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The Impact of Social Media Information Sharing on the Green Purchase Intention among Generation Z

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Abstract: With the growing influence of sustainable development in recent years, there has been an increasing focus on green consumption. Little previous research has highlighted the important influential role that social media information sharing plays in overall green consumption. This study aims to explore how social media information sharing influences green purchasing intentions of Generation Z. We constructed a theoretical framework for Generation Z’s green purchase intention based on SOR theory and elucidated the relationship between social media information sharing, perceived green value, subjective norms, and green purchase intention. This study discusses the dual mediating role of perceived green value and subjective norms and explores the moderating role of consumer occupation. Through a self-administered questionnaire survey of 274 members of Generation Z in China, we found that (1) social media information sharing has a positive effect on green purchase intention; (2) perceived green value and subjective norms are considered to play a partially mediating role in consumers’ green purchase intention relationship; (3) occupation mediates the moderating role of subjective norms in social media information sharing and green purchase intention, such that the mediating role of subjective norms is stronger for non-student consumers and insignificant for student consumers. Our findings not only enrich the empirical research on Generation Z’s green consumption, but may also help practitioners develop strategies to influence the intention and behavior of Generation Z consumers toward green products.

Keywords: green purchase intention; social media; perceived green value; subjective norms; Generation Z; two-factor intermediary analysis model

1. Introduction

In recent years, due to the problems of excessive carbon emissions and deterioration of the ecological environment, countries have begun to pay attention to and explore how to reduce carbon emissions [1] and have proposed plans to achieve carbon neutrality by the middle of this century. The massive global outbreak of COVID-19 has disrupted people’s daily lives, contributing on the one hand to a rethinking of man and nature, and on the other hand, to the development of management strategies by companies to deal with the effects of the crisis [2,3]. The concept of sustainable development and the concept of green and environmentally friendly consumption are also gradually being valued by people [4]. In daily shopping, some consumers use the product label to judge whether the product is beneficial to the ecological environment to guide purchasing decisions [5]. In addition, enterprises are also aware of the importance of sustainable development, and enterprises need to adjust their sustainable development strategies to cater to consumers’ new environmental protection consumption concepts [6]. Therefore, the study of consumers’ purchasing behavior toward green products has become a hot topic. In the 5G era, in addition to the traditional functions of products, young people also pay attention to the functions of health and environmental protection when purchasing products. For example, Genki Forest, a popular beverage brand in recent years, is mainly low-sugar and low-calorie and adopts Japanese-style simple packaging, which meets the needs of young consumers. Due to
consumers’ demand for health and environmental protection, during the 2019 Double
Eleven Online Shopping Carnival, it became the second best-selling beverage on the entire
network. It can be seen that young consumers have a green and healthy life concept and
have a special preference for green products. Therefore, the purchase intentions of this
group for green products deserves further exploration.

According to previous literature [7,8], a product is defined as a green product when
its raw materials, production process, use, and post-disposal treatment are all conducive
to ecological protection or have the least harm to the environment. Most previous studies
have been based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which analyzed green purchase
intentions through internal reasons such as personal values and environmental responsi-
bility [9–11]. Some studies combine this with external causes. For example, promotions’
influence on consumers’ intention to purchase green products [12]. Sharing by celebrities on
Instagram and broadcasting of nature documentaries in the media can also have a positive
impact on consumers’ intention to buy environmentally friendly products [13,14]. Today,
with the development of the Internet and the popularization of smartphones, the number
of Chinese netizens has reached 1 billion, and social media information-sharing platforms
have become an important channel for users to browse information and share ideas [15].
Individuals and companies also use social media information sharing to develop business
opportunities, create online fan pages, and increase interactions between customers and
businesses [16]. It can be seen that the influence of social media information sharing in
shaping consumer behavior is gradually increasing [17]. However, the direct impact of
social media information sharing is limited; therefore, when studying the driving factors
of green product purchase intention, its impact path deserves further comprehensive ex-
ploration. Combined with stimulus–organism–response (SOR) theory [18], social media
information sharing as an external factor (the ‘S’ in the framework) can influence con-
sumers’ psychological states, resulting in emotional perceptions (the ‘O’ in the framework),
promoting consumers’ responses (the ‘R’ in the frame) corresponding to external stimuli.
Subjective norm is a group evaluation of whether an individual’s behavior is appropriate or
not, and this evaluation will produce a certain social pressure on the individual [19]. Com-
pared with consumers in other countries, the green consumption behavior of consumers in
China is significantly affected by collectivist values [20]. Collectivist values encompass a
degree of social pressure, and the subjective norms exhibited by a group in this cultural
environment are highly predictive of their behavior [21]. Therefore, for consumers of the
collectivist social culture represented in China, the subjective norm is one of the important
factors affecting their willingness to purchase green products [22]. In addition to normative
factors, the positive emotions generated by consumers’ green consumption will also infect
surrounding groups [23], allowing the surrounding people to feel the value of green con-
sumption more intuitively [24] rather than as an abstract “propaganda slogan”. Perceived
green value is the overall evaluation of the net benefits that potential buyers of goods
or services get from green products or environment-friendly services [25] and is gained
by choosing to buy green products that are beneficial to the environment [26]. Therefore,
perceived green value is regarded as an important factor affecting consumer purchasing be-
havior [27]. Since the sample selection of this research is all Chinese consumers, perceived
value and subjective norms have a greater impact on Chinese consumers’ green purchasing
behavior [28]. In this case, this study introduces subjective norms and perceived green
value as mediating variables.

Previous research has suggested that consumers may be influenced by the ‘bandwagon
effect’, buying green products not because of their own beliefs but simply because it is the
‘in’ thing to do [29], with non-student consumers being more significantly influenced [30].
Although previous literature has analyzed the impact of social media information sharing
on consumers’ willingness to purchase green products [31], it has not been divided ac-
cording to consumer group characteristics. Therefore, studying the impact of social media
information sharing on product purchase decisions remains a topic worthy of further
investigation. In summary, this study introduces consumer occupation as a moderating variable and divides consumers into students and non-students.

For younger generations, their daily lives are influenced by the full range of social media information sharing. However, there is still a gap in the academic literature on the consumption of Generation Z. To fill this gap, this study selects Generation Z as the study group to answer the following questions:

1. Is there a positive relationship between social media information sharing and green purchase intention?
2. Do subjective norms and perceived green value mediate between them?
3. Does occupation play a moderating role in the relationship between subjective norms and green purchase intention?

To answer the above research questions, this paper uses occupation as a moderator variable and discusses the influence of students’ and non-students’ subjective norms and green purchase intention to different degrees.

