# Green Washing and Consumer Behavior with Mediating Role of Green Skepticism and Moderating Role of Influencer Marketing in the FMCG Industry in Sri Lanka

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*Abstract*

*It is very common that firms in FMCG industry claim to be green in the recent years increased in Sri Lanka but the reality is not very well known to them and most of them buy even without verifying the products claim. This study was intended to study the impact of green washing on consumer behavior with the mediating role of green skepticism and the moderating role of infuluencer marketing. Data were collected through online questionnaire using google form from 400 respondents using convenience sampling. Path analysis of structural equation modelling used to test the hypotheses, it is found out that the green washing has a significant relationship with consumer behavior and green skepticism. Green skepticism found to have significant relationship with consumer behavior and mediates the relationship between greenwashing and consumer behavior while influencer marketing moderates the relationship between green skepticism and consumer behavior; it means the customers tend to believe the green claims of firm in the FMCG industry to a great extent. Though they doubt about the claim the influencer shape their behavior towards buying the products claim to be green. Consumers were not sensitive to green washed products hence the acceptance of green washed products are very high.*

*Keywords: Greenwashing, Green Skepticism, Influencer Marketing, Consumer Behavior*

## 1.0. Introduction

Green washing occurs when a company invests a greater amount of effort and resources on presenting itself as environment conscious than it does into really limiting the negative impact that it has on the environment (Edwards, 2022). Firms that have involved in widespread instances of greenwashing have garnered significant media attention. The environmentalist Jay Westerveld first used the phrase "greenwashing" in 1986.

Companies in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry in Sri Lanka market a variety of products labelled as a "Environmentally Friendly Product," packed in a fully closed packaging that did not provide for tactile interaction with the prospective customer. It was later discovered that the product was not as environmentally friendly as it was advertised to be.

The "recyclable" label is printed on the plastic packaging that contains a brand new shower curtain. There is some ambiguity regarding the recyclable status of either the package or the shower curtain. In either scenario, the label is misleading if there is any element of the packaging or its contents that cannot be recycled, with the exception of few small components. There is a label on an area rug that says "50% extra recycled material than before." In spite of the fact that it is factually accurate, the message gives the reader the incorrect idea that the rug is made up of a sizeable portion of recycled fiber. The word "recyclable" is printed on a trash bag. Because trash bags are not typically separated from the rest of the waste at the disposal, it is extremely unlikely that trash bags will ever be utilized for any other purpose again. The assertion is misleading since it promises an environmental advantage while there is actually no benefit that can be meaningfully quantified (Adam, 2022).

This suggests that greenwashing may have a negative impact on the environmentally conscious purchasing behaviors of consumers. Because to greenwashing, customers are developing a healthy skepticism and losing their faith, confidence, and trust in environmentally friendly goods and services (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). Greenwashing is harmful to businesses for a number of reasons, the most significant of which is that it increases suspicion on the part of consumers (Zhang et al., 2018). However, the bad consequences of greenwashing are also reflected on businesses that have genuine green agendas.

Because greenwashing produces confusion among consumers, it is difficult for consumers to differentiate between genuine environmental claims and misleading ones, which in turn drives consumers away from the market for environmentally friendly products (Nyilasy et al., 2014). It is a misleading marketing approach that is intended to confuse customers who would rather purchase goods and services from businesses that are more environmentally sensitive. The goal of this tactic is to deceive customers into spending more money with the company (Edward, 2022).

When it comes to increasing sales and return on investment, partnering with an influencer marketing organization can be useful for businesses that promote green-washed products (Nyilasy et al., 2014). Before making a purchase, consumers are increasingly checking their favorite influencers on Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube for product suggestions and evaluations. This trend is expected to continue as the popularity of influencer marketing continues to rise (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022). Since the advent of influencer marketing, a variety of specialized markets have emerged as natural destinations for various types of influencers. There is no differentiation in terms of what a consumer packaged goods (FCMG) brand an influencer can endorse. The relationship that an influencer has with their audience is unlike any other, and oftentimes it is even more trustworthy than that of a well-known celebrity (Nyilasy et al., 2014). Customers have the sense that they can relate to their favorite influencer, that they can trust them, and that they can find comfort in them. When an influencer establishes a trustworthy relationship with their audience, it is in the best interest of brands to take advantage of the influencer's natural voice when communicating their message to the general public rather than providing the influencer with a script of what they want them to say (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022). This actually does mislead the buyer in many situations, particularly those in which the influencer is not going to be the actual user of the green washed products they recommend.

