

Sustainable Fashion Consumption in The Era of Greenwashing: Examining The Mediating Roles of Consumer Skepticism and Green Trust in Sustainable Purchase Behaviour

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Abstract

The rise of sustainable fashion also brought along an increasing interest in sustainable fashion from consumers and the green washing trend also introduced the need for more attention to be paid on how credible sustainable fashion claims are by fashion brands. This study aims to investigate what “sustainable fashion consumption” is in the era of “greenwashing” and focuses on how consumer skepticism and green trust can play a mediating role in sustainable fashion purchase behavior. The study was of a quantitative design with the population of 384 consumers. To test the proposed relationships, Exploratory Factor Analysis, linear regression and parallel mediation analysis were used. The factor analysis resulted in the presence of 4 constructs that are greenwashing perception, consumer sceptics, green trust and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour, and the factors accounted for 74.015% of the total variance. Results of the regression showed that the greenwashing perception was a significant factor affecting sustainable fashion purchase behaviour ($\beta = -0.642$, $p < 0.001$) and accounted for 41.2% of the variance. Results of the mediation showed that the perception of greenwashing significantly increased the consumer scepticism and decreased green trust. There is a negative relationship between consumer scepticism and sustainable purchase behaviour and positive relationship between green trust and sustainable purchase behaviour. Consumer skepticism and green trust had a significant mediating effect for the model of greenwashing perception to sustainable purchase behaviour. The indirect effect via green trust (-0.336) was higher compared to the indirect effect via consumer skepticism (-0.172), suggesting that loss of consumer trust is a particularly important path by which greenwashing undermines purchasing of sustainable fashion. The study finds partial parallel mediation, in that there was still a direct path from greenwashing perception to the outcomes after the mediators were added. The insights underscore the need for verifiable, credible and transparent sustainability communication to build sustainable fashion consumer trust and sustainable consumption of fashion.

Keywords: Sustainable Fashion; Greenwashing Perception; Consumer Skepticism; Green Trust; Sustainable Purchase Behaviour; Green Consumption; Sustainable Consumer Behaviour; Fashion Industry.

Introduction

Given the fact that the fashion industry uses 36 billion cubic metres of water and releases 300,000 tonnes of textile waste in India alone every year, this sector is one of the biggest where sustainability issues are gaining attention due to its associated natural resource consumption, pollution and GHGs emissions. In recent times, with the surge of fast food, these awarenesses have increased even further, as it is due to this immense fast fashion that garments are bought in large numbers and disposed of after just a few days. Therefore, sustainable fashion is becoming more and more visible as an alternative form of consumption that promotes environment-friendly materials, longer lasting items, re-use, re-cycle and ethical production and consumption. The results of recent studies inspire an understanding that sustainable consumption of fashion, as it stands more recently, is not just about attitudes or beliefs towards the environment but has more and more become a matter of consumers' values, social norms, trust and real consumption (Hong et al., 2024). As an example, Hong et al. (2024) revealed that values, ecological beliefs, social norms, and trust-related factors directly and indirectly affect sustainable fashion purchase intentions and behavior, indicating the need to understand how consumers' intentions can actually influence their buying habits.

Even if consumers are becoming aware of sustainability, it is difficult for them to shift positive environmental attitudes into their sustainable fashion buying behaviour. The customers might be concerned with the degradation of the environment and they show a preference for buying products that are sustainable in terms of clothes, though at the same time they buy conventional or fast fashion products. This is indicative of the lack of change in sustainable consumption attitudes and practices. Hogg et al., (2025) conducted a critical review of the factors influencing the green purchasing habits of consumers of apparel and the methodological shortcomings of relevant studies that have been done through the empirical investigation on green buying behaviour in the apparel industry. The review also found that green trust and green skepticism can shape consumers' intentions to make sustainable apparel purchases.

Greenwashing is one of the up-rising issues in sustainable consumption of fashion. Greenwashing is defined as when companies voice environmental messages in a way that misrepresents, overstated or falsely suggests that their products or practices are environmentally friendly. This is especially pertinent to fashion as aspects of sustainability like recycled or ethical sourcing and reduced environmental impact can be hard for the average consumer to assess on their own. Consumer conversations about greening in fashion revealed the emergence of a theme with skepticism towards fast-fashion brands' sustainability communication, as consumers actively question the sustainability claims made by fashion brands. An important theme that came out of the consumer conversations with regard to greening in fashion was the skepticism of consumers towards fast-fashion brands' sustainability communication, with consumers actively questioning sustainability claims made by fashion brands. This shows that creating extra visibility for sustainability marketing can sometimes lead to enhanced awareness about sustainability among consumers and a certain suspicion about the credibility of environmental messages. The effects of greenwashing perceptions on sustainable fashion buying are also found to be empirical. The authors of the report Apaolaza et al. (2023) discovered that greenwashing has a negative impact on consumers' desire to purchase sustainable clothing, while their environmental concerns, as well as their perception of their own utility and the level of trust in sustainable clothing brands, had a positive impact. They found that consumers' response to sustainability claims is not just about their environmental concern, but first their perceptions about the credibility and authenticity of brands' sustainability products can weigh in consumers' willingness to go green with fashion.

