



Green Purchasing and Consumption within Sustainable Economic Discourse: A Bibliometric Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how research on green purchasing and consumption is positioned within broader sustainable economic discourse through a bibliometric systematic review. Using the PRISMA 2020 framework, 86 peer-reviewed open-access journal articles indexed in Scopus (2016–2026) were systematically identified and analyzed. Bibliometric mapping with VOSviewer was employed to explore keyword co-occurrence, thematic clustering, density structures, and temporal evolution. The findings show a marked increase in publications after 2020, indicating growing scholarly attention to linking consumer behavior with sustainability-oriented economic discussions. Network and density visualizations identify green economy and consumption behavior as dominant thematic anchors, while green purchase intention and consumer attitude remain central explanatory constructs. Overlay analysis reveals a progression from macro-level sustainability concerns toward behaviorally oriented and empirically refined investigations. Despite these connections, the literature exhibits a structural imbalance. Micro-level behavioral models are more developed than macro-level economic transformation frameworks. The study highlights the need to integrate institutional mechanisms, governance structures, and production-consumption linkages to better align consumer behavior research with broader sustainable economic transitions.

INTRODUCTION

Green purchase behavior refers to consumers' willingness to select products that are environmentally friendly or less harmful to the natural environment. Over the past decade, research on green purchasing has expanded substantially as scholars seek to understand how individual consumption decisions contribute to environmental sustainability (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). Prior reviews identify several consistent determinants, including environmental concern,

attitudes toward green products, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and product-related characteristics (Joshi & Rahman, 2015; Biswas & Roy, 2015). Empirical studies across different contexts confirm that attitudinal factors and perceived behavioral control significantly predict purchase intentions, although their influence varies across cultural and economic settings (Liobikienė et al., 2016). More recent research extends this framework by incorporating environmental knowledge, prosocial values, and trust, further strengthening pro-environmental purchasing outcomes (do Paço et al., 2019; Naz et al., 2020). In this study, green purchasing and green consumption are treated as closely related constructs within the broader domain of pro-environmental consumer behavior, while green purchase intention is considered a key explanatory construct frequently used to predict actual purchasing outcomes.

Beyond individual-level determinants, recent empirical evidence highlights the role of moral norms, perceived consumer effectiveness, and value orientations in reinforcing environmentally responsible purchasing. Han (2020) demonstrates that moral obligation and environmental concern significantly enhance intention formation within an extended Theory of Planned Behavior framework. Similarly, Wang et al. (2018) find that perceived consumer effectiveness mediates the relationship between environmental knowledge and actual consumption practices. These findings indicate that green purchasing is not merely an attitudinal outcome but is embedded in broader cognitive and normative structures shaping pro-environmental decision-making.

Despite this growing body of literature, scholars continue to document an intention-behavior gap in green purchasing. Consumers may express strong pro-environmental intentions but fail to translate them into actual buying behavior due to perceived risk, higher prices, limited product availability, or skepticism toward environmental claims (Gleim et al., 2013). Nguyen et al. (2017) further demonstrate that situational constraints and price sensitivity significantly weaken the conversion of green purchase intention into real behavior. This persistent gap indicates that psychological determinants alone are insufficient to explain green purchasing outcomes. Structural conditions, market transparency, regulatory frameworks, and supply-side dynamics must also be considered.

At a broader level, discussions on sustainable economic development emphasize the transformation of production and consumption systems toward environmentally responsible models (Loiseau et al., 2016). The concept of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) underscores that consumer demand plays a central role in redirecting economic systems toward sustainability (Mont & Plepys, 2008). From this perspective, green purchase behavior represents a micro-level mechanism that supports macro-level economic transformation. Sustainable economic discourse highlights systemic change involving institutional reform, technological innovation, circular economy principles, and shifts in market structures (Kirchherr et al., 2017). The transition toward sustainable economic systems therefore requires alignment between consumer preferences, corporate strategies, and policy interventions.

Sustainability transition theory further explains that changes in consumer practices are embedded within wider socio-technical systems that shape economic activities and market structures (Geels, 2011). Complementing this perspective, Evans et al. (2017) argue that sustainable consumption must be understood not only as individual choice but also as socially organized practice influenced by infrastructures, cultural norms, and policy environments. In this context, green purchasing behavior becomes part of a broader socio-economic transition process rather than an isolated consumer act.