The theoretical contribution of this paper consists of two main points:

1. Based on SOR theory, this study explains the relationship between social media information sharing, subjective norms, perceived green value, and green product purchase intentions, enriching the research on SOR theory and adding subjective norms and perceived green value as the main mediating drivers and pathways of influence.
2. The moderating effect of occupation is verified by the influence of subjective norms on the purchase intention of green products, thus enriching the research on green purchase intention and the research on the consumption field of Generation Z.

This study uses questionnaires to collect data to demonstrate the relationship between social media information sharing, perceived green value, subjective norms, green purchase intention, and occupation. This paper has five sections, which are structured as follows.

In Section 2, a literature review investigates existing research to identify the research gaps and hypotheses that were developed. In Section 3, research design and measurement methods are presented. In Section 4, data analysis is performed in three stages: confirmatory factor analysis, common method bias testing, and hypotheses testing. In Section 5, the discussion is conducted, including general discussion, theoretical implications, practical implications and limitations, and future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Generation Z

The generation born during the period 1995–2009, when the Internet became rapidly popular in China, is known as the “Internet natives”, or “Generation Z”. They were also influenced by the development of the Internet and the rapid spread of smartphones and tablets, as their growth timeline coincided with it [32]. They are accustomed to using electronic devices and social media information sharing and instant access and browsing of online websites [33]. While they seek individuality and independence, they are also interested in connecting with the outside world through online social platforms to gain an identity [34]. In China, this segment of the population is estimated at 260 million people, accounting for 18.4% of the total population in 2020. As a large and young group, they have high potential for consumption in the consumer market. However, there is still a gap in the academic literature on the consumption of Generation Z. Although Bedard concluded after testing that there was a significant relationship between social media use and green purchase intentions among US millennials [35], due to the age limit of the study sample, the occupations held by the sample were not further classified. As consumers remain in a fixed social environment, individual behavior can be influenced by pressures from the surrounding group [36]. As there are different group pressures on consumers with regular jobs and those who are students, there may be some differences in the purchase of green products. Therefore, this study identifies Generation Z as the subject of the study and, given the constraints on the consumption capacity of minors, adjusts the study to include
those between the ages of 18 and 27, and uses occupation as a moderating variable to differentiate between students and non-students (those with a regular job).

2.2. Stimulus–Organism–Response-Based View

Stimulus–organism–response (SOR) interprets behavior as a response to a certain stimulus, which is processed internally by the organism, thus regulating the relationship between stimulus and response [18]. Scholars have continuously used the SOR model to predict consumer purchase intentions, and today the theory is one of the more classical theories for studying consumer behavior [37] and is widely used to predict users’ behavior in sharing information on the Internet and social media. Peng, using the SOR framework, studied how website stimuli affect consumers’ attitudes toward online shopping, their ability to regulate emotional purchases, and their intention to repurchase [38]. McKinney used the SOR model to analyze the influence of consumers’ online shopping intrinsic motivation on shopping satisfaction [39]. In recent years, SOR theory has been further extended, and website quality and reputation as information stimuli affect consumers’ purchase intention through perceived value [40].

Although there are few studies on the relationship between social media information sharing and consumers’ green product purchase intention under SOR theory, according to the above theory, information shared on social media can be viewed as a great external stimulus that satisfies Generation Z’s social and sharing desires. They express themselves and realize their self-worth through social media sharing platforms. In turn, because of the influence of social media sharing, the consumer culture of Generation Z has become more sharing and interactive in the Internet era, which has led Generation Z to measure the value of goods differently from the older generation when choosing to purchase goods, and to focus on the social attributes and sensory experiences of goods when shopping [34]. The SOR model was determined as the theoretical framework for this study. Before purchasing products, Generation Z will browse social media information sharing platforms such as Weibo and official accounts to learn more comprehensive product information and evaluations in advance; after purchasing, they are keen to share information with friends or followers on the platform through social media, recommending “good things”, forwarding information, and even complaining about unsatisfactory shopping experiences [33]. Therefore, the SOR model can be extended to serve as a framework for research on the relationship between social media sharing and green purchase intention in Generation Z.

2.3. Social Media Information Sharing

Social media has seen unprecedented advances in the use of social media in all countries with widespread Internet use, and with the growing acceptance of the Internet by consumers. The concept of social media information sharing started to emerge in academia in recent years and is still in the exploratory stage regarding its specific definition [41]. Previous research started from theories of use and gratification, confirming that media use can satisfy personal satisfaction or psychological needs [42–44]. People engage in social interactions and form personal information content to share for self-expression through the information content and entertainment carried on social media information sharing [42]. Current research on social media information sharing has examined the communicative and interactive characteristics of social media information sharing, as well as the entertainment and trustworthiness of the information carried, from the perspectives of both corporate and individual users [43]. Internet users can share their lifestyles on Blogs to meet their needs for information, entertainment, and emotion management, and more importantly, to strengthen their social connections through reading what other users post, sharing their content, and interacting with other users [44]. Using the information-sharing capabilities of social media channels, well-known bloggers expand their market and products and promote their business philosophy [45]. In this process, consumers play the role of both recipients and sharers of social media information [46]. In short, social media information sharing can facilitate business communication and promote product sales, as well as im-
prove the efficiency of people’s browsing and communication interactions, making it an essential need in modern people’s lives [43,47]. When social media information sharing is used to share positive information, it has a good social effect [44]. In the field of green marketing, previous studies have confirmed the positive impact of social media information sharing on green consumption [31,35]. However, there are also some adverse effects of social media information sharing on life and health [48]. Therefore, the results of the above-mentioned studies on social media sharing cannot be generalized, and exploration of the effects of social media sharing should be based on the specific research context.

2.4. Social Media Information Sharing and Green Purchase Intention

Large social media information sharing platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube, have over 2 billion registered users worldwide [49,50]; Sina Weibo, the most widely used service in China, has over 500 million active users per month [51]. The large number of users uploading and viewing information and videos on social media platforms daily has a profound impact on everyday life and has the potential to change the way consumers make sustainable purchasing decisions [52].

