

## Developing a Model for Implementing Consumer Green Purchase Behavior Using Grounded Theory

Seyyede Fatemeh Alavi Foumani<sup>1</sup>, \*Ali Gholipour Soleimani<sup>2</sup>, Hamidreza Rezaee Kelidbari<sup>3</sup>

1. Ph.D Student of Business Management, Department of Business Management, Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Business Management, Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran

3. Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Rasht Branch, Islamic Azad University, Rasht, Iran

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### توسعه مدل پیاده سازی رفتار خرید سبز مصرف کنندگان با استفاده از نظریه داده بنیاد

سیده فاطمه علوی فومنی<sup>۱</sup>، \*علی قلی پورسلیمانی<sup>۲</sup>، حمیدرضا رضائی کلیدبری<sup>۳</sup>

۱. دانشجوی دکتری مدیریت بازرگانی، گروه مدیریت بازرگانی، واحد رشت، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، رشت، ایران

۲. استادیار، گروه مدیریت بازرگانی، واحد رشت، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، رشت، ایران

۳. استادیار، گروه مدیریت دولتی، واحد رشت، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، رشت، ایران

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#### Abstract

The state of the world's environment reveals the fact that in recent decades, due to human activities and increasing consumerism, Earth has suffered irreparable damage and the world is witnessing unprecedented growth in environmental degradation, just as consumers activities can lead to deteriorating environmental conditions. The environmentally conscious behaviors such as green purchase behavior, can be agents of change, motivation and attention to the environment. The purpose of this research is to develop a model for implementing green purchase behavior that recognizes the dimensions of this behavior to determine the effective factors, operational strategies, and consequences of its implementation. The overall approach is qualitative and Grounded Theory has been done. Using purpose foul and snowball sampling methods, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 experts from the field of business researchers and environmental activists. The results of data coding led to the identification of 448 initial codes which finally cited the approach Systematic in the given data theory, paradigm model show that causal categories (environmental belief, health concern, green attitude, mental norm), causal categories (green purchase behavior), background categories (economic indicators, government support for capital Eco-friendly investments, the country's environmental policies, the impact of green consumption culture), interventionist category (distribution of green products, financial and economic constraints of households and promotion, encouragement to green purchase), strategies (Indian market strategies, prices, innovation), and the consequence (at the macro-level including increasing the level of health in society, development, and growth of organizational performance and promoting green lifestyle and at the micro-level including preference to buy environmentally friendly products and increase the repetition of green purchases behavior) Impact on the implementation of green purchases behavior.

**Keywords:** Green Purchase Behavior, Environment, Strategies for Implementing Green Purchases Behavior, Consequence, Grounded Theory.

#### چکیده

وضعیت محیط زیست نشان دهنده این واقعیت است که در چند دهه اخیر به خاطر فعالیت های بشر و افزایش مصرف گرایی، کره زمین متحمل صدمات جبران ناپذیری شده و جهان شاهد رشد بی سابقه ای در زوال محیط زیست است، همان طور که فعالیت های مصرفی مصرف کنندگان می توانند منجر به وخامت وضعیت محیط زیست گردند، از سوی دیگر رفتارهای آگاهانه زیست محیطی مانند رفتار خرید سبز، می توانند عامل تحول، انگیزه و توجه به محیط زیست شوند. هدف پژوهش حاضر توسعه مدل پیاده سازی رفتار خرید سبز می باشد که با شناخت ابعاد این رفتار به تعیین عوامل تأثیرگذار، استراتژی های عملیاتی و پیامدهای اجرای آن می پردازد. پژوهش حاضر با رویکرد کیفی مبتنی بر نظریه داده بنیاد از طریق نمونه گیری هدفمند و گلوله برفی و مصاحبه نیمه ساختاریافته با ۱۳ نفر از پژوهشگران بازرگانی و فعالان محیط زیست صورت گرفته است. نتایج کدگذاری داده ها به شناسایی ۴۴۸ کد اولیه منجر شد که در نهایت با استناد به رهیافت سیستماتیک در نظریه داده بنیاد، الگوی پارادایمی شامل مقوله های علی (باور زیست محیطی، دغدغه سلامتی، نگرش سبز، هنجار ذهنی)، پدیده محوری (رفتار خرید سبز)، مقوله زمینه ای (شاخص های اقتصادی کشور، حمایت دولت از سرمایه گذاری های سازگار با محیط زیست، سیاست های زیست محیطی کشور و تأثیر فرهنگ مصرف سبز)، مقوله مداخله گر (توزیع محصول سبز، محدودیت مالی و اقتصادی خانوارها و ترفیع و تشویق برای خرید سبز)، راهبردها (استراتژی های بخش بندی بازار، قیمت گذاری و نوآوری) و مقوله پیامدها (افزایش سطح سلامتی در جامعه، توسعه و رشد عملکرد سازمان، ترویج سبک زندگی سبز، ترجیح خرید محصولات دوستدار محیط زیست و افزایش تکرار خرید سبز) می باشد که بر پیاده سازی رفتار خرید سبز تأثیر گذارند.

**واژه های کلیدی:** رفتار خرید سبز، محیط زیست، استراتژی پیاده سازی رفتار خرید سبز، پیامد، نظریه داده بنیاد.

## Introduction

Today, by increasing environmental knowledge and awareness of consumers, the environment has become very important (Babaei et al., 2020). Environmental problems due to the rapid development of societies and the industrialization of countries have caused widespread changes in lifestyles and consumption models in society (Soomro et al., 2020). So that increasing consumerism, scarcity of resources, exposure to the undesired consequences of environmental degradation, and conservation of natural resources have become the most important issues in recent years (Hojnik et al., 2020).

