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Moderating The Role of Green Trust in The Relationship of Green Brand Positioning, Green Marketing, Green Production, and Green Consumer Value on Green Purchase Intention of University Students in Iraq

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Abstract

The primary objective of this study is to examine the direct relationship between green brand positioning, green marketing, green manufacturing, green consumer value, and green purchase intent. This study also investigated the moderating effect of green trust. This investigation was conducted with university students from Iraq. The present study utilized a survey to collect data from respondents. The current analysis was quantitative and employed a cross-sectional research methodology. The survey used a 5-point Likert scale. The distribution of a questionnaire to students was based on convenience sampling. The rate of useable responses was 74%. The collected data were evaluated with Smart-PLS. According to the study's findings, green purchasing intent is directly influenced by green brand positioning, green marketing, green trust, and green production. In addition, the moderating function of green trust is validated. The study's conclusions are beneficial for academics and policymakers.

Keywords: *Green Trust, Green Purchase Intention, Green Marketing, Green Brand, Iraq*

Introduction

Sustainable development has been one of the world's most important subjects for the past two decades. One of the essential objectives for organizations is to prioritize sustainability. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about environmental protection. Therefore, firms focus on intensive contact with customers to demonstrate their environmentally beneficial actions. Environmental concerns also influence the purchase behavior of customers. Recently, studies have noticed that consumers prefer to purchase ecologically friendly items (Román-Augusto et al., 2022).

In this context, organizations are emphasizing the implementation of eco-friendly practices. The good response of clients to a green environment and various environmentally friendly products is another reason for this action. Moreover, customer demand for eco-friendly items is increasing (Baiquni & Ishak, 2019). It has been noticed that people regularly purchase

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environmentally friendly products. Similarly, green consumer behavior has emerged as one of the most recent consumer trends. Customers' green behavior can be influenced by several variables, which companies must prioritize. On the other hand, experts believe that prior studies involving green buying intention and brand positioning were insufficiently comprehensive, since the motivational variables contributing to the development of green purchasing intention were neglected (Wang, Zaman, & Alvi, 2022).

Organizations can cultivate positive goodwill and a positive brand image with the support of green purchase intention. Customers who intend to purchase environmentally friendly products have intents for such items. They buy things that are not harmful to the environment (Sreen, Purbey, & Sadarangani, 2018). Examining the relationship between customer attitudes and green buying intentions facilitates adopting eco-friendly practices. Attitude addresses the skepticism people have towards green items. Aulina and Yuliati (2017) noted that some organizational activities could contribute to the establishment of green purchase intentions.

This study studied the impact of Green Brand Positioning, Green Marketing, Green Production, and Green Consumer Value on Iraqi university students' intent to purchase a green brand. In addition, the moderating influence of green trust in the current study's independent-dependent relationships has been investigated. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) presented by DeVries and Ajzen (1971). The proposed variable of the study demonstrating the effect of green buying intent would strengthen the explanatory model of the theory of planned behavior (Zhuang, Luo, & Riaz, 2021).

Literature Review

Green purchase intention (GPI)

Purchase intent is the customers' choice to buy a product based on past experiences (Chen & Chang, 2012). Past research has described GPI as the "possibility and desire of an environmentally conscious consumer to choose a more environmentally friendly product than traditional items, given that the majority of the production process tends to outweigh environmental disadvantages" (Nia et al., 2018).

The GPI is referred to as the prediction of consumer preference for environmentally friendly items in the literature. GPI is related to consumers' intentions to purchase products with environmentally friendly attributes. Customers recognize these characteristics based on the country of origin and the characteristics of the items. According to previous research, multiple factors play a significant influence in the development of the GPI among customers. Their GPI is affected by their consumers' perceptions of green value and green products (Mohd Suki, 2018).

Green brand positioning (GBP) and green purchase intention

According to researchers, active communication highlighting green features may play a key role in enhancing consumers' perceptions of green products—customers with expertise utilizing green products or who have a basic understanding of their characteristics. Customers' propensity to purchase a given product is based on their use of eco-friendly goods. Customer awareness of the product or product placement on the market is an additional aspect of purchasing environmentally friendly items (Chin et al., 2019). According to academics, GBP influences the customers' intent to buy the product.

