

The impact of Environmentally Friendly Behavior (EFB) on the Green Perceived Quality in UAE: The mediating role Green Trust
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Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of environmentally friendly behavior (EFB) on the green perceived quality in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the mediating role of green trust. The research design is based on a sample of consumers in the UAE and uses structural equation modeling to test the hypotheses. The results show that EFB has a positive impact on green perceived quality, and green trust plays a mediating role in this relationship. The findings provide valuable insights for firms operating in the UAE to understand the importance of incorporating environmentally friendly practices in their operations, as well as the role of consumer trust in enhancing the perceived quality of green products and services. The results can inform marketing strategies aimed at promoting EFB and building trust in green initiatives and may contribute to the development of more sustainable consumption patterns in the UAE.

Keywords: Environmentally Friendly Behavior, Green Perceived Quality, Green Trust, UAE

Introduction

Since 1970s, environment of the Earth started to suffer adversely from various industrial activities, and due to the rising pollution, the environment started to move in a new way across the globe. Significance of environment has now become the center of attention for most of the people, and the first United Nations Environment Program (UNPE) was established by United Nations General Assembly in 1972. UNPE serves the basic objective of it as to establish the ways to reduce the pollution, maintain the environmental movements by different United Nations agencies, and to save the Earth from pollution. Consequently, Green environmental management started to grow. Meanwhile, businesses started to take social responsibility more seriously and motivated to adopt green strategies as crucial part of their business activities through changing their marketing strategies completely (Majid et al.,2020).

As these days, the green movements are more frequent, ultimately the consumers would be motivated to alter their patterns and shall be focused to a greater extent for buying green products (Kautish & Sharma,2020). Consumers valuing green movements are increasing these days, and they are more conscious about how their buying behaviors keep influence on the

environment. Consumers are motivated to make those type of purchases which may provide for the environment of the world. People are more attracted to the green products even if they have to bear a higher price for them (Al Mamun et al.,2020). It has become a world-wide trend to produce green and consume green. We should be transforming our traditional practices of production and consumption so the Earth may enjoy a sustainable development.

Green movements are driven by Taiwan since many years, and it created awareness among people for green products. Moreover, comparatively greater number of green products are accessible in Taiwan. Nevertheless, a very large population of consumers do not trust the green products, and they feel reluctant towards the organizations and consumers which prefer to move with green concept (Ren et al.,2021).

Various companies are finding new methods to deploy according to the environmental requirements in order to create product differentiation. For gaining product differentiation, firms are seeking green marketing more effective. By offering extra environmental products and services, firms are seeking to gain benefits from the green concept. In present era, environmental sustainability has become their center of attention (Du et al.,2020).

Because of this, marketing and advertising campaigns of different companies are involving the messages of “environmental friendly,” “earth friendly,” “eco,” “green,” and “sustainability.” The claims of green should be having clarity, accuracy and truthfulness. However, there are various environmental claims which are proven to be unclear and misleading. In this era, significant environmental indication is being given by the consumers through their purchase patterns. Firms are forced to transform their marketing strategies due to the “green purchase”. Decisive practices of consumers with respect to the environmental activities of a corporation or the environmental advantages of a product or service is referred to (Phreecha & Chinpa,2019). The advertising and messages given by a firm are the basis of reliance for the consumers for their decision-making capability, but their decision-making power becomes wear away due to Khiew, (2019). Consumers are unable to make a purchase if there is no consumer trust on the claims of a company, as they have no confidence of knowing anything. Consequently, there is more harm caused by the Greenwash to the whole market and virtuous companies could have a damaging influence on them. Consumers are well-aware about the environmental problems due to a significant rise in global warming. They are motivated to buy green products which may contribute for global environment.

Hypothesis Development

Environmentally Friendly Behavior (EFB)

The feelings and concerns of consumers in regard to environment originated from green issues are the cause of generation of environmentally friendly behavior. Kim *et al.* (2019) suggests that, Environment encompass attitude, injunctive norms and personal norms which hold a strong impact on EFB. Personal norms hold a higher degree of influence as compared to the injunctive norms, which shows that if the consumers think environmental issues are obligatory to be concerned with, their behavior is consistent with the personal norms. There is a greater impact of Injunctive norms over environmental concern attitude, therefore, showing that personal emotions emerging from stress of the society can motivate consumers for EFB as compared to the emotions emerged from the green issues (Khiew et al.,2020).

