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# *Why Popularity is Not Enough: Identity-Based Drivers of Green Purchase Value among Gen Z Consumers*

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**ABSTRACT**

*The objective of this study is to understand the psychological mechanisms that affect green purchase value and willingness to pay more for green household products among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia, using the bandwagon effect and the need for uniqueness. This study used a quantitative approach, and 344 respondents were collected with the condition that Generation Z have experience purchasing, or care about green household products, and data was analyzed with PLS-SEM. The outcome is bandwagon effect has no affect on the green purchase value household products, while need for uniqueness has a affect. The green purchase value was proven to have a strong effect on the willingness to pay more. Furthermore, environmental self-efficacy negatively moderated the relationship between bandwagon effect and green purchase value and strengthened the relationship between need for uniqueness and green purchase value. By mapping the green consumption patterns of Generation Z in developing countries, we can see that individual-based mechanisms still play an important role, although they will differ from the surrounding social norms.*

## INTRODUCTION

The continued worsening of environmental damage in the world has made responsible consumption research continue to receive special attention (Bindra et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023; Teufer & Grabner-Kräuter, 2023). As a generation that grew up in the era of the climate crisis and with better access to digital information than previous generations, Generation Z is considered the consumer group most concerned with environmental issues (Cho et al., 2022; Shaheen Hosany & Serdiuk, 2025; Wojdyla & Chi, 2024). However, several previous studies have shown that caring for the environment is not enough to make their consumption behavior in accordance with environmental ethics, they will consider several other things when faced with price of eco products is greater than other non eco products (Fogt Jacobsen et al., 2022; Haba et al., 2023). This phenomenon is certainly a unique gap, due to the divergence linking Gen Z's attitudes and behavior in their consumption patterns. This

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phenomenon also shows that cognitive and affective factors are not enough to fully explain green consumption behavior.

Household products are a product category with a relatively high level of daily use, yet they have received relatively little discussion in existing green consumption research (Bindra et al., 2022; Fogt Jacobsen et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). In developing countries like Indonesia, household product consumption patterns are highly sensitive, as consumers consider price when purchasing products. Furthermore, eco products little bit pricy than non-eco products on market (Rahmani et al., 2023). This situation is further complicated by the potential gap between consumer attitudes and behavior. Several studies in high-income countries tend to assume consistency between values and behavior in consuming green products (Sharma et al., 2023). Therefore, a broader understanding of specific psychological factors that could potentially drive alignment between values and behavior in green consumption patterns in developing countries is important to do (Rahmani et al., 2023).

Social affect is widely used in green marketing literature as a mechanism for driving sustainable consumption (Bindra et al., 2022; Haba et al., 2023; Sharma et al., 2023). One frequently studied mechanism is bandwagon effect, where consumers tend to follow the majority's choices due to perceived social legitimacy (Bindra et al., 2022; Fogt Jacobsen et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). The popularity of eco-friendly products is often assumed to increase their perceived value and justify premium prices. However, this approach is beginning to be questioned, particularly in the context of Generation Z, who are known to be more critical of mass trends and greenwashing practices. In this context, popularity is not always interpreted as an indicator of value and can even potentially undermine the perceived authenticity of eco-friendly products (Majeed Nadroo et al., 2025; Wojdyla & Chi, 2024). On the other hand, Generation Z also has a strong need for uniqueness, a drive to build self-identity through consumption that differs from the mainstream. In the context of eco-friendly products, this need for uniqueness can drive consumers to value products when they represent their personal identity and values(Dodds et al., 1991; Ruvio et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2024).

Previous research tends to examine bandwagon effect and need for uniqueness separately in explaining green consumption behavior. Bandwagon effect is generally positioned as a form of social conformity that encourages individuals to follow majority preferences, while need for uniqueness reflects self-differentiation. The distinct characteristics of these two variables enable for a simultaneous understading of the psychological mechanisms underlying green consumption behavior. However, their integration within a single model is still limited, particularly for Generation Z consumers in developing

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countries(Alfoqahaa, 2025; Sun et al., 2024). Therefore, this paper seeks to fill this gap by integrating both independent variables within a single analytical framework to more fully capture the dynamics of motivation and social identity.