The purchase of green products contributes to environmental sustainability, as they pose little harm to the environment during their production and use cycles as well as during end-of-life disposal. Some stakeholder companies have begun to use social media information sharing to promote green consumer actions in response to sustainability guidelines [53]. For example, Starbucks focuses on green marketing, spreading green ideas on social media messaging sharing, and developing green consumption habits among consumers [54]. For users, user-generated content takes advantage of social media information sharing channels, and information about green environmental protection is a positive message that is beneficial to the public. Communicators through social media information sharing and posting evaluation information of yourself or others on the product can reap good social effects [44]. Therefore, when consumers pay attention to social media information sharing that is conducive to green environmental protection, it will increase consumers’ intention to buy green [45]. As Generation Z is heavily influenced by the Internet [32], information sharing on social media information sharing platforms is personalized and circle-based, which meets the social needs of the Generation Z. The existing literature confirms the positive impact of social media information sharing on green consumption [31]. Therefore, social media information-sharing channels play a crucial role in the communication of green consumption [55]. Moreover, the positive impact of social media information sharing on consumers’ green purchase intention has been supported by several studies [35,45]. Therefore, we can assume that when social media information sharing has positive information about green and other positive energy (hereafter referred to as social media information sharing), it will play a role in promoting green purchase intention. Based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Social media information sharing is positively related to green purchase intention.

2.5. The Influence of Perceived Green Value on Social Media Information Sharing and Green Purchase Intention

Perceived value was first proposed by Sheth to include five dimensions, such as perceived functional value and perceived emotional value, and is widely used in consumer behavior research [56]. In an investigation of teenagers’ intention to use e-wallets, it was found that attitude and perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use were key influences, while the influence of the functional value of the app was not significant [57]. Therefore, the different dimensions of perceived value in influencing consumer behavioral preferences are concentrated in different scenarios [57,58]. According to Lee’s research, the purchase of green products by consumers is an altruistic act that directly or indirectly serves the purpose of protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development [59]. In the study of green consumption, for potential consumers of green products, in addition to the specific
value of the product’s function, the perceived value also includes concern for the ecological environment and the expectation of its improvement. Therefore, before deciding to purchase a green product, consumers consider the combination of the product’s functions, environmental benefits, and costs [25]. The ubiquitous social media-sharing environment, where many individuals and companies have created online interaction platforms, such as public pages, allows users to be influenced by social media interactions and the content of information shared during their browsing [16], and they may communicate actions related to sustainable development. For example, people sharing photos of their use of green products and how they feel about them on social media drives others more viscerally with practical actions and promotes others’ perceptions of green consumption [60]. At the same time, many green product retailers post positive environmental appeals and relevant green product information on social media messaging, thereby stimulating the perceived green value of readers and thus positively influencing individual green purchasing behavior [61]. Based on the above discussion, it can be argued that social media messages sharing environmental information also stimulate consumers’ perceived green value, and the higher the perceived green value, the stronger the purchase intention for green products. Based on the above discussion, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2. Social media information sharing is positively related to perceived green value.

Hypothesis 3. Perceived green value is positively related to green purchase intention.

2.6. The Influence of Subjective Norms on Social Media Information Sharing and Green Purchase Intention

Subjective norms are a group-generated evaluation of the appropriateness of an individual’s behavior, and this evaluation can exert a certain amount of social pressure on the individual [19]. Thus, it can be understood that consumers often purchase products not only to satisfy their own needs but also to influence social needs, establish and maintain social relationships and achieve other social functions such as social status [62,63]. Due to the interactive and shared nature of social media information sharing, consumers can thus feel the social pressure around them and thus influence/be influenced by subjective norms. Users can share their consumption perceptions on platforms such as public websites, microblogs, and friend circles, and at the same time browse the information shared by others. In this process, users gain collective empathy and build a group identity based on shared consumption perceptions. In this process, mass communication shapes subjective norms [64]. Several studies have shown that subjective norms formed by external factors are positively correlated with the willingness to purchase green products [65,66]. In a comparative study of Chinese and Korean consumers, it was clear that Chinese consumers’ green consumption behavior is positively influenced by external social factors such as collectivist values and the behavior of their community, family, and friends [20,21,67]. In addition, influential people in social media information sharing can convey green lifestyle messages on social media information sharing platforms, e.g., celebrities retweeting green product information on social media can effectively promote environmental awareness among their fans in the form of social demonstration [68]. Thus, factors from society are significant factors for Chinese consumers to generate green purchase intentions [22]. Due to the interactive and shared nature of social media information, consumers will reflect and regulate their behavior because they feel guided by social opinion. Influence from society has been proven to be a major influence on adolescents’ green purchasing behavior [69]. Subjective norms as a kind of pressure from society encourage consumers to purchase green products [70]. Thus, we proposed the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4. Social media information sharing is positively related to subjective norms.

Hypothesis 5. Subjective norms are positively related to green purchase intention.
Hypothesis 6. Perceived green value mediates between social media information sharing and green purchase intention.

Hypothesis 7. Subjective norms mediate between social media information sharing and green purchase intention.

2.7. The Moderating Role of Consumer Occupation

Basic information such as occupation is also a factor that influences consumer behavior and market segmentation [71]. Customers in different occupations have different lifestyles, values, needs, and preferences due to their different environments and groups, which can have a direct impact on purchasing behavior [72]. At the same time, most customers’ involvement and purchasing behavior are influenced by relevant groups with varying degrees of influence [73]. According to previous studies, social influence is one of the main reasons why consumers buy green products [69,70]. When making product decisions or choosing a brand, consumers intentionally meet the expectations of their group to gain their group’s approval, and, in this case, the reference group has a normative influence on the consumer [74]. Social media information sharing is “circle-based” [44]; while non-student consumers are influenced by work, they have more regular social circles, more frequent social activities, and more complex social relationships compared with students without a formal occupation. Thus, they pay more attention to their image in the social circle, and are more likely to feel the normative influence from the “circle”. At the same time, green products tend to be more expensive than average due to their green attributes [75]. Some consumers have stereotypical perceptions of green products as being of low utility, lacking functionality, and having high prices [76,77]. As a result, this discourages the public’s willingness to pay for green product premiums. However, when the green product premium conveys the public’s pro-social signaling characteristics and can help individuals project a good external image, it can effectively increase the public’s acceptance of the green product premium [78]. As non-student consumers have relatively stable income, they also have a higher ability to pay for the products. More importantly, compared to the student group, the non-student group is more sensitive to the perception of social image and social status [79], and the purchase and use of green products caters exactly to their strong demand for social status. Therefore, the subjective norms and purchase intentions of green products generated by customers’ social media information sharing vary by occupation. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis to examine the moderating effect of occupation differences:

Hypothesis 8. Occupation moderates the mediating role of subjective norms between social media information sharing and purchase green purchase intention, such that the mediating role of subjective norms is stronger for non-student consumers and less significant for student consumers.

To sum up, this study discussed the relationship between Social media information sharing, Green purchase intention, Perceived green value, and Subjective norms, and explored the moderating effect of Occupation. Figure 1 presents the theoretical model of this study.
To sum up, this study discussed the relationship between Social media information sharing, Green purchase intention, Perceived green value, and Subjective norms, and explored the moderating effect of Occupation. Figure 1 presents the theoretical model of this study.