In this context, consumer skepticism plays a major role. If consumers feel that claims are "greenwashing" due to exaggeration, vagueness, or insufficient information, they may lose their trust in green marketing communication. This doubt can dampen their tendency to take the environmental aspect at face value and may reduce purchase intent of products labelled as sustainable. The research literature on green consumption shows that greenwashing negatively influences green purchase intentions by inducing green scepticism, a psychological mechanism that can play a crucial role when considering the relationship between misleading environmental communication and consumers' actions. The fashion domain also suggests that skepticism is a consumer response to when they feel they are being greenwashed, as in fashion there is recent evidence to indicate that customers actively discuss and question sustainability claims made in advertisements (Li et al., 2025).

On the other hand, green trust is an important way how sustainability claims can lead to sustainable purchasing. Green trust is defined as the consumers' tendency to trust a brand, product or environmental claim, on the basis of their perceived green reliability, green performance and credibility. If buying into a sustainable fashion brand becomes a more genuine and transparent decision, backed with proof, there is the potential for more consumers to be willing to spend money with those brands. More recent research on sustainable fashion has shown the relevance of trust for sustainable intentions to become sustainable consumption behaviour (Hong et al., 2024). Also, Behre and Cauberghe (2025) discovered that there is a positive relationship between third-party sustainability certification and increased sustainability communication credibility, which in turn bolsters consumers' purchase intention, for online fashion retail. They found that proper sustainability labels can help to overcome scepticism and enhance perception of sustainable fashion products.

These relationships can be explored in the Indian context in particular. In an Indian consumer context, Yadav et al. (2024) discovered that influencing factors such as motivators and barriers impact the attitudes and intentions of consumers regarding green apparel. They showed how values affect motivations and barriers and motivations and barriers affect attitudes and intentions to adopt green apparel – a case of mediation. The results emphasize that concern for the environment is not the only factor that drives sustainable fashion buying, as consumer perception, psychological barriers and contextual issues are also crucial to sustainable apparel adoption.

A recent study also highlights the emerging trend of 'greenwashing' in the fashion industry. In the study conducted by Do et al. (2025) on Gen Z consumers in the fashion industry in Vietnam, greenwash perception is found to play a significant negative moderating role between key predictors of green purchase intention and purchasing intentions. Their results show that, promoting favourable attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural control and perceived consumer effectiveness of consumers, perceptions of greenwashing can counteract the impact of the other three positive determinants. This indicates that sustainability communication can turn counterproductive if consumers suspect that it is deceptive or not genuine.

Meanwhile, recent literature shows that increasing crescendos in the importance of sustainability communication content are becoming more credible. Behre and Cauberghe (2025) highlighted how certification labels can boost the credibility of the sustainability information and, in a resulting step, purchase intentions of sustainable fashion items. In the context of the aforementioned greenwashing this finding is of critical importance, as, very often, consumers find themselves lacking of technical expertise to independently assess environmental claims. By building strong green trust and minimising uncertainty and scepticism, credible signals, certifications and transparent sustainability information can help build trust.

While past research has focused on greenwashing, green scepticism, green trust and buying sustainable fashion individually and/or by certain interdependencies, there is still a need to clarify how these psychological mechanisms work in tandem to one another. Existing literature on sustainability in fashion has largely focussed on attitudes towards the environment, values, norms, perceived behavioural control and intentions to purchase; there has been less research on how these factors are mediated by consumer scepticism and green trust in the simultaneous causation between consumer perception of greenwashing and purchasing sustainable fashion. The readily available evidence from the systematic review by Suneja and Aastha (2025) suggests further evolution of the study of sustainable fashion purchase intention, including the necessity to bridge the intention–behaviour gap since that may persist.

Hence the present study named 'Sustainable Fashion Consumption in the Era of Greenwashing: Examining the Mediating Role of Consumer Skepticism and Green Trust in Sustainable Purchase Behaviour' aimed to examine more in-depth consumer reactions towards claims communicating aspects of sustainable fashion. In this regard, it draws on the idea that consumers' perception of greenwashing might also impact on their purchase decision for sustainable fashion by indirectly increasing consumer skepticism and decreasing green trust. The study may therefore help to contribute to existing research on sustainable consumption by describing how sustainability claims can sometimes lead to responsible consumer choices and how, in other cases - if the claims are interpreted or investigated as 'green washing' - they can lead to consumers' distrust, skepticism and resistance to sustainable fashion products in one single empirical framework (Joseph, 2026).