Scholars have emphasized that product positioning must satisfy client expectations so that they may associate the product or service with its features. One of the primary objectives of positioning is to create a competitive advantage among customers over rivals based on the intangible and tangible characteristics of the product. The customer's extensive environmental awareness demonstrates a favorable disposition toward the purchase of the product. Those who have had positive experiences using environmentally friendly items exhibit comparable opinions toward the brand. It is due to the brand's positive and successful positioning. The environmental awareness of customers regarding these items influences the brand's positioning in consumers' minds. Thus, communication may play a crucial role in influencing client brand positioning positively (Norazah, 2016). Conscious shoppers are more likely to purchase ecologically friendly goods. To reach the corporate objective, they must concentrate on GBP. Previous research has indicated that brand positioning is crucial in increasing purchase intent (Wang et al., 2022).

The following theory is therefore proposed:

H1: *There is a positive and significant relationship between GBP and green product purchase intention.*

Green marketing (GM) and green purchase intention

The organization's green initiatives increase the buying intent of the products. Organizations must prioritize the reduction of perceived green risk. Customers might acquire a certain level of trust by providing reliable information. It will contribute to the increase of GPI and perceived value. Customers tend to purchase green products in this situation. Bringing attention to the significance of the environment increases the severity of natural disasters. Thus, the consumer's perspective regarding product consumption is adjusted as they are urged to purchase ecologically friendly products (Kartawinata et al., 2020).

According to researchers, genetic modification uses a marketing mix for ecologically friendly goods. It also guides customers and organizations regarding the preferences and wants of customers in the future. If customers are aware of the expansion of environmental problems, it will be difficult for the firm to maintain a competitive advantage based on customer perception. Customers around the world are becoming increasingly aware of environmental problems and concerns. Therefore, a business needs to design tactics to educate clients about using environmentally friendly products (Rahman et al., 2017). In this regard, companies frequently employ environmentally friendly flyers to raise awareness among potential and existing clients about their eco-friendly operations. As a result, customer knowledge can be increased to encourage the adoption of ecologically friendly products. Researchers noted that if consumers are more informed about environmentally friendly items, they will be more inclined to utilize them (Hashim et al., 2019).

H2: *There is a positive and significant relationship between GM and green product purchase intention.*

Green production and green purchase intention

Green products must examine the environmental aspect of the product life cycle to lessen the product's negative influence on the environment. Due to these efforts, all stakeholders are urged to play a crucial role in utilizing the technology and minimizing environmental risk. Various production-level actions can be taken to make a product ecologically friendly. In essence, green production is the attempt to manufacture environmentally friendly products to limit the waste of various products and maximize their usefulness. The term "green product" refers to an item that is high quality and does not harm the environment (Nia et al., 2018).

GPI is the willingness of consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products relative to conventional products. This is because the environmental impact of such products is minimal (Hashim et al., 2019). Consequently, clients must be informed about the organization's production process. Developing educational programs and information together is crucial. As a result, customer education of the significance of green products and their understanding of the environmentally friendly practices followed by a particular firm would be strengthened. Consequently, individuals are more likely to purchase ecologically friendly products. In other words, such actions will positively affect the customers' ethical conviction to use green products (Nguyen et al., 2019).

H3: *There is a positive and significant relationship between green production and green product purchase intention.*

Green consumer value and green purchase intention

The functional value of the product always has a substantial beneficial impact on the organization's decision-making process. Consumers become more conscientious when the word "environmentally" is added to product information. They are willing to pay more for a product that is not destructive to society and the environment (Kung, Wang, & Liang, 2021).

Organizations can produce green value, the perceived value gained from customers' environmental aspirations and green needs, such as energy conservation and pollution reduction. Customers' decisions are influenced by perceived value, allowing them to gain new experiences while also altering their willingness to pay. In this aspect, the importance of a customer's social ideals cannot be overstated. Social value is described as the impacts of a product's use on society, such as its effect on reputation and social position. Customers utilize various things to cultivate a particular image in society. They use the things when they perceive that their social status increases the products' value (Yu & Lee, 2019). As a result, product value influences purchasing intent positively (Hasbullah, Sulaiman, & Mas' od, 2019).