The current body of study has mostly concentrated its attention on the concept, the practice, and the antecedents of greenwashing. Previous researchers did not focus on green skepticism, which occurs when consumers realize that firms are greenwashing, and how firms again use influencers to convince consumers to buy their products. However, there is little knowledge of the impacts that it has on consumer behavior. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of green washing on consumer behavior with the mediating role of green skepticism and moderating role of influencer marketing.

## 2.0. Literature Review
## 2.1. Green Washing

Greenwashing is an action or set of claims made by an organization that are deceptive, misleading, or otherwise inaccurate regarding the positive influence that a firm, product, or service has on the environment. The phrase "greenwashing" was used to describe this practice. Greenwashing has a variety of negative repercussions for customers, businesses, green industries, and the environment in general (Zhang et al., 2018).

For consumers, there is an increasing amount of evidence that suggests consumer attitude is tilted toward being green and environmentally sustainable. This can be seen in the expanding number of green and environmentally sustainable products. People, in general, want to assist alleviate the effects of climate change and want to do the right thing (Townsend & Alice, 2017). They also want to do what they can to achieve it. When a business, product, or service is found to be greenwashing, or when the practice is discovered to be taking place, there is a widespread feeling of mistrust that results. The consumers will no longer have faith in the brand or product in question, and they may also start to be skeptical of other claims (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022).

Consumers are likely to steer clear of greenwashing businesses and choose instead to do business with enterprises that have a stronger commitment to ethics (Ottman, 2011, Nguyen et al., 2019). Greenwashing can reduce the level of happiness felt by customers, diminish loyalty to a brand, and possibly damage subsequent purchases. Customers are much more likely to spend their money on goods and services that do not make an effort to mislead them through greenwashing (Johnston & Tan, 2015). Companies bear the additional risk of receiving fines from governmental and regulatory bodies located in several countries across the world.

## 2.2. Green Skepticism

The amount of green advertising and greenwashing has expanded in tandem with the rise in demand for environmentally friendly products and services. Greenwashing has a substantial impact on customer perceptions, and it effects consumers' skepticism and trust towards environmentally friendly products and services, which in turn affects consumers' attitudes toward the environment and their intents to make purchases (Nyilasy et al., 2012; Nguyen et al., 2019)). According to Leonidou & Skarmeas, (2017), consumers have begun to question the motives of corporations, raising doubts on the environmental claims made by those corporations as a result of the rising usage of greenwashing. Consumers are unsure of those environmental claims that can be trusted because of greenwashing, which has led to confusion in the market. The primary issue at hand is the consumer's lack of awareness regarding the matter in question. The information that is presented in "green claims" is frequently deceptive and difficult to comprehend. Green product and marketing claims continue to be misleading and confusing, despite the fact that there are regulations and guidelines in place to prevent this from happening (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022; Nguyen et al, 2019). Because green marketing claims are frequently ambiguous or challenging to grasp, customers frequently lump all green marketing claims together as "greenwashing" because they find it difficult to distinguish between genuine and misleading green claims. As a result, consumers are becoming less optimistic about the environment. Communications between businesses and customers have become difficult as a result of the rising anti-green sentiment, and this issue is seen throughout the green sector. Consumers who are overly skeptical and view all green advertising as greenwashing will interpret it as misleading (Pittman & Abell, 2021), and consumers will see all green marketing negatively if they are unable to distinguish between genuine and greenwashed commercials. Customers may no longer be able to believe the environmental advantages claimed in marketing and products as a result. As a result, green marketing may become less effective (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022).