Statement of the Problem

As sustainable fashion becomes more prominent, brands can make more claims about how environment-friendly their recycled materials are, as well as other ethical production and environmental friendly aspects. But, as more and more marketing campaigns are targeting sustainability, questions about greenwashing have also arisen: do consumers feel claims relating to a product's environment are exaggerated, unclear, or that they are intended to mislead? Recent studies have been conducted on fast-fashion brands and their perception of greenwashing in sustainability communication has been linked to higher levels of scepticism towards brands and their sustainability communication (2024). It is very relevant as it means that a consumer might not be able to determine if the fashion product is really sustainable or whether it is marketed as sustainable. As such, consumer scepticism towards communications of sustainability could lower consumer trust in greenwashing and jeopardise the willingness of consumers to buy green. The other issue is that the effects of the greenwashing perception on sustainable fashion purchases are not fully studied. Recent studies in the fast fashion context show that greenwashing can create a rise in green skepticism which in turn generates negative reactions of consumers (Promalessya & Handriana, 2024). In the same way, concerning green apparel, recent studies reveal that credible environmental information helps to mitigate consumer scepticism and boost green apparel attitudes, emphasizing the need for trust and credible green apparel communication (Zhang et al., 2025). Still, the co-occurrence of consumer scepticism and trust in green should be considered at the same time as intervening factors between perceived greenwashing and sustainable fashion purchasing behaviour. Building upon this, the aim of the present study is to fill this niche gap by examining if perceived greenwashing directly influences sustainable fashion purchase behaviour and if this is possible, it is indirect by instilling consumer skepticism and green trust.

Need and Significance of the Study

Especially within the context of shifting to sustainable fashion, sustainable fashion consumption in mainstream and traditional fashion has gained more and more in importance, since consumers, fashion brands and policymakers are interested in minimizing the impacts related to the conventional fashion consumption. Recent studies have highlighted that there are other aspects of sustainable fashion purchasing that have an impact on consumers such as values, attitudes, norms, knowledge and behaviours, which shows that sustainable consumption is not just about environment related concerns (Hong et al., 2024). Additionally, the systematic review conducted by Schiaroli et al. (2024) highlights the need to comprehend the factors driving and hindering consumers at various phases of fashion consumption. Consumers' attitudes towards sustainability are of interest and in this regard it is important to consider why positive attitude does not always result in sustainable fashion purchasing behaviour. The study, therefore, is significant in the sense that it helps to spot psychological factors that can influence the way consumers behave when faced with sustainability claims and what they ultimately buy. The research is especially relevant as the act of greenwashing may affect the authenticity of sustainable fashion communication. It can be challenging for consumers to determine what real sustainability is from greenwashing. Consumer trends in the fashion industry also reveal that there is growing detection and mistrust

of sustainability claims by brands, and the growing mistrust of fast-fashion brand marketing has become a relevant point in recent fashion greenwashing studies (Li et al., 2025). Meanwhile, there is evidence to show that credible sustainability signals, like third-party certifications, can diminish skepticism and enhance how credible and desirable sustainable fashion products are perceived (Behre & Cauberghe, 2025). Hence, it is important to scrutinise the mediating roles of consumer scepticism and green trust as they can shed light on how consumer perceptions of greenwashing can eventually lead to sustainable purchase behaviour.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical significance:

The study brings a new perspective on sustainable consumer behaviour literature by using a combination of the constructs of greenwashing perception, consumer skepticism, green trust and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour within a single framework. Previous studies have demonstrated that perceived greenwashing can be a hindrance for people to adopt a sustainable mindset towards clothing, while trust in sustainable brands can foster their purchase (Apaolaza et al., 2023). Study of skepticism and trust therefore gives a more comprehensive explanation as to how consumers respond to sustainability claims, psychologically. The study can thus make a contribution towards the understanding of how the sustainability attitude-behaviour gap can be explained.

Managerial significance:

The results can be used by sustainable fashion brands as a guide to understand the impact of poor claims or 'greenwashing'. Some recent evidence indicates that convincing sustainability communication and certification can boost information credibility and purchase intent and diminish consumer scepticism (Behre & Cauberghe, 2025). The researchers thus build a basis for the fashion marketers to pursue more transparent sustainability communication and make environmental claims that could be substantiated and contribute to promoting green trust even more.

Consumer significance:

The study could also be of value for consumers to be aware of to not be taken in by deceptive brands claiming to be sustainable. It is especially relevant as consumers might not have the technical knowledge to be able to verify for themselves whether claims of sustainability are legitimate or not. Previous studies on sustainable fashion knowledge highlight that stakeholders, consumers and experts in particular, can vary significantly from the other in their understanding of what is sustainable fashion practices (Ko, 2024). Knowing the ties between greenwashing, Skeptics and Trust can then lead to more informed and responsible consumption of fashion which is also sustainable.

Relevance from practical implementation and Sustainability:

Lastly, the study has broader implications with respect to the transition to sustainable consumption. However, greenwashing can lead to skeptical behavior and a lack of buyer trust in sustainability claims and thus can deter consumers from buying truly sustainable products. On the other hand, if the consumers can be communicated to in a transparent and credible way about the concept of sustainability, it can build up trust and entice consumers to buy responsibly. This means the study can offer valuable insights into how fashion companies can facilitate true sustainable fashion practices as opposed to enabling only sustainable fashion communication and media for sustainability practitioners and policymakers (Joseph, 2026).