Although green purchase behavior has been widely examined at the micro level and sustainable economic transformation has been extensively discussed at the macro level, these two strands of research are often treated separately. Consumer behavior studies typically focus on individual motivations and decision-making processes, whereas sustainable economic discourse centers on structural reforms and systemic change. Despite the growing volume of studies, limited synthesis systematically examines how research on green purchasing and

consumption is positioned within, and structurally connected to, broader sustainable economic transformation discourse.

Recent research reinforces the importance of bridging this divide. For instance, Sun et al. (2019) show that institutional trust and regulatory support significantly shape consumers' green purchasing decisions, indicating that governance structures interact with individual-level determinants. Similarly, Awan et al. (2019) demonstrate that supply chain integration and sustainable innovation influence market availability of green products, thereby affecting consumer purchasing patterns. These findings suggest that green purchase behavior operates within interconnected economic, institutional, and production systems.

Given this fragmentation, a structured and integrative review is necessary to clarify how existing scholarship positions green purchasing and consumption within broader sustainable economic discourse. This study adopts a bibliometric systematic review approach, combining PRISMA-based study selection with bibliometric mapping techniques using VOSviewer. By systematically constructing the dataset and analyzing keyword co-occurrence, thematic clustering, and temporal evolution, the study maps the intellectual structure of the field and highlights the micro–macro sustainability gap that characterizes current research.

METHODS

This study employs a bibliometric systematic literature review approach, integrating systematic review procedures with bibliometric mapping techniques. A systematic literature review (SLR) is designed to systematically identify, assess, and synthesize relevant scholarly evidence in order to address the research question and provide an in-depth analysis of the findings (Snyder, 2019; Xiao & Watson, 2019). In addition to qualitative synthesis, this study incorporates bibliometric analysis to examine structural relationships and thematic patterns within the literature. The PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines were adopted to ensure a transparent and systematic review process. PRISMA 2020 provides a structured framework for identifying, screening, evaluating, and reporting relevant studies in systematic literature reviews, thereby enhancing methodological transparency and reproducibility.

The literature collection procedure was conducted by retrieving articles from the Scopus database. The search strategy applied the following search string: TITLE-ABS-KEY (("green economy" OR "sustainable economy") AND ("green purchase behavior" OR "green purchase intention" OR "green consumption" OR "green consumer behavior")) AND PUBYEAR > 2015 AND PUBYEAR < 2027 AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE , "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (PUBSTAGE , "final")) AND (EXCLUDE (SRCTYPE , "k")) AND (EXCLUDE (LANGUAGE , "Chinese")) AND (LIMIT-TO (OA , "all")). The eligibility criteria for collecting documents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Eligibility Criteria

No	Criterion Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1	Thematic Relevance	Studies examining green purchasing or green consumption within the context of sustainable economy or broader sustainability-oriented economic discourse	Studies focusing exclusively on green purchasing and consumption without reference to economic sustainability context; studies addressing sustainable economy without discussion of consumer purchasing or consumption behavior
2	Publication Type	Peer-reviewed journal articles (empirical or	Editorials, opinion papers, book reviews, conference abstracts,

No	Criterion Category	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
		conceptual studies)	reports, theses, and non peer-reviewed publications
3	Language	Articles published in English	Articles published in other languages
4	Time Frame	Publications between 2016–2026	Publications outside the defined time frame
5	Accessibility	Open-access full-text articles available	Articles requiring subscription-based access

