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### Explaining the mechanism of the effect of green washing behavior on the green purchase intention of consumers of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

Mohammad Ayati Mehr \*, Edris Mahmoodi, \*\* Bahar Sepyani\*\*\*

\* Phd in Management, Department of Management., faculty of Economics and social sciences , Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz , Ahvaz, Iran. (Corresponding Author)

Email: [M.ayati@scu.ac.ir](mailto:M.ayati@scu.ac.ir)

Postal address: Khuzestan- Ahvaz- Golestan Boulevard- Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz- Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences.



[0000-0002-1833-6253](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1833-6253)

\*\* Phd in Management, Department of Management., faculty of Economics and social sciences , Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz , Ahvaz, Iran.

Email: [ed.Mahmoodi@scu.ac.ir](mailto:ed.Mahmoodi@scu.ac.ir)

\*\*\* Graduated from Master of Business Administration, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran.

Email: [baharsepyani8115@gmail.com](mailto:baharsepyani8115@gmail.com)

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

### INTRODUCTION

With the increase in population growth and the problems of the planet, researchers have paid more attention to the phenomenon and behavior of greenwashing. Greenwashing behavior is a situation according to which companies and businesses present unhealthy products and services as green and organic (Wang et al., 2019). This study generates new insights for emerging markets and provides potentially important information for academics and practitioners on greenwashing behavior. It can be shown that almost half of people's income is spent on buying food products (Mishra & Sharma, 2012), so the quality, safety and performance of such products have attracted the attention of customers, consumers and shareholders (Bhattacharya, al. , 2012).), in addition, environmental protection has faced problems in the country due to the limitations of greenwashing regulations and their unclear and imprecise implementation. In the field of food products, national regulations on organic and green labels have not been determined, so many companies and food industries can use greenwashing behavior well and show themselves to be environmentally friendly (Chen & Chang, 2012). With these explanations, it is possible that customers are skeptical about green claims and the purchase of green products in society will decrease, which in turn will have harm to people in terms of safety and health, and its

consequences for the environment include It will be pollution and destruction of ecosystems (Hai et al., 2017). Due to having industrial companies, Khuzestan province is exposed to industrial and environmental pollution (Guo et al., 2014). In the past years, suggestions for minimizing the environmental effects of waste, access to green life, and maximizing the capacity of using green food industry products, which can reduce their potential effects by using the phenomenon of greenwashing, have not been presented by researchers. As a result, it is vital for consumers to review their product consumption practices and move from non-organic products to green products. By observing these cases, in this research, we will seek to investigate the phenomenon of greenwashing and explain the mechanism of its effect on the intention to buy green.

## METHODOLOGY

The current research is in the field of descriptive and survey research from the methodological point of view. Also, from the point of view of the implementation method, the current study has two phases: library and field. In the library phase, the researchers presented the research model by using the literature review and the existing experimental background. The authors' tool for this has been the use of library resources. In the field phase, the authors distributed questionnaires in order to test the fit of the model and research hypotheses. Finally, 276 healthy questionnaires were collected and analyzed using the structural equation modeling method based on the partial least squares approach.

## FINDINGS

The authors present the findings of this study in two basic steps. The first step of the findings is related to the fit and validity of the research model. The second group of findings of this research includes the confirmation of all research hypotheses, which are summarized in **Table 1**:

**Table 1.** The results of the test of research hypotheses

hypotheses	Path	Path coefficient	T Statistic	Result
H <sub>1</sub>	greenwash→ Green Purchase Intention	-0/316	6/045	supported
H <sub>2</sub>	greenwash→ Green Word of Mouth	-0/819	40/944	supported
H <sub>3</sub>	greenwash→ Green confusion	0/827	40/476	supported
H <sub>4</sub>	greenwash→ Green Skepticism	0/771	29/208	supported

H <sub>5</sub>	Green confusion→ Green Purchase Intention	-0/269	5/833	supported
H <sub>6</sub>	Green Skepticism→ Green Purchase Intention	-0/135	3/053	supported
H <sub>7</sub>	Green Word of Mouth→ Green Purchase Intention	0/254	5/218	supported
H <sub>8</sub>	greenwash→ Green confusion→ Green Purchase Intention	-0/104	2/985	supported
H <sub>9</sub>	greenwash→ Green Word of Mouth→ Green Purchase Intention	-0/208	5/596	supported

## CONCLUSION

The current research encourages and supports food industry marketers to create credible green claims that not only improve their business status, but also enhance their environmental programs. The results showed that some food industries have a high risk due to consumers' pessimism towards the greenness of their activities and services. Managers should focus on several environmentally friendly methods to reduce consumer cynicism. Managers should increase the transparency of environmental performance, and in addition, non-governmental organizations can audit companies' environmental reports and fine companies that engage in greenwashing. With these words, it is expected to be able to help control greenwashing behavior and green doubts to some extent.

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