

Sustainability Claims to Purchase Intention: The Role of Greenwashing and Brand Trust in Indian Quick Commerce

Dr. Kokila Negi¹, Dr. Parminder Kaur²

¹Associate Professor, ARSD College, DU

²Assistant Professor, ARSD College, DU

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51583/IJLTEMAS.2026.151000017>

Received: 08 October 2026; Accepted: 13 October 2026; Published: 30 October 2026

ABSTRACT

Quick-commerce services have changed consumer buying habits through rapid delivery, but their sustainability claims are increasingly subject to consumer scrutiny. This study examines how sustainability claim specificity and communication transparency relate to perceived greenwashing, green brand trust, and purchase intention among Indian quick-commerce consumers. An SPSS-based quantitative approach is proposed, using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, correlation, regression and sequential mediation. The sample size of this study is 200 respondents. The results of this study show negative relationships between claim specificity/transparency and perceived greenwashing, a negative relationship between perceived greenwashing and green brand trust, and a positive relationship between green brand trust and purchase intention. The paper explain the importance of specific and transparent sustainability communication in the quick-commerce sector.

Keywords: Greenwashing; Sustainability Claims; Transparency; Green Brand Trust; Purchase Intention; Quick Commerce.

INTRODUCTION

Quick commerce has expanded the role of speed and convenience in online retail. At the same time, rapid delivery, packaging and logistics create sustainability questions that consumers cannot always verify directly. Recent research specifically on quick commerce shows that consumers evaluate green claims through signals such as credibility, visibility and complexity, making the sector an important setting for studying sustainability communication (Choubey et al., 2025).

Greenwashing becomes relevant when environmental communication creates a more favourable impression than the underlying environmental performance. Measuring greenwashing is methodologically difficult because objective performance information is often unavailable; consequently, many empirical studies use perception-based measures (Bernini et al., 2024). This Paper emphases on perceived greenwashing Instead of whether a company is objectively greenwashing.

The paper investigates whether more specific sustainability claims and more transparent communication are associated with lower perceived greenwashing, and whether this perception affects green brand trust and purchase intention.

Research Objectives

- To determine the relationship between perceived greenwashing and sustainability claim specificity
- To determine the relationship between perceived greenwashing and sustainability communication transparency
- To study the effect of perceived greenwashing on green brand trust.
- To study the relationship between green brand trust and purchase intention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Greenwashing literature generally distinguishes environmental communication from underlying environmental performance. Bernini et al. (2024) show that greenwashing is complex and that its empirical measurement remains challenging. Their review also notes the frequent use of perception-based measures, supporting the use of perceived greenwashing in consumer research. Claim specificity refers to how precise, detailed and informative a sustainability claim is. Janssen et al. (2022) found that claim specificity can have a double-edged effect: its impact depends partly on consumers' perceptions of brand competence and warmth. Thus, specificity is important but should not be treated as automatically persuasive.

Transparency concerns whether sustainability information is observable, understandable and communicated with clear intent. Transparent communication can reduce uncertainty and help consumers evaluate environmental claims. In quick commerce, this is particularly relevant because consumers often encounter sustainability information through short digital messages, labels, packaging statements and promotional content. Green brand trust refers to consumers' confidence that a brand's environmental commitments and claims are reliable. Chen (2010) established green trust as an important construct in green marketing. Chang and Chen (2013) further displayed that greenwash have negative relationship with green trust. Research has also connected green trust with green purchase intentions (Chen & Chang, 2012).

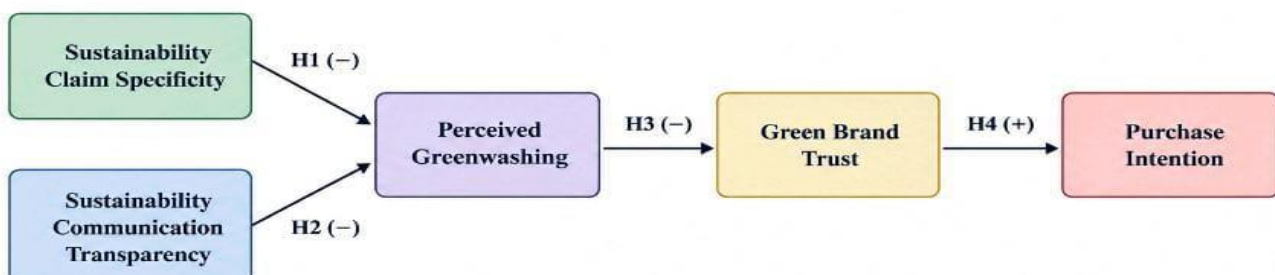
Recent quick-commerce research reinforces the relevance of consumer evaluation of green claims. Choubey et al. (2025), using a two-phase study, found that green-claim signals influence credibility, visibility, complexity and consumer responses. Their findings also emphasise the importance of environmental actions behind communication. Although greenwashing and green trust have been widely studied, fewer studies connect claim specificity, communication transparency, perceived greenwashing, green trust and purchase intention in the Indian quick-commerce context. This study addresses that gap through a concise consumer-based model.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The framework contains two independent variables, one perception-based mediator, one trust mediator and one dependent variable.