Awareness of the degradation of natural resources by human activities has caused a kind of public concern which has led to the development of concepts called "green marketing" and "green purchase behavior" (Nguyen et al., 2016 & Keho, 2016).

Green purchase behavior refers to the purchase and consumption of low-impact products that are environmentally friendly, recyclable, with optimized packaging and less energy use (Hasbullah, 2021).

In the philosophy of green marketing, it is the consumers who help preserve the environment for future generations as responsible and aware of the purchase and use of green products (Minbashrazgah & Maleki, 2017).

This in turn has increased the demand for green products in world markets (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015).

Studies have shown that environmental concerns have had a significant effect on the purchase of green products (Tan et al., 2019), and buyers are now more likely to respond to environmental policies that result from their concerns about disposing of products when purchased and consumed and the potential impact on the environment. Just as consumer consumption activities can lead to a deterioration of the environmental situation, on the other hand, environmentally conscious behaviors such as green purchase can be a factor in change, motivation and attention to the environment (Gocer & Sevil Oflac, 2017).

Studies have shown that 87% of people in countries such as Brazil, Canada, China,

France, Germany, India, Britain and the United States are interested in reducing their destructive impacts on the environment (Karimi Alavijeh & Foroughi Asl, 2015). According to the report of the Environmental Performance Index in the 2006 ranking, Iran was ranked 53 out of 133 countries, which in the 2008 ranking was ranked 68, in the 2010 ranking, Iran's environmental situation was again reduced to 78 by 10 steps, and in the 2014 ranking also reduced to 114 (Aliabadi et al., 2021).

In 2016, Iran was ranked 105 out of 180 countries in the world, 80 in 2018, and 67 in the 2020 ranking, with the score 48, compared to 2018, and improved by 13 ranks (EPI, 2020). These results indicate the undesired environmental situation in Iran and that no serious measure has been taken to deal with pollution and prevent environmental degradation, especially in the field of production and consumption.

The main issue that highlights the necessity for this study is that although consumers may be inclined to purchase green products, the market share of green products is limited to less than 4% around the world (Soomro et al., 2020, Ritter et al., 2015), indicating that very few consumers actually purchase green products (Hojnik et al., 2020, Handayani & Prayogo, 2017).

In other words, green product purchase is no longer easy and there is a gap between consumers' intention and action for green product purchase. The issue is that in previous studies, each with a specific perspective on the purchase intention and the actual purchase, not all concepts have been fully addressed and hidden concepts have been ignored. This gap can be due to barriers to the implementation or planning of strategies for green product markets. This study attempted to identify the factors that facilitate and inhibit green purchase behavior, meanwhile, provide effective strategies for the development of this behavior by emphasizing the consequences of green purchase behavior can also indicate the effectiveness of this behavior on society that should be investigated.

On the other hand, various studies that have been conducted on green purchase behavior so far have shown that most of these studies have

investigated the factors affecting green consumption (Rahman, 2019 & Wu et al., 2018). Therefore, it is necessary to review all strategies and measures to implement green purchase behavior.

Given the lack of research conducted in this field, it is necessary to identify the factors that facilitate and inhibit green purchase behavior, implementation strategies and consequences of green purchase behavior through proposing an integrated conceptual framework that can complement previous studies and complete the previous models to provide guiding suggestions for government, environmental activists, business owners, and even consumers' perceptions of how green purchase behavior by providing an innovative model. Accordingly, the main objective of this study was to develop a model for implementing consumer green purchase behavior using grounded theory.

One of the most important variables considered in green marketing is consumer behavior. Promoting consumer environmental behavior is a necessity that should be a priority in emerging markets (Nguyen et al., 2016, Keho, 2016).

Today, consumers take responsibility for their consumption model and try to make social changes with their purchase behavior (Khari & Sharma, 2021). Consumers have started green consumerism with the awareness of their rights to get suitable, safe and environmentally friendly products (Handayani & Prayogo, 2017, Hojnik et al., 2020).

Green consumption is a special type of consumer behavior that leads to social awareness and responsibility, so consumers should consider the consequences of their behaviors in the consumption process (Wang et al., 2019). Despite the positive attitude of consumers towards green consumption, the real purchase behavior is not done (Wang et al., 2021).

Despite the lack of research on consumer behavior for selecting green products, the fact that consumers in the United States spend \$ 25 billion a year on food and green products cannot be ignored (Maniatis, 2015).

Awareness of customer purchase behavior and purchase decision process is very difficult. The answer to this question is usually in the depth of the consumer's mind.

Customers purchase a brand when it has the

quality and features they like. Purchase intention is a combination of consumers' interest in purchase and the possibility of purchase (Wu et al., 2015). Cheah and Phau (2011) believed that by changing the values and beliefs, and the importance of some product features, such as being green and environmentally friendly compared to other products, it is possible to change people's attitudes toward being green. In order for to understand the reasons for consuming green products, their purchase behavior should be investigated. Studies have shown that people who spend money on green products have a high level of environmental awareness and knowledge and are called green customers (Suki, 2016).

One of the key dimensions of consumer behavior that is used for planning of marketing activities is to pay attention to the reasons and motivations for purchase, which can be divided into two main categories:

**Why purchase:** In this theory, the researcher attempts to identify the reasons and motives of purchase by the consumer.

**How to purchase:** In this type of theory, the researcher attempts to know customer purchase process and the factors affecting it (Nalchi Kashi et al., 2012).