Hereafter, most previous studies tend to examine the affect of psychological variables on willingness to pay more directly, without considering consumers' internal evaluation processes. However, the decision to accept higher price for eco conscious products is generally mediated by green purchase value, namely consumers' perceptions of the overall value of eco conscious products, whether functionally, symbolically, or morally (Bindra et al., 2022; Fogt Jacobsen et al., 2022; Roy et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2023). Willingness to pay more arises when consumers recieve the product as valuable and relevant to themselves (Alsubhi et al., 2023; Das et al., 2022; Gomes et al., 2023). Furthermore, research on green consumption rarely adopts an identity-based perspective, particularly through the concept of environmental self-efficacy(Bindra et al., 2022; Fogt Jacobsen et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023). Environmental self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief that their actions can have a tangible impact on the environment (Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022).

Referring to the cases above, this research focuses on whether bandwagon effect and need for uniqueness as mechanism that affects the value of green purchases and subsequently affects the willingness to pay more for green household products in Indonesia Gen Z consumers. This study also highlights the moderating role of environmental self-efficacy in the relationship between bandwagon and need for uniqueness on consumer value. The outcome for this research are expected to produce theoretical input to be able to see the psychologic mechanisms for green consumption based individual and social identities to be implemented practically in green product strategies in emerging markets.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Bandwagon effect in Green Consumption

Bandwagon effect is individual tendency to follow behavior of their surrounding social community to gain social acceptance (Majeed Nadroo et al. 2025). Existing research suggests that bandwagon effect has the potential to be a mechanism that can increase the intention and real practice consuming environmentally products (Majeed Nadroo et al. 2025). Although in the context of Gen Z, reflective behavior is also possible, considering access to existing information and a high sense of curiosity, Generation Z has the opportunity to critically evaluate the motives behind their community's habits. In this context, there is the potential to find existing trends that are merely symbolic or suspected of greenwashing, which of course

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can reduce trust and perceived value (Hilton, 2025). Therefore, bandwagon effect will depend heavily on consumer characteristics and their social context.

**Need for Uniqueness and Consumer Identity**

The individual drive to stand out and express their identity through their consumption is the concept of need for uniqueness (Alfoqahaa, 2025; Sun et al., 2024). This need arises from a person's tendency to choose a product not only based on its functional aspects but also on its representation of self-identity. Green products possess a level of uniqueness that has the potential to differentiate them when consumed by individuals. In line with this, other research shows that persons that reflect their identity more. In other cases, consumers tend to be willing to pay more for these products (Ruvio et al., 2008).

**Green Purchase Value as an Intervening Mechanism**

The concept of green purchase value refers to consumers' perceptions of green products' evaluations based on several aspects, such as moral, social, and functional aspects (Pathak et al., 2024; Riva et al., 2022). This concept explain that consumer behavior toward green products does not emerge spontaneously; consumers first calculate the benefits and costs. In this context, green purchase value acts as a mediator, bridging the affect of psychological factors on consumer economic decisions (Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022; Tawde et al., 2023).

**Environmental Self-Efficacy as a Contingency Factor**

Environmental self-efficacy based on persons who faith in their ability to take actions that positively impact the environment (Guo, 2022). This construct emphasizes person`s to control and affect outcomes through actions, rather than simply attitudes toward environmental issues (Guo, 2022; Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022). Person with high environmental self-efficacy tend to faith that their actions have real consequences, thus being more motivated to behave pro-environmentally and making more in-depth evaluations of the value and impact of eco conscious products, rather than relying solely on external signals such as popularity or trends. Conversely, individuals with low environmental self-efficacy are more uncertain about the impact of their actions and are possible to be affectd by social norms and peer pressure. Therefore, environmental self-efficacy acts as a cognitive mechanism that determines the extent to which individuals rely on internal beliefs rather than social affects in green consumption decisions.