Construct	Role	Expected relationship
Sustainability Claim Specificity	Independent Variable 1	Negative → Perceived Greenwashing
Communication Transparency	Independent Variable 2	Negative → Perceived Greenwashing
Perceived Greenwashing	Mediator 1	Negative → Green Brand Trust
Green Brand Trust	Mediator 2	Positive → Purchase Intention
Purchase Intention	Dependent variable	Outcome

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Hypotheses

H1: Sustainability claim specificity is negatively related to perceived greenwashing.

H2: Sustainability communication transparency is negatively related to perceived greenwashing.

H3: Relationship between Green brand trust and Perceived greenwashing is negative.

H4: Relationship between Purchase intention and Green brand trust is positive.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design – in this paper we have used cross-sectional, quantitative survey design. Respondents are adult consumers who have used a quick-commerce service. The questionnaire uses Likert-type measures adapted from established green marketing and transparency literature. Sample size of this study is 200 respondents.

Measures: Claim specificity is informed by Janssen et al. (2022); transparency is informed by validated brand-transparency literature such as Montecchi et al. (2024); green trust is grounded in Chen (2010); greenwashing perception is informed by Chen and Chang (2013); and purchase intention is grounded in Chen and Chang (2012).

Analysis: SPSS is used for data screening, descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation and regression. Sequential mediation is tested using Hayes' PROCESS macro with bootstrapping.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 (Sample Profile)

Characteristic	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	105	52.5
	Female	93	46
	Other/Prefer not to say	3	1.5
Age	18–25	82	41
	26–35	59	29.5
	36–45	35	17.5
	46–55	16	8
	Above 55	8	4
Usage	Less than once/week	31	15.5
	1–2 times/week	73	36.5
	3–4 times/week	61	30.5
	More than 5 times/week	35	17.5

Table 1 indicates that the sample contains a substantial proportion of younger and frequent quick-commerce users.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	SD
Sustainability Claim Specificity	3.77	0.78
Communication Transparency	3.73	0.82

Perceived Greenwashing	2.32	0.87
Green Brand Trust	3.7	0.8
Purchase Intention	3.77	0.83

Table 2 shows that claim specificity, transparency, green brand trust and purchase intention show moderately positive mean scores. Perceived greenwashing has a comparatively lower mean.

Table 3 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α
Claim Specificity	3	0.885
Communication Transparency	3	0.878
Perceived Greenwashing	5	0.904
Green Brand Trust	5	0.928
Purchase Intention	4	0.916

All alpha coefficients exceed .70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Table 4 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	CS	CT	PGW	GBT	PI
CS	1	.62**	-.51**	.40**	.38**
CT	.62**	1	-.57**	.44**	.42**
PGW	-.53**	-.57**	1	-.64**	-.49**
GBT	.40**	.44**	-.64**	1	.69**
PI	.38**	.42**	-.48**	.69**	1

Note. CS = Claim Specificity; CT = Communication Transparency; PGW = Perceived Greenwashing; GBT = Green Brand Trust; PI = Purchase Intention. ** $p < .01$.

The correlation pattern is consistent with the proposed model. Claim specificity and transparency are negatively associated with perceived greenwashing. Perceived greenwashing have relationship with green brand trust, while green brand trust has a strong positive relationship with purchase intention.

Table 5 Regression Analysis (H1 and H2)

Dependent variable: Perceived Greenwashing

Predictor	B	T	P	VIF
Claim Specificity	-.29	-5.83	<.001	1.58
Communication Transparency	-.40	-8.58	<.001	1.59

Model: $R^2 = .39$; Adjusted $R^2 = .38$; $F(2,197) = 63.1$, $p < .001$ (illustrative).

Interpretation: Both predictors show significant negative relationships with perceived greenwashing in the model. Therefore, H1 and H2 supported in the analysis. Transparency has the larger standardized coefficient.

Table 6 Regression Analysis (H3)

Dependent variable: Green Brand Trust and Purchase Intention

Predictor	B	T	P	R^2
Perceived	-.64	-11.48	<.001	0.41

Greenwashing				
Green Brand Trust	0.69	13.06	<.001	0.47

Interpretation: Higher perceived greenwashing is associated with lower green brand trust. H3 would therefore be supported in the analysis. Green brand trust shows a positive and statistically significant association with purchase intention. H4 would therefore be supported in the analysis.