In fact, the emergence of a higher level of attention to green marketing due to environmental issues is due to increased consumption, which has caused the market for green brands to grow significantly globally (Brahmah, 2015). Frequent concepts in this field are green marketing, green product and green purchase behavior.

### **Green marketing**

The American Marketing Association (1975) introduced green marketing through an environmental marketing workshop. Green marketing is referred to as environmental, social and sustainability marketing. This is a broad concept with three key components of marketing, evaluating positive and negative activities, and investigating a wide range of environmental issues (Zhua & Sarkis, 2016).

### **Green product**

Wu et al. (2018) considered green products as products with no damage to the environment and /or with elements that do not potentially

damage the environment. Compared to regular products, degradable and non-toxic materials are usually used for the production of green products, using packages that are recyclable and consume less energy (Wu et al., 2018).

Dangelico and Pontrandolfo (2010) defined a green product as a product that is designed to be usable, assembled and reproducible, and uses recyclable materials. It is energy efficient and causes less environmental pollution than other products (Rahimnia et al., 2016). In addition, a green product meets the needs of consumers without damaging the environment (Soomro et al., 2020).

### **Green purchase behavior**

It can be acknowledged that pro-environmental consumer behaviors are different from general purchase behaviors. General purchase behaviors are based on an evaluation of their benefits and costs. In contrast, environmentally friendly behaviors are unlikely to be based on profit or enjoyment, but are more futuristic, and in the interest of society. As a result, awareness of the environment and the purchase intention for environmentally friendly products and services and interest in the environmental business has increased (Bahrainizad & Rezaei, 2016). In order to reduce the effect of their consumption habits on the environment, some consumers change their behaviors and select an environmentally friendly consumption behavior, which they call green consumption. Green consumers care about quality and price, and select products and brands that adopt conservation practices and demonstrate environmental protection (Junior et al., 2019).

### **Empirical literature review**

Jacobs et al. (2018) investigated the significant attitude-behavior gap and considered positive attitudes toward socio-environmental standards, biological values, and altruism as factors influencing green purchase. The results indicate the importance of changing attitudes and values toward sustainability. While a study by Samarasinghe (2015) found that although green consumers had strong green beliefs and attitudes, their moral responsibility as a preventative factor was low and a positive attitude towards the environment lead to no

actual purchase behavior, indicating a dichotomy in the study results.

Yadav (2016) recalling environmental concerns as altruistic values and health concerns as selfish values, both altruistic and selfish values affect the purchase intention of the youth for organic products in India, but selfish values have a greater effect.

Varela-Candamio et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analytic study on the importance of environmental training on the determinants of green behavior, the results of which confirmed environmental training and interpersonal factors as strong tools for predicting and creating green behavior among citizens. Interpersonal and motivational factors played less role in creating green behaviors.

Hsu et al. (2017) showed that attitude, emotion and perceived behavioral control had a significant effect on the product purchase intention.

The study results of Chaudhary and Bisai (2018) showed that environmental concerns, attitudes, control of perceived behavior, and mental norms affected green purchase behavior through purchase intention. Also, pay intention moderated the relationship between the purchase intention and action.

However, in order to investigate the socio-economic status of society, in order to differentiate the attitudes and behaviors of consumers, Tong et al. (2016) identified items such as gender, age, race, income, literacy, and for social classification, identified income, education and employment indicators in investigating the information of green consumers and designing decision-making models.

By investigating the factors affecting environmental knowledge and consumer green behavior in order to save energy in Bangladesh, Rahman et al. (2019) showed that the influence of peers, green advertising and environmental knowledge affected green purchase behavior.

However, the path from the green purchase intention to real environmental or real green consumption is not easily possible. This is because consumers may want to purchase sustainable products, but very few of them actually intend to make a real purchase (Handayani & Prayogo, 2017, Hojnik et al.,

2020).

Wang et al. (2020) investigated the effect of green consumption on consumption intention in a pro-environmental environment, the mediating role of avoidance approach and motivation and found that green consumption values positively affected consumption intention in an environmentally friendly environment.

The results of a meta-analysis study conducted by Bakhshandeh and Kazemi (2017) on green purchase behaviors, which reviewed 38 studies conducted in Iran, showed that the variables of attitudes, social responsibility and norms had the greatest effect; and the variables of knowledge, value and promotion have the least effect on green purchase intention of Iranian consumers. Another study by Bahrainizad and Rezaei (2016), conducted for studies during 1997-2015, found that environmental concerns, social effects, perceived effectiveness, social responsibility, self-image concerns, environmental attitudes, environmental awareness, and importance of environmental issues and green purchase intention had the greatest effect on green purchase behavior in various studies.

Singhal et al. (2019) conducted a study entitled "Factors Affecting Consumers' Intention to Purchase Regenerated Products by a meta-analysis approach". The results showed that attitude and mental norm had a positive effect on the purchase intention, while it was also influenced by perceived green benefits and behavioral control.

### Research Methodology

Given that the present study, on the collected qualitative data, attempted to provide a new and

indigenous model in order to identify and extract the implementation of consumers' purchase behavior of green products, therefore the existing theoretical gap has been filled.

Based on the qualitative research and interpretive paradigm, the central feature of this approach is that it makes a fundamental difference between the natural and social sciences. But because this study attempted to develop a theory from qualitative data, it is based on grounded theory. Grounded theory is a kind of research strategy that seeks to develop a theory and origins from conceptual data which are systematically collected and analyzed (Danaeifard & Emami, 2007).