Review of Literature

The focus is on Sustainable Fashion Consumption and Purchase Behaviour.

Sustainable fashion consumption has gradually become a critical field in consumer behaviour studies due to the negative impacts of traditional fashion production and consumption on the environment and society. In the context of sustainable fashion consumption in China, Hong et al. (2024) tested the Value-Belief-Norm framework with Chinese consumers and concluded that values, beliefs and norms of the environment and attitudes had an impact on consumer's intentions and practices towards sustainable fashion consumption. The study argues for the need to not only consider the environment per se but also psychological and social determinants of sustainable fashion behaviour.

Likewise, Yadav et al., (2024) conducted a study on the reasons and constraints behind green apparel purchases in India based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework. Their results indicated that consumer values

drive towards motivation and barriers that ultimately influence attitudes and intentions related to green apparel. The study is especially pertinent to the current study as it reveals that both positive motivations and psychological barriers play a role in defining the sustainable apparel purchase in the context of India.

Systematic evidence from recent years further illustrates the complexity needed to purchase sustainable fashion. Indeed, the systematic review results of Toebast-Wensink et al. (2025) revealed that in 100 empirical studies, buying sustainable fashion was often found to be related to environmental awareness, environmental knowledge and perceived consumer effectiveness. There is also an important intention–behaviour gap, however, that was identified by the authors, meaning consumers who convey intent to buy sustainable, do not always exhibit sustainable buying behaviour (Joseph, 2025).

To determine the crucial elements of sustainable fashion, Suneja and Aastha (2025) systematically reviewed 126 journal articles from the years 2006 to 2024, revealing that elements such as trust and moral norms, along with consumer effectiveness, identity and other behavioural factors, are significant. Their analysis focused on the need to shift from intention-based models and explore the underlying thoughts and feelings that lead to sustainable fashion actions.

Sustainable Fashion: Greenwashing Perception

An important issue raised is Greenwashing, as consumers are now faced with more and more environmental claims that don't necessarily reflect the real sustainability of fashion brands. A recent study on understanding Spanish fast-fashion customers' awareness towards greenwashing in sustainability communication revealed a growing suspicion of consumers that companies' sustainability communication is not necessarily aligned with their sustainability practices. The research also pointed out the increasing consumer doubt on the fast-fashion brands' sustainability initiatives.

Do et al. (2025) studied green purchase intention among 467 respondents from generation Z of the fashion industry in Vietnam. They revealed that attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and perceived consumer effectiveness had a positive influence on green purchase intention; however, greenwash perception had a negative moderating effect. This means that the sustainable consumer attitude can be undermined by other perceptions of greenwashing and thereby reduce the effectiveness of such factors in encouraging sustainable buying.

Apaolaza et al. (2023) also studied the phenomena of greenwash in the related area of the sustainable clothing industry with a representative sample of 600 Australian consumers. The study revealed that perceived greenwashing had a negative impact on the intention to purchase sustainable clothes, whereas trust in sustainable clothing brands and other factors related to consumers had a positive impact on purchases. The results support the greenwashing perception as one of the key factors considered in the decision to purchase sustainable fashion directly, and in an empirical way.

Consumer Skepticism and Sustainable Fashion

Consumers take their scepticism very seriously when assessing an environmental claim in particular as sustainability attributes are difficult to verify prior to purchase. In the systematic literature review performed by Schiaroli et al. (2024) in *Journal of Cleaner Production*, skepticism, lack of knowledge, high prices, limited availability and others are important impediments to sustainable consumption for the fashion sector. The outcome of their analysis indicates that having positive feelings towards the environment does not necessarily mean sustainable consumption behavior as consumer skepticism can hinder the congruence.

The dynamic between credibility and scepticism applies to cases such as that of Behre and Cauberghe (2025), who explored the communication of sustainability within online fashion retail. They conducted experimental studies and discovered that third party certification boosted the credibility of sustainability information and, in turn, the purchase intention. The findings suggest that credible sustainability signals can work to alleviate consumer doubts and lessen the scepticism around environmental claims.

The increase of skepticism is also reflected in the study of how “consumers react to fashion greenwashing. In fact, a recent study on the social conversation about greenwashing by fashion brands revealed that consumers are actively noticing, questioning and engaging in conversations about potentially misleading claims from brands. This consumer awareness shows that communicating sustainability can produce negative reactions, because consumers are aware of the differences between the advantages offered in the message and the actual environmental performance. Hence, the sensitization of consumers plays a crucial role as a mechanism to comprehend how the greenwashing perceptions might impact sustainable fashion behaviour.

Green Trust and Sustainable Fashion Purchase Behaviour

Another psychological factor in sustainable fashion consumption is green trust. Clothing products generally cannot be independently verified many sustainability aspects makes consumers dependent on taking a leap of faith for the environmental values of a brand. Apaolaza et al. (2023) illustrated the positive relationship between TSB and SCP and also found that PWP negatively influences SCP. The results indicate that trust can be a significant factor in the challenge to reduce uncertainty related to sustainable fashion claims.