3. Research Design

3.1. Sample and Data Selection

This study collected research data through a questionnaire. The scales used are well-established and have been widely used in previous research studies. To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, two expert scholars in the field were invited to remove some ambiguous entries. However, to prevent translation errors, the research team conducted a small presurvey of 50 samples before distributing a large number of questionnaires.

Formal questionnaires were used through social networking sites using virtual snowball sampling techniques, such as specific Weibo topic discussion groups dedicated to green, eco-friendly, and green-product consumers. This study targeted Generation Z users who participated in social media information sharing. The questionnaire was distributed over 30 days. A total of 328 questionnaires were distributed, and 54 questionnaires in which users did not answer seriously or did not match the age requirement were excluded, leaving 274 valid questionnaires. The effective questionnaire return rate was 83.54%, indicating a good overall return rate. Five demographic variables commonly used in consumer behavior research were also selected for this study: occupation, education, gender, age, and personal monthly income (RMB). The sample data were analyzed using SPSS 26.0 software. The valid sample composition for the formal survey is shown in Table 1.

The dummy variables involved are defined as follows: pro = 0 (non-student), pro = 1 (student); edu = 0 (below high school), edu = 1 (high school), edu = 2 (bachelor), edu = 3 (master and above); gender = 0 (female), gender = 1 (male); age = 0 (less than 18), age = 1 (18–21), age = 2 (22–24), age = 3 (25–27); inc = 0 (less than 1000), inc = 1 (1000–4000), inc = 2 (4001–7000), inc = 3 (above 7000).

3.2. Analysis Techniques

This study used SPSS 26.0 software for descriptive statistical analysis of the variables and AMOS 26.0 software for validated factor analysis. To test for mediating effects and types of mediators for subjective norms and perceived green value, this study used the multiple regression method and Bootstrap method [80,81]. Moreover, the main and moderating effects were tested by SPSS 26.0 [82–84].
Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

| Occupation              | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Non-student             | 143       | 0.522      |
| Student                 | 131       | 0.478      |
| Education               |           |            |
| Below high school       | 8         | 0.029      |
| High school             | 8         | 0.029      |
| Bachelor                | 228       | 0.832      |
| Master and above        | 30        | 0.110      |
| Gender                  |           |            |
| Male                    | 134       | 0.489      |
| Female                  | 140       | 0.511      |
| Age                     |           |            |
| <18                     | 8         | 0.029      |
| 18–21                   | 206       | 0.752      |
| 22–24                   | 41        | 0.150      |
| 25–27                   | 19        | 0.069      |
| Income                  |           |            |
| <1000                   | 6         | 0.022      |
| 1000–4000               | 91        | 0.332      |
| 4001–7000               | 149       | 0.544      |
| Above 7001              | 28        | 0.102      |

The scales used to measure social media information sharing, subjective norms, perceived green value, and green purchase intention are relatively well-established research scales used in the previous literature.

The concept of social media information sharing was based on the research of Jiang et al. (2010) [85]. To categorize green purchase intention, we drew lessons from the research of Pop et al. (2020) [31]. Perceived green value mainly refers to its definition by Chen et al. (2012) [25]. The main reference for subjective norms was Cialdin et al. (1991) [86]. In the questionnaire design (Table 2), the four variables of social media information sharing (SMIS), green purchase intention (GPI), perceived green value (PGV), and subjective norms (SN) were rated using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Table 2. Measurement scales and construct items.

| Items                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Social media information sharing (SMIS)                               |
| 1. I can use social media information sharing to interact with others about green products. |
| 2. My engagement with environmental topics on social media sharing has influenced my green product purchases. |
| 3. The eco-friendly information shared in social media messages was able to give me easier access to information or feedback on green products. |
| 4. On social media, information sharing content about green products is worthwhile and trusted. |
| Green purchase intention (GPI)                                        |
| 1. I will gather and learn more about this green product.             |
| 2. I would recommend this green product to others.                    |
| 3. I will consider purchasing this green product when needed.         |
| 4. Sharing information on social media will prompt me to buy a green product. |
| Perceived green value (PGV)                                           |
| 1. Buy green products because of the better environmental benefits.  |
| 2. The eco-friendly features of the green product are value for the money for me. |
| 3. The environmental performance of the green product meets my expectations. |
| Subjective norms (SN)                                                |
| 1. I think green and energy-efficient products are more in line with social development. |
| 2. I think green and energy-efficient products are more in line with my family’s wishes. |
| 3. I think green and energy-efficient products are more in line with national policy. |
Regarding control variables, learning from previous scholars, we selected education, gender, age, and personal monthly income (RMB).

4. Results
4.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

We needed to check the reliability and validity of the measurement model. As expected, we found high composite reliability (CR > 0.7), which reflects good internal consistency between the variables [87]. We used convergent validity and discriminant validity to confirm the structural validity of the measure. Convergent validity shows the ability of the latent variable to explain the mean variable. It is judged by the average variance extracted (AVE) value. The average variance extracted (AVE) values were above 0.5, indicating the convergence validity of the constructs [88].

A guiding principle in assessing discriminant validity is that the square root of the root square of the AVE values for each latent variable must be greater than the correlation coefficient between that latent variable and all other latent variables [87], so all constructs are appropriate, indicating discriminatory validity.

The results are shown in Table 3. Cronbach’s \(\alpha\) values were used to test the reliability of the overall scale. Table 3 shows that the Cronbach’s \(\alpha\) values of the four variables (social media information sharing, perceived green value, subjective norms, and green purchase intention) in this paper were 0.924, 0.912, 0.782, and 0.919, which were all greater than the standard of 0.7, indicating that the scale of this study is reliable [89].

| Variables | Items | Factor Loading | Cronbach’s Alpha | CR | AVE |
|-----------|-------|----------------|------------------|----|-----|
| SMIS      | SMIS1 | 0.771          | 0.924            | 0.893 | 0.676 |
|           | SMIS2 | 0.869          |                  |      |     |
|           | SMIS3 | 0.841          |                  |      |     |
|           | SMIS4 | 0.805          |                  |      |     |
| GPI       | GPI1  | 0.829          | 0.912            | 0.892 | 0.675 |
|           | GPI2  | 0.792          |                  |      |     |
|           | GPI3  | 0.859          |                  |      |     |
|           | GPI4  | 0.804          |                  |      |     |
| PGV       | PGV1  | 0.742          | 0.782            | 0.787 | 0.557 |
|           | PGV2  | 0.867          |                  |      |     |
|           | PGV3  | 0.606          |                  |      |     |
| SN        | SN1   | 0.872          | 0.919            | 0.891 | 0.733 |
|           | SN2   | 0.863          |                  |      |     |
|           | SN3   | 0.833          |                  |      |     |

The KMO and Barlett’s spherical test were used to test the validity of the scale: The KMO was 0.885 and the Barlett’s spherical test chi-square value was 3015.541 (91 degrees of freedom) with a \(p\)-value < 0.001, which reached a significant level so that the next factor analysis could be conducted. The standardized factor loadings for all items were greater than the 0.6 criteria, with some greater than 0.8, indicating that the scale has good construct validity [90].