These type of buyer behaviors are involved by consumer EFB: utilizing biodegradable bags for carrying waste, reading of the labels along with cleaning products, purchase of packaging supplies which are reusable, recycling of the product and contributing to particular classes in the environment. Researchers interpret consumer EFB from the perspective of behavior and intent as a subset of pro-social or selfless behaviors (Hayati et al.,2020). The prior scholars developed the longing of the consumers to remunerate higher for eco-friendly services and products (Shafaghat et al.,2019). The earlier stack of literature has been observed to keep a concern with the intention for the engagement in environmentally friendly behavior (EFB). Most of the intentions encompass the following: “intentions of selecting those services which are environmental friendly”, “paying eagerly for the eco-friendly products and services”, “staying committed to the products and services which are environmental friendly”, and “communications relevant to word of mouth of green” (Ofek, et al.,2019). Values are considered as determinant of environmentally friendly behavior (EFB) by prior literature for the implementation of concept of pro-social behavior (McCoy et al.,2018). Personal norms, altruism and feelings of moral obligation by various studies in previous literature and in order to explore attitudes which involve energy saving, recycling activities and practices], and contributing for protection of the environment.

Green Perceived Quality

“Objective quality” and “Perceived quality” are the two main divisions of product quality. The technological benefits or products’ strength by utilizing measurable or expected standards comes under the definition of Objective quality. The Perceived quality is basically related to the consumer of products or services, general evaluation of superiority of product or service, and it is generally more highly abstract as compared to the simple recommendations to qualities of the product and its features (Yoon et al.,2019). The disparity prevailing between objective quality and perceived quality are due to: Pre-existing impression of consumer influences the perceived quality; belief of consumer about significant quality aspects varies from the perspective of manufacturers; because of difference in information, customers are unable to grasp detailed knowledge due to which they make deductions about the quality of a particular product contingent on limited information provided. Nevertheless, it has been suggested by the researchers conducted earlier that perceived quality bears all the quality measures as the quality perception is the consequence of assessment and evaluation, thus, practically, there is no presence of objective quality (Haris et al.,2021). “The comprehensive evaluation of superiority of the product or service by the consumer”. Five factors can determine the perceived quality: proficiency in usage, Features of the product, performance, capacity of service, and image. A consumer if has no past experience of purchasing a product, past experience can never lead to build a trust and development of belief in the infancy stage of a purchase; therefore, the buyer behaviors of consumers are influenced by the perceived quality (Khoshnava et al.,2018). Moreover, brand loyalty and brand commitment appear due to the element of Brand Trust. It has been observed in the previous studies that the mutual trust between consumers and sellers can be boosted up with the help of perceived quality. In real, trust is influenced positively by perceived quality (Husseinsyah et al.,2020). The extent to which the perceived confidence is gained by a customer for a person, object, process or event is referred as Trust. Therefore, the trust is boosted when a customer has a boosted sense of reliability and confidence towards the quality of a product.

Green Trust

Trust is about the belief of a party toward another about being reliable and to be dependent upon, and there is no risk involved that the other is deceptive and is determined to keep all commitments. Integrity, competence and benevolence are found as the basis for Trust. As trust is defined in social psychology studies, same is taken in marketing, describing that trust is dependent upon other party's goodwill and reliability. The extent of integrity and trust towards, words, speech and behaviors are referred as reliability, however, the interests of both of the parties relevant to the goals and welfare, and chasing the greatest shared interest is referred as goodwill (Joghee, et al.,2020).

Methodology

The Measurement of Constructs "7-point Likert scale having a range of 1 to 7" is used to measure the items of the questionnaire, having selection choices ranging from 1= strongly agree to 7= strongly disagree. Following are the explanations of the variables along with their measurement has been described:

Environmental friendliness. The present study is concerned with the friendliness of a product with the environment rather than the friendliness of a consumer and a company toward environment. There are very few numbers of studies which are concerned with the environmental friendliness of the product. Prior studies were concerned about environmental friendly consumer behaviors which depends upon the willingness to purchase green products for neutralizing environmental stress or the individualized green expectations should be met (Shabbir, et al.,2020). Furthermore, the evaluation for product environmental friendliness which involves reduced contamination along with non-environmental demolition throughout their life cycle.