The level of eco-friendliness of a product influences the green behavior of various consumers. Keeping in mind their influence on health and the environment, the goods utilize energy-efficient materials. As a result, customer contentment will increase, and they will tend to purchase more things (Luo, Li, & Sun, 2021). Therefore, firms must improve and demonstrate production values to increase the demand for green products (Ansu-Mensah, 2021).

H4: *A positive and significant relationship exists between green consumer value and green product purchase intention.*

Green Trust (GT) and green purchase intention

Three different assumptions, namely competence, altruism, and honesty, are identified by researchers as the sources of customer confidence. One can rely on the expectations held by one side regarding the declaration, promise, and words of the other party. Moreover, trust is the extent of a party's expectation-based confidence in others. The foundation of a fundamental, long-term relationship between a consumer and a business is the customer's trust. Therefore, client confidence has a significant impact on purchase intent. The customer's buy intent would be greater if they had a positive experience with the seller's credibility. Therefore, consumer trust is essential to the client's purchasing intent.

Literature defines GPI as "the possibility that a consumer would purchase a specific product based on his or her environmental demands." On the other hand, it is reported that green trust benefits consumers' GPI (Juliana, Djakasaputra, & Pramono, 2020). It is also essential to mention that trust plays a crucial part in buying environmentally friendly items (Wasaya et al., 2021).

H5. *GT is positively associated with green product purchase intention.*

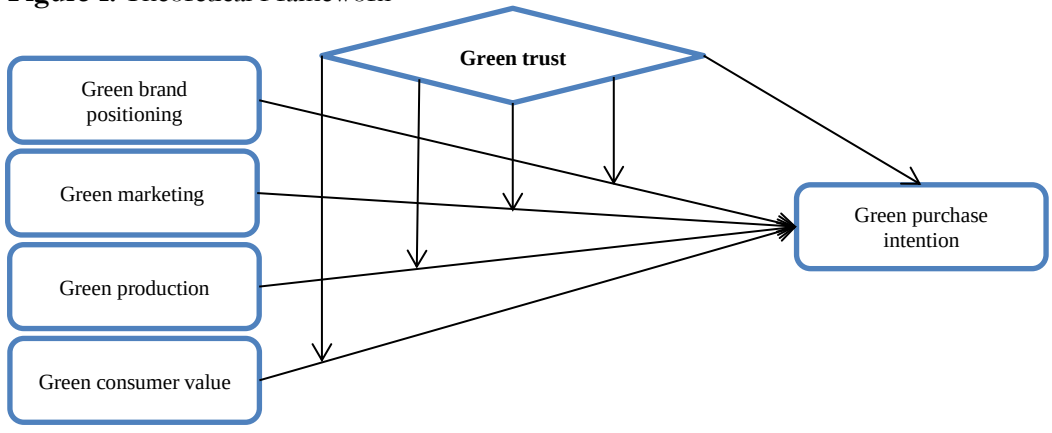
GT as a moderator

In previous research, GT was described as "a willingness to rely on a product, service, or brand based on the belief or expectation that its credibility, benevolence, and environmental performance will meet or exceed expectations." It is feasible for buyers to build such expectations through many stimuli, such as advertising. Moreover, the actual consumption process plays an important part in building customer trust. The trust factor mitigates the hazards connected with any given product. Consequently, product value also increased (Chuah et al., 2020).

Trust is the trust of one party in another's reliability in terms of promises, deeds, or words, and the party in an exchange relationship conducts negotiations. Scholars have noted that trust is a significant psychological state characterized by the decision to accept vulnerability based on favorable assumptions of another party's intentions. Consequently, trust is the direct driving force behind the intention to acquire goods. Previous research has demonstrated that trust governs the relationship between the vendor and the purchaser. As a result, more buyers have purchased the product. Therefore, trust is a significant factor in customers' future purchase intentions. This variable relates to the impact of GT on the intention to purchase green products. Customers with a greater understanding of the product are more likely to buy it because they have greater confidence in it (Li et al., 2021).