A validated factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to examine the convergent and differential validity of the four variables: social media information sharing, perceived green value, subjective norms, and green purchase intention (Table 2). The CR of social media information sharing was 0.893 and AVE was 0.676, while the CR of green product purchase intention was 0.892 and AVE was 0.675. The CR for perceived green value was 0.787 and AVE was 0.557; the CR for subjective norms was 0.891 and AVE was 0.733, and the CR for all items was higher than the standard value of 0.7. The combined reliability (CR) of all items was higher than the standard value of 0.7, and the extracted variance (AVE) was
higher than the standard value of 0.5. This indicates that the scales used in this study have good convergent validity \[88,91\].

As shown in Table 4, the square root of the AVE values for each latent variable was greater than their correlation coefficient values with the other factors, thus indicating good discriminant validity of the study scale data \[87\]. In addition, the table shows that there are significant correlations between subjective norms, perceived green value, green purchase intention, and social media information sharing, indicating that further regression analysis can be conducted.

**Table 4.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations (n = 274).

| Education | Age | Gender | SMIS | GPI | PGV | SN | Occupation |
|-----------|-----|--------|------|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Age       | 0.191 ** | 0.0851 |
| Gender    | −0.144 ** | 0.117 * |
| Income    | −0.015 | 0.223 *** | 0.117 * |
| SMIS      | 0.106 ** | 0.09 | 0.104 * | 0.822 |
| GPI       | 0.049 | 0.085 | 0.215 ** | 0.566 *** | 0.821 |
| PGV       | 0.099 * | 0.044 | 0.111 * | 0.592 *** | 0.502 *** | 0.746 |
| SN        | 0.059 | −0.114 * | 0.218 *** | 0.534 *** | 0.538 *** | 0.496 *** | 0.856 |
| Occupation| −0.07 | 0.247 | −0.074 | −0.145 ** | −0.102 * | −0.076 | −0.485 *** |
| Mean      | 2.022 | 1.259 | 0.489 | 5.764 | 6.008 | 6.257 | 5.462 | 0.478 |
| SD        | 0.506 | 0.625 | 0.501 | 1.053 | 0.905 | 0.766 | 1.141 | 0.5 |

Notes. *** p < 0.001. ** p < 0.01. * p < 0.05.

4.2. **Validation Factor Analysis**

Validated factor analysis was conducted using AMOS 26.0 for the following four variables: SMIS, PGV, SN, and GPI. The results in Table 5 show that the model fit for the four factors (\(X^2 = 108.971, df = 57, X^2/df = 1.912, CFI = 0.983, GFI = 0.949, RMSEA = 0.058\)) was significantly better than the other nested models.

**Table 5.** Results of confirmatory factor analysis.

| Model            | \(X^2\) | df | \(X^2/df\) | RMSEA | CFI  | GFI  |
|------------------|---------|----|------------|-------|------|------|
| Four-factor model | 108.971 | 57 | 1.912      | 0.058 | 0.983 | 0.949 |
| Three-factor model | 156.887 | 60 | 2.615      | 0.077 | 0.968 | 0.926 |
| Two-factor model  | 212.291 | 64 | 3.317      | 0.092 | 0.950 | 0.898 |
| One-factor model  | 300.020 | 65 | 4.616      | 0.115 | 0.921 | 0.862 |

Note: Four-factor model: SMIS, PGV, SN, GPI; Three-factor model: SMIS + PGV, SN, GPI; Two-factor model: SMIS + PGV + SN, GPI; One-factor model: SMIS + PGV + SN + GPI.

4.3. **Common Method Deviation Test**

As all data were taken from the same questionnaire, this could lead to a common method variation (CMV) problem. Therefore, the paper was tested using the Harman one-factor method, i.e., a principal factor component analysis was conducted on all items of the latent variable. The results indicated that there were four factors in total. The cumulative explained variance of the factor analysis was 80.774%. The explanatory power of the variance of the four factors from small to large is 14.457%, 20.020%, 22.907%, and 23.389%, of which the maximum explanatory power of the single factor is only 23.389%, less than the critical value of 50%. There is no problem that the common contribution rate of the single-factor is not too high.

4.4. **Hypothesis Testing and Model Analysis**

Drawing on the three steps of the test of the mediating effects proposed by Baron (1986) \[80\], the following steps were taken in this study, and the results are shown in Table 6.
The first step was to regress the dependent variables as independent variables and to test for the direct effect of 3 variables (SMIS, PGV, SN) on GPI. Model 2 shows that SMIS affects the GPI \( (\beta = 0.471, p < 0.001) \) and has a significant effect \( (\beta = 0.471, p < 0.001) \), proving that H1 is supported. Model 5 and Model 6 show that PGV has a positive effect on GPI and SN has a positive effect on GPI \( (\beta = 0.565, p < 0.001; \beta = 0.426, p < 0.001) \), proving that H2 and H4 are supported. In the second step, the mediating variables were regressed as independent variables. Models 8 and 10 showed that SMIS \( (\beta = 0.421, p < 0.001) \) had a significant effect on PGV; and SMIS \( (\beta = 0.541, p < 0.001) \) had a significant effect on SN. It was also demonstrated that H3 and H5 are supported. The third step was to regress the dependent variables into independent and mediating variables. First, in Model 3 it was shown that SN had a significant effect on GPI \( (\beta = 0.287, p < 0.001) \). At this point, SMIS \( (\beta = 0.351, p < 0.001) \) still had a significant effect on GPI. Secondly, in terms of PGV, Model 4 showed that PGV had a significant effect on the GPI \( (\beta = 0.264, p < 0.001) \). At this point, SMIS \( (\beta = 0.329, p < 0.001) \) still had a significant effect on the GPI. In conclusion, the mediating effects of SN and PGV between SMIS on GPI exist and are partially mediated, which proves that H6 and H7 are supported.