Green perceived quality. The overall assessment of a consumer about the excellence of a service or product is referred as perceived quality considered distinctive from objective quality. The following studies of Amin and Tarun (2021) in order to interpret the definitions of green perceived quality as "The assessment made by the consumer concerning a brand's generalized environmental superiority."

Green trust. According to the study conducted by Chuah et al. (2020), the present study comes up with a definition of "green trust" as "The eagerness to rely on a brand, a product or a service by expecting or believing on it because of a credible experience, compassion, and capability of its performance relevant to environment." Additionally, referring to the research works of Wang et al. (2019), for the measurement of green trust, and four items are included in its measurement: (1) You consider that environmental image of a particular product is overall dependable; (2) you believe that the functionality of a particular product is generally reliable; (3) Generally, you think that this claims of a particular product on the basis of environment are well grounded; (4) The environmental performance of the product fulfils your expectations.

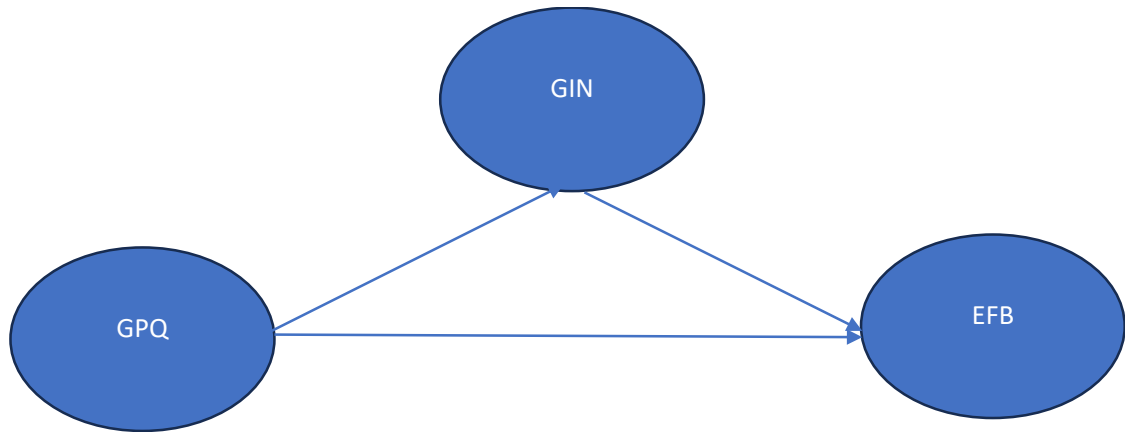


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

H1: There is positive relationship between GPQ and EFB

H2: There is positive relationship between GPQ and GIN

H3: There is positive relationship between GIN and EFB

H4: GIN mediates between GPQ and EFB

Results

The Results of the Measurement Model

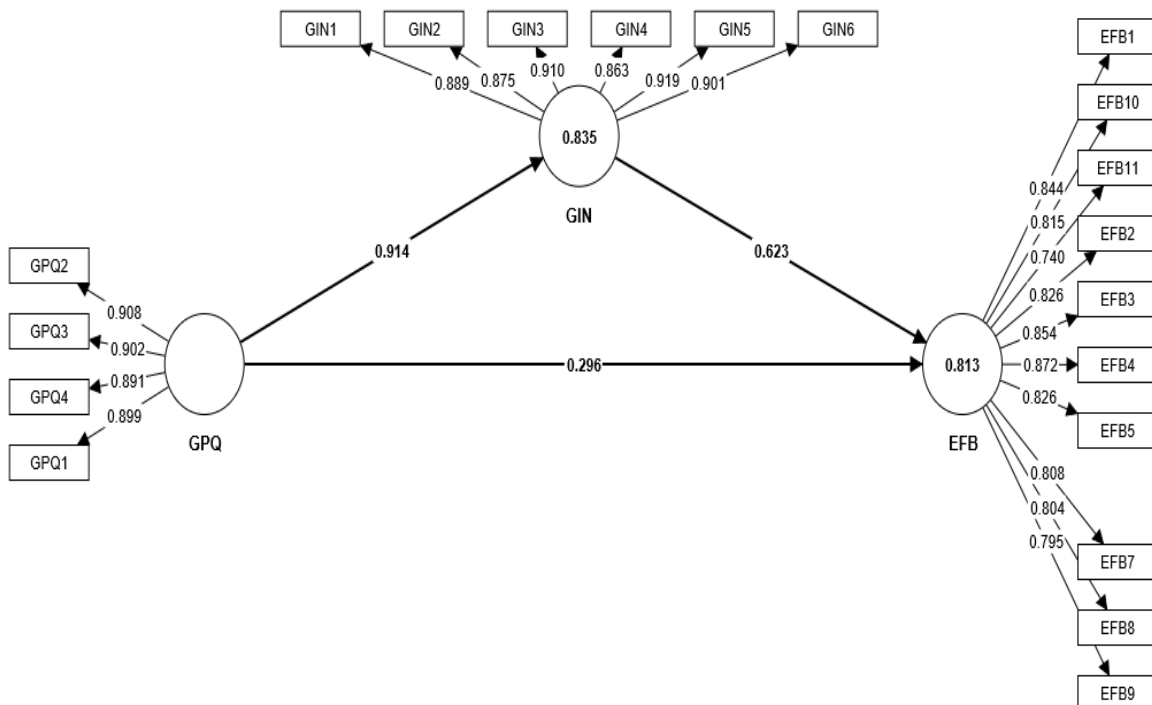


Figure 2: Measurement model

Table 1: Outer Loadings

	EFB	GIN	GPQ
EFB1	0.844		
EFB10	0.815		
EFB11	0.740		
EFB2	0.826		
EFB3	0.854		
EFB4	0.872		
EFB5	0.826		
EFB7	0.808		
EFB8	0.804		
EFB9	0.795		
GIN1		0.889	
GIN2		0.875	
GIN3		0.910	
GIN4		0.863	
GIN5		0.919	
GIN6		0.901	
GPQ2			0.908
GPQ3			0.902
GPQ4			0.891
GPQ1			0.899

Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the questionnaire items in this study. This study shows the evaluation of validity and reliability. Table 2 demonstrates that the value of every construct's value of Cronbach's α is greater than 0.85. As 0.7 is the criteria of acceptable value of Cronbach's α coefficient so that values exceeding 0.7 would show greater reliability (Abdulmuhsin et al.,2021; Nuseir et al.,2020; Yan et al.,2020)