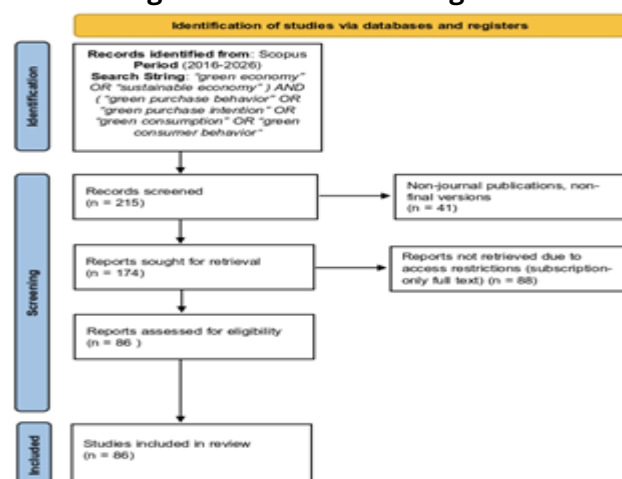
Source: Author, 2026

The study selection followed four stages in accordance with the PRISMA framework: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. After retrieving the initial records from the databases, duplicate entries were removed. Titles and abstracts were subsequently screened based on predefined eligibility criteria. Full-text articles were then assessed to determine their conceptual alignment, geographical relevance, and methodological clarity. Studies that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded, and reasons for exclusion were documented.

RESULTS

The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework (Haddaway et al., 2022), ensuring transparency and reproducibility in article identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion as shown in Figure 1. The initial search results yielded 215 documents. In the initial screening phase, 41 documents were eliminated because they were not journal articles and not final publications. Subsequently, from the 174 remaining articles, 88 were excluded after manual verification of accessibility and language criteria to ensure full compliance with the predefined eligibility requirements. Finally, 86 articles met the inclusion criteria and were used in this literature study.

Figure 1 Prisma Flow Diagram



This study investigates green purchasing and consumption within sustainable economic discourse using a systematic literature review complemented by bibliometric mapping with VOSviewer. The analysis synthesizes key theoretical perspectives and determinants while visualizing thematic structures and conceptual linkages in the literature. The temporal distribution of publications (Figure 2) demonstrates a clear upward trajectory in scholarly

attention to the intersection between green purchasing and consumption and sustainable economic discourse.

Based on Figure 2, between 2016 and 2019, the number of publications remained relatively low and fluctuating, with only one publication in 2016, none in 2017, one in 2018, and two in 2019. A notable increase emerged in 2020 with ten publications, followed by a temporary decline in 2021 to three articles. From 2022 onward, research output expanded substantially, reaching sixteen publications in 2022, seventeen in 2023, and sixteen in 2024. The highest number of publications was recorded in 2025 with nineteen articles, indicating peak scholarly engagement during this period. The lower count in 2026, with only one publication, is likely attributable to the ongoing publication cycle at the time of data collection rather than a substantive decline in research interest. Overall, the trend reflects accelerating academic engagement with the topic, particularly in the last four years of the review period, suggesting that the integration of green purchase behavior within broader sustainable economic discussions has become an increasingly prominent research agenda.

Figure 2 Annual Distribution of Publications on Green Purchasing and Consumption within Sustainable Economic Discourse

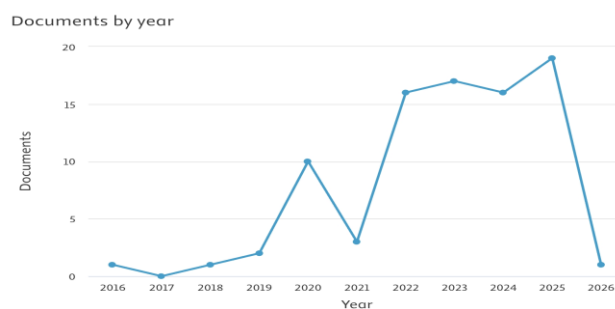
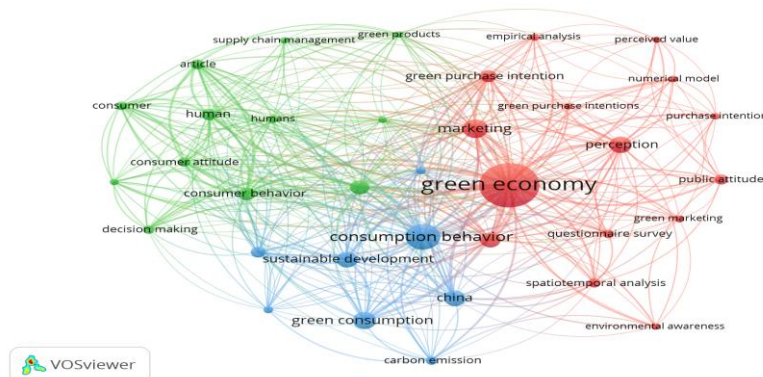


Figure 3 shows the keyword co-occurrence network generated using VOSviewer. The size of each node indicates how often a keyword appears, while the lines between nodes show how frequently the keywords appear together in the same articles. The different colors represent thematic clusters. The map reveals three main clusters that describe the structure of research on green purchase behavior within sustainable economic discourse.

