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## Article

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## **The Influence of Consumption Values on Green Purchase Intention: A Moderated Mediation of Greenwash Perceptions and Green Trust**

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### **Abstract**

Recent years have spotted a major boost in consumers turning to green consumption due to escalating sustainable development. Following this, how consumption values, green trust and greenwash affect green purchase intention remain unexplored in emerging economy. Drawing on the theory of consumption, this research examines the relationship among consumption values, green trust, and green purchase intention. Furthermore, this research also assesses the moderating results of greenwash perception on the relationship between consumption values and green trust in the context of China. Surveys were collected from 207 Chinese organic food consumers at different shopping marts. This research applies the structural equation model (SEM) by using Smart PLS 2.0. The study reveals that functional value (quality and price), and social value have significant effects on green trust. Green trust proves to be a significant mediator between the consumption values and green purchase intention. Moreover, greenwash perceptions have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between consumption values involving functional value quality and epistemic value, and green trust. This study offers a new insight by combining green trust and greenwash perceptions with consumption theory. This study

urges firms to place attention on the green trust through paying focus on relevant consumption values, which will help them to leverage the green purchase intention.

**Keywords:** consumption values, green trust, greenwash perceptions, green purchase intention, sustainable consumption.

## 1. Introduction

The recent environmental degradation has given rise to air and water pollution and has endangered human life. Following this, protective emotions have been arousing among modern consumers towards the environment (Bei, 1995), and they are more worried about their sustainable future life (Khan & Mohsin, 2017). Therefore, consumers are inclined towards the use of the green product, including organic food, hybrid cars, and energy-saving appliances and the demand for green items in the worldwide markets has expanded, and the buyers are lean toward green items that are more secure and eco-friendly (Bhutto *et al.*, 2019). In response, companies are also taking care of the environmental-friendly aspect of their product as their corporate social responsibility (Dwyer, 2009) and are much eager to adopt green strategies to market their green product (Pane Haden *et al.*, 2009). Since the factors that propel the green buying behavior is found to possess significant ramifications whereas the past scholars analyzed the green intention and buying behavior in different exchanging markets, however the greater part of the investigations are identified with green buying behavior from developed economies (Hansen, 2009) and comparing with Asian rising economies, there is a shortage of research work about green purchase behavior in China, India (Chan, 2001; Yadav & Pathak, 2016) Similar to other Asian nations, China is experiencing the high force risk of air contamination, low-class water and solid waste issues. (Khan & Chang, 2018). Recently, China is very serious about ecological threat and the critical environmental issues are making buzz among the chinese companies and the green consumers. However, due to the increasingly competitive market, many environmental-friendly claims made by the companies are deceptive and vague. Chinese consumers are faced to growing perception of greenwash, which is about the false claim of a firm about the environmental-friendly nature of a product (Dahl, 2010). Chinese consumers are alert to corporate greenwashing, and as a consequence, the misleading green claims influence consumer not to buy the green products and thus are negatively affecting the green trust (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). In 2013, Chinese news agency INFZM announced the greenwashing record and list, which disclosed the lack of trust caused by the greenwash (Duan & Jie, 2013). According to Zhang *et al.* (2018), 75% of 500 firms reveal their claims about green attributes and policy and around 98% of the firms with green claims deceive their consumers by performing one of the “seven sins of greenwashing” (Choice, 2010)

Recent studies have focused on the types, antecedents, and impacts of greenwash. As Zhang *et al.* (2018) showed the significant negative direct and indirect impact of greenwash through green word of mouth (WOM) on green purchase intention. Chen *et al.* (2018) expressed the negative influence of greenwash on green purchase intention and indirect negative effect through green image of a brand and green brand loyalty on green purchase intention. Chen and Chang (2013) presented direct negative effect of greenwash on the trust of green product and confirmed that greenwash had a negatively

indirect impact on green trust via consumer confusion and consumer risk in the context of green product. In fact, previous researches mainly examined the direct effect of greenwash on green purchase intention or green trust and overlooked the probability of taking greenwash perceptions as a moderator. Up till now, no earlier work has tested the moderating effects of greenwash perception from the perspective of consumer values and their green trust. Therefore, it is imperative to enrich the literature in this direction. Widely acknowledged theory of consumption value is taken so it helps to make a future purchase decision. The theory has been engaged and applied in more than 200 applications, and has shown reliable validity (Sheth et al., 1991). The theory further enlightens, predicts and supports in evaluating consumer behavior and understanding consumer-product choice. Nevertheless, it is not clear how consumption values moderated by greenwash perceptions may affect green purchasing intentions. The present research looks to fill this gap.