. In order to test the discriminant and convergent validity, average variation extraction (AVE) was employed by this study. Average variation extraction (AVE) is helpful in estimating the appropriation of items of the questionnaire in explaining the average variation of that particular construct (Asada et al.,2020). 0.658, 0.723, 0.587 and 0.667 are the values for AVE sequentially for the four constructs demonstrated in Table 2. It can be observed that all of the values are greater than 0.5 which shows the acceptability of convergent validity (Basheer et al.,2020). The square root of AVE of a construct should be greater than the correlations among the constructs present in the study for the acceptability of divergent validity (Raof et al.,2021). The values placed on the diagonal are the square root estimations of AVEs, and the remaining values are showing the inter-construct Pearson correlation which are demonstrated in Table 2. For instance, the square roots of the AVEs for, green satisfaction and environmental friendliness are 0.8499 and 0.8106 respectively whose value is greater than the value of Pearson correlation shown in Table 3. It has been indicated that two constructs share significant discriminant validity between them. The square roots of AVEs for every construct are greater than the values of correlations among all of the constructs employed in this study as tabulated in Table 2. Therefore, value of discriminant validity is also acceptable according to the criteria.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
EFB	0.946	0.953	0.953	0.671
GIN	0.949	0.950	0.959	0.798
GPQ	0.922	0.922	0.945	0.810

The structural model belonging to structural equation modeling (SEM) is employed in this study in order to investigate the causal relationship shared by the constructs. It can be observed in Table 3, 4c and Figure 2 that the results of structural model, and the inter-constructs positive impacts in the structural model are affirmed by the path coefficients.