The sampling strategy by the qualitative approach is non-random and snowball. The criterion of the sample size is theoretical adequacy. In other words, in interviewing the statistical population of elites including professors in the field of management, especially business and environmental activists, no new index or structure is identified. Therefore, the criterion of sample adequacy is theoretical saturation. The objective of sampling in the qualitative research is to better understand the given phenomenon. Hence, sampling in this study is purposeful, because unlike the quantitative research, the objective is not to generalize the results to societies from which the sample was selected. Rather, the objective is to understand green purchase behaviors of consumers. Data saturation was observed by conducting 10 interviews, but for further assurance and confirmation of the results, the interviews were continued until the thirteenth person. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the interview participants.

**Table 1.** Demographic Description of the Interview Participants

Level of Education		Gender		Interviews	
P.H.D	M.Sc	Male	Female	Interview Time	Number of Interviews
9	4	5	8	30-100	13

The researcher has used semi-structured interview for the concepts in his research as a source of data and the interviews have been coded and analyzed one by one before the next interview. This process has continued to the point where the research conditions have reached a theoretical saturation point and there

is no new information to develop the concept of the conditions. It is usually recommended to use an interview protocol to record information during the interview. In this regard, in the present study, a guide or protocol for the interview was prepared to identify the main axes and axial questions of the interview in this

protocol.

Due to the cyclical nature of the qualitative research, different expertise of the interviewees and the enrichment of the required material, new questions were raised during the conversation and for this reason, the protocol of interviews changed from one research to another. But in general, the main axes of the protocol in interviews included questions about the dimensions of green purchase behavior, definition of green purchase behavior, factors affecting green purchase behavior according to causal, background, intervening, strategic and consequential conditions for green purchase behavior and its consequences.

The three coding stages used to develop a coherent, systematic, and detailed theory are open, axial, and selective coding.

At open coding stage, according to the initial codes extracted from the interviews, the codes related to a common topic were grouped and concepts were formed, and conditions were determined by comparing and classifying them.

At axial coding stage, in order to link the main conditions to the sub-conditions, using the paradigm model, causal conditions, phenomenological, background, intervening, strategic and consequence conditions that are the components of axial coding are identified. Then, through selective coding and based on the model of identified relationships between conditions and sub-conditions in open and axial coding, the conditions were linked together and the corresponding theoretical system was presented. The final output of grounded theory could be a phrase, a model, an image, and / or a table (Rezaee et al., 2020).

For ensuring data analysis and coding, the agreement of two coders was used for the interview analysis. In this method, reliability between codings is obtained from dividing the total codes of the agreed coders by the total of identified codes. The percentage of agreement of the coders, which is used as an index of the reliability of the analysis, is acceptable and the reliability of the coders is confirmed, and it can be claimed that the reliability of the current interview analysis is appropriate. Also, the validity of the qualitative research, by a naturalistic and pluralistic approach, depends on the basic research process and steps and the

researcher's abilities in their implementation. Validity of the qualitative research, especially qualitative interviews, deals with the two issues of reality and knowledge. For this purpose, at the proposed seven stages of the qualitative research including determining the subject, design, conditions of the interview, taking notes of the interviews, analysis, confirmation and reporting, validity was investigated and confirmed step by step (Seyyed Javadin et al., 2017).

## Research Findings

### Open coding

Open coding is the first stage of the data interpretation process. Here, the semantic unit of data can be small sentences or a part of a paragraph or one or more paragraphs of the entire textual content (Ferasatkah, 2016). In open coding, after reviewing the texts several times, the data were encoded, and the codes that referred to a particular concept and were placed in a category were placed in a concept, and then the concepts related to a condition were placed in a condition at a more abstract level. At this stage, 448 initial open codes were identified, which were categorized under 20 conditions that were fully explained in the axial coding.

### Axial coding

In order to understand the difference between the axial code and the conditions by the researcher, Uwe Flick (2005) stated that the axial code is like the source of a genealogy as other concepts are placed under it and play the role of his conceptual children, but the concept itself cannot be below another concept even outside the present study. Axial coding is based on the paradigm model and helps the theorist to easily facilitate the theory process. At this stage, by studying and reviewing the cyclical process between the relevant concepts and conditions, the components of axial coding were identified including causal, axial, phenomenological, background, intervening, strategic and consequential conditions, which are explained in the following:

#### A. Causal conditions

Causal conditions are the main causes from which the phenomenon (the main condition)

arises and directly affect the main phenomenon (Ferasatkhah, 2016). The relationship between the extracted codes and causal concepts is shown in the Table below. In this study, 145 open codes were classified under 4 conditions of environmental belief, health concern, green attitude and mental norm among the important conditions of this model, which is shown in Table 2. As an example, the following is one of

the narrations related to health concerns:

*"In order to protect my health, I attach great importance to consuming organic and green products, and after my health, it is important for me to protect the environment. In fact, loving myself and my children is another reason to accept and pay for green products. Really, I give the most valuable gift to myself through green consumption".*

**Table 2.** Codes and Concepts with the Causal Conditions

Concept	Sub Category	Causal Conditions
Availability Of experts	Environmental knowledge	Environmental beliefs
Knowledge of green and non-green products		
Provide education to children and families	Environmental concerns	Environmental beliefs
Environmental protection		
The value of altruism against the environment	Environmental congruency	Health concerns
Feeling one with nature		
Belief in the safety of organic and green food	Being safe	Health concerns
Selfish value (health concerns)	-	
Health awareness	Awareness of green product features	Green attitude
Low damage product environment		
Green label	Trust the green brand	Subjective norm
Green product quality		
Healthy and green economical packaging	Emotions	Subjective norm
Reliability of the green production process		
Trust in reports of green products of companies	Recommended reference groups	Subjective norm
Lack of feeling the need to consume green product		
Recommended by celebrities	Influence family and others	Subjective norm
Recommendations of popular organizations		
Influence of children on buying	Influence family and others	Subjective norm
Demand for people around you, friends and acquaintances		