**Framework and Hypotheses**

Consider literature review, this paper shows a conceptual model to suggests bandwagon effect and need for uniqueness affect green purchase value, which in turn impacts the willingness to pay more for green household products. Furthermore, environmental self-

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efficacy is positioned as a moderating variable that affects the strength of the relationship between bandwagon effect and need for uniqueness on green purchase value. The proposed hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Bandwagon effect affects green purchase value.

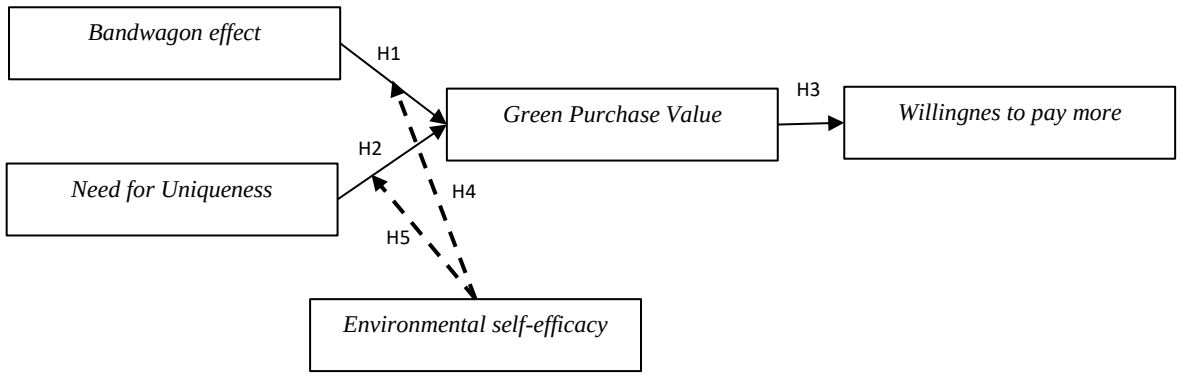
H2: Need for uniqueness has affects on green purchase value.

H3: Green purchase value has a affects on willingness to pay more.

H4: Environmental self-efficacy have moderation relation between bandwagon effect and green purchase value.

H5: Environmental self-efficacy have moderation relation between need for uniqueness and green purchase value.

Figure 1. Research Model




## METHODS

This paper suggest a confirmatory research design with a quantitative approach, intended to test causal relationships between variables based on theory and previous empirical findings (Neuman, 2014). This approach was deliberately chosen because it aligned with the research objective, which was to explain the affect of bandwagon effect and need for uniqueness on green purchasing value, as well as their impact on willingness to pay more for green household products, with environmental self-efficacy as a moderating variable. This study focused on Gen Z consumers, who theoretically have unique characteristics in interpreting green consumption as part of their self-identity.

Population for this research is Gen Z consumers in Indonesia and have experience buying or considering buying green household products. Because the exact population size is unknown, this paper employed a non probablity sampling technique (Cooper and Schindler., 2013). Respondents were deliberately chosen based on predetermined criteria: (1) belonging to the Gen Z group, (2) domiciled in Indonesia, (3) having purchased or considering

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purchasing eco conscious products, and (4) having awareness of eco conscious household products. Sample size was follow cummonly used the rule of thumb in PLS-SEM. Minimum sample size must at least ten times the number of structural paths specified in the paper model (Hair et al., 2019). In this research model has five structural paths, so the recommended minimum sample size is 50 respondents. Data collection yielded 344 valid questionnaires, exceeding the minimum requirements and deemed sufficient to enhance model reliability and generalize the research findings. Data gathered using an online questionnaire shared through sosmed and online communities at kudata.com, tailored to the respondents' characteristics. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were first given a brief explanation of research objectives and guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality. The measurement scale used was a 5-point Likert scale.

This study adapted previous research instruments. Bandwagon effect examined consumers' tendency to follow majority preferences and product popularity (Majeed Nadroo et al., 2025). Need for uniqueness was measured using indicators reflecting the drive to stand out and express personal identity through consumption (Alfoqahaa, 2025). Environmental self-efficacy is measured as a reflection of the extent to which environmental concern contributes to an individual's self-efficacy (Guo, 2022). Green purchasing value is measured through the perceived overall value of green products, which includes functional, symbolic, and moral aspects (Pathak et al., 2024). Willingness to pay more was measured through respondents' willingness to pay for green household products(Gomes et al., 2023).