To examine the psychological factors affecting sustainable fashion consumption, Hong et al. (2024) also found some factors related to trust. They found that purchasing sustainable products would not happen just because of the environment, as consumers perception and consumption intention towards sustainable products have an influence on their actual sustainable consumption.

Behre and Cauberghe's (2025) research supports these findings, as it revealed that certification labels can enhance credibility of sustainability communication for online fashion retailers, which in turn leads to a higher intention to buy online clothing. Their findings are highly relevant to green trust as they can help empower consumers to agree with the green claims of fashion brands by credible external signals.

Significantly, the relationship between "greenwashing" and "green trust" in the fashion sector was explored directly by the study done by Zhao et al. in 2026. Based on the data obtained from PLS-SEM with 300 online fashion consumers, it was found that greenwashing significantly lowered green trust and green trust was significant and directly affected by the variable of green purchase intention. This offers fresh proof that a key component of consumers' sustainable buying decisions focuses on the credibility of sustainability claims.

Mediating mechanisms Greenwashing, Consumer Skepticism and Green Trust

Literature shows a significant volume of evidence that greenwash has a potential impact on sustainable fashion purchases, and consumers' trust can push them to buy sustainable fashion. But these variables have often been studied separately and/or in disjointed connections. The literature thus opens the door for the study of the psychological path between consumers' perception of greenwashing and their purchasing behaviour of sustainable fashion.

Nevertheless, the recent systematic review by Suneja and Aastha (2025) specifically mentions the importance of trust and other psychological factors in understanding adoption of sustainable fashion and points to a need for more comprehensive models which can explain the 'intention-behaviour gap'. Again, Toebast-Wensink et al. (2025) show that the adoption of sustainable purchasing of fashion is influenced by various cognitive and behavioural factors, where experience can potentially shift constraints to motivations.

Based on the evidence, a possible sequential psychological pathway thus emerges: consumers' perception of greenwashing can lead to reduce their green trust that can lead to decline in their sustainable fashion purchase behaviour. Such relations were evidenced in 2026 between greenwashing and green trust as well as between green trust and green purchase intention, making this framework more relevant. But there is still room to test consumer skepticism and green trust simultaneously as mediators between perception of greenwashing and buying behaviour with regards to sustainable clothing. It is a clear study gap which can be used to provide for the proposed study.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the underlying dimensions of greenwashing perception, consumer skepticism, green trust and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour among consumers.
2. To examine the influence of greenwashing perception on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.
3. To examine the mediating roles of consumer skepticism and green trust in the relationship between greenwashing perception and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

Objective 1: Factor Analysis

Objective 1

To identify the underlying dimensions of greenwashing perception, consumer skepticism, green trust and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour among consumers.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Test	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.921
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity – Approx. Chi-Square	4867.214
df	190

Test	Value
Sig.	0.000

Communalities

Item	Initial	Extraction
GWP1	1.000	0.721
GWP2	1.000	0.746
GWP3	1.000	0.783
GWP4	1.000	0.704
GWP5	1.000	0.758
CS1	1.000	0.687
CS2	1.000	0.731
CS3	1.000	0.764
CS4	1.000	0.719
CS5	1.000	0.748
GT1	1.000	0.755
GT2	1.000	0.781
GT3	1.000	0.723
GT4	1.000	0.769
GT5	1.000	0.741
SPB1	1.000	0.704
SPB2	1.000	0.776
SPB3	1.000	0.738
SPB4	1.000	0.759
SPB5	1.000	0.716

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.214	31.070	31.070
2	3.842	19.210	50.280
3	2.784	13.920	64.200
4	1.963	9.815	74.015
5	0.782	3.910	77.925
6	0.631	3.155	81.080
Remaining	—	18.920	100.000

The analysis produces four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1, explaining 74.015% of the total variance.

Rotated Component Matrix

Item	Greenwashing Perception	Consumer Skepticism	Green Trust	Sustainable Purchase Behaviour
GWP1	0.824	0.142	0.126	0.118
GWP2	0.851	0.109	0.134	0.101
GWP3	0.873	0.121	0.108	0.096
GWP4	0.791	0.167	0.151	0.128
GWP5	0.846	0.134	0.119	0.105
CS1	0.153	0.802	0.141	0.116
CS2	0.126	0.836	0.119	0.108
CS3	0.145	0.858	0.102	0.097
CS4	0.172	0.794	0.148	0.126
CS5	0.131	0.821	0.135	0.114

GT1	0.121	0.126	0.847	0.138
GT2	0.113	0.104	0.872	0.127
GT3	0.142	0.138	0.801	0.119
GT4	0.107	0.121	0.856	0.145
GT5	0.135	0.109	0.823	0.132
SPB1	0.116	0.127	0.143	0.812
SPB2	0.104	0.115	0.129	0.871
SPB3	0.126	0.137	0.118	0.824
SPB4	0.119	0.121	0.153	0.849
SPB5	0.132	0.108	0.146	0.796