**B. Axial conditions**

Axial conditions are the phenomena that we explore in context to which all other major conditions are related and appear repeatedly in the data (Ferasatkhah, 2016) . So that in all or almost all cases there are signs that point to that concept. In this study, 16 open codes were categorized into two sub-categories of consumer responsibility and conscious mental structure of the axial condition of green purchase behavior, which is shown in Table 3. The relationship between the extracted codes and the phenomenological concepts is shown in

Table 3. As an example, the following is one of the narrations related to the conscious mental structure in green purchase behavior:

*"I think green purchase behavior, consumer purchase intention and action for green products and services instead of other similar products and services are common in the market. I believe that consumption should be conscious, the first step is that I should be careful when deciding for purchase, to know that I have another choice, not to make habitual decisions and not to purchase, and to behave consciously".*

**Table 3.** Codes and Concepts with the Axial Conditions

Concept	Sub Category	Axial Conditions
Preference to buy green to non-green products	Consumer responsibility	Green purchase behavior
Feeling responsible for oneself, society and the environment		
Mental conflict with the consequences of consumption	Conscious mental structure	Green purchase behavior
Mindfulness and vigilance at the time of purchase		

The phenomenological green purchase behavior with two dimensions was selected as an important axial condition of this model.

### C. Strategic conditions

Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined strategies as plans and actions that are the output of the axial condition of the model and lead to consequences. Strategies are a set of measures taken to manage, and / or respond to the studied

phenomenon.

In this study, 34 open codes were classified under 3 conditions among the strategically important conditions of this model as shown in Table 4. As an example, one of the narrations related to innovation is as follows:

*"Achieving new technologies that can help lower the cost of products or increase their production and save on scale increases the production and availability of green products".*

**Table 4.** Codes and Concepts with the Strategies

Concept	Sub Category	Strategies Conditions
Segmentation based on education level	-	
Segmentation based on income level	-	
Segmentation based on consumer purchasing power (Social class)	-	Market segmentation strategy
Segmentation based on age groups	-	
Reduction of production costs for organizations	-	
Price value (cost-effectiveness of green benefit)	-	Pricing strategy
Process innovation	-	
Product innovation	-	Innovation strategy

Green market segmentation strategy, green product pricing strategy and innovation strategy were selected as important strategic conditions of this model.

### D. Background conditions

Background conditions represent a specific set of features related to the phenomenon that generally refers to the location of relevant events. Background conditions include factors without which it is not possible to implement green purchase behavior among consumers and provide the background conditions in which specific strategies for managing, controlling, and responding to the phenomenon are provided. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined background conditions as representing some of

the conditions that affect strategies, which constitute a set of background concepts, conditions, and variables. In this study, 69 open codes were categorized under 4 conditions among the important background conditions of this model, which is shown in Table 5. As an example, one of the narrations related to the development of green production standards in the country's environmental policies is as follows:

*"Companies should also consider environmental processes at the early stages of new product development and design products based on the ecological effects i.e. the basis of product design should be factors such as health, safety, recycling and minimal energy use".*

**Table 5.** Codes and Concepts with the Background Conditions

Concept	Sub Category	Background Conditions
Inflation	-	Economic indicators of the country
Recession	-	
Provide government facilities and support	-	Government support for environmentally friendly investments
The effectiveness of the activities of regulatory bodies in the country	-	
No harm to animals	-	
Optimization of energy consumption in the country	-	
Waste management in the country	-	Country environmental policies
Protection of natural resources in the country	-	
Development of green production standards in the country	-	

Concept	Sub Category	Background Conditions
Eco-friendly product development program	-	
The taste of the green product	Consumer	
Appearance characteristics of green products	tastes	The impact of green consumption culture
Consumption pattern in families	-	
Preference of individual interests over collective	-	

The country's economic indicators, government support for environmentally friendly investments, the country's environmental policies and the effect of green consumption culture were selected as important background conditions for this model.

**E. Intervening conditions**

Intervening conditions include more general terms such as time, space, and culture, which act as facilitators or limiters of strategies. Strauss and Corbin (1998) considered

intervening conditions as indicating some of the conditions that influence strategies. In this study, 86 open codes were classified under 3 conditions as important intervening conditions of this model as shown in Table 6. As an example, one of the narrations related to the distribution of green products is as follows:

*"The fact that these products are in fact luxury and sold in certain places of the city where people are better off financially shows that it is not a public consumption and distributed in all places".*

**Table 6.** Codes and Concepts with the Interventional Conditions

Concept	Sub Category	Intervener Conditions
Green product / brand access level	-	Green produ distribution
Economic situation and household expenses in choosing a shopping cart	-	Financial and economic constraints of households
High prices of green products		
Presence of green manufacturing companies in conferences and exhibitions		
Advertising of green products in the media		
Provide rewards and incentives to consumers	-	Promotion and encouragement to buy green
Word of mouth ads for green products		
Information and awareness about green products		
Advertising on social networks		
Guided by trained people		

Green product distribution, financial and economic constraints of households, and promotion and encouragement to green purchase were among the important intervening conditions of this model.