Past researches acknowledged that consumer trust plays a major role to influence purchase intention of green product and is a determinant of consumer buying intention (Schlosser et al., 2006). Therefore, green trust defined as “a willingness to depend on a product or service based on the belief or expectation resulting from its credibility, benevolence, and ability about environmental performance” (Chen, 2010) is an important predictor of green purchase intention. Thus, green trust is a level of a keenness to have assurance on the nature friendliness aspect of a product. Few prior studies shed light on the impact of green trust on the relationship between perceived values, perceive risk, green loyalty, and green purchase intention. (Wang et al., 2019) showed the partial mediating function of green trust between the association of green product knowledge and green purchase intention. Chen and Chang (2012) examined the significant impact of green trust on the bond between green perceive value and green purchase intention; also on the relationship of green perceive risk and green purchase intention. (Chen et al., 2015) described the significant positive role of a product’s nature friendliness on green trust. Konuk et al. (2015) put forward that green trust had a significant mediating effect among green satisfaction and green purchase intention. Chen (2013) delineated that to increase green loyalty; companies must strengthen their green trust on customers, and thus, green trust positively influenced green loyalty. Bailey, Mishra, and Tiamiyu (2016) confirmed the impact of green trust on the link between green consumption values and green brand purchase intention. Cheung et al. (2015) also demonstrated green trust as an important mediator between green perceive value and green purchase intention. As from previous researches about green trust, we explored the mediating influence of green trust in the relationship between consumption values and green purchase intention. In addition, the green purchase intention which is a degree to which customers are eager to purchase ecological likely products or services (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015) has been explored in numerous settings including attitude, perceived readiness to be green, price fairness, consumption values, and culture. Hsu et al. (2017) claimed that attitude had a strong influence on purchase intention of green products, and country of origin also displayed strong influence among attitude and green purchase intention. Arli et al. (2018) pointed out that the readiness to be green of consumers used to affect significantly the relationship between attitude and green buying intentions. Iyer et al. (2016) elucidated that price fairness had a vital influence on the association between ecological consciousness and green purchase intention. Bong Ko and Jin (2017) believed that man-

nature orientation had positively influenced the green purchase intention in the USA. Awuni and Du (2016) professed that social value and emotional values were significantly associated to the green purchase intention among different Chinese cities. We argue here that green trust moderated by greenwashing perceptions have influence on green buying intention.

In the light of previous research gaps, the current empirical research is an effort to apply the theory of consumption values and inspect the effects of consumption values on green trust in the Chinese context. This study also finds the indirect relation among consumption values and green purchase intention through green trust. In addition, current research explores the importance of consumption values on green trust through the moderating effects of greenwash perception. This paper introduces an integrated research model and concentrates our attentions towards the moderating role of greenwash.

This research is performed to address the latest appeal for research in green marketing and enhance the greenwash perspective in relation to consumption values. The paper contributes to explain the context by observing the bond between consumption values and green trust. Major contributions include the application of theory of consumption values and broaden the information on green purchase intention. This paper extends our understanding as to how the greenwash used to moderate the link between consumption values and green trust. Secondly, there is no previous work examining the greenwash as moderating role in relation with consumer values and green purchase intention. Thirdly, it will aid Chinese companies to improve their product by identifying affected consumers' value from greenwash perceptions. To improve the green purchase intention of a consumer, Chinese manufacturers must focus on the functional value quality and epistemic values through true environment-friendly claims which can enhance the green trust in the context of organic food. Fourthly, current research also provides value to the field of sustainability. The new outlook of the greenwash and the integrated perspective can be highly beneficial and valuable for sustainable development. Moreover, this research is based on the developing country of China, which has rapid economic growth at the cost of continuous deterioration of the environment. The current study may assist in designing rule and regulations. This research has managerial implications for food processing enterprises in China and can be useful for marketers to re-design their business strategies.

The structure of this paper is as per the following; "Literature Review and Hypothesis Development" followed by the "Methodology and Data Analysis" which include participants and procedure, questionnaire development and results. Further, "Discussion" section explains the results followed by a conclusion which include theoretical contribution, managerial implications, research limitation, and future research direction.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### *2.1. Theory of Consumption Value*

Theory of Consumption value has been extensively acknowledged and utilized to predict consumer behavior. The theory of consumption values was invented by Sheth et al. (1991) after vast research in human science, psychology, financials and purchaser behavior. Sheth et al. (1991) established five fundamental facets of consumption values

comprising functional value, social value, conditional value, emotional value, and epistemic value. These independent values react in a different way to any choice situation. Prior researches have enlightened the function of consumption values in the sphere of green purchase behavior, green choice behavior, ecological concerns and purchase intention to buy green products. Gugkang et al. (2014) utilized consumption theory to investigate the influence on green purchase intention in the context of Malaysian, found functional value price, epistemic, conditional and emotional value to have significant effects on consumer intention to purchase green products. Awuni and Du (2016) investigated the consumption values influence on green purchase intention of young adults on general green products in the context of Chinese and explored the significant effects of social and emotional values and insignificant effects of functional, conditional and epistemic value on green purchase intention. In line with this trend, to find out the consumer behavior and intention, the current study took previous researches to another step and suggested theoretical model to examine the effects of functional value (both quality and price), social value and epistemic value are on green purchase intention through greenwash perceptions and green trust on organic food items.