Figure 3 Network Visualization



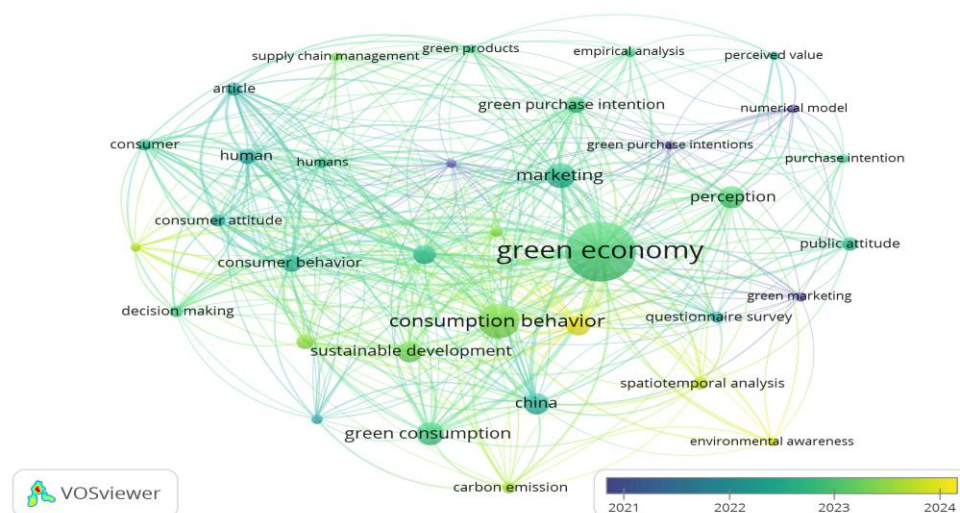
The first cluster is centered on green economy, which appears as the largest and most connected keyword. It is closely linked to terms such as marketing, perception, green purchase intention, public attitude, and environmental awareness. This pattern indicates that many studies discuss the green economy from a consumer and marketing perspective. Green purchasing is often treated as an important mechanism that supports environmentally oriented economic systems.

The strong connection between green economy and green purchase intention shows that intention remains a key concept in explaining how individual behavior contributes to sustainability goals. The second cluster focuses on consumption behavior, green consumption, and sustainable development. This cluster shows that many studies connect consumer behavior with broader sustainability and development issues. The presence of terms such as carbon emission suggests that some research directly links consumption patterns to environmental impact reduction. This indicates that green purchasing is not only analyzed at the individual level but also considered part of wider sustainable development strategies. The third cluster is built around consumer behavior, consumer attitude, and decision making, together with terms such as green products and supply chain management. This cluster reflects the strong influence of behavioral theories in explaining green purchasing decisions. At the same time, the inclusion of supply chain-related terms shows that some studies also consider production and distribution systems, not only consumer attitudes.

Overall, the network shows that green purchase behavior is connected to sustainable economic discourse, but the research remains partly separated into different thematic areas. Consumer-level studies, marketing perspectives, and macro-level sustainability discussions are related, yet they are not fully integrated.

Figure 4 presents the overlay visualization generated by VOSviewer, which illustrates the temporal evolution of keywords in the literature. In this map, node colors represent the average publication year of each keyword, ranging from earlier topics (blue/purple tones, around 2021) to more recent topics (yellow tones, around 2024). This visualization helps identify how research themes have developed over time within the intersection of green purchase behavior and sustainable economic discourse.