**F. Consequential conditions**

Consequences are the outputs or results of actions and reactions. According to open coding, the concepts related to the consequences of the model are extracted. Then, according to study of themes and concepts, the main conditions are extracted and divided into

two parts related to the consumer (micro level) and society (macro level). In this study, 98 open codes were classified under 5 conditions among the important conditions of this model, which is shown in Table 7. As an example, one of the narrations related to increasing the level of health is as follows:

*"The most important consequence of using green products, especially in the field of food, is health because it is not composed of substances that are harmful to the body, for example, chicken without antibiotics is good for human health".*

**Table 7.** Codes and Concepts with the Consequences

Concept	Sub Category	Consequences Conditions
Reducing mortality rates in the community	-	Increasing the level of health in the community
Reducing the cost of treatment in the country	-	
Increasing demand for green purchase	-	Development and growth of organizational performance
Production capacity of the organization	-	
Avoid consumerism	-	Promoting a green lifestyle

Concept	Sub Category	Consequences Conditions
Paying attention to environmental issues	-	
Reducing waste and participate in recycling	-	
Paying attention to the future in green consumption	-	
Reducing the use of energy resources	-	
Becoming a green consumer	-	Preferring to purchase environmentally friendly products
Perceived effectiveness of green purchase	-	
Interest to green purchase		Increasing green purchase repetition

Increasing the level of health in society, developing and growing the performance of the organization, promoting a green lifestyle, preferring to purchase environmentally friendly products and increasing the frequency of green purchase were among the consequences of this model.

### Selective coding

The third step in selective coding is the process of selecting the main category, systematically linking it to other categories, validating these relationships, and completing categories that need further modification and development. Selective coding uses the results of the previous coding steps, selects the main condition, systematically links it to other conditions, validates relationships, and develops conditions that need further development (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The following conditions are the result of selective coding related to the green purchase behavior:

Promoting consumer behavior in the environment is necessary. Although the role of governments and companies in environmental protection is important and undeniable, consumers play a much more important role in protecting the environment. The effect of consumer behavior on society can have consequences for society, the economy, firms and the environment. This behavior is manifested by green or environmental purchase. Reviewing and analyzing the collected materials and theoretical literature in this field show that green purchase behavior is phenomenological.

Factors such as "environmental belief" include environmental knowledge, concern, and congruency, and belief in safety that can lead to green behaviors. "Health concern" is another factor affecting green purchase

behavior that guarantees more executive performance. Awareness of product features, trust in the green brand and feelings towards green brands and products are components of the "green attitude". The "mental norm" consists of two dimensions of the recommendation of reference groups and the influence of family and others.

Components of "economic indicators of the country", "government support for environmentally friendly investments" through the provision of government facilities and support, "environmental policies of the country" on non-harm to animals, optimization of energy use through the use of new energy, waste management, natural resource protection in the country, the development of green production standards in the country for the development of environmentally friendly products and "the effect of green consumption culture" are among the important background conditions of green purchase behavior as factors that can affect production, sales and institutionalization of this behavior.

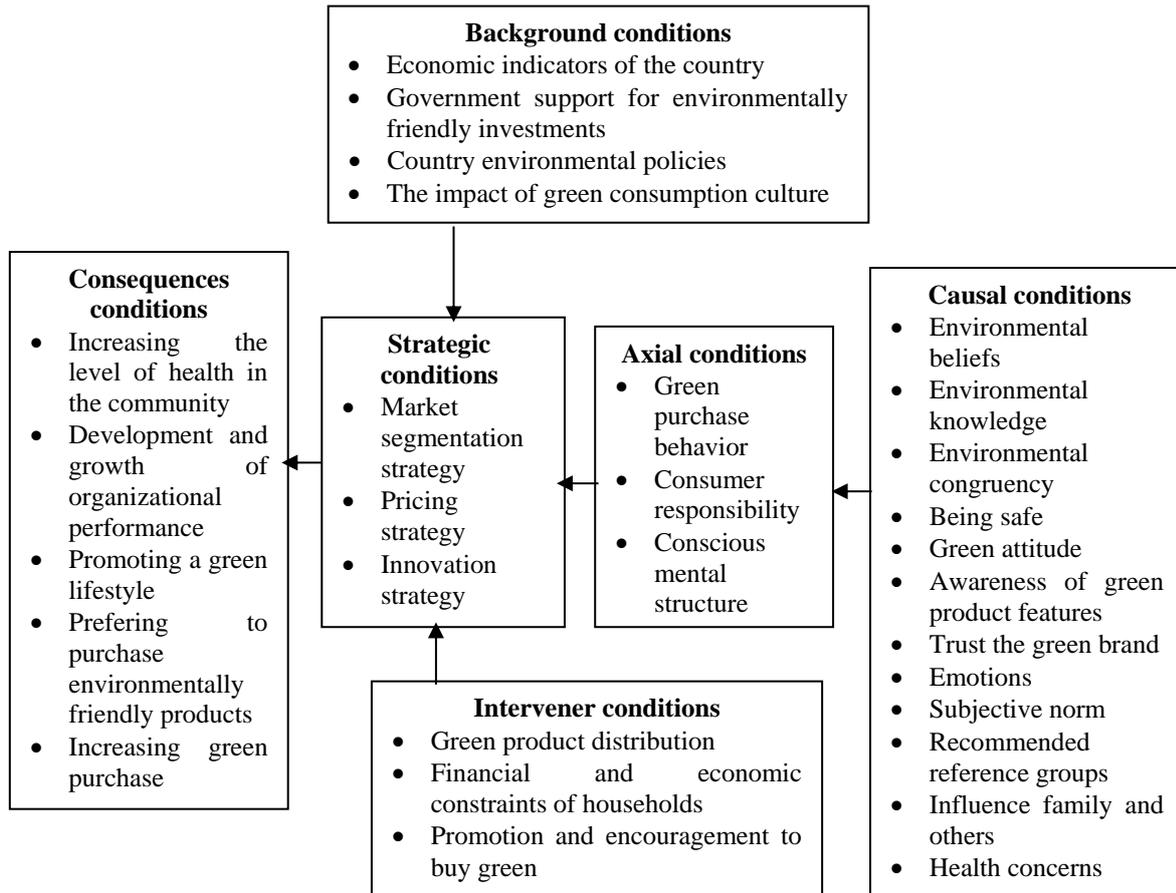
On the other hand, the components of "green product distribution" through access to the green product / brand, "financial and economic constraints of households" according to the economic status and costs of selecting the household cart and price of green products and "promotion and encouragement to green purchase" through the presence of green firms in conferences and exhibitions, advertising green products in the media, providing awards and incentives to consumers, word of mouth and information and awareness of green products and advertising on social networks or guidance by trained people as intervening conditions have an effect on conditions.