### *2.2. Consumption Values and Green Trust*

Functional value is associated to the “perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity for functional, utilitarian or physical performance and was thought to be generated by a product's salient attributes” (Sheth et al., 1991). This gages the functional benefits of a product including price, quality, reliability, and durability as part of consumer's perception (Sheth et al., 1991). Green trust as characterized by (Chen, 2010) is an eagerness to rely upon a product or service dependent on the conviction or desire resulting from its validity and ability about ecological performance. Trust is a sureness that one would act as likely on other (Hart & Saunders, 1997). However, trust develops when the consumer has faith in reliability and integrity of any manufacturer or service provider. The favorable price-quality ratio of a product will offer certain benefits which raised the buyer's perceived value (Matzler et al., 2007) and hence resulted in higher trust. Munnukka (2008) found the positive influence of price satisfaction on the level of trust. From the perspective of online retailing, consumers' willingness to give price premium is greater for trusted e-tailers (Zhou et al., 2013). Beukel et al. (2016) testified the positive influence of price fairness, relative price and price reliability on consumer trust. According to Chang and Chen (2008), the consumer opinions on the good class product or brand expected to hold strong belief for that product or brand. Chang and Chen (2013) showed that the green perceived quality and green trust has a strong significant relationship in the context of Taiwan. Based on the indications of the above scenario, we assume the following hypotheses.

- **H<sub>1</sub>**: Functional value quality has a positive effect on green trust.
- **H<sub>2</sub>**: Functional value price has a positive effect on green trust.

Social value is explained as the “perceived utility acquired from an alternative's association with one or more specific social groups was defined as social value, and it was measured through the product association with various reference groups of customers” (Sheth et al., 1991). Social value is considered to be one of the way of self-image (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), since a product has an influence on improving self-

image (Finch, 2006). Therefore, individual based perspective including the requirement for uniqueness and self-expressive benefits played a vital role in establishing green behavior (Afshar Jahanshahi & Jia, 2018). Chinese youngsters and adults prefer to use and trust in western clothing stuff as compared to Asian stuff as a sign of high self-status and wealth (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013). Hence, peer opinions, social associations, and comparisons (Jager, 2006; Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008) play a central part in the practice of making decisions (Sheth et al., 1991) which is critically affected by the level of trust (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). Social group impact is critical to reducing distrust on green products (Khare & Pandey, 2017). Costa-Migeon et al. (2014) showed the influence of social group on the acceptance of organic food; as the specific group used to show their association with organic food. Khare and Pandey (2017) demonstrated the significant positive influence of green peer impact on perceived trust in organic food. As China is a symbol of collective society, therefore suggestions by the peer opinion have imperative effects. As a result, this research proposed the below hypothesis.

- **H<sub>3</sub>:** Social value has a positive effect on green trust.

Epistemic value explained as the “perceived utility acquired from an alternative's capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, or satisfy a desire for knowledge” (Sheth et al., 1991). It is a shopper eagerness or willingness to gain more knowledge about product's detail including its design and attributes (Tanner & Wölfling Kast, 2003). Therefore, limited product information could result in risk perceived by a customer which would create mistrust. Since Chen and Deng (2016) proved that product knowledge significantly moderates the relationship of attitude and subjective norms with green purchase intention, therefore companies must have to lessen human curiosity and provide great details to increase consumer trust (Abgrab et al., 2000; Chang & Chen, 2008). In an online market, the presence of rich information put forward an important mark which positively increases customer trust (Gregg & Walczak, 2010). Gracia and de Magistris (2008) noted the information related to the organic food products play a vital role to leverage its market demand as it increases customer trust towards organic food. According to Wang and Benbasat (2016), the display of exact, accurate, useful and ample information can lead to improving consumer trust. Zahaf and Hamzaoui Essoussi (2009) proved that country of origin; product labeling, distribution, and certification are positively linked to consumer trust. Thus, based on the above discussion, this study proposed the following hypothesis.

- **H<sub>4</sub>:** Epistemic value has a positive effect on green trust.

### 2.3. Moderating Effect of Greenwash

#### 2.3.1. Functional Value (Quality and Price) and Green Trust

Greenwash moderates the relationship between the functional value (quality and price) and green trust. Greenwash is broadly utilized to describe the deceitful and misinforming of a company about its product to be green, sustainable or environment-friendly (Parguel, Benoît-Moreau, & Larceneux, 2011). Magali and Vanessa Cuerel (2011) referred greenwash as an incorporation of two communal behavior: poor environmental

performance and optimistic communication related to green or pro-environmental performance. Considering China, the biggest emerging market with the second largest economy, a majority of the Chinese consumer pay special focus on product price and quality aspect. Since consumer functional value is divided up into dual aspects, that is, price and quality (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), therefore the consumers who are facing greenwash would feel pessimistic about the quality of the product and would not be satisfied for value for money of a product which could result in reducing the trust. However, in the absence of greenwash perception, a consumer would feel indifferent about quality claims and remain optimistic. Hence, the moderator role of greenwash becomes vital to study as for how it moderates the associations of functional value quality and functional value price with green trust. Therefore, this paper hypothesized the following.

- **H<sub>5</sub>**: Greenwash moderates the relationship of functional value quality and green trust.
- **H<sub>6</sub>**: Greenwash moderates the relationship of functional value price and green trust.