## 2.3. Influencer Marketing

It is now a common practice in marketing to persuade public figures such as celebrities, influential people, and others of a similar stature to endorse specific items or companies in public (Wielki, 2020). Influencers who continue to promote hazardous products or brands have seen their reputation erode as more individuals have become aware of the need for environmental and social change and have gotten involved in working toward those changes (Kumar & Tripathi, 2022). In order for brands to continue to have an impact and reach a wider audience, it is likely that they will try to shift their attention toward engaging this new crop of reputable influencers. On the other hand, as a result of this change, businesses and brands will be held to a higher standard. This is something that should go without saying. The consumer is trying to hold businesses accountable for their behavior in yet another way, and this is one of those ways celebrity (Nyilasy et al., 2014). As we move toward a world in which environmental and social goods are valued more highly, there will be a significant increase in the number of people in the public eye scrutinizing the companies that want to work with them. These people will frequently identify businesses that may attempt to "greenwash" their brands through a collaboration (Wielki, 2020).

The issue of trust is one that keeps coming up in discussions about influencer marketing in the modern era, and there is a perfectly good explanation for why this is the case (Pittman & Abell, 2021). People have come to realize that advertisements are dishonest and that celebrities are paid to endorse products that they are not necessarily interested in. While influencers have built their followings around a topic that they are extremely enthusiastic about, their followers are called fans. In addition, because they stand to lose their audience if they promote items that they have not thoroughly researched and vetted, they are more likely to limit their endorsements to only those items. Because of this, the people they are addressing have faith in them.

A significant contribution to the growth of influencer marketing is the increasing prevalence of ad blocking software. People have a preference for blocking advertisements, but they also have other objections. Therefore, it is quite clear that influencer marketing, along with user-generated content, is what shapes the purchasing behaviors of consumers based on the trends, facts, and figures that have been observed (Pittman & Abell, 2021). And even though celebrities have a wider audience, those who have a micro-influence tend to have more sway (Wielki, 2020).

The content of marketing campaigns that is generated by influencers plays a significant part in shaping the purchasing behaviors of consumers. This is primarily attributable to the format's trustworthiness, authenticity, great delivery, and attractiveness to the audience (Wielki, 2020). In addition to this, the change in message that an endorser can expose is not commonly found in traditional marketing; for this reason, the influence that it has on messages and their decision to buy immediately increases.

## 2.4. Consumer Behavior

Concern for the environment is one of the primary cognitive measures that can predict environmentally responsible consumption behavior (Adam, 2022). People who are concerned about the environment are more likely to look for environmentally friendly products, and they are frequently ready to pay a higher price for those products (Edward, 2022). Considering that the conversation of the business is the main information source for the consumer, who are looking for environmentally friendly products may be more susceptible to greenwashing (Johnstone & Tan, 2015). On the other hand, if consumers believe that a company is engaging in greenwashing, this has a negative impact on both their purchase intention and the company's image because consumers are unable to trust the information that is provided by the company (Ottman, 2011). This, in turn, increases the likelihood that the customer will be unable to make a decision regarding the purchase.

Despite this, Zhang et al., (2018) discovered that consumers are susceptible to green cues simply due to their presence, irrespective of the quality of the statement. This has a beneficial effect on the consumer's intent to buy. According to Sun et al. (2021), nature-evoking aspects in selling have a positive impact on consumers' perceptions of brand images. This finding suggests that imaginary resemblances of nature, such as the color green or symbols that resemble nature, influence consumers by evoking an image of an environmentally friendly product or service in the consumer's mind. Greenwashing can significantly boost the buying behaviour of environmentally conscious consumers by incorporating green cues into marketing messages Zhang et al., (2018). However, this is only the case if the consumer does not recognize greenwashing and believes the environmental claims made by the company. Therefore, consumers who have strong environmental values may be more vulnerable to react to green cues and search for green products. As a result, greenwashing may have a greater effect on customers who have good environmental values.

## 4.0. Methodology

## 4.1. Research Strategy and Research Design

The research paradigm that was followed for this study was a positivist paradigm. This is because the research paradigm tries to follow a predictive model that is established by previous studies to investigate its generalizability in a different setting. It was necessary to collect primary data in order to continue the study because there was a lack of secondary data pertaining to the influence of greenwashing on customer behaviour. The use of primary data allows for the collected data to be tailored to the objective of the research in a manner that is as close as is practically possible.