H6: *GT moderates the relationship between GCV and GPI*
H7: *GT moderates the relationship between GM and GPI*
H8: *GT moderates the relationship between GP and GPI*
H9: *GT moderates the relationship between GBP and GPI*

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Methodology

The quantitative cross-sectional research approach was employed to collect data for this study. A researcher approached the university in search of study participants older than 18. Self-administered questionnaires were utilized to collect data. In terms of monthly income, education, marital status, and gender, the respondents in the survey belonged to varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Before data collection, respondents were notified that their information would not be shared. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from not agreed (1) to

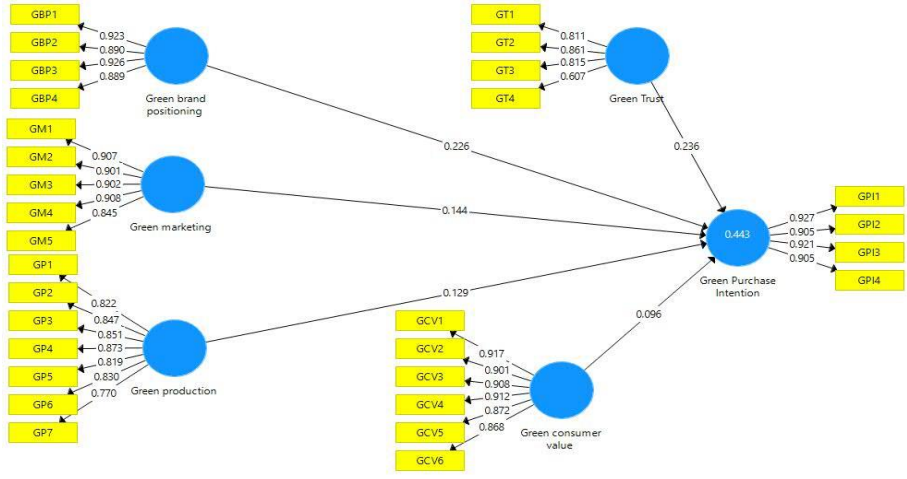
strongly agreed (5), a questionnaire was used to collect the data (5). These questionnaires were created by adapting questions from previous research. The GBP components were modified from Siyal et al. (2021), greed production from Liang and Chang (2008), the green value from Chatterjee et al. (2022), and GT from Chuah et al. (2020). GPI is derived from Zaidi et al. (2019), while GM is derived from Liao, Wu, and Pham (2020).

This study utilized convenience sampling following suggestions from prior research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In addition, 500 respondents were contacted for data-gathering purposes. Later, 376 legitimate responses were obtained and were utilized for data analysis. The study's usable response rate was greater than 74%. The structural equation model was used to investigate the suggested model's relationships.

Moreover, due to the intricacy of the model, PLS-SEM was favored over other methods, such as CB-SEM. The PLS-SEM analysis is based on two components: the outside model and the inner model. Indicators' contributions are computed in the outer model. In contrast, the link between variables is evaluated in the internal model (Hair et al., 2016). SEM is also useful for comprehending phenomena that are difficult to understand. In addition, SEM combines regression and factor analysis.

Results

The study of the collected data began with demographic analysis and a preliminary SPSS analysis. Gender was the initial demographic variable. According to the data, approximately 65.7% of respondents were male, and 34.3% were female. Regarding marital status, 82% of respondents were unmarried, while 18% were married. The data indicates that 68.9% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 30, 24% were between the ages of 30 and 40, and the remaining respondents were older than 40. The data also revealed that 64% of the students were undergraduates, 27% were graduate students, and the remaining pupils were postgraduates. SPSS was also used for a further preliminary study. CMV, missing values, and data normalcy were evaluated at this stage. This study utilized the mean replacement method for handling missing values (Hair et al., 2017).



Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= GPI, GT= green trust

The subsequent examination of the data began with the measurement model. This is essential for assessing the validity and dependability of the data. At the outset of the measurement model, PLS-SEM was used to determine the indicator's loadings. This test additionally verifies the consistency of the measuring instruments for specific constructs. On the other hand, the validity test verifies that a particular construct can measure the claim it purports to assess (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In addition, at the outer model stage of analysis, discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability are examined (Hair et al., 2016).