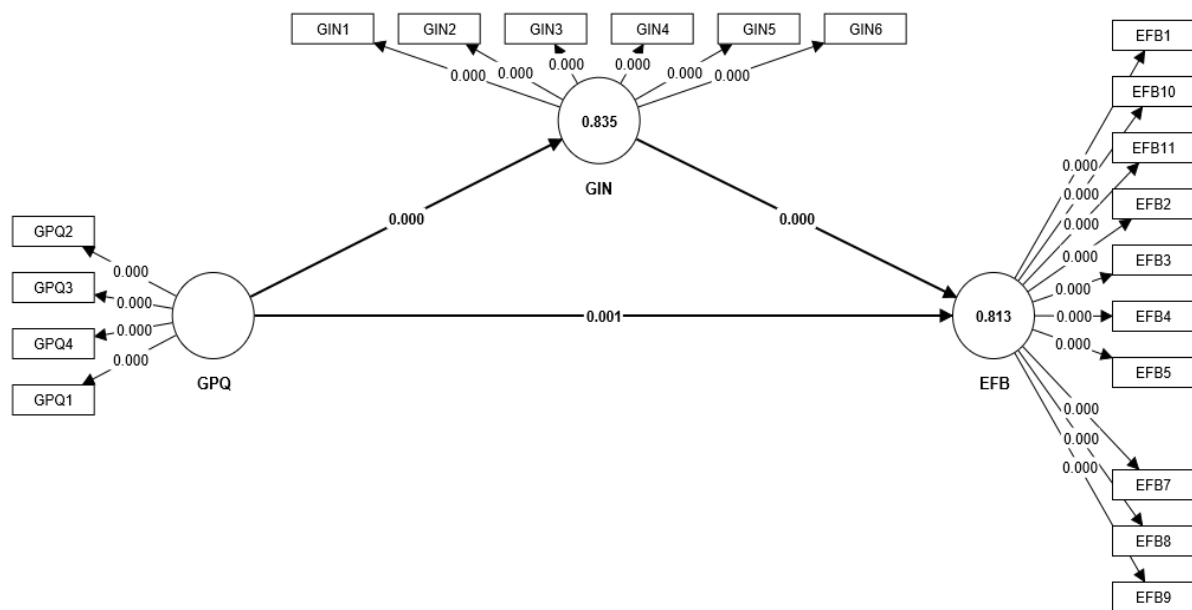


Figure 3: Structural Model

Table 3: Direct Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
GIN -> EFB	0.623	0.625	0.081	7.726	0.000
GPQ -> EFB	0.866	0.867	0.021	41.808	0.000
GPQ -> GIN	0.914	0.914	0.014	64.443	0.000

Table 4: Mediation Analysis

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
GPQ -> GIN -> EFB	0.569	0.571	0.075	7.578	0.000

Discussion

In this study, it has been observed that green trust is affected by environmental friendliness and mediation green perceived quality's impacts have been discussed. The impact of "greenwash" on green trust is examined by Al Mamun et al. (2020) and explored that green perceived risk and green consumer confusion hold mediation effects. Unlike the study of Yan et al. (2020), which shows that green wash negatively determines the green trust, environmental friendliness is exposed to be a positive precursor of green trust. According to the discussion of Yan et al. (2020) there is an effect of green perceived risk and green perceived quality on green trust, furthermore it examines how green satisfaction keeps mediation effect. However, it has been indicated by Al Mamun et al. (2020) that green trust is negatively determined by green perceived risk, yet it has been examined in this study that green perceived quality positively determines the green trust. It has also been pointed out by Amin and Tarun (2021) that green trust is positively determined by green perceived quality, thus, it has been proven by the present study that the relationship between green trust and environmental friendliness is mediated by green perceived quality. It is also explicated by this study that there is a positive impact of green satisfaction on green trust. Furthermore, it has also demonstrated that there is a positive impact of green perceived quality on green trust.

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