Figure 4 Overlay Visualization



Earlier studies, shown in blue tones, are associated with keywords such as sustainable development, green consumption, carbon emission, and China. This pattern indicates that initial research focused more on macro-level sustainability issues and environmental impact, particularly within policy-driven and emerging economy contexts. The emphasis during this period was largely on linking consumption practices to environmental outcomes and broader sustainable development agendas. Keywords displayed in green tones, such as green economy, consumption behavior, marketing, and perception, represent topics that became more prominent around 2022–2023. This suggests a shift toward integrating sustainability discourse with consumer behavior and marketing perspectives. During this stage, research increasingly examined how individual purchasing behavior supports green economic models, indicating stronger conceptual connections between micro-level and macro-level analyses. The most recent

themes, indicated by yellow tones in the overlay visualization, include environmental awareness and spatiotemporal analysis. Keywords such as carbon emission and consumption behavior also display relatively recent average publication years, as reflected by their yellow-green coloration. In contrast, core terms such as green economy and sustainable development appear in greener tones, suggesting that these concepts became consolidated earlier in the review period rather than emerging in the most recent phase.

Overall, the overlay visualization indicates a clear thematic progression. The literature initially concentrated on sustainable development and environmental impact, then moved toward integrating consumer behavior and green economy discourse, and more recently has emphasized awareness-driven and methodologically advanced empirical investigations.

Figure 5 Density Visualization

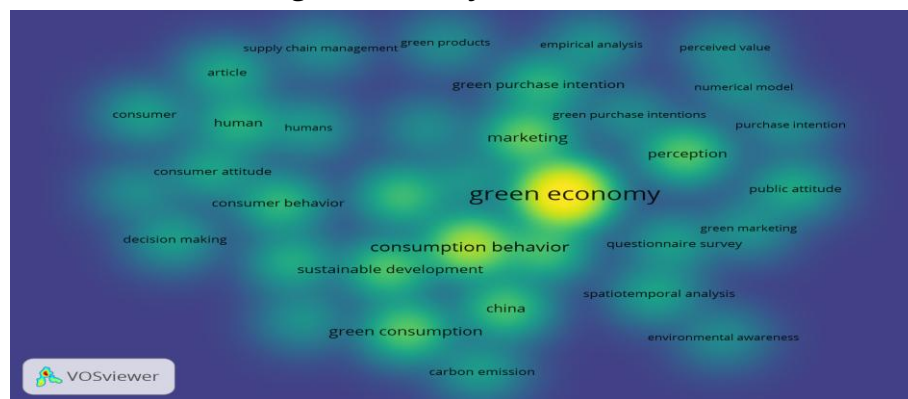


Figure 5 presents the density visualization generated using VOSviewer, illustrating the concentration and intensity of keyword occurrences within the dataset. In this visualization, areas displayed in yellow represent the highest keyword density, indicating frequently occurring and strongly connected terms, while green and blue areas represent moderate to lower densities.

The figure clearly shows that green economy occupies the most intense (yellow) area, confirming its position as the dominant and most influential concept within the literature. Its central placement and high density indicate that it functions as the main thematic anchor connecting various research streams. Closely surrounding this core term are consumption behavior, marketing, and perception, which appear in green-to-yellow shades. This pattern suggests that discussions of the green economy are strongly intertwined with consumer behavioral analysis and marketing perspectives. Moderate-density areas include keywords such as sustainable development, green consumption, and consumer behavior. These terms reinforce the linkage between individual purchasing behavior and broader sustainability agendas. Their spatial proximity to green economy and consumption behavior indicates conceptual integration, although their slightly lower density suggests they are secondary rather than dominant focal points within the dataset. Lower-density areas, shown in blue and light green tones, include terms such as environmental awareness, spatiotemporal analysis, questionnaire survey, and carbon emission. The distribution of these terms suggests more specialized or emerging subtopics within the field. While they contribute to the overall structure of the research landscape, they are less central compared to the core themes.