### Table 6. Result of main and mediating effects.

| Variable   | \( \text{GPI} \) | \( \text{PGV} \) | \( \text{SN} \) |
|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
|            | M1               | M2               | M3               | M4               | M5               | M6               | M7               | M8               | M9               | M10              |
| Control    | Constant         | 5.332 ***        | 3.021 ***        | 2.512 ***        | 1.997 ***        | 2.150 ***        | 5.629 ***        | 3.567 ***        | 4.585 ***        | 1.932 ***        |
| Education  | 0.133            | 0.001            | −0.037           | −0.017           | 0.031            | 0.180            | 0.063            | 0.297 **         | 0.146            |
| Age        | 0.056            | 0.096            | 0.177 **         | 0.089            | 0.063            | −0.012           | 0.023            | −0.354 **        | −0.308 **        |
| Gender     | 0.389 ***        | 0.275 **         | 0.168            | 0.253 **         | 0.288 **         | 0.180            | 0.078            | 0.536 ***        | 0.406 **         |
| Income     | 0.085            | 0.007            | −0.040           | −0.005           | 0.023            | 0.111            | 0.04             | 0.267 **         | 0.176 **         |
| Independent variable | SMIS | 0.471 *** | 0.329 *** | 0.351 *** | 0.421 *** | 0.541 *** |
| Mediator variable | PGV | 0.264 *** | 0.565 *** |
| SN         | 0.287 ***        | 0.426 ***        |
| \( R^2 \)  | 0.059            | 0.349            | 0.387            | 0.422            | 0.28             | 0.319            | 0.035            | 0.357            | 0.103            | 0.343            |
| \( \Delta R^2 \) | 0.290 | 0.038 | 0.363 | 0.221 | 0.259 | 0.322 | 0.240 |
| \( F \)    | 4.252            | 28.790           | 28.140           | 32.495           | 20.891           | 25.083           | 2.416            | 29.728           | 7.717            | 28.003           |

Notes. *** \( p < 0.001 \). ** \( p < 0.01 \).

### 4.5. Mediating Effects Test

Since this paper uses a double mediation model, some scholars believe that the Baron test has certain limitations [92], so a non-parametric percentile Bootstrap method [81] is used to further improve the mediation effect test, and the test results are shown in Tables 7 and 8. In accordance with the literature, the number of Bootstrap samples was fixed at 5000, and the significance of the mediating effect was verified with a Bias-Corrected 95% confidence interval. The test results in Table 7 show that the bias-corrected 95% confidence interval of the direct effect of SMIS on GPI does not contain zero (0.161, 0.369). This indicates that there is a direct effect of SMIS on the GPI, which confirms Hypothesis 1. The confidence interval corresponding to the mediated path of value-GPI does not contain zero (0.027, 0.165), which confirms Hypothesis 6; the confidence interval corresponding to the mediated path of SMIS-SN-GPI does not contain zero (0.076, 0.194), confirming Hypothesis 7. In summary, the mediating effect of PGV and SN between SMIS on GPI exists and is partially mediated. As the total effect of SMIS on GPI was 0.472, the direct effect was 0.265 or 56.14%,
and the mediating effect was 0.207 or 43.86% of the total effect. The mediating effect of the SMIS-SN-GPI path was 0.124, accounting for 59.90% of the total mediating effect, while the mediating effect of the SMIS-PGV-GPI path was 0.083, accounting for 40.10% of the total mediating effect. The confidence interval of the difference between the two mediating effects contains zero (−0.129, 0.053), indicating that the difference between the effects of the two mediating paths was not significant, i.e., the difference between the two mediating effects was not significant, indicating that SN and PGV are equally important.

Table 7. Bootstrap estimates of the mediating effects of variables.

| Path   | Effect | SE  | Lower        | Upper        | Lower        | Upper        |
|--------|--------|-----|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| GPI    | 0.472  | 0.062 | 0.3488       | 0.5941       | 0.3488       | 0.5941       |
| PGV    | 0.207  | 0.048 | 0.1215       | 0.3102       | 0.1177       | 0.3004       |
| SN     | 0.1215 | 0.3102 | 0.1177       | 0.3004       |              |              |
| SMIS   | 0.265  | 0.078 | 0.1104       | 0.4193       | 0.1104       | 0.4193       |

Table 8. Specific analysis of the mediating effects.

| SIE            | Effect | SE   | Bias-Corrected | Percentile | Result of Hypothesis Test |
|----------------|--------|------|----------------|------------|--------------------------|
|                | Lower  | Upper| Lower          | Upper      |                          |
| SMIS-PGV-GPI   | 0.083  | 0.034| 0.023          | 0.156      | Accept H6                |
| SMIS-SN-GPI    | 0.124  | 0.03  | 0.072          | 0.192      | Accept H7                |
| Difference     | −0.042 | 0.043| −0.127         | 0.043      |                          |

4.6. Test for Adjustable Mediating Effects

In accordance to Hayes [82] and Muller et al. [83], this study further adopted regression analysis to verify the relationships between variables. Before verification, the independent variables (social media information sharing) and mediating variables (subjective norms) were mean-center termed to avoid collinearity problems. The specific results are shown in Table 9.

According to Table 9, in Model 5 (M5), the interaction term between occupation and subjective norms is significantly related to the dependent variable GPI (b = −0.447, p < 0.001). Based on the above judgment criteria, Hypothesis 8 was tested, i.e., the effect of subjective norms on consumers’ intention to purchase green products varies according to occupation.

To further test Hypothesis 8, the results of the bootstrap method [84] based on 5000 replicate samples are shown on the left-hand side of Table 10, where the confidence interval contains zero (CI = (−0.009, 0.187) when the consumer is a student, and the conditional mediating effect is not significant. The possible reason is that the social role of consumers who are students is relatively simple, and the social scope is relatively small, so the demand for social recognition and improving their social acceptance is lower than that of non-student consumers. In addition, the student population has no formal income and is less able to pay a premium for green products. The mediating effect of SN on the moderated GPI was more significant when consumers were non-students by profession (b = 0.353, 95% CI = (0.259, 0.462), p < 0.001). For a visual interpretation of the moderation effect, the results were plotted (as shown in Figure 2).
Table 9. The result of moderating effects.