Reliability Statistics

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Greenwashing Perception	5	0.918
Consumer Skepticism	5	0.902
Green Trust	5	0.925
Sustainable Purchase Behaviour	5	0.914
Overall	20	0.941

Exploratory Factor Analysis was used to indicate the number of dimensions under which the four constructs which were incorporated in the study could be placed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was “excellent” (0.921), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4867.214$, $df = 190$, $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. A total of four factors were extracted from the analysis with eigenvalue values more than one, which are Greenwashing Perception, Consumer Skepticism, Green Trust and Sustainable Fashion Purchase Behaviour. The four factors accounted for 74.015% of the total variance and clearly explained a significant amount of variance of the items observed. Many of the factor loadings were above 0.70, thus indicating high correlations between the items and constructs. In addition, the Cronbach's alpha of the items varied between 0.902 and 0.925, indicating good internal consistency and reliability. Thus, the results of the factor analysis indicate that the measurement items have good validity and reliability in being representative of four dimensions, namely Knowledge, Attitude, Competence, and Knowledge of Technology, as supports for the next regression analysis and mediation analysis.

Objective 2: Regression Analysis

Objective 2

To examine the influence of greenwashing perception on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

Hypotheses

H₀: Greenwashing perception does not significantly influence sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

H₁: Greenwashing perception significantly influences sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.642	0.412	0.410	0.624

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	103.684	1	103.684	266.105	0.000
Residual	148.913	382	0.390		
Total	252.597	383			

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	4.218	0.193	—	21.855	0.000
Greenwashing Perception	-0.681	0.042	-0.642	-16.312	0.000

A linear regression analysis was carried out to assess if the consumer's perception of the greenwashing is statistically significant affecting his/her sustainable fashion purchase behaviour. The model resulted in an R value of 0.642 and an R² value of 0.412, which suggests that the greenwashing perception accounted for around 41.2% of the variance in the sustainable fashion purchase behaviour. Results of the ANOVA showed that the overall regression model was significant (F = 266.105 at p < .001). The regression coefficient also showed a negative significant effect of the greenwashing perception on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour ($\beta = -0.642$, $t = -16.312$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that if consumers believe the brand's sustainability claims are "far-fetched", misleading or deceptive, they will be less likely to purchase from sustainable fashion brands. The negative association is important in the sense that it points to the potential of counterproductive effects of greenwashing on sustainable consumption. Hence, the null hypothesis can be rejected, Greenwashing Perception: There is no significant influence on Sustainable Fashion Purchase behaviour. However, analysis reveals that consumer perceptions of misleading sustainable communication are an important impediment to purchasing sustainable fashion.

Objective 3: Mediation Analysis

Objective 3

To examine the mediating roles of consumer skepticism and green trust in the relationship between greenwashing perception and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

Hypotheses

H₃: Greenwashing perception significantly influences consumer skepticism.

H₄: Greenwashing perception significantly influences green trust.

H₅: Consumer skepticism significantly influences sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

H₆: Green trust significantly influences sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

H₇: Consumer skepticism mediates the relationship between greenwashing perception and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

H₈: Green trust mediates the relationship between greenwashing perception and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour.

Mediation Path Analysis

Path	B	SE	t	p
Greenwashing Perception → Consumer Skepticism	0.724	0.039	18.564	0.000
Greenwashing Perception → Green Trust	-0.657	0.041	-16.024	0.000
Consumer Skepticism → Sustainable Purchase Behaviour	-0.238	0.052	-4.577	0.000
Green Trust → Sustainable Purchase Behaviour	0.512	0.049	10.449	0.000
Greenwashing Perception → Sustainable Purchase Behaviour (Direct Effect)	-0.291	0.047	-6.191	0.000