Data were analyzed using (SEM-PLS) method, which is considered appropriate for difficult structural models with several sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019, 2017). PLS SEM was undertaken in two main phase: Measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. Measurement component component evaluation is conducted to make sure the relevance of each question which is validity measurement and to ensure the consistency of the questionnaire, which is reliability measurement. Internal reliability asses by score of (CA) and (CR) with a minimum value of 0.70. Convergent validity was asses by score of outer loading indicators (≥ 0.708) and (AVE) with a minimum value of 0.50. Discriminant validity was tested using (HTMT), with score below the recommended acceptable level. Next, the structural model was evaluated by examining the relationships between laten constructs (Hair et al., 2019, 2017). The possibility of multicollinearity can be seen from the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) score below 3, indicating no collinearity problem. Hypothesis testing was undertaken through a bootstrapping procedure with 5 thousand resamplings, and 5% significance level. (Hair et al., 2019, 2017).

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## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessment model evaluation was undertaken to ensure that each construct on paper the reliability and validity criteria according to PLS-SEM analysis standards. The first stage was the outer loading test to evaluation validity of the indicators. The results showed that all indicators had outer loadings above the minimum threshold of 0.708, with varied from 0.704 until 0.899. Indicates each indicator adequately represents the latent construct it measures, and therefore, no indicators needed to be eliminated from the model (Table 2). Reliability of the constructs was tested using (CA) and (CR). For this outcome (CA) score for all constructs ranged from 0.856 to 0.902, while Composite Reliability (rho_c) values ranged fell between 0.897 and 0.927. These score exceed recommended threshold (≥ 0.70), revealing elevated level of internal consistency across the study constructs (Table 1).

**Table 1. Discriminant Validity Test**

| Konstruk | BE | ESI | GPV | NU | WTP | ESI x BE | ESI x NU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BE | | | | | | | |
| ESI | 0,608 | | | | | | |
| GPV | 0,478 | 0,732 | | | | | |
| NU | 0,579 | 0,519 | 0,410 | | | | |
| WTP | 0,357 | 0,688 | 0,847 | 0,298 | | | |
| ESI x BE | 0,516 | 0,174 | 0,219 | 0,224 | 0,156 | | |
| ESI x NU | 0,223 | 0,179 | 0,057 | 0,457 | 0,085 | 0,457 | |

*Sources: Processed Research Survey Data (2025)*

Convergent validity was recommended using AVE score, and all constructs surpassed recommended threshold of 0.50. The AVE score spanned from 0.637 to 0.718. Finding suggesting that each construct is possible to explain higher than half of the variance of indicator. This confirms that the requirement for convergent validity has fulfilled. Finally, discriminant validity was examined by HTMT score, and score for the constructs did not reach threshold of 0.85, indicating that each construct in the model had good discrimination and no conceptual overlap. Overall, this outcome suggest that the measurement model is adequate reliability and validity, and therefore appropriate to proceed with strutural model analysis and testing on hypothesis (see Table 2).

Structural model testing was undertaken to asess the causal relationship between latent constructs and significance of the research hypotheses. The analysis showed that all (VIF) score were below the minimium acceptable value 3, indicating no indication multicollinearity in the research model. The direct path test showed that bandwagon effect had no affect on green purchasing value ($\beta = 0.004$; $p = 0.965$), thus H1 was rejected. Furthermore, green purchasing value had a positive and affect on willingness to pay more ($\beta = 0.753$; $p = 0.000$), thus H2 was accepted. In addition, need for uniqueness had a positive and affect on green purchasing value ($\beta = 0.146$; $p = 0.038$), thus H3 was accepted. The moderation test showed that the interaction between environmental self-efficacy and bandwagon effect had a negative and affect on green

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purchasing value (β = –0.131; p = 0.024), thus H4 was accepted. Meanwhile, the interaction between environmental self-efficacy and need for uniqueness has a affect on green purchasing value (β = 0.141; p = 0.003), so H5 is accepted (Table 3).