Greenwashing is established as the independent variable influencing the dependent variable Consumer Behavior within the study model. Green skepticism as a mediator between the independent and dependent variables, influencer marketing is anticipated to moderate the link between green skepticism and Consumer Behavior. In order to confirm or refute the hypotheses, the study employs a deductive research strategy and conducts tests on the hypotheses. The behavior of the subjects and the research setting are not governed. Consequently, this study employs a descriptive research design.

## 4.2. Population and Sampling

The population is the complete group of individuals, events, or objects that the researcher seeks to examine. It is the group of people, events, or objects for which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions (Sekeran & Bougie, 2013).

Because the population is known and it is simple to collect data, non-probability sampling, a convenient sampling method, was adopted. This strategy will be implemented since samples are easier to establish, less expensive, and sufficiently representative within the area of the research.

The number of items to be included in a study is the sample size. In this situation, 400 consumers form the sample size. We distributed the survey to our own network of contacts via email and social media. 400 questionnaires were distributed to consumers. We utilized Google Form for the data collection, which began on the 15th of July 2022 and concluded on the 14th of August 2022. So far, the collection has lasted thirty days.

### 4.3. Data to be gathered

The survey method was utilized to acquire data. According to Hawkins et al. (2007), surveys are a methodical approach of collecting data from a significant number of individuals via the use of questionnaires. It is essential to any study to collect pertinent data from credible sources. The majority of this study is based on primary and secondary data gathered utilizing the following sources and methods: We collected primary data via questionnaires. Secondary data consists of information that has been utilized for a purpose other than the one for which it was originally obtained were collected from websites, books, and periodicals.

### 4.4. Conceptual Framework and hypotheses development

To investigate the research objectives this thesis proposes to use the following conceptual framework
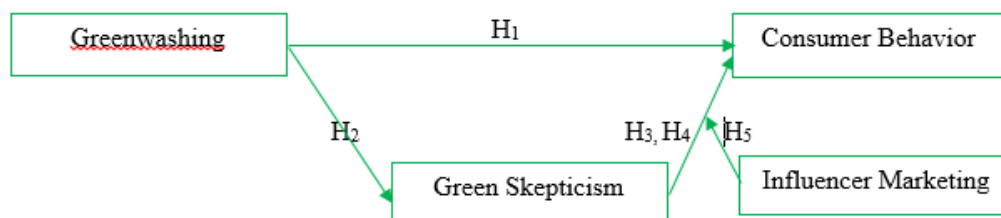


Source: Adopted and Modified from (Nguyen et al., 2019)

Based on the above literature and conceptual framework, the following hypotheses have been developed

$H_1$: There is a positive relationship between green washing and consumer behavior

$H_2$: There is a positive relationship between green washing and green skepticism

$H_3$: There is a positive relationship between green skepticism and consumer behavior

$H_4$: Green skepticism mediates the relationship between green washing and consumer behavior

$H_5$: influencer marketing moderates the relationship between green skepticism and consumer behavior

### 5.0. Results of Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 and AMOS. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) will be used. Descriptive analysis, CFA, Correlation analysis and Path Analysis were performed to test the hypothesis and measure the model fit.

### 5.1. Sample Description

This study employed an online survey to disseminate questionnaires to 400 participants; 36 questionnaires were omitted from the final sample because they were incomplete or had nonserious response behavior. 364 valid and complete replies were collected for analysis.

20% of the participants were male and 80% were female. 38% of the respondents are between the ages of 25 and 34, 14% are between the ages of 45 and 54, and 18% and 17%, respectively, are between the ages of 35 and 54 and over the age of 55. Consequently, the perfect representation of age groups older than 35 is the strength of this sample, as these age groups account for a significant share of consumption as the breadwinners of many households.

Education wise, participants had a NVQ level 17%, Higher national diploma 19% or bachelor's degree which was represented by 35% , while 15% had passed G. C. E. (A/L) and 7% had a master's degree. This witnesses the good composition where the respondents were well educated who have the ability to evaluate the green claim made by the firms in the FMCG industry.

As for household income, participants were quite equally divided over the first two income brackets of below Rs. 50.000, and Rs. 50.000 to Rs. 99,000 were 34% and 38%, while Rs. 100,000 and above was 20%. When it came to marital status, around half of the participants (46%) were single, while 28% were in a relationship and 22% was married with children.