Table 1: Factor Loading

	GBP	GCV	GM	GP	GPI	GT
GBP1	0.923					
GBP2	0.890					
GBP3	0.926					
GBP4	0.889					
GCV1		0.917				
GCV2		0.901				
GCV3		0.908				
GCV4		0.912				
GCV5		0.872				
GCV6		0.868				
GM1			0.907			
GM2			0.901			
GM3			0.902			
GM4			0.908			
GM5			0.845			
GP1				0.822		
GP2				0.847		
GP3				0.851		
GP4				0.873		
GP5				0.819		
GP6				0.830		
GP7				0.770		
GPI1					0.927	
GPI2					0.905	
GPI3					0.921	
GPI4					0.905	
GT1						0.811
GT2						0.861
GT3						0.815
GT4						0.607

Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust

This study determined internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability. According to Nunnally (1978), it is obvious that all composite reliability and Cronbach alpha values were greater than 0.70. As a result of these tests, the variables' internal consistency is proven.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
GBP	0.928	0.949	0.823
GCV	0.951	0.961	0.804
GM	0.936	0.952	0.798
GP	0.925	0.940	0.690
GPI	0.935	0.953	0.836
GT	0.787	0.859	0.608

Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust

In this investigation, later convergent validity was evaluated. For this reason, convergent validity was determined using AVE. Initially, the factor loading of all maintained items with a value greater than 0.60 was analyzed (Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Later, the suggested value for AVE was determined to be more than 0.50. The AVE numbers listed in table 2 demonstrate that the AVE in the current investigation meets the criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This establishes the convergent validity of the current research.

Table 3: Fornell & Larker Matrix

	GBP	GCV	GM	GP	GPI	GT
GBP	0.907					
GCV	0.525	0.897				
GM	0.598	0.392	0.893			
GP	0.587	0.400	0.709	0.831		
GPI	0.559	0.422	0.539	0.538	0.915	
GT	0.513	0.421	0.554	0.576	0.546	0.780

Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust

After the measuring model, it is essential to evaluate the discriminant validity, for which two approaches, HTMT and (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), are utilized. Discriminant validity explains variation in the study's constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the diagonal values of the matrix are greater than the other values. This demonstrates that there is variation among the study's constructs. Another criterion this study utilizes is HTMT, where the matrix values must be smaller than 0.85. It is obvious from table 4 that this requirement is met, hence demonstrating discriminant validity. In conclusion, the present investigation confirms the measuring model's evaluation.

Table 4: HTMT

	GBP	GCV	GM	GP	GPI	GT
GBP						
GCV	0.555					
GM	0.639	0.414				
GP	0.633	0.425	0.760			
GPI	0.598	0.445	0.574	0.576		
GT	0.564	0.465	0.592	0.639	0.604	

Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust

Table 5: R square

	R Square
GPI	0.443

Note: GPI= green purchase intention

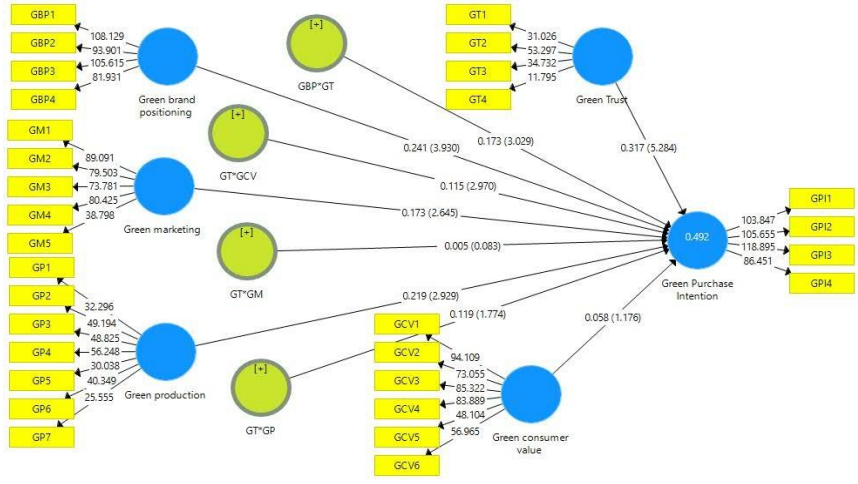
After evaluating the measurement model, we evaluated the structural model to evaluate the presented hypothesis and achieve the study's objectives. GBP has a positive and statistically significant connection with GPI (B=0.241, t=3.930), demonstrating that H1 of the present investigation is supported. In contrast, GCV has no significant positive effect on GPI (B = 0.058, t = 1.176), refuting H2. The study's H3 is supported by evidence of a direct and substantial effect of GM on GPI (B=0.173, t=2.645). Similarly, the results demonstrate a positive connection between GP and GPI (B=0.219, t=2.929), supporting Hypothesis 4. In addition, the data support H5 since GT has a significant favorable effect on GPI (B=0.317, t=5.284).