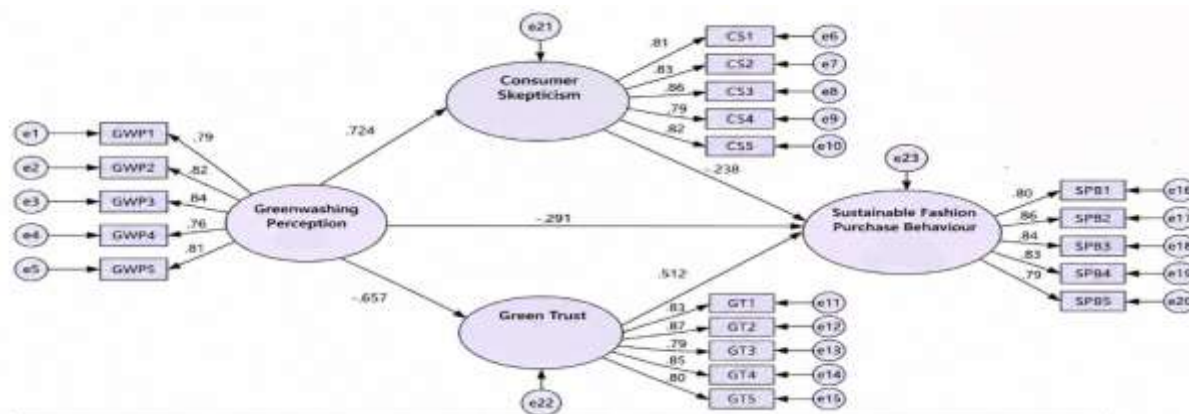


Figure 1 Mediation analysis

Direct, Indirect and Total Effects

Effect	Effect (B)	Boot SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total Effect	-0.681	0.042	-0.763	-0.598
Direct Effect	-0.291	0.047	-0.383	-0.198
Indirect Effect through Consumer Skepticism	-0.172	0.038	-0.249	-0.101
Indirect Effect through Green Trust	-0.336	0.045	-0.427	-0.253
Total Indirect Effect	-0.508	0.051	-0.609	-0.410

Summary of Mediation Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H ₃	Greenwashing Perception → Consumer Skepticism	Supported
H ₄	Greenwashing Perception → Green Trust	Supported
H ₅	Consumer Skepticism → Sustainable Purchase Behaviour	Supported
H ₆	Green Trust → Sustainable Purchase Behaviour	Supported
H ₇	Consumer Skepticism mediates Greenwashing → Purchase Behaviour	Supported
H ₈	Green Trust mediates Greenwashing → Purchase Behaviour	Supported

Mediating steps of consumer skepticism and green trust were included and tested through parallel mediation analysis to identify the possible role played by them in the relationship between Greenwashing perception and Sustainable fashion Purchase behaviour. Results show that greenwashing perception has significant positive relationship with consumers' skepticism ($B = 0.724$, $p < 0.001$), and significant negative relationship with green trust ($B = -0.657$, $p < 0.001$). Consumer skepticism then has a significant negative effect on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour ($B = -0.238$ and $p < 0.001$) but, green trust has a significant positive effect on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour ($B = 0.512$ and $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of greenwashing perception on consumer skepticism was -0.172 and the 95% bootstrap confidence interval was $[-0.249, -0.101]$. However, zero is not contained in the confidence interval, which means that the mediation effect is significant. Moreover, the mediation effect of green trust was also significant with a 95%CI of $[-0.427, -0.253]$ for indirect effect. The total indirect effect was -0.508 and the direct effect was still significant: -0.291 ($p \text{ value} < 0.001$). Hence, the results demonstrated that the direct effect was significant after including both mediators, indicating partial parallel mediation. In this case, the green trust indirect effect (-0.336) is stronger than the consumer skepticism indirect effect (-0.172). Thus, a distrust or move away from sustainability claims by fashion companies could be a key mechanism by which greenwashing undermines people's sustainable fashion buying behavior.

Findings of the Study

Based on the factor analysis, regression analysis and mediation analysis conducted for the study "Sustainable Fashion Consumption in the Era of Greenwashing: Examining the Mediating Roles of Consumer Skepticism and Green Trust in Sustainable Purchase Behaviour," the following findings were obtained:

- The measurement structure was determined to be acceptable and that the scores were reliable. The KMO measure was 0.921, which was excellent; and the Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4867.214$, $df = 190$, $p < 0.001$). Four different factors were extracted from the factor analysis namely Greenwashing Perception, Consumer Skepticism, Green Trust and Sustainable Fashion Purchase Behaviour with the total variance of 74.015%.
- There were high factor loadings for measurement items. Generally, the items pointing to the different factors exhibited factor loadings above 0.70 which is considered strong association among the observed items and the factors applied. This validates that the items of the questionnaire effectively captured the four constructs that were subjects of this study.
- High internal consistency was found for the all four constructs. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for items on each scale ranged between 0.902 and 0.925, with excellent reliability. The alphas achieved were Greenwashing Perception 0.918, Consumer Skepticism 0.902, Green Trust 0.925 and Sustainable Fashion Purchase Behaviour 0.914.
- Greenwashing perception greatly affects and negatively influences sustainable fashion purchasing behaviour. The regression model presented a R value of 0.642 and an R^2 value of 0.412, which means

that the successful prediction rate using greenwashing perception was 41.2%. The regression coefficient was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.642$, $t = -16.312$, $p < 0.001$).