Respondents were asked about their concern to environment when purchasing, 52% were highly concerned while 23% was not worried about environmental impact. Lastly, 72% of the respondents follow celebrities from various fields like cinema, sports and professionals in any of the social media, such as Facebook, twitter, linked in, Instagram and others. This clearly witnesses the influence of celebrities (Influencers) in their purchasing decisions.

## 5.2. Validity and Reliability Analysis

Prior to its application to structural equation modeling, the measurement model was validated using the two-stage approach developed by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). The measurement model has supplied the appropriate fit statistics ($\chi2$ /df = 4.4; GFI=.91; AGFI=.90; TLI=.91; CFI=.92; RMSEA=.06). These statistics can be found in the table below.

### Table 1: Analysis of Reliability and Validity

| Variable | Item Code | Factor Loadings | Cronbachs Alpha | CR Value | AVE Value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Green Washing | GW1 | 0.849 | 0.873 | 0.922 | 0.782 |
| | GW2 | 0.854 | | | |
| | GW3 | 0.805 | | | |
| | GW4 | 0.850 | | | |
| | GW5 | 0.955 | | | |
| | GW6 | 0.976 | | | |
| Green Skepticism | GS1 | 0.816 | 0.916 | 0.951 | 0.841 |
| | GS2 | 0.845 | | | |
| | GS3 | 0.826 | | | |
| | GS4 | 0.913 | | | |
| | GS5 | 0.923 | | | |
| | GS6 | 0.886 | | | |
| Influencer | IM1 | 0.861 | 0.936 | 0.815 | 0.855 |
| | IM2 | 0.885 | | | |
| | IM3 | 0.963 | | | |
| | IM4 | 0.964 | | | |
| | IM5 | 0.891 | | | |
| Consumer Behavior | CB1 | 0.814 | 0.883 | 0.962 | 0.793 |
| | CB2 | 0.812 | | | |
| | CB3 | 0.945 | | | |
| | CB4 | 0.919 | | | |
| | CB5 | 0.921 | | | |

The degree to which a particular measurement provides a consistent measurement of a concept is what is meant by the term "reliability," and Cronbach's alpha is one method for determining the degree to which that consistency is maintained. As a general rule of thumb, a Cronbach's alpha of.70 or higher is considered to be good,.80 or higher is considered to be better, and.90 or higher is considered to be the best (Sekeran & Bougue, 2013). The reliability study found that the cronbach's alpha coefficient of each of the 22 items was greater than 0.8; this suggests that there is a higher level of internal consistency between the items of each variable. Accordingly Green Washing 0.873, Green Skepticism 0.916, Influencer Marketing 0.936 and Consumer Behavior 0.883.

Factor loading values of Green Washing varies between 0.805-0.976, Green Skepticism falls between 0.816 – 0.923 , Influencer Marketing were 0.861 – 0.964 and Consumer Behavior were 0.812 – 0.945. At the same time, composite reliabilities values of all variable falls between 0.815 – 0.962, and AVE values were between 0.782-0.855. These findings suggest that the measurement model follows the convergent validity criterion as stated by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), standard factor loadings should be statistically significant and greater than the minimum value of 0.60, composite reliabilities should be larger than 0.80, and values of average variance extracted for all measurement items should be more than 0.50.

## 5.3.  Correlation Analysis

A correlation test was carried out for the purpose of determining the strength of the linear relationship that exists between independent variables and dependent variables in this study. The context of the variables being studied has an effect on the strength of the relationship between two variables (strong, moderate, or weak), as measured by a correlation coefficient. The following values represent strong ($r = \pm.5$), moderate ($r = \pm.3$) and weak relationships ($r = \pm.1$) according to (Cohen, 1988).

As described in Table 2 , the results revealed that the variables, namely, Green Washing, Green Skepticism, and Influencer Marketing have strong positive relationship with consumer behavior.