#### 2.3.2. Social Value and Green Trust

Greenwash moderates the relationship between social value and green trust. With increasing environmental concerns and greater use of green products, Chinese consumers are gradually becoming conscious and alert of the corporate greenwashing which is affecting their purchasing decisions (Zhang et al., 2018). Consumers when facing risk related to the undesirable outcome would follow more peer or expert opinions or follow major social groups. The presence of greenwash perceptions in the mind of consumer trigger the negative WOM (Ramus & Montiel, 2005) and becomes a way of mistrust (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011) which negatively influence the purchase decisions (Chen & Deng, 2016; Leonidou et al., 2013). On the contrary, positive WOM would result in strengthening strong green trust. Thus, greenwash perception among consumer can widely affect their opinion which will further impact their green trust. Above literature let us to assume the following hypothesis.

- **H<sub>7</sub>**: Greenwash moderates the relationship of social value and green trust.

#### 2.3.3. Greenwash moderates the relation between epistemic value and green trust

This hypothesis is built on the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) theory founded on two routes. In the central route, individuals build their attitude depend on the shared arguments while peripheral route relies on the information from a source (Huo et al., 2018). Since epistemic value refers to the desire to gain product knowledge including its characteristics and features, therefore consumers with more product information would understand better about the green product and would rely on their sensible decision making rather following their feelings. As Wang and Wu (2011) by using ELM theory confirmed that consumers with more involvement of product possess good brand trust and purchase intention for rational appeal than towards emotional appeal. The presence of greenwash would do the task in the opposite direction. Despite having detailed product knowledge, consumers barely trust in product details because he or she would feel that



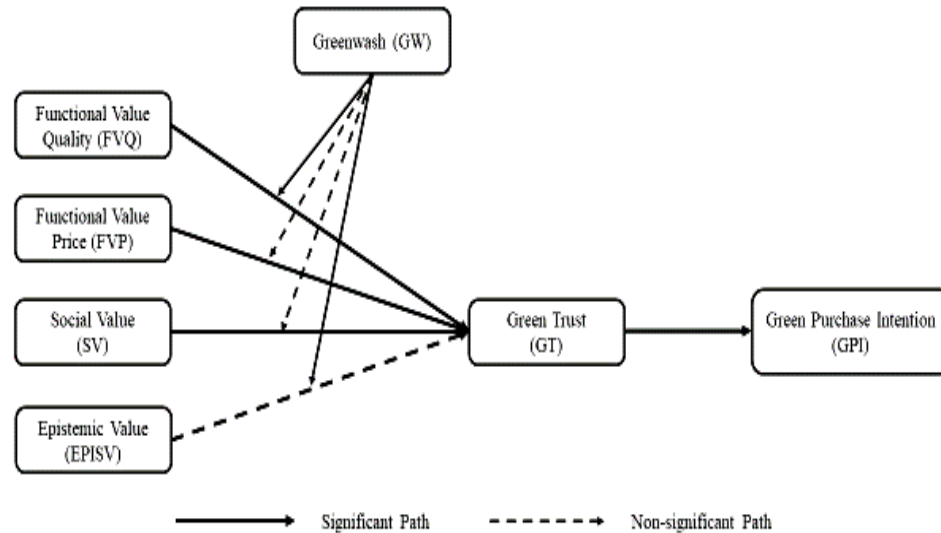
the shared details are only to attract the customers. Therefore it is interesting to see how greenwash will act as a moderator. Hence, current study postulated the following hypothesis.

- **H<sub>8</sub>:** Greenwash moderates the relationship of epistemic value and green trust.

#### 2.4. Green Trust and Green Purchase Intention

As indicated by Chen (2010), green purchase intention expressed as “the likelihood that a consumer would buy a particular product resulting from his or her environmental needs.” To the extent green consumption is the concern, many prior works have depicted associations between trust of green products and purchase intention (Chen & Chang, 2013; Kang & Hur, 2011). The empirical study of Everard and Galletta (2005) presented the positive relation of trust in online store and consumers’ intention to buy from an online store. Lu *et al.* (2010) indicated a positive relation of customer trust and buying intention. From online buying, Lee and Lii (2012) showed that perceived fairness would lead to building strong consumer trust that would result in higher purchase intention. Thus, client trust is a determinant factor of purchase intention (van der Heijden *et al.*, 2003). Gil and Jacob (2018) showed that green trust significantly mediate the link between green perceived quality and green purchase intention. This paper hypothesizes the optimistic influence of green trust on green purchase intention. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

- **H<sub>9</sub>:** Green trust has a positive impact on green purchase intention.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**

To address the research objectives, a conceptual model (see figure 1) is developed by using the (Sheth *et al.*, 1991) "theory of consumption value" predictors like functional

value quality (FVQ), functional value price (FVP), social value (SV) and epistemic value (EPISV) on green trust and green purchase intention. In addition, the mediator role of green trust in the association among four predictors and green purchase intention. Moreover, the moderating role of greenwash perceptions in the relationship between consumption values (functional value quality and price, social value and epistemic value) and green trust is also examined.