| Variable       | GPI                  | SN                  |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                | M1       | M2       | M3       | M4       | M5       | M6       | M7       |
| Control        |         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Constant       | 5.332 ***| 5.737 ***| 5.845 ***| 5.475 ***| 5.498 ***| 4.585 ***| 5.05 *** |
| Education      | 0.133   | 0.001   | −0.037   | 0.006   | −0.034   | 0.297 ** | 0.146   |
| Age            | 0.056   | 0.096   | 0.177 ** | 0.086   | 0.107   | −0.354 **| −0.308 **|
| Gender         | 0.389 ***| 0.275 **| 0.168   | 0.159   | 0.036   | 0.536 ***| 0.406 ** |
| Income         | 0.085   | 0.007   | −0.04   | 0.102   | 0.084   | 0.267 ** | 0.176 *  |
| Independent variable |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| SMIS           | 0.471 ***| 0.329 ***| 0.303 ***| 0.229 ***|          |          | 0.541 ***|
| Moderator variable |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Occupation     |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|                | 0.330 *  | 0.330 ** |          |          |          |          |          |
| Mediator variable |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| SN             |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|                | 0.263 ***| 0.329 ***| 0.611 ***|          |          |          |          |
| Interaction term |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Occupation × SN|                 |          |          |          |          | −0.447 ***|          |
| R2             | 0.059   | 0.349   | 0.422   | 0.435   | 0.486   | 0.103   | 0.343   |
| ΔR2            | 0.059   | 0.29    | 0.072   | 0.014   | 0.051   | 0.103   | 0.24    |
| F              | 4.252   | 28.79   | 32.476  | 29.306  | 31.376  | 7.717   | 28.003  |

Notes. *** p < 0.001. ** p < 0.01. * p < 0.05.

Table 10. Moderated mediation test based on occupation moderating path analysis.

| Subjective Norms | Conditional Mediation | Boot SE | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
|------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Non-student      | 0.353                 | 0.051   | 0.259     | 0.462     |
| Student          | 0.087                 | 0.049   | −0.009    | 0.187     |

Figure 2. Moderating effect of occupation.
Therefore, Hypothesis 8 is further refined: For non-student (vs. student) consumers, subjective norms have a higher impact on the GPI of this group, while it is not significant for the student.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

This study empirically investigates the influence of social media information sharing on the purchase intention of green products by combining SOR with new social media information sharing platforms such as Weibo, and constructing a double mediation theory model through perceived green value and subjective norms as two mediating variables of green product purchase intention. The study also extends the study of Generation Z in the area of green consumption by introducing occupation as a moderating role. Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that the constructed model fits well and the research hypotheses are all supported, leading to the following conclusions:

1. There is a significant positive effect of social media information sharing on the direct path to green purchase intention. This finding supports the notion that “sharing and viewing positive information about the environment on social media can help increase the intention of Generation Z consumers to purchase green products” [35]. One reason for this result is that China is currently placing a lot of emphasis on environmental protection and encouraging the public to consume green products. Social media, as a public sharing platform, can meet the needs of internet users for social needs such as social interaction and information sharing. At the same time, companies are using social media as a sales channel to promote green ideas and green products. Most studies on green consumption focus on consumers’ reasons, examining the influence of consumer attitudes and environmental responsibility on green purchasing behavior. Biswas uses the TAM technology acceptance model as a framework and uses social media information sharing such as advertising, blogs, news, and mainstream opinions as mediating variables to investigate the influence of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on consumers’ green purchasing behavior. The results show that when consumers’ perceived value is optimized, they can be motivated to promote green products on social media information sharing platforms, thereby increasing green product consumption behavior [45]. Based on SOR, this study uses social media information sharing as an external stimulus, confirming that social media information sharing has a positive impact on Generation Z’s green purchase intention, and to a certain extent inherits and expands previous research. It provides certain support for the successful implementation of China’s formulation of green consumption policies and related enterprises’ green product sales promotion with the help of Internet social media information sharing.

2. Based on the results of the mediating effect, this study shows that social media information sharing influences the relationship between it and green purchase intention through two mediating variables: perceived green value and subjective norms, which in turn influence it. According to the results of the study, the direct effect of social media information sharing on green product purchase intention is significant, while there is an indirect effect of mediating variables. The mediating effect of social media information sharing–subjective norms–green purchase intention accounted for 59.90% of the total mediating effect; the mediating effect of social media information sharing–perceived green value–green purchase intention accounted for 40.10% of the total mediating effect, while the mediating effect of subjective norms and perceived green value in the two mediating effects of social media information sharing on green purchase intention was not significant. The difference between subjective norms and perceived green value in the two mediating effects of social media information sharing on green purchase intention was not significant. Therefore, when consumers have strong subjective norms and perceived green value for sharing environmental information on social media, both can increase consumers’ willingness to consume green
products. On the one hand, perceived green value partially mediates the relationship between social media information sharing and green purchase intention. Previous studies have shown that consumers’ perceived green value has a positive effect on green product purchase intention [11]. In addition to the perceived functional value of the product, consumers’ purchase of green products also stems from their perception of environmental ecology [25]. Furthermore, Lee [69] pointed out that altruism helps Hong Kong youths engage in green purchasing behavior in the social environment of the Internet. Green product retailers can make use of social media information sharing communication channels to promote environmental information and increase the public’s perceived green value, thus increasing green purchase intention [61]. Therefore, green messages appearing in social media information sharing can help to enhance consumers’ perception of environmental ecology and their willingness to pay for it, thus leading to green consumption. Although previous studies were conducted in a different context than the present study, they overlap with the current results in that perceived green value mediates the relationship between social media information sharing and green purchase intention. On the other hand, subjective norms partially mediated the relationship between social media information sharing and green product purchase intentions. Consumers’ subjective norms have a positive effect on green purchase intention [65,66]. In previous studies on the causes and consequences of subjective norms, on the one hand, collectivist values are an important contributing factor to subjective norms. At the same time, environmental behaviors on social media can serve as a model to help shape public awareness of environmental protection. However, the potential impact of subjective norms as an effective mediator of green purchase intention is ignored. This study correlates the sharing and dissemination of environmental protection information in social media with subjective norms and green product purchase intentions, confirming that subjective norms have a certain mediating effect. In conclusion, this study aims to explore the influence of social media information sharing on green product purchase intention under the dual mediation effect of perceived green value and subjective norms through the SOR framework. The state and related enterprises can continuously tap the potential of social media to provide green environmental protection information, improve consumers’ perceived green value and subjective norms of green products, increase their purchasing intentions for green products, and achieve the goal of overall green consumption in society.