DISCUSSION

This bibliometric systematic review included 86 peer-reviewed open-access journal articles examining green purchasing and consumption within sustainable economic discourse. The distribution of publications indicates strong concentration in sustainability-oriented journals, particularly Sustainability, Journal of Cleaner Production, Business Strategy and the Environment,

and Ecological Economics. This pattern suggests that the topic is predominantly embedded within environmental management and sustainability scholarship rather than mainstream macroeconomic analysis. Such disciplinary concentration is consistent with prior assessments that green consumption research has largely developed within sustainability and marketing domains rather than structural economic theory (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

Geographically, the reviewed studies are largely concentrated in emerging economies, with China appearing as the most frequently examined context, followed by Indonesia, India, and Malaysia. European countries are represented to a lesser extent on an individual basis. This regional concentration reflects the growing relevance of sustainable consumption issues in rapidly developing markets, where economic growth and environmental pressures coexist. From a disciplinary perspective, most studies are classified within environmental science, business and management, and social sciences. Empirical survey-based approaches dominate the literature, frequently employing structural equation modeling techniques. The prominence of intention-based models aligns with earlier observations that green marketing and consumer sustainability research is strongly behaviorally oriented (Peattie & Peattie, 2009).

The bibliometric mapping further reinforces this behavioral orientation. Keywords such as green purchase intention, consumer attitude, marketing, and perception occupy central positions within the network, demonstrating the dominance of consumer-focused explanatory models. This aligns with broader behavioral sustainability scholarship emphasizing cognitive drivers and motivational mechanisms of pro-environmental consumption (White et al., 2019; Trudel, 2019). Although macro-level terms such as sustainable development and green economy are also highly connected, they often function as contextual references rather than as operationalized economic variables within empirical models. Institutional and structural terms, including supply chain management and regulation, appear in secondary clusters, suggesting partial but not comprehensive integration of broader economic dimensions.

Taken together, these findings reveal a structural imbalance in the literature. Research on green purchasing and consumption has achieved considerable maturity in explaining individual intentions and attitudes; however, its integration with systemic sustainable economic transformation remains conceptually limited. Broader sustainable consumption scholarship emphasizes that meaningful economic transition requires changes in production systems, governance structures, and market institutions (Jackson, 2005; Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017), yet empirical green purchasing studies rarely embed consumer behavior within such systemic economic frameworks. The micro-level behavioral focus coexists with macro-level sustainability discourse, yet the two domains are not fully synthesized. This indicates that bridging the micro-macro sustainability gap remains a central challenge

CONCLUSION

This bibliometric systematic review maps the intellectual structure of research on green purchasing and consumption within sustainable economic discourse over the period 2016–2026. The analysis demonstrates a clear acceleration of scholarly output after 2020, indicating that the integration of consumer behavior and sustainability-oriented economic discussions has become an increasingly prominent research agenda. Bibliometric mapping reveals that green economy and consumption behavior serve as dominant thematic anchors, while intention-based and attitude-based models remain central explanatory frameworks.

Despite the apparent conceptual linkage between green purchasing and sustainable economic transformation, the literature remains structurally imbalanced. Empirical studies predominantly emphasize individual cognitive and attitudinal determinants, often employing survey-based methodologies and behavioral theories. In contrast, macro-level economic variables, institutional arrangements, and systemic production-consumption dynamics are less

frequently operationalized within empirical models. As a result, consumer behavior research and sustainable economic transformation discourse coexist but are not fully integrated.

Future research should move beyond intention-driven explanations and embed green purchasing behavior within broader economic and institutional transition frameworks. Integrating governance mechanisms, regulatory interventions, supply chain dynamics, and circular economy principles would strengthen the alignment between micro-level behavioral analysis and macro-level sustainability transformation. Such integration is essential for advancing a more coherent and policy-relevant sustainable economic research agenda.

SUGGESTION

This study has several limitations. It relies exclusively on Scopus-indexed, open-access English journal articles published between 2016 and 2026, which may exclude relevant studies from other databases or subscription-based sources. The bibliometric approach using VOSviewer focuses on keyword co-occurrence and thematic structures, capturing structural patterns rather than providing in-depth qualitative evaluation of theoretical frameworks or methodological rigor within individual studies. In addition, the search string required explicit linkage between green purchasing/consumption and sustainable economy terms, potentially omitting studies that address these constructs implicitly. Future research could expand database coverage and combine bibliometric mapping with qualitative content analysis to produce a more comprehensive synthesis

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