### **3. Methodology and Data Analysis**

#### *3.1. Participants and Procedures*

This study acquire a quantitative way to examine the hypothesis which contains the creation of organized, self-directed questionnaire. Respondents were accosted in different branches of Walmart and Carrefour in China, where consumer like to purchase organic food and have knowledge about it. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to the consumers. In total, 212 questionnaires were collected and after initial screening 207 were usable responses and the remaining five incomplete questionnaires were discarded, showing 97% response rate. According to Roscoe (1975), a suitable number of the questionnaires should be in between 30 to 500.

#### *3.2. Questionnaire Development*

##### *3.2.1 Questionnaire Design*

The author used questionnaires to examine the opinion of the respondents on the introduced hypotheses. The questionnaire started with the aim of the research and few definitions, followed by three sections. The first section consists of knowledge and experience of organic food. Next section asked respondent about their consumption value, their trust in organic foodstuff and their purchase intention towards it. The last section evaluated respondents' personal information including gender, education, age and household income. The questionnaire followed 5-point likert scale to evaluate the items. To avoid misunderstanding, the questionnaires were translated into the Chinese language. Professor and language experts were consulted for this task. Once, the translation was finalized, and it was proof-read by experts, a trial test was performed to evade any ambiguity. Corrections made by the experts were noted, and required actions were implicated to complete the final version of the Chinese language questionnaire.

##### *3.2.2 Measure*

There were in total 27 items for gaging all the variables. Functional value (quality and price) and social value items are all taken from Sweeney and Soutar (2001). Epistemic value items are adapted from Hirschman (1980) and modified according to organic food. Items of green trust are borrowed from Chen (2010) and amended according to the current study. Items of greenwash are adapted from Laufer (2003) and Chen and Chang (2012). Finally, green purchase intention items are taken from Lai and Cheng (2016). Appendix 1 contains the detail of all the items.

### **4. Results**

#### *4.1 Descriptive Analysis*

The demographic results are displayed in table 2 having 62% female participants and 38% male participants. Around 58% (29% were not sure, and 13% have no knowledge)

of the respondents showed knowledge about the organic food and 72% (18% were not sure, and 10% have no experience) had the experience to buy the organic food which shows increasing environmental concerns among Chinese. 57% of the respondents' age group was from 21-30 years which was the majority group. Thus it is evident that young citizens are more concern about the green environment, followed 20% of the age group in between 31 to 40 years. 86% of the participants had an educational level up to an undergraduate degree. 27% of the respondent had annually more than around \$20,700 (144,000 RMB).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Profile	Category	%age
Gender	Male	38
	Female	62
Age	18-20	16
	21-30	58
	31-40	20
	41-50	4
	Above 50	2
Education	Undergraduate	86
	Master	12
	PhD	2
Annual Household Income	<\$8,640 (60,000 RMB)	26
	<\$13824 (96,000 RMB)	25.50
	<\$20736 (144,000 RMB)	22
	>\$20736 (144,000 RMB)	26.50
Organic Food Knowledge	Yes	58
	No	13
	Not	29
Organic Food Buying Experience	Yes	72
	No	10
	Not	18

#### 4.1.1 Measurement Model

A dual step procedure was operated to examine the data (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). At initial phase, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to test the reliability of variable towards hypothesized latent variable. The second step contained the application of structural equation modeling (SEM) to confirm the adequacy of the construct of the model. Smart PLS 2.0 software package was applied for statistical examination. For the measurement of the model, all latent constructs were filled by their respective measurement items which make the model ready for correlation analysis (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were measured to calculate the reliability of the instrument. Total seven constructs are applied in this research. Cronbach's alpha values of all the construct observed to be in the range of 0.77-0.89. Table 3 presents all the alpha values of the construct used that satisfy the minimum requirement of 0.70.

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Composite reliability as shown in table 3 also satisfies with the minimum condition of 0.70 ranging in between 0.87-0.92. Hence, the instrument is currently reliable for calculation of latent construct.

**Table 3: Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), CR, AVE and SFL**

Constructs	Items	SFL	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Functional Value Quality	FVQ1	0.79	0.81	0.88	0.64
	FVQ2	0.75			
	FVQ3	0.82			
	FVQ4	0.84			
Functional Value Price	FVP1	0.82	0.82	0.88	0.65
	FVP2	0.84			
	FVP3	0.81			
	FVP4	0.74			
Social Value	SV1	0.85	0.89	0.93	0.77
	SV2	0.87			
	SV3	0.91			
	SV4	0.88			
Epistemic Value	EPISV1	0.69	0.78	0.86	0.60
	EPISV2	0.79			
	EPISV3	0.79			
	EPISV4	0.81			
Green Trust	GT1	0.86	0.88	0.91	0.68
	GT2	0.84			
	GT3	0.85			
	GT4	0.77			
	GT5	0.80			
Green Washing	GW1	0.72	0.84	0.89	0.73
	GW2	0.90			
	GW3	0.91			
Green Purchase Intention	GPI1	0.74	0.77	0.86	0.68
	GPI2	0.81			
	GPI3	0.89			