The strategy of "segmenting the green products market" based on education level, age,

income, purchase power, the strategy of "pricing green products" based on production cost and cost-effectiveness of green benefit-cost and the strategy of "innovation" through product and process are among the important strategic conditions that affect the green purchase behavior.

Finally, the consequences of green purchase

behavior include "increasing the health of society", "developing the organization's performance", "promoting a green lifestyle", "preferring to purchase environmentally friendly products" and "increasing the frequency of green purchase". The paradigm model of the research is shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Proposed Model for Implementing Consumer Green Purchase Behavior (Source: Authors' own work)

### Conclusion

In this study, grounded theory has been used to develop and explain the model of green purchase behavior of consumers. The data were collected and analyzed based on semi-structured interviews with academic experts in the field of management and environmental activists. By line-by-line analysis of interviews, open coding and recognition of core codes and then axial and selective coding, a paradigm model based on the model of Strauss and Corbin (1998) was formed.

The objective of the present study was to identify the discrepancy and gap between

environmental concerns or the green product purchase intention that exist in society and the current state of purchase. Although decisions by government, environmental activists, and the media emphasize support for the environment and sustainable consumerism, in practice what happens to consumers, government, industry, and service organizations is not convergent and leads to a difference in view and performance. Regarding the gaps and challenges raised in previous studies, each of which addresses the green issue from a specific perspective, conducting an integrated research has been shown to be necessary.

In previous national and international studies, no model that simultaneously investigates the antecedents and consequences has not been found, while the model developed in this study used a multiple approach that is one of the advantages of this model over other models of previous studies. On the other hand in this model, background and intervening conditions are also considered in an integrated manner, which is a comprehensive model for implementing green purchase behavior and addressing the shortcomings of previous studies. The model suggests that green purchase behavior is implemented through a set of strategies and actions.

For the causal factors affecting green purchase behavior, environmental belief, health concern, green attitude and mental norm were selected among the important causal conditions of this model. Environmental belief consists of the dimensions of environmental knowledge, concern, and congruency and the belief of safety. Green attitude consists of three dimensions of awareness of product features, trust in the green brand and emotions. Mental norm consists of two dimensions of the recommendation of reference groups and the influence of family and others. These results are consistent with the study results of Zafar et al., (2020), Junior et al., (2019), Chaudhary and Bisai(2018), Forati et al., (2019), Saif et al., (2015), Joshi and Rahman(2015), and Uddin and Khan(2016). For explaining green purchase behavior, it is necessary to rely on environmental beliefs by providing knowledge of green and non-green products to consumers, access to experts, creating the value of altruism to the environment, considering consumers originated from the nature and creating a belief in the safety of organic and green food. Also, recognizing features such as the presence of green or organic label on the product, product quality and healthy and green economic packaging will increase consumer awareness. On the other hand, the reliability of production processes in organizations and their reports or the existence of standards or a certifying logo of the green brand that is accepted by the general public increases the trust in these brands. Marketers can change the attitude of consumers towards these products by creating a

need to consume a green product. Reference groups are also an inspiring source for shaping attitudes, evaluations, and behaviors and a model for likening. These groups play a very important role in socializing and creating green purchase behavior in society. Creating environmental concerns with a positive and reinforcing effect by setting up recreational tours using the approach of cleaning the environment, forming a green management committee in organizations, holding specialized training courses on environment, wastewater treatment and energy management in addition to influencing consumers' beliefs affect green or environmental purchase behavior.

According to the study results, the background conditions affecting the strategies of green purchase behavior in society are the country's economic indicators, government support for environmentally friendly investments, the country's environmental policies and the effect of green consumption culture. These results are consistent with the study results of Rezaei et al. (2020) Popzan and Shiri (2012), Khaledi and Amjadi (2011), and Parra Lopez (2005).

For the explanation, it can be stated that in the current situation, one of the most important issues that have negatively affected the purchase power of the people is Covid-19 pandemic and the closure of businesses on the one hand and inflation and recession on the other hand. The former is in the process of using appropriate strategies to vaccinate society and with approved global health strategies, but the latter is the result of the devaluation of the national currency, inflation and reduction in purchase power on reducing the demand for ordinary goods, left no room for advertising and purchasing green products. So, the production of green goods at reasonable prices should be increased by providing government facilities and support. On the one hand, the country's environmental policies, in addition to the development of green products, should be in order to avoid harm to animals, optimize energy use through the use of new energy and waste management, especially in industry. On the other hand, creating cultural infrastructure for green consumption in society is very important, so that the consumption model is one of the

sustainable behaviors of society and sustainable behaviors have cultural roots and their fundamental change is not possible without changing culture, which can change families and children's education by the Ministry of Health, or through the media, especially social media, or the promotion of proper nutrition in families, especially reducing the consumption of fast food and foods with preservatives.