**Table 2: Correlation between Variables**

|  | GW | GS | IM |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CB** | r=0.716<br>Sig = 0.000** | r=0.825<br>Sig = 0.000** | r=0.871<br>Sig = 0.000** |

## 5.4.  Structural Equation Model and Hypotheses Testing
### 5.4.1. *Hypotheses Testing: Direct Effect*

This section discusses the findings of the structural model that was derived through the use of SEM, as well as the findings of the testing of hypotheses. The exploratory power of the regression model in conjunction with the result obtained through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM). The conclusion can be seen in table 3, and it is presented as a demonstration of the connection between exogenous and endogenous variables. The explanation of the standardised regression coefficients of the path relationship between exogenous and endogenous variables can be found here.

**Table 3: Relationship between Variables**

|  |  | Path | Unstd. estimate | S.E. | C.R. | Beta | P | Std. Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CB. | <--- | GW. | .268 | .152 | 2.475 | .258 | *** | .334 |
| GS. | <--- | GW. | .427 | .164 | 2.516 | .420 | *** | .347 |
| CB. | <--- | GS. | .513 | .087 | .327 | .056 | .027 | .129 |

As per the table 3: green washing has significant direct effect on consumer behavior and green skepticism, similarly, green skepticism has direct effect on consumer behavior.

According to the findings $H_1$, $H_2$ and $H_3$ are accepted, because the standardised regression coefficient of the path relationship is statistically significant between green washing and consumer behavior (Regression Coefficient   r= 0.258, significant level p= 0.000 <0.01).  This indicates that green washing has significant positive relationship with consumer behavior. Similarly, standardised regression coefficient of the path relationship is statistically significant between green washing and green skepticism (Regression Coefficient   r= 0.420, significant level p= 0.000 <0.01).  This indicates that green washing has significant positive relationship with green skepticism. At the same time, standardised regression coefficient of the path relationship is statistically significant between green skepticism and consumer behavior (Regression Coefficient   r= 0.056, significant level p= 0.027 < 0.05).  This indicates that green skepticism has significant positive relationship with consumer behavior.

### 5.4.2. *Hypotheses Testing: Indirect Effect*

The indirect and direct effects were computed using AMOS. Detailed results are shown in following.

**Table 4: Unstandardized indirect effect**

|      | GW    | GS    | CB    |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| GS   | .000  | .000  | .000  |
| CB   | .049  | .000  | .000  |

**Table 5: Indirect Effects Analysis**

|      | 95% Lower Bound | | | 95% Upper Bound | | | P-value | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
|      | GW   | GS   | CB   | GW   | GS   | CB   | GW   | GS   | CB   |
| GS   | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | …    | …    | ….   |
| CB   | .021 | .000 | .000 | .072 | .000 | .000 | .002 | ….   | ….   |

The mediating effect of KMP is presented in the above table. The mediating effect of GS is 0.028. The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of GS on CB is (lower bound= 0.011, upper bound= 0.072). The value of 0 does not fall within this interval. The direct path from GW on CB is also significant. Direct Effect without mediation indicates that green washing is positively (0.258) and significantly (p<0.01) related to consumer behavior when GS is included as a mediating variable, the regression weights has been substantially reduced (0.258 to 0.049) but were highly significant. If the regression weight is reduced, but it is still significant, it provides evidence of partial mediation (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Hence, GS is a partial mediator to GW and CB. Hence, GS partially mediates the relationship between GW and CB.

### 5.4.3. *Hypotheses Testing: Moderator Effect*

Moderating variable is the variable that "moderates the effects" of an independent variable on its dependent variable. In other words, "interfere" in the relationship between an independent variable and its corresponding dependent variable. The path of interest were identified where the moderator variable is to be assessed as shown in the table 5. According to Hair et al. (2010) Multi-Group CFA method has been used for assessing the effect of moderator variable in the overall model and individual paths.

**Table 5: Moderation test**

| Model                 | NPAR | CMIN     | DF   | P    | CMIN/DF |
|-----------------------|------|----------|------|------|---------|
| Unconstrained         | 363  | 3488.644 | 1878 | .000 | 1.857   |
| Measurement residuals | 95   | 3685.223 | 1825 | .000 | 2.019   |

Based on the moderation test table 5 above, showed that relative chi square for unconstrained was lower that measurement residual. Unconstrained relative chi-square was 3488.644 and measurement residual chi square at 3685.223. The output indicates there was a presence of moderation effect of the moderator on the overall model. This indicates that influencer marketing moderates the relationship between green skepticism and consumer behavior.