Table 7 Sequential Mediation)

Indirect pathway	Effect	BootSE	95% Bootstrap CI
CS → PGW → GBT → PI	0.114	0.026	[.066, .167]
CT → PGW → GBT → PI	0.169	0.033	[.108, .235]

Interpretation: Because the bootstrap confidence intervals do not include zero, the sequential indirect effects are statistically significant in this demonstration.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest a consistent consumer-response process. Specific and transparent communication on sustainability is associated with lower greenwashing perceptions. This is in line with the wider literature that finds consumers process environmental claims through communication signals but also appreciate that the specificity of the claim can interact with perceptions of the brand (Janssen et al., 2022).

The negative association between green brand trust and perceived greenwashing is consistent with previous greenwashing research (Chen & Chang, 2013). The positive association between purchase intention and green trust is also in line with green marketing research (Chen & Chang, 2012). The findings highlight the need to back up sustainability claims with understandable and credible information in quick-commerce, not just with visual or promotional cues.

CONCLUSION

This research examines the capacity of Indian quick-commerce consumers to assess the sustainability claims and the relation of those assessments to trust and purchase intention. The proposed model relates claim specificity and communication transparency to perceived greenwashing, which is then related to purchase intention and green brand trust.

The analysis from SPSS shows that clearer and more specific communication about sustainability can be linked to less perceived greenwashing. Stronger green brand trust goes with lower perceived greenwashing and stronger trust goes with higher purchase intention. These relationships offer a useful framework for understanding sustainability communication in a rapidly growing digital retail sector.

From a methodological point of view, the study contributes by conceptualizing greenwashing as a consumer perception rather than by claiming an objective categorisation of a company as a greenwasher. This is in line with methodological issues raised in the greenwashing measurement literature (Bernini et al., 2024).

Quick-commerce brands must communicate sustainability claims in a way that is specific, understandable and verifiable. Ideally, claims should be supported by evidence, such as measurable targets, clear explanations of packaging or delivery initiatives and accessible information on progress. Open communication can help consumers distinguish real sustainability efforts from nebulous marketing claims.

LIMITATION

- The cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions.
- Responses are self-reported and may not be representative of actual behaviour

- Perceived corporate greenwashing does not produce objective greenwashing.
- Purchase intention does not always result in actual purchase behaviour.

Future Research

- Compare quick-commerce platforms and communication formats.
- Compare vague, specific and evidence-based claims in experiments.
- Look at actual purchases, and trust change over time.
- Merge consumer perceptions with objective evidence of environmental performance.

REFERENCES

1. Akturan, U. (2018). How does greenwashing affect green branding equity and purchase intention? An empirical research. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 36(7), 809–824. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MIP-12-2017-0339>
2. Bernini, F., Giuliani, M., & La Rosa, F. (2024). Measuring greenwashing: A systematic methodological literature review. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 33(4), 649–667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12631>
3. Chen, H., Bernard, S., & Rahman, I. (2019). Greenwashing in hotels: A structural model of trust and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 206, 326–335. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.09.168>
4. Chen, Y.-S. (2010). The drivers of green brand equity: Green brand image, green satisfaction, and green trust. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 93, 307–319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0223-9>
5. Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2012). Enhance green purchase intentions: The roles of green perceived value, green perceived risk, and green trust. *Management Decision*, 50(3), 502–520. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741211216250>
6. Chen, Y.-S., & Chang, C.-H. (2013). Greenwash and green trust: The mediation effects of green consumer confusion and green perceived risk. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 114, 489–500. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1360-0>
7. Choubey, V., Joshi, P., Chakraborty, D., Khare, A., & Appolloni, A. (2025). Signals vs. reality: Consumer responses to green claims in quick commerce. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 34(3), 3656–3671. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.4165>
8. Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling theory: A review and assessment. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), 39–67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310388419>
9. Fernando, A. G., Sivakumaran, B., & Suganthi, L. (2014). Nature of green advertisements in India: Are they greenwashed? *Asian Journal of Communication*, 24(3), 222–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01292986.2014.885537>
10. Janssen, C., Swaen, V., & Du, S. (2022). Is a specific claim always better? The double-edged effects of claim specificity in green advertising. *Journal of Business Research*, 151, 435–447. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.07.005>
11. Montecchi, M., Plangger, K., West, D., & de Ruyter, K. (2024). Perceived brand transparency: A conceptualization and measurement scale. *Psychology & Marketing*, 41(10), 2274–2297. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.2204>