- The consumers' awareness of greenwashing becomes a hindrance for sustainable fashion buying. The negative regression coefficient means that when consumers' perceptions of the extent to which the environmental statements made by the fashion brand are exaggerated, they are more likely to engage in MDE suppression and their purchase of sustainable fashion items decreases. The regression model fitted was statistically significant ($F = 266.105$, $p < 0.001$).
- Consumers perceive greenwashing and it creates significant scepticism. The path from greenwashing perception to consumer skepticism was shown to be significant and positive ($B = 0.724$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that if consumers feel there is more greenwashing going around, they may doubt and reject claims made by fashion brands about their products' green nature.
- Green trust is greatly lowered when there are greenwash perceptions. A strong negative correlation was found between the greenwashing perception and green trust ($B = -0.657$; $p < 0.001$). This suggests that consumers lack trust in the fashion brands' environmental integrity when they believe claims to be misleading.
- Consumers' skepticism has negative implications on sustainable fashion purchase behaviour. Consumer scepticism was a big negative influence on sustainable purchase behaviour ($B = -0.238$, $p < 0.001$). With the increase in consumer suspicion of 'cleangreen' claims, then, consumers' interest in cleangreen fashion decreases.
- Green trust positively influences sustainable fashion purchase behaviour' is True. The Green trust positively and significantly affected the sustainable purchase behaviour ($B = 0.512$, $p < 0.001$). Our findings indicate that consumers who trust brands' claims to be safe and environmentally sustainable are more likely to buy sustainable fashion.
- He/she perceives whether green marketing activities are greenwashing and whether this perception of greenwashing is a significant mediator with sustainable purchase behaviour. For the indirect effect, values were -0.172 with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of $[-0.249, -0.101]$. Because the number of 0 didn't fall within the confidence interval, the mediation effect was statistically significant.
- Green trust has a very important mediation role between the greenwashing perception and sustainable purchase behaviour. The indirect effect via green trust was -0.336 (95% Bootstrap CI $[-0.427, -0.253]$). The mediation effect is significant because 0 is not within the confidence interval.
- Green trust was the stronger mediator. The indirect effect, namely green trust (-0.336), was much bigger than the indirect effect, namely consumer skepticism (-0.172). This suggests that maybe "a loss of faith" in the environmental claims of fashion brands is a more powerful way in which greenwashing deters purchases of sustainable fashion products.
- The total indirect impact was not insignificant. This total indirect effect of greenwashing perception via the psychological mechanisms consumer skepticism and green trust was -0.508 , 95% bootstrap $[-0.609, -0.410]$ indicating that both together account for a considerable proportion of this relationship.
- The result was that there was partial mediation. Even when consumer skepticism and green trust were added into the model, the direct influence of greenwashing perception on sustainable purchase behaviour is still significant ($B = -0.291$, $p < 0.001$). Greenwashing thus influences sustainable fashion buying directly and indirectly on a psychological level.
- Overall results show that credibility plays a major part in sustainable fashion consumption. Greenwashing can lead to a vicious cycle where inert or misleading eco-friendly messages raise awareness among consumers and green trust, and consequences down the chain can ultimately dampen the desire to buy green clothing. To boost consumer trust and facilitate the transition into sustainable fashion consumption, transparent, verifiable and credible sustainability communication is key.

Conclusion

The study "Sustainable Fashion Consumption in the Era of Greenwashing: Examining the Mediating Roles of Consumer Skepticism and Green Trust in Sustainable Purchase Behaviour" found that consumer reactions to sustainable claims are an important measure to take into account when explaining sustainable fashion purchasing behaviour. Factor analysis yielded a 4-factors solution as the final results with 74.015% of total variance accounted and the factors were perpendicularly rotated to ensure that they are orthogonal and reliable. Further, the factors were found to be suitable for use in research because of the high KMO value and highly significant Bartlett's test, and the results of high values of Cronbach's alpha indicated strong reliability.

The results of the regression showed that greenwashing perception significantly negatively affects the behaviour of buying sustainable fashion. If consumers do not see that any fashion brand is credible about the environmental attributes then they will be less likely to buy from them. The results show that greenwashing can thus have a counterproductive impact: the willingness to engage in sustainable consumption can be lowered due to doubtful sustainability information!

This relationship can be further illustrated by the mediation analysis. The perceiving of greenwashing and sustainable fashion purchase behaviour become significant when there's an interaction between greenwashing perception and consumer skepticism and green trust. Perceived greenwashing leads to not only green distrust, but also to green distrust. Skepticism then has a negative influence on sustainable purchasing behaviour while green trust relates positively to sustainable purchasing behaviour. The substantial indirect effect via both mediators also revealed the important role of consumers' psychological reactions as mechanisms that lead to purchase decisions being impacted by greenwashing.

Out of the two mediators, green trust dominated the mediation process, suggesting that both the decrease in trust in a fashion brand's environmental statement and their effect on sustainable purchase were significant. Consumers' skepticism is also of great importance, as this encourages consumers to doubt the authenticity and credibility of sustainability claims. The direct effect of greenwashing perception did not diminish with the inclusion of both mediators, thus the study shows the occurrence of "partial parallel mediation".

The study provides a holistic picture of sustainable consumption in fashion by showing how important it is for the sustainability communication to be credible, not only for the consumers to be aware of ecological consequences in their consumption or to have enough sustainable alternatives. Brands should therefore take action to ensure their fashion items have clear and measurable sustainability practices, rather than general environmental claims. More authentic sustainability communication, more credible certification, more transparent reporting of environmental impacts and more integrity between communicating about green promises and being green in business can help build green trust and diminish consumer suspicion. Thus, the fashion industry can enhance the relationships with consumers, fostering a larger shift from the idea of sustainable marketing to a sustainable consumption as well.

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