Table 2 represents the Item details with Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extract (AVE) and Standard Factor Loading (SFL).\* Overall Model Fit:  $\chi^2(207) = 892.47$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; NFI = 0.72, SRMR = 0.07

**Table 3: Correlations Matrix**

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Functional_Value_Quality	<b>0.79</b>						
2	Functional_Value_Price	0.46**	<b>0.80</b>					
3	Social_Value	0.35**	0.54**	<b>0.87</b>				
4	Epistemic_Value	0.28**	0.38**	0.37**	<b>0.77</b>			
5	Green_Trust	0.50**	0.51**	0.46**	0.42**	<b>0.82</b>		
6	Green_Wash	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.05	<b>0.85</b>	
7	Green_Purchase_Intention	0.34**	0.16*	0.21*	0.24**	0.30**	-0.02	<b>0.82</b>
	Mean	3.85	3.22	3.19	3.65	3.79	3.09	4.32
	SD	0.70	0.72	0.83	0.61	0.62	0.71	0.56

Note: n =207, Bold figures which are located diagonally are the square root of AVE for constructs \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Standardize factor loading of all the items ranges from 0.73 to 0.91 except an item which was having value around 0.68. Therefore, the items fulfilled the convergent validity. In addition, all the constructs also satisfied the average variance extracted (AVE) values fell in the range of 0.60-0.81, clearing the least criterion of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For discriminant value validity, the square root values of AVE should exceeds its correlation coefficients with other constructs. Therefore, correlations matrix table 4 verified the discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Model fitness test and chi-square test were also performed for CFA. The Chi-square goodness of fit was 892.47. Normed fit index (NFI) was 0.72. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) is used to ensure a suitable nature of data. If SRMR is higher than the allowed limit, it showed that something is mistaken or flawed with the measurement or structural model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Thus, the overall model showed 0.07 SRMR value which was well below the specified range.

The model proposed by (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) has been utilized to confirm the discriminant validity in this research. As indicated by this model, an examiner initially create the comparison of the square root of the (AVE) of each construct with the shared variance between, and if the square root of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is higher than the shared variance between constructs, at that point the examiner can express the discriminant validity that exists. Table 4 speaks to the subtleties that discriminant validity is affirmed.

#### 4.2 Structural Model

Table 5 shows the structural analysis for the direct relations. As shown, functional value quality ( $b = 0.38$ ,  $t = 7.93$ ) and functional value price ( $b = 0.28$ ,  $t = 5.45$ ) showed positive

and significant relation with the green trust. Therefore, H<sub>1</sub> and H<sub>2</sub> are accepted. Social values (b= 0.17, t= 2.39) expressed positive and significant influence of green trust. Thus, H<sub>3</sub> is accepted. Epistemic value (b= 0.06, t= 1.24) did not show significant effect on green trust. Thus, H<sub>4</sub> is rejected. Green trust (b= 0.33, t= 30.29) showed the strongest direct significant effect on green purchase intention (see table 5) which is aligned with the findings of Chen and Chang (2012). Thus, H<sub>9</sub> is accepted.

**Table 4: Model Estimation**

Hypothesis	Hypothesized Path	Path Coef.	t-value	Status
H <sub>1</sub>	FVQ→GT	0.38	7.93	Accepted
H <sub>2</sub>	FVP→GT	0.28	5.45	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	SV→GT	0.17	2.39	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	EPISV→GT	0.06	1.24	Rejected
H <sub>5</sub>	FVQ*GW→GT	-0.16	2.20	Accepted
H <sub>6</sub>	FVP*GW→GT	-0.09	1.24	Rejected
H <sub>7</sub>	SV*GW→GT	-0.01	0.16	Rejected
H <sub>8</sub>	EPISV*GW→GT	-0.05	2.66	Accepted
H <sub>9</sub>	GT→GPI	0.33	30.29	Accepted

Sobel test was used to analyze the mediating effects of green trust. Table 6 highlights the results of mediating effects. Green trust prove to be a significant mediator between functional value (price and quality), social value and green purchase intention. Green trust has a significant mediating influence between functional value price (z = 7.67, p = 0.00) and green purchase intention. Green trust also has significant results between functional value quality (z = 5.37, p = 0.00), social value (z = 2.38, p = 0.00) and green purchase intention. However, green trust has insignificant mediation effect among epistemic value (z = 1.24, p = 0.21) and green purchase intention.

**Table 5: Sobel Test**

Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	Z value	p value
FVQ	GT	GPI	7.67	0.00
FVP	GT	GPI	5.37	0.00
SV	GT	GPI	2.38	0.02
EPISV	GT	GPI	1.24	0.21

Greenwash acts as a moderator in the current study. Table 5 displayed the results after structural analysis. Greenwash acts as a significant moderator between the functional value quality (b= -0.16, t=2.20) and green trust. Thus, H<sub>5</sub> is accepted. Greenwash also significantly moderate the relationship of epistemic value and green trust (b= 0.26, t= 2.66). Thus, H<sub>8</sub> is also accepted. However, greenwash did not act as a significant moderator between functional value price (b= -0.09, t= 1.24) and green trust and social value (b= -0.01, t= 0.16) and green trust. Thus, H<sub>6</sub> and H<sub>7</sub> are rejected.