## 6.0. Findings and Discussions

There has been a limited amount of research that incorporates green skepticism and influencer marketing to investigate the process and context by which greenwashing affects consumer behavior. Despite the fact that previous research has suggested that greenwashing plays a significant role in consumer behavior, this method of investigation has not been conducted.

To begin, greenwashing is significantly related to the purchasing behavior of customers and they are becoming more environmentally conscious as environmental issues continue to worsen and as their awareness of the need to protect the environment grows. As a result, they are placing a greater emphasis on purchasing environmentally friendly goods and services that are also beneficial to the environment (Nguyen et al., 2019; Nyilasy, 2014). Consumers learn about the misconduct of companies by watching the news on television, searching the internet, and participating in social media. This has a negative impact on consumer behaviors and discourages purchases, while it is again shaped by influencers by endorsing brands and products as stated by (Wielki, 2020). There is no research that utilizes an integrative and all-encompassing methodology to explain the mediating roles of green skepticism and moderating role of influencer marketing in the relationship between greenwashing and consumer behavior.

The following paragraphs contain a number of fresh ideas for new initiatives that have been proposed with the intention of preventing greenwashing. To begin, there is no denying that green business strategies have helped improve corporate image, green belief, and green purchasing intent (Nyilasy, 2014). These improvements are indisputable facts. However, there is still a great deal of controversy regarding the potential effects that a rapid increase in environmentally friendly practices could have on the quality of the environment, this was the same in (Pittman & Abell, 2021). The purpose of this paper is to investigate the relationship between greenwashing, green skepticism, influencer marketing, and consumer behavior in Sri Lanka. This is the first attempt to do so. Because of this discovery, businesses will have a better understanding of the intricate psychological processes that are involved in greenwashing, which will help them build trust with their customers, which in turn will increase positive word-of-mouth communication and consumer behavior in relation to their products.

As stated by Pittman & Abell, (2021), it is found to be customers do not place a high value on the originality of environmentally friendly products; consequently, businesses that have a credible green marketing are anticipated to be successful in gaining customer trust and increasing their intention to make a purchase. Once again, influencer marketing is able to assist companies in removing skepticism held by consumers regarding their brand.

## 7.0.    Conclusions and Limitations

The goal of this research was to investigate the impact of greenwashing on consumer behavior. This study demonstrate how the green skepticism of Sri Lankan consumers and firms' influencer marketing strategies affects their consumption of environmentally friendly products within the FMCG industry. Our findings demonstrated the effect of consumers' green skepticism that arises when consumers observe greenwashing and recognize the risk and confusion associated with green consumption. This occurs when consumers observe greenwashing and recognize the risk associated with green consumption. This highlights how vital it is for businesses to provide information that is accurate when it comes to their products.

Green washing results in more sales among Sri Lankan consumers as a result of their growing concern for the environment and their health; however, once consumers realize that they are being misled or put in danger by the consumption that falsely claims to have qualities that it does not in fact possess and is instead referred to as a greenwashing goods, they become skeptical and stop believing in the product as well as the company that sells it. This causes consumers to lose faith in the product. Use of famous celebrities from a variety of fields to inform about the product or to persuade the consumers towards their green washed product are also high in Sri Lanka; this is something that really influences the consumers to buy such products again and again.

According to the findings of this study, for businesses, determining that a product is misleading can be detrimental to the company's image and result in decreased sales volume, market share, and financial results. In the most severe of situations, this will continue until the product in question is removed from the market. In general, the most common forms of deceiving customers through greenwashing involve the use of environmentally friendly packaging that misrepresents the product as organic or portrays it as having some sort of connection to the natural world. Other aspects of the products are associated with information that is ambiguous, irrelevant, and even false regarding the product's status as being environmentally friendly or appropriate in green washed product.

In conclusion, one of the drawbacks of this study is that the respondents are not provided with an explicit definition of the variables that are used in the questionnaire. This is due to the fact that it is expected of them that they have a fundamental understanding of the topic. However, we believe that the most important contribution of this study is to prove that consumers have a tendency to place a high value on environmentally friendly products in the FMCG industry and that they may choose not to consume a product if they learn that it engages in the practice of greenwashing.

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