Green product distribution, financial and economic constraints, and promotion and encouragement of households for green purchase are among the intervening conditions that affect the strategies of green purchase behavior. These results are consistent with the study results of Ranaei & Elahyari (2011), Hussein and Rahman (2018). In the present study, marketing mix factors have been considered as mediating factors. For the explanation, it can be stated that one of the factors that lead to increased sales of green products is the availability and specificity of places to offer. If green products are only available in certain places, it will make it difficult for consumers to travel or plan to go to a specific place for green product purchase, although one of the ways to develop product sales is online purchase, but lack of trust in products on these sites reduces availability.

On the other hand, the financial constraints of households and the lack of priority of paying additional costs for green products reduce the purchase of these products, which if the price is optimized and the close prices of green and non-green products can cause these products to be permanently in the household purchase cart. Meanwhile, strategies such as promotions and incentives for green purchase, such as advertisements by trusted people who are environmentally active, such as Hedyeh Tehrani or Parviz Parastoi, or word of mouth for green products that have the greatest effect on the sale of these products, as well as advertisements on social media and rewards and incentives to consumers can be helpful.

Strategies in this model were based on three strategies in the field of green product market segmentation, green product pricing and innovation. These results are consistent with the study results of Karimi and Foroughi asl (2015), and Gupta and Acharya (2019). For the explanation, it can be stated that market segmentation is a process for identifying and

distinguishing the characteristics of buyers, in order to select the markets that the organization wants or can better and more effectively meet their needs. This segmentation can be based on income level, consumer purchase power (social class), age groups and education level. The supply and sale of green products for customers who have a high level of income or purchasing power can be done by finding a position in their minds. Because high-income customers have fewer constraints and more convenience opportunities for more diverse purchases, so it is easier for marketers to locate green products in their purchase cart due to the high price of these products. Also, due to the high level of awareness, educated people are more aware of the various choices and obtain more information before making a decision on their purchases based on the evaluation of the information obtained. As a result, they can play a more effective role in the development of green product purchase. Another good suggestion for attributing green purchase is to position this product in the family based on age groups. Usually, both young and old age groups are more sensitive to the nutritional style that can be considered a serious fan of organic food. This group of customers can be a good target market for healthy or organic food. Product information for this group of customers can be a good source for market segmentation.

According to the conditions identified in this model, the consequences are formed in a continuum from micro to macro, explaining the integrated coordination at both levels that is one of the advantages of this model. Increasing the level of health in society, developing the performance of the organization and promoting green lifestyle are the consequences of macro level and preference for environmentally friendly product purchase and increasing the frequency of green purchase are the micro level consequences identified in this study. These results are consistent with the study results of Gupta and Acharya (2019), Golob et al., (2018) and Rezaei et al., (2020).

One of the consequences of green purchase behavior that shows the effectiveness of this behavior is the perceived effectiveness in purchase that should be created by marketers and companies for customers. In order to increase the frequency of green purchase in society and the preference for environmentally

friendly product purchase, it is suggested to announce the benefits of using green and healthy products that can lead to increased health in the community, which can promote the use of healthy green products by nutritionists and physicians leading to a change in eating style.

In order to develop and promote green lifestyle, it is suggested that educational institutions, the media and the government promote simple green lifestyle tips such as advertising on billboards for short walks, implementing a "smokeless" plan in all cities by municipalities, and implementation of teleworking to reduce traffic in society, the use of energy-saving and nature-friendly lamps, to minimize fuel consumption, sealing windows and houses to prevent energy loss, and etc. can be simple but effective ways to change the lifestyle in society to be advertised.

If we consider the earth and nature as a heritage for the future generation, its conservation will be better among human beings and cause the protection of the environment by reducing the consumption of resources, preventing consumerism and reducing waste and participation in recycling. So it is necessary, first, public awareness should be done. Awareness can be done through social programs and jokes in the media during popular hours and cyberspace. Also, cultural-artistic competitions in schools and universities in relation to the production of appropriate content for competitions related to these topics can be designed to be indirectly effective.

Increasing the level of health in society can be another case for which appropriate measures should be taken. Given that promoting health by increasing knowledge and awareness, health training and raising the level of life skills leads

to the development and promotion of individual and collective health, this requires health training to the people individually and collectively and raising health literacy, which should only be fully understood and committed through governments so that the necessary infrastructure can be planned and implemented through the Ministry of Health and Medical Education.

Also, in order to develop and grow the performance of manufacturing organizations through designing products and services that are green from the beginning, the use of renewable energy (solar, wind, and marine power including wave power, biogas and fuel cell) helped the green business.

Compared to previous studies that focused on the factors affecting green purchase behavior, this study, considering the gap observed in the research literature, has investigated all the influential factors, strategies and consequences of this behavior for consumers and society, which can lead to the development of new models and discussion in different statistical populations along with other studies conducted in this field. In this study, green products have been considered in general, which by separating the product family in future studies, each can be commented separately. Although purposeful and snowball sampling reduces the generalizability of this model, evaluation and testing of the developed conceptual model of this study through quantifying and conducting field studies can be used in future research. From a practical point of view, the present study can be a good guide by governmental managers, production and service organizations, and researchers and scholars.

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