**Table 2 Validity Test Result**

| Item | Outer Loading | AVE | CA | CR |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BE1 | 0,722 | 0,637 | 0,856 | 0,89766 |
| BE2 | 0,790 | | | |
| BE3 | 0,840 | | | |
| BE4 | 0,807 | | | |
| BE5 | 0,825 | | | |
| NU1 | 0,866 | 0,718 | 0,902 | 0,927 |
| NU2 | 0,870 | | | |
| NU3 | 0,857 | | | |
| NU4 | 0,855 | | | |
| NU5 | 0,786 | | | |
| ESI1 | 0,763 | 0,705 | 0,859 | 0,905 |
| ESI2 | 0,885 | | | |
| ESI3 | 0,899 | | | |
| ESI4 | 0,804 | | | |
| WTP1 | 0,824 | 0,646 | 0,889 | 0,916 |
| WTP2 | 0,704 | | | |
| WTP3 | 0,858 | | | |
| WTP4 | 0,767 | | | |
| WTP5 | 0,850 | | | |
| WTP6 | 0,811 | | | |
| GPV1 | 0,836 | 0,686 | 0,884 | 0,915 |
| GPV2 | 0,833 | | | |
| GPV3 | 0,792 | | | |
| GPV4 | 0,801 | | | |
| GPV5 | 0,872 | | | |

*Source: Processed Research Survey Data (2025)*

The effect size value shows that the relationship between GPV and WTP (1.309) has a very large effect, indicating that the value of green purchases is the main determinant in increasing willingness to pay. Meanwhile, the relationship between NU and GPV (0.022), ESI moderation on the relationship between BE and GPV (0.028), and ESI moderation on the relationship between NU and GPV (0.038) are in the small effect category, so their affect is relatively weak in practice. Meanwhile, the relationship between BE and GPV (0.000) shows no practical effect, so bandwagon effect does not directly contribute significantly in forming the value of green purchases. The model shows quite strong performance, as seen from the moderate $R^2$ value for the Green Purchase Value variable (0.449) and the relatively strong Willingness to Pay More variable (0.567). These results explain that bandwagon effect and Need for Uniqueness can explain 45% of the variance in green purchase value, and green

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purchase value can explain 56% of the variance in the willingness to pay more. Meanwhile, the positive $Q^2$predict values (0.407 and 0.321) indicate that the model has good predictive relevance in predicting the data. (Table 4).

**Table 3. Structural Model Assessment**

| Construct | $F^2$ | VIF | β | P-value | Hypothesis | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BE -> GPV | 0.000 | 2,071 | 0,004 | 0,965 | H1 | Rejected |
| GPV -> WTP | 1.309 | 1 | 0,753 | 0,000 | H2 | Accepted |
| NU -> GPV | 0.022 | 1,776 | 0,146 | 0,038 | H3 | Accepted |
| ESI x BE -> GPV | 0.028 | 1,683 | -0,131 | 0,024 | H4 | Accepted |
| ESI x NU -> GPV | 0.038 | 1,576 | 0,141 | 0,003 | H5 | Accepted |

Source: Processed Research Survey Data (2025)

**Table 4. Result R2 and Q2**

| Endogent Variable | R-square | $Q^2$predict |
|---|---|---|
| Green Purchase Value | 0.449 | 0.407 |
| Willingnes to Pay More | 0.567 | 0.321 |

## Discussion

Findings for this paper suggest bandwagon effect does not affect for green purchase value household products among Gen Z consumers. This outcome with several previous studies that emphasize the positive role of social norms in encouraging the adoption of green household products (Bindra et al., 2022; Cho et al., 2022). However, this is in line with findings that social affect is contextual and can weaken in more reflective and critical consumers (Hilton, 2025; Majeed Nadroo et al., 2025). These findings suggest that popularity is not always interpreted as a value signal but can trigger critical evaluations of product authenticity, particularly in the context of heightened sensitivity to greenwashing practices. Therefore, a non-significant bandwagon effect does not necessarily indicate the dominance of identity-based mechanisms, but rather reflects that social affect operates non-linearly and depends on how consumers interpret the social meaning of popularity. Thus, theoretical contribution of this study lies in the assertion that social norms in green consumption are not universal, but rather affectd by boundary conditions such as consumer reflectivity and orientation towards value authenticity, which opens up space for future research to further interaction between social, cognitive factors in context of developing countries.