**5. Discussion**

Albeit prior work has directed the negative influence of greenwashing on green trust or green purchase intention. There has been limited research and a connection gap as how greenwashing perception would affect the consumers’ value. In today’s world, where

environmental concerns are rapidly evolving among the consumers, the reliability, durability, and performance of the green product become a vital issue for the consumers. The competitive market where manufacturers are trying their best to lessen the time to market the product and to win the greater market share, companies have started to perform greenwash activities, which is negatively affecting the green trust of the consumers through consumer confusion and consumer perceived risk (Chen & Chang, 2013). Considering the limited application of greenwash as a moderator, this study investigates the direct relation of consumption values and green trust and focuses on the process and context as which relationship between consumption value (functional value quality, functional value price, social value, and epistemic value) and green trust would be moderated by greenwash that can influence green purchase intention. Based on the hypotheses developed, the influence of each variable is measured by calculating the standardized beta coefficient of each predictor variable; followings are some findings from current study.

The consumption values which involve functional value (price and quality) and social value are significantly positively related to green trust. However, epistemic value does not display significant influence on green trust. Functional value price rely on the performance of the product keeping in mind the cost-benefit ratio whereas functional value quality rely on the expected performance of the product (Lin & Huang, 2012). Consumers assess a green product based on the price they pay for it. Since high price of a green product against traditional products is a shared concern for a worldwide green consumer (Minbashrazgah *et al.*, 2017), Chinese companies can gain a suitable amount of green trust by educating consumers as how the price of organic food comparable to non-organic counterpart and maintaining reasonable price-benefit ratio keeping the quality standards constant. This act will boost the consumers' green trust as they will receive the same quality of green product compared to traditional product which is a common concern for a green product consumer. This finding also supports the past research conducted at Hong Kong on green products which also showed significant impact of green perceived value (functional and performance) on green trust (Cheung *et al.*, 2015). On the other hand, companies must take care of social aspect of their product to obtain green trust and to increase green purchase intention. Due to increasing material intensive lifestyle (Vergragt *et al.*, 2015), Chinese consumers are very much concern about their social image and social association that allow them to improve their social image. Hence, social value turn out be important predictor of green trust. This result is similar to the findings in terms of brand image on the consumers in the context of Taiwan (Chen, 2010).

### *5.1. Greenwash Moderation*

This study elaborates the understanding of greenwash as a moderating variable and demonstrate that the associations among functional value quality and epistemic value with green trust are moderated by greenwash perception (see table 5). Since quality aspect of a product is much more sensitive when it comes to food and directly related to human health, therefore health conscious consumers are bit skeptical about the organic food claims. As the perceived personal benefits are more attached with organic food (Olson, 2017), therefore the presence of greenwash perceptions through negative WOM

or any social network, would let consumers to be cautious about the organic food. Hence, green trust would get hit as consumers feel not to compromise on quality standards. This result confirms the finding of Wang et al. (2019), where consumers having critical past experience in terms of quality of green product possess lower preference or, in other words, have low trust for green products. This could result in the reduction of green purchase intention as consumer might turn to traditional products. The function of epistemic value is to arouse curiosity for knowledge among consumers. Greenwash activities make the consumer confuse and uncertain in their buying decision of green product (Pomeroy & Johnson Lester, 2009). Our finding reveals that the presence of greenwash perception would demoralize the consumer about buying a green product and lessen his willingness to know more about the product. According to Wang et al. (2019), green product knowledge significantly affects green purchase intention via green trust, thus it is imperative to counter the effects of greenwash perception that hinder the inner desire or curiosity of a consumer to seek novelty or knowledge of green product. This result is in line with past study where greenwash use to negatively affect the green trust through green consumer confusion (Chen & Chang, 2013). The relationship between social value and green trust is not moderated by greenwash perceptions. Since social value refers to association of individuals with certain social class. Based on the trend and fashion in society, Chinese people prefer to trust on majority of their peer suggestions and purchase green product because they want to obtain social acceptance. Thus, group conformity among Chinese play an important part for purchase intention (Qi & Ploeger, 2019). In order to improve one's social image and to acquire certain social class, greenwash perception seems to have some influence on Chinese consumers but not up to significant level. This finding depicts that greenwashing still a relatively new phenomena among majority of Chinese consumers and they do not consider greenwashing as a major hurdle. Thus in Chinese society, social value considered as a significant element in promoting green purchase intention (Lin & Huang, 2012). This result is in line with the past study conducted in different cities of China about the significant influence of social value on green purchase intention (Awuni & Du, 2016). Contrary to our research hypothesis, greenwash perception prove to be a non-significant moderator between functional value price and green trust. Though the result show a negative relationship, however it is not significant. Thus, despite the presence of greenwash perceptions which insufficiently affects the relationship, consumer still believe that if they pay higher price for a green product they might get benefits from the green product. This reflect the belief of Chinese consumers on high price product.