Regarding the moderating function, the results indicate that GT moderates the link between GCV and GPI. The proposed H6 is, therefore, acceptable. However, the study results suggest that GT does not attenuate the association between GM and GPI rejection of H7. In addition, the moderating effect of GT in the link between GP and GPI is supported, confirming H8. In conclusion, statistical evidence supports the moderating impact of GT among GBP and GPI acceptors of H9.

Table 6: Results

		Beta	SD	T value	P Values	
H1	**GBP -> GPI**	0.241	0.061	3.930	**0.000**	**Accepted**
H4	**GCV -> GPI**	0.058	0.050	1.176	**0.120**	**Rejected**
H2	**GM -> GPI**	0.173	0.065	2.645	**0.004**	**Accepted**
H3	**GP -> GPI**	0.219	0.075	2.929	**0.002**	**Accepted**
H5	**GT -> GPI**	0.317	0.060	5.284	**0.000**	**Accepted**
H6	**GT*GCV -> GPI**	0.115	0.039	2.970	**0.002**	**Accepted**
H7	**GT*GM -> GPI**	0.005	0.066	0.083	**0.467**	**Rejected**
H8	**GT*GP -> GPI**	0.119	0.067	1.774	**0.038**	**Accepted**
H9	**GT*GBP -> GPI**	0.173	0.057	3.029	**0.001**	**Accepted**

Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust



Note: GCV= green consumer value, GP= green production, GM= green marketing, GBP= green brand positioning, GPI= green purchase intention, GT= green trust

At the end of the structural model, this study examined the R square value showing that IVs of the present research affect the GPI by 49.2%

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between green consumer value, green production, GM, and GT on the GPI. In addition, this study investigated the moderating influence of GT. The study's findings indicate that the Green brand's position significantly impacts GPI. This result is comparable to those of Wang et al. (2022). In addition, the results demonstrate that GM is an important predictor of GPI development among Iraqi students. This conclusion is consistent with those of Hashim et al. (2019). The same results were found regarding the association between green production and GPI, indicating that Iraqi students place a high value on green output. These results are identical to those found in investigations conducted by Nguyen et al. (2019). The study's findings also indicate that GT is a moderate predictor of GPI (Wasaya et al., 2021). GT moderates the association between green customer value and GPI, green production and GPI, and green brand production and GPI, according to the study's findings. These studies demonstrate the significance of green elements such as GM, green customer value, GT, GBP, and green manufacturing in fostering customer GPI.

Contribution, Limitations, and Future Direction

The current investigation had management and theoretical consequences. In terms of theoretical ramifications, this study demonstrated that the GM, GT, green production, green customer value, and GBP of customers must be considered to increase GPI among Iraqi students. The results also confirmed the moderating effect of green trust. In terms of management consequences, marketers and managers must focus on embracing green products and processes to increase sales.

Nonetheless, this study has several drawbacks. The university students in this study were recruited by convenience sampling. For data gathering, future studies should utilize any type of probability sampling, such as stratified sampling. In addition, this approach accounts for both the direct and moderating effects of factors. Future research should incorporate a mediating variable into the current model. This approach is ultimately tested on Iraqi kids. It will be fascinating to observe its impact on the telecom business. The study's findings are useful for managers and policymakers in developing a strategy to increase green goods buying intent.

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