Second, there was a strong affect in respcet to green product purchase values and willingness to pay more. These results indicate that in addition to being driven by green attributes, consumers also assess the extent to which their behavior aligns with functional, symbolic, and moral values. This finding is consistent with previous research that places perceived value as a key determinant of willingness to pay(Das et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2023),

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but also extends the literature by demonstrating that perceived value acts as a mediating mechanism linking psychological factors to actual economic decisions. Thus, these results strengthen the argument that premium payment decisions are not simple but rather involve a complex internal evaluation process, in which the product's relevance to one's needs and self-identity is key. The implication is that while the literature often assumes that sustainability attributes inherently increase willingness to pay, this finding suggests that without strong value formation, these attributes may not be sufficient to drive higher payment behavior, especially among more reflective consumers like Gen Z.

Third, the positive affect of need for uniqueness on the purchase value of eco-friendly products indicates that the drive to express uniqueness is an important factor in the formation of eco-friendly product value among Generation Z green household products are perceived as more valuable when they represent personal identity and differentiate consumers from the mainstream. This finding reinforces the view that eco-friendly consumption among Generation Z is not only normative but also serves as a means of identity differentiation (Wojdyla & Chi, 2024). Thus, the value of eco-friendly products lies not only in sustainability claims but in their ability to support consumers' self-expression (Cho et al., 2022; Ruvio et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2024).

Fourth, negative moderation results indicate that environmental self-efficacy weakens the affect of bandwagon effect on green purchase value. For consumers with high environmental self-efficacy, the popularity of green products is less relevant or even perceived negatively. This indicates that consumers who value environmental concerns as part of their self-efficacy tend to be skeptical of mass-trend green consumption(Akhtar et al., 2021; Sh. Ahmad et al., 2022). They value authenticity and consistency of values more than mere social legitimacy. Outcome for this research confirms environmental self-efficacy boundary condition that limits the effectiveness of popularity-based green marketing strategies(Guo, 2022; Tawde et al., 2023).

Fifth, environmental self-efficacy has been shown to strengthen the affect of need for uniqueness on green purchase value. This means that when environmental concerns become a source of self-efficacy, the drive to appear unique becomes more significant in forming value of green products. Gen Z consumers with high environmental self-efficacy tend to value green products more when they enable authentic identity expression consistent with their environmental values (Tawde et al., 2023). This finding demonstrates a synergy between personal and environmental identities in green consumption and confirms that the value of green products is identity-driven (Guo, 2022; Tawde et al., 2023).

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## CONCLUSION

This paper shows that the value of eco-conscious purchases is a key determinant of willingness to pay more among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia, confirming that willingness to pay is shaped by identity-based internal value evaluations, not simply by the attribute of "eco-friendliness." The outcome of this study revealed that the bandwagon effect did not have a significant effect, while the need for uniqueness actually played a positive role. These findings indicate that green consumption is driven more by individuals' efforts to express their identity, rather than simply following social trends. In addition, environmental self-efficacy has been revealed to weaken the bandwagon effect while strengthening the need for uniqueness. This confirms that individuals' beliefs in their ability to contribute to the environment function as a cognitive mechanism that shapes how they interpret green consumption in a more reflective and authentic way.

However, this paper has several shortcomings, particularly in its use of purposive sampling and self-report data, which can introduce bias and limit the broader relevance of the findings. Therefore, further research is recommended to use a more representative sample approach, consider economic factors such as price sensitivity, and explore the role of digital media and skepticism towards greenwashing practices. This step is important to braden insight into drivers of green consumption, especially in developing countries.

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