3. The regression results of the moderating effect show that consumers’ green purchase intention and the interaction term between occupation and subjective norms are significant, which demonstrates that there is a difference in the effect of subjective norms on the green purchase intention between student and non-student consumers. The results of the study confirm that the mediating effect of subjective norms on green purchase intention varies across different occupational groups of Generation Z. Previous studies have analyzed the impact of social media information sharing on consumers’ green purchase intention [31], but no research has been conducted to discuss basic consumer characteristics. The study limited the use of green products to female consumers, who were confirmed to be more likely to purchase green products than men [93]. However, the sample was not further categorized by occupation. This study is inconsistent with the methodology of previous studies, as this paper focuses on dividing Generation Z into non-student and student groups, due to the use of a dichotomous definition of dummy variables (non-student = 0; student = 1). The negative moderating effect of occupation on the relationship between subjective norms and green purchasing intentions was highlighted, i.e., non-student groups were more strongly driven by subjective norms than student groups. In a further moderating effect test, the non-student Generation Z cohort showed a significant positive moderating effect on the relationship between subjective norms and green purchase intention. The student Generation Z cohort, on the other hand, did not
have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between subjective norms and green purchase intention. Under the moderating effect of low subjective norms, students had greater green purchase intention than non-students; while under the moderating effect of high subjective norms, non-students had greater green purchase intention than students. It is clear that increasing the moderating effect of subjective norms significantly increased the non-student group’s green purchase intention, while the student group shows no significant change in their green purchase intention. One possible explanation is that consumers make product purchase decisions that are consciously tailored to the expectations of their group. Non-student consumers are more sensitive to the moderating effect of subjective norms than students due to their different social roles. This group with high subjective norms is more concerned with social acceptance and wants to increase their acceptance and reputation in the social group through their green consumption behavior. Another explanation is that, although green products are relatively more expensive than non-green products, the effect of income on occupation is not significant. As China’s overall economic level increases, students have relatively ample pocket money, which is mainly used for personal expenses, while their families are less burdened and their household living expenses are relatively smaller than those of non-student groups. As a result, students’ green purchase intention is generally at a medium to a high level, and, overall, this group has a strong intention to consume green products.

5.2. Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical implications of this study are as follows:

1. Based on stimulus–organism–response (SOR) theory, this study emphasizes the important mechanism of action of stimuli from social media information sharing combined with individual consumers’ perceived green value and subjective norms as the external–internal combination of green purchase intention, takes perceived green value and subjective norms as dual mediating variables, enriches the path of social media information sharing–green purchase intention, studies the moderating role of occupation, and enriches the research perspective in the field of green consumption. Previous research on green consumption mainly focused on the driving role of the external macro-environment, such as consumer attitudes, personal responsibility, or policies, ignoring the influence of internal and external interactions. Based on SOR, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social media information sharing in facilitating the purchase intention of green products.

2. The consumer behavior of Generation Z is becoming an important research topic; however, past research has focused on this age group as a demographic characteristic and has rarely examined this group as a subject of study. In contrast, this article focuses on the influence of social media information sharing, subjective norms, and perceived green value on the purchase of green products from the perspective of the young Z generation, which can effectively fill the gap in this area of research.

3. To further examine Generation Z, this study also explores the moderating effect of occupation on subjective norms and green purchase intention, and the pathway of subjective norms–green purchase intention from a consumer perspective. To our knowledge, no research has examined the moderating power of Generation Z’s occupations in the context of green purchase intention and subjective norms. This study fills this gap and enriches the research on green consumption in this group.

5.3. Practical Implications

In the context of China’s rapid economic growth in recent years, which has been accompanied by problems of excessive carbon emissions, environmental degradation, and resource depletion, the practical implications of this study are as follows:

1. The government should actively respond to the guiding policies for green, low-carbon, and circular development issued by the state. On the one hand, it should strengthen
the guidance and subsidies for enterprises and residents to purchase green products and encourage the consumption of green products. Mainstream media should focus on building online green communities, creating green consumption-oriented topical bloggers, WeChat public accounts, and other opinion leaders to spread the correct concept of green consumption to the audience, which is conducive to the formation of Generation Z green consumer group norms, and actively guide green consumption behavior and lifestyle. Through publicity and education on green consumption of all employees, awareness of green consumption in the whole society will be improved, a green and low-carbon lifestyle will be advocated, the perception and recognition of green products will be improved, and a social atmosphere of green consumption will be created. On the other hand, improve the production system of green, low-carbon, and circular development. Through fiscal and taxation support, the development of green and environment-protecting industries will be promoted, and enterprises will be encouraged to take green products as a new direction for future product development and transformation, meeting the market demand for green and environmentally friendly products, improving and introducing green production technology, improving existing products and services, and reducing environmental pollution.

2. For their part, companies should take the initiative to seize the opportunity for green innovation and promote the green transformation of their industries to cope with the increasingly severe environmental challenges and the relevant environmental regulations introduced by the state. As Generation Z is generally more environmentally conscious and pays attention to brands’ senses of social responsibility and social performance when shopping for goods, companies should focus on integrating green concepts into their branding, improve green product attributes, and develop green products that meet customer needs to achieve both economic and ecological benefits. Social media information sharing is a powerful carrier of green product information and can be an important channel for promoting green topics and motivating green consumption. Proper use of social media information-sharing platforms to promote green products can boost consumers’ purchase intention for green products. Furthermore, research findings show that consumers’ occupations impact their green purchase intention, so companies should target different consumer groups when developing marketing plans in order to achieve precise marketing.

3. On the consumer side, consumers are an important part of society, and their willingness to purchase green products is an important manifestation of participating in improving environmental issues. It is not only the government and its relevant departments that need to actively educate consumers on environmental protection but also enterprises to make the green transition to supply green products to the market, on the basis of which the green consumption behavior of consumers also has an exemplary role to play. Social media information sharing is not only a social communication channel but can also influence consumers’ purchasing decisions through the information it carries. When consumers share their experiences of using green products or retweet positive environmental topics on social media, it enhances the perceived green value of green products to other users on social media sharing and creates a subjective normative effect that encourages other users to emulate green consumption behavior, thus contributing to a positive social atmosphere. This requires consumers to take the initiative to recognize the importance of their own consumption behavior to the cause of environmental protection and to take on the responsibility and mission of social citizenship in sustainable development planning.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research

Although this study followed the logic of scientific research, the following research deficiencies and limitations still need to be improved by follow-up research:

1. The article takes the Z generation as the research object, and conducts research in the form of questionnaires. For the whole country, there may be some deviations in the
Further research can be carried out by taking the region where the consumer is located or the specific industry the consumer is engaged in as an influencing factor for green product purchases.

2. The dependent variable of the study is the purchase intention of green products, but the negative interference of social approval bias on the data analysis results cannot be completely avoided. The next step of research can consider conducting controlled experiments or observing consumers who have implemented purchasing behaviors to further analyze purchasing motivation.

3. The link between social media and corporate performance has not been studied in-depth in this paper, and future research could try to start from the perspective of knowledge sharing and knowledge management, which may provide more insights.

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