### *5.2. Green Trust Mediation*

The findings in table 6 present the mediator role of green trust between consumption values and green purchase intention, which shows that green trust help to link the functional and social values with green purchase intention. When a consumer achieve more functional expectation from a green product (including performance and good quality) and social association with the green product, the more they generate green trust. Thus, green trust act as mechanism to improve Chinese consumers' purchase intention by considering the price, quality and social attachment factors of organic food as they are much concerns about the social image and quality aspect of a product. This finding about the functional value is similar to the past study where green trust significantly mediate the



bond between green perceived value and green purchase intention in the Indian context (Gil & Jacob, 2018). This development of green trust increases the possibility of purchase as well.

## **6. Conclusions**

Based on the consumption theory, this study tested the influence of consumption values on green trust and testified the impact of moderating role of greenwash perception on the linkage between consumption values and green trust. Through the collection of 207 questionnaires from consumers at supermarkets like Walmart and Carrefour, we conclude that functional value (quality and price) and social value are positively linked to green trust while greenwash perceptions moderates the connection of consumers' functional value quality and epistemic value and green trust.

### *6.1. Theoretical contribution*

Our contribution extends the literature in following three ways. First, current paper recaps the notion of theory of consumption to widen the literature on green marketing and to test which consumer value can be helpful to strengthen green trust. Secondly, there is no previous work exploring the moderating role of greenwash with regard to consumer values and green purchase intention, this research studies the moderating role of greenwash between the consumption values and green trust. Thirdly, recognizing the affected consumers' value from greenwash activities, companies can improve their product in the respected areas. Thus, this study spreads the research of consumption theory, green trust and greenwashing.

### *6.2 Managerial Implication*

There are four practical implications of this research. First, the significant effects of functional values (price and quality) on green trust infer that performance of the product is the core principal in strengthening green trust. If company would like to augment the green trust, companies must be very accurate about their quality standards throughout their production department, which will ultimately lead to continuous improvement to the product performance. Second, social value also have significant effects on green trust which imply that company must grab the opportunity to truly emphasize on the social impact of their product to boost the green trust in consumers. In the era of information technology, people to people contact is not restricted to face to face conversation, but social followings are rapidly increasing through social media. Therefore, firms should give more consideration to this increasing dependence on social media in order to gain more green trust. Third, greenwash perceptions moderates the connection of functional value quality and epistemic value on green trust. Companies should depreciate the corporate greenwash activities that negatively affects their trustworthy relations with the consumers. Firms must ensure their customer about the authenticity of their claims through effective marketing. Manufacturers should educate their consumers and enhance their ability to identify green claims. By reducing the greenwash activities related to consumers' functional value quality and epistemic value, companies could build strong green trust which will assist them with increasing the green purchase intention and the profit sales. Fourth, since green consumption is at beginner level in China compare to west, it is necessary to promote green awareness. Government and corporate sector must

put efforts to eradicate this corruption which is polluting the green products' market. This study may help the food manufacturers and other stakeholders to perform the needful actions.

### 6.3 Limitation and Future Research

This research has some restriction and limitations that should be considered while taking the findings. First, generalizability of this study as it is conducted in China. Therefore, it cannot be generalized to other parts of the world. Upcoming research can consider the cultural aspect of the other societies in to this model. Furthermore, this study took organic food as their green product as food is very conscious part and directly related to human health; therefore green trust and greenwash in this regard are of high attention. Future research can take this model to apply to other product categories. Variables like green WOM, green perceived risk can be utilized to examine the green purchase intention. Future researches may take this model to apply on a household item like washing detergents, soap and others as they are readily available and highly usable.

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**Appendix1. Summary of Questionnaire Items**

Items
FVQ1: The organic food has consistent quality.
FVQ2: The organic food product is well made.
FVQ3: The organic food has an acceptable standard of quality.
FVQ4: The organic food would perform consistently.
FVP1: The organic food is reasonably priced.
FVP2: The organic food offers value for money
FVP3: The organic food is a good product for the price
FVP4: The organic food would be economical.

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SV1: Buying the organic food would help me to feel acceptable.
SV3: Buying the organic food would make a good impression on other people
SV4: Buying the organic food would give its owner social approval.
EPIS1: Before buying the organic food, I would obtain substantial information about the different makes and models of products.
EPIS2: I would acquire a great deal of information about the different makes and models before buying the organic food
EPIS3: I am willing to seek out novel information.
EPIS4: I like to search for the new and different organic food information.
GT1: You feel that organic food's environmental reputation is generally reliable
GT2: You feel that organic food's performance is generally dependable
GT3: You feel that organic food's environmental claims are generally trustworthy
GT4: Organic food's environmental concern meets your expectations.
GT5: Organic food keeps promises and commitments for environmental protection.
GW1: The organic food misleads with words regarding its environmental features
GW2: The organic food misleads with visuals or graphics regarding its environmental features
GW3: The organic food is associated with an environmental friendly claim that is vague or seemingly un-provable
GPI1: I am willing to buy products that contain no or fewer chemical ingredients
GPI2: I am willing to buy products that are labeled as environmentally safe
GPI3: I am willing to buy organic products