

# Priming the consumer's locus of control in an online shop to increase consumers' willingness to buy

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## **Abstract**

Previous research shows that the perception of one's ability to improve the environment can increase pro-environmental purchases. However, research is missing on the question how this perception can be strengthened most effectively. Therefore, this study examines the manipulability of internal environmental locus of control (IN-ELOC) by adding three different types of environmental messages (direct environmental impact; indirect impact via company; combination) to the product information in the web-interface of an online shop in two survey-based experiments with Chinese consumers (n1=144; n2=152). Messages significantly increase consumers' IN-ELOC when they emphasize consumers' indirect impact on the environment via influencing companies in the product category of organic food. Messages that combine the direct and indirect impacts achieve significant outcomes for recycled paper product. The assumption that increased IN-ELOC promotes willingness to buy is partly supported by our results.

**Keywords:** *Environmental message; Locus of control; Green purchase*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics