





## Article

# Modeling Positive Electronic Word of Mouth and Purchase Intention Using Theory of Consumption Value

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**Abstract:** Green is a timely and crucial concept in sustainability; therefore, encouraging both public and private businesses in Malaysia to persistently promote and make attempts to put green practices into effect is similarly crucial. The green industry and its environment are under pressure as a result of its acquisition, which is still occurring at an alarming rate. Using the theory of consumption values (TCV) as the underlying theory, this study explores the potential drivers of green purchases while also analyzing the mediation effect of positive word-of-mouth. Purposive sampling was employed in this study and data analysis was conducted using covariance-based structural equation modeling (SEM-AMOS). Findings from 336 respondents highlight the significance of positive word-of-mouth, emotional value, and epistemic value, as major determinants of green purchase intention. This study offers crucial information that will aid suppliers of green goods in motivating customers to make green purchases by emphasizing high-impact product values. Additionally, the study advocates the promotion of sustainable practices by emphasizing positive word-of-mouth in sparking public interest to make green purchases.

**Keywords:** green; consumption values; positive word-of-mouth; purchase intention; SEM AMOS

## 1. Introduction

Green has gained a lot of traction in businesses, as it promotes a sustainable and fulfilling way of life. In fact, researchers have emphasized the advantages of becoming green, such as protecting the environment, conserving energy, reducing or eliminating trash, as well as the emission of harmful gases and pollutants, all of which work to improve sustainability by promoting eco-based products [1–3]. As a matter of fact, the Malaysian government has officially prioritized greening as a key theme in the 12th Malaysia Plan [4], which outlines a blueprint for advancing sustainability efforts in a five-year span from 2021 to 2025. The sustainability goals stated in Theme 3 of [4], amount to advancing

green growth through numerous eco-programmes which include sharing responsibility in pollution prevention, achievable by embarking on green consumption. In fact, Malaysia's journey towards sustainability started in the 11th Malaysia Plan [5] through a string of green programmes such as replacing plastic straws with paper straws in eateries, eradicating the distribution of single-use plastic bags in retail outlets, promoting substitutes such as recycled plastic bags or paper bags, and the prohibition of smoking within restaurant spaces.

Despite the initiative tailored to preserving earth via green activities, subsequent evidence suggests the opposite; for example, Malaysia generated 38,000 metric tons of waste per day in 2018 [6], which is twice the amount yielded in 2005 [7]. This pattern obviously raised many questions. Apparently, subsequent evidence has demonstrated that swift urban advancement, abundance of people, and lifestyle transformation have fundamentally spiked the production of waste [8,9]. This was also deliberated previously in [10], which states that ecological issues are all the doings of humans; therefore, initiatives to sustain the environment should commence by altering people's perceptions of the product's worth, which is typically demonstrated through positive word-of-mouth with the aim of Earth conservation. Although a string of researchers has investigated consumption value in green research, positive word-of-mouth was not included [10–13]. A similar pattern was also observed in non-green research [14–16]. A literature survey on recent articles was undertaken to understand consumption values in green and non-green contexts (see Appendix A). A glaring pattern prevails whereby the five dimensions of consumption values were either investigated directly with respect to purchase intention/behavior or indirectly via mediating/moderating variables. In addition, researchers observed inconclusive outcome pertaining to consumption values' impact on purchase intention/behavior. Apart from that, research that incorporates word-of-mouth to TCV is still scarce.

Given the fact that word-of-mouth functions as a more reliable marketing tool [17–19], it may undertake a pivotal role in embracing green practices [20–22]. Therefore, this research investigates intention to purchase green goods coupled with positive word-of-mouth, aimed at enhancing our consumption values perspective; thus, it could offer an excellent breakthrough in the discovery of elements that eventually encourage the public to purchase green goods. As such, given the research scarcity in Malaysia on how values possessed by a green product coupled with positive word-of-mouth could lead to green purchase intention, this study intends to evaluate how values affect positive word-of-mouth, and is underpinned by the theory of consumption values (TCV) in its verification of the driving factors of green purchase intention.

## 2. Materials and Methods

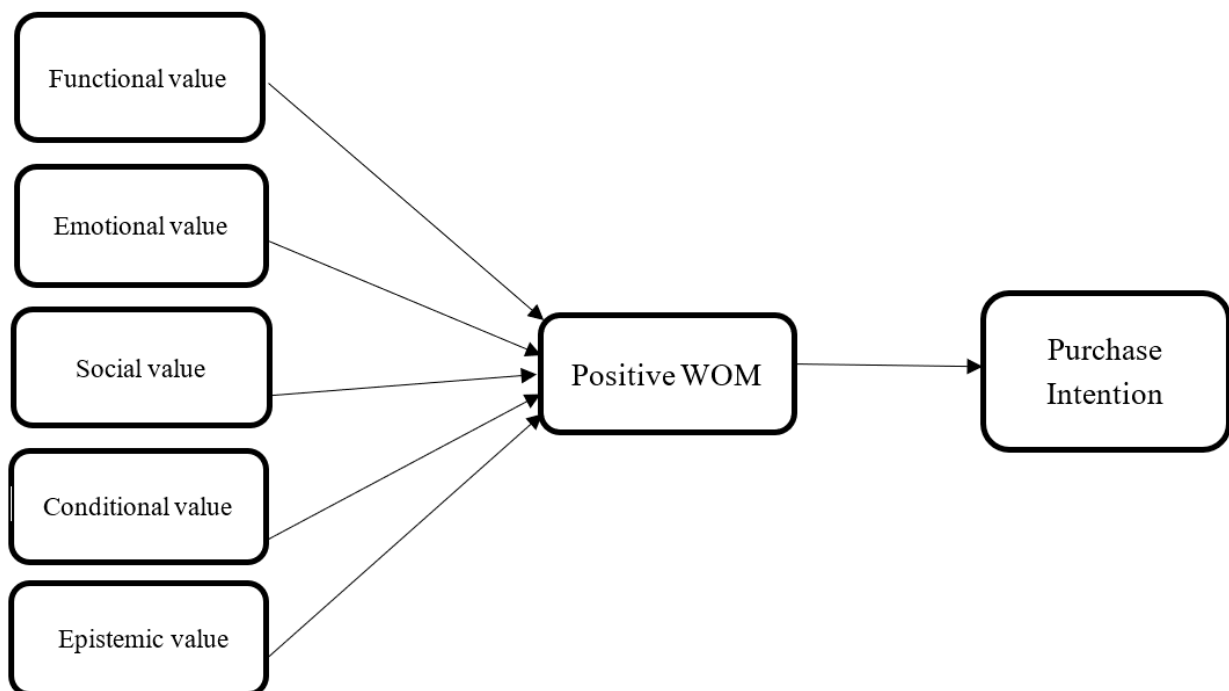
Value is a key element in relationship marketing that has been the focal point for consumer purchase, especially in green practices [22,23]. Despite a myriad of researchers in the past have emphasized the study of ecological intention to be based on the theory of planned behavior (TPB) [24] and the norm activation model (NAM) [25], we select a different approach. Given the limitations of these theories [23], and subsequent suggestions to utilize TCV in understanding consumers' value perspective [11,12], this research is underpinned by TCV, for it being a more suitable recipe with which to investigate consumer choice behavior, depicted through positive word-of-mouth, owing to its ability to radiate product values (compared to TPB and NAM). In fact, TPB's normative belief is shown to lead to social influence [26]; for the TCV, attitude portrays consumers' overall evaluation of cost and benefits, which is equivalent to functional value. On the contrary, NAM, which gravitates along altruistic behavior, is built on the foundation that human being executes such behavior due to moral obligation [27]. Nevertheless, TCV is built on the premise of understanding consumer behavior, such as why customers make certain choices, whether they have a tendency to buy/use, and the reasons for selecting one product over the other [28]. Underlining both cognitive and affective aspects of consumption is more apt to ascertain the intention/behavior, especially in green context, as it skews to value offerings.

In fact, Tan et al. [10] reiterated that consumption value is a predictor/independent variable and thus purchase intention is a function of consumption value. As such, TCV is more suitable in green purchase/consumption studies.

TCV underlines five important consumption values, namely functional, emotional, social, conditional, and epistemic values, which were all employed in this research. Most Malaysians broadly enjoy and are gratified by using a product based on the explicit and implicit contributions that the item presents. This can be evinced by the vast number of physical stores in Malaysia that have test items for Malaysians to try on, perhaps spreading positive word-of-mouth before actually purchasing the product (e.g., beauty products, baked goods, electronic gadgets, and vehicles). As a result, product values, explicit and/or implicit, do play a distinguished role in identifying factors that entice potential consumers. Uniquely, this displays a strong constructive link to the high or low valuation of the product value among Malaysians.

Additionally, there is a clear conviction that consumption values are multidimensional independent variables. Multidimensional models in customer values portray better accuracy in purchase prediction, especially when it is coupled with positive word-of-mouth, compared to singular dimension model [29,30]. Along the same notion, positive word-of-mouth is included. As examined by numerous researchers, positive word-of-mouth could have both a direct and indirect effect on green purchase intention [21,31]. Hence, this research is aimed towards examining the factors that may determine green purchase intention. With that, this research may provide valuable information to green merchants, policy makers, and academicians in understanding green purchase intention.

The research framework is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Schematic diagram depicts research model and its exogenous and endogenous variables.

### 2.1. Functional Value

Functional value discusses a product's physical and usage-centered performances, a gravitate along variety, durability, comfort, reliability, safety, and price. Ref. [32] commented that the price of products and services have an impact on the spread of positive word-of-mouth, especially for first-time users; they unearthed that tourism destinations receives less attention from new prospects if their rate is paramount. Although green products could still cause disinterest among price-conscious prospective buyers [33], the concern

for negative impacts towards nature has led pro-environmental citizens to have a higher willingness to pay for green products [34,35]. Thus, price and quality sensitive communities are more careful in disseminating word-of-mouth. Nonetheless, the study also proves that repeat users are less influenced by word-of-mouth shared among the public. The insinuation by various researchers and subsequent revelation by [36–38] was that customers' satisfaction towards price would also launch word-of-mouth sharing, be it from a volume or a valence perspective.

Meanwhile, ref. [22] reiterated further that word-of-mouth can be a powerful tool for new customer acquisition, identifying antecedents of word-of-mouth, especially from a value perspective, which may harness purchase intention. Similarly, quality in the form of reliability takes effect and leads to keenness to acquire recycled goods, especially from construction waste [39]; this could altogether lead to price-quality conflict. Even though ecologically tender people are seen as less sensitive to its cost and are highly converged to shopping green compliant products [35], green goods are still comparable cost wise [40] and quality wise [41], especially in Malaysia's setting. In many instances, consumers are attentive enough and have strong intentions to purchase green to lessen the damaging impact on the ecosystem and ecology by choosing to pay premium to obtain green goods, perhaps also buying green goods with the belief that they are better quality.

**H1.** *Functional value has a positive relationship with positive WOM.*

## 2.2. Emotional Value

Emotional value can be considered as a value that surfaces due to a feeling or affection ignited from the usage of a product. Additionally, [42] articulates that consumers' usage of a product/brand reflects emotions exchanged by the actor involved and, as iterated by a string of researchers, emotional value must inspire delight, pleasure, comfort, playfulness, enjoyment, and happiness for imbue ment of emotional value [11,16,43]. This could be the link to bridge the gap in achieving purchase intention in the green environment, especially when emotional responses enhance affinity towards environmentally friendly products and services [21,44]. Thus, on a general note, it could be perceived that emotional value may be able to instigate and enhance the intention to acquire environmentally friendly green goods.

**H2.** *Emotional value has a positive relationship with positive WOM.*

## 2.3. Social Value

Social value relates to the value garnered through the link associated with distinct social cohorts or due to successful persuasion by peers; thus, it is usually set in the premise of demographic, economic power, and culture-centric individuals [28]. Consequently, it is of paramount importance that green marketers and merchants demonstrate their involvement in aiding green consumers to choose wisely in ensuring environmental preservation. This act of relative selflessness opens the propensity that organizations does not solely emphasize their green strategies to yield a favorable outcome, but also strive towards greater benefits for mankind, beyond the formal ecosystem, eventually to catapult values for consumers [45,46]. In fact, seasoned green users may function as proponents of green intention by providing advice or opinion to the information seeker; therefore, persuasion by a confident ally can grow one's intention to purchase green in a more dynamic manner. Similarly, [11] have reiterated that green customers motivate others to embrace green in order to save the environment.

**H3.** *Social value has a positive relationship with positive WOM.*

## 2.4. Conditional Value

Conditional value indicates the value that comes because of the usage of an item under a certain situation such as nutritious food during pregnancy or the purchase of a product due to seasonal promotion [28]. The conditional value is expected to intensify when it is

strongly linked to the sustainable lifestyle of youth [44]. Numerous research undertaken on convenience consumables such as snacks, beers, and carbonated drinks has argued that consumers' consumption is often decided by their diet behavior; nevertheless, one should not discount situational influences that may show its flash of brilliance where prospects who wish to be thrifty may spend money lavishly on good green items [13,29]. In fact, changes in a natural environment such as global warming may foster customers' inclination toward green products [44], in addition to community-driven efforts to create a healthy environment by promoting organic food and physical activity [15], and thus condition value's influence on green purchase intention.

**H4.** *Conditional value has a positive relationship with positive WOM.*

#### 2.5. Epistemic Value

Epistemic value postulates the value that stems from a product that offers novelty, heightens curiosity, and prompts the thirst for knowledge [28]. A string of researchers had revealed that knowledge has an imperative influence on purchase intention and behavior [13,47,48]. Therefore, knowledge corroborates with purchase intention in many instances, although customers may occasionally be prone to seek information that is insignificant at a particular point of time yet may prove to be of critical importance in another time setting. This phenomenon proves that relentless knowledge exploration may fulfill one's need to attain greater heights; thus, it adds value to oneself along the process [16] and, consequently, epistemic value's magnitude towards purchase intention is stamped further in green environment [11,44]. This is indeed very true for early adopters, who generally adopt innovation soon after launch, motivated by inquisitiveness and concern for environmental sustainability besides their being less individualistic [49], which eventually leads to the intention to embrace green products.

**H5.** *Epistemic value has a positive relationship with positive WOM.*

#### 2.6. Positive Word-of-Mouth

Word-of-mouth encompasses oral and informal person-to-person communication [50,51]. Although word-of-mouth is the oldest marketing communication style, it has remained resolute throughout a period where prospective customers are seen to frequently consult reviews prior to purchase decision, especially with respect to green proliferation [20,52]. In fact, word-of-mouth had remained steadfast despite technological onslaught by refining itself as electronic word-of-mouth, scaling virtual communication to greater heights in marketing and consumer behavior aspects, yet without compromising its fundamental function, i.e., to bridge communication between actual or potential customers with relevant stakeholders while mitigating risk and expanding publicity [53,54]. Along the same notion, the positive aspect of word-of-mouth, namely, positive word-of-mouth, is a remarkable indicator for a successful marketing journey given its ability to shape customers' intention and behavior. As such, positive word-of-mouth comprises examples such as the sharing of a good, evocative, or new experience, a noticeably vibrant display about the product, and even advising others directly to acquire a particular product, brand, and service. In a green context, although positive word-of-mouth may not totally compel individuals to commit future purchases or patronage, it plays an important role in green proliferation [20]. As such, positive word-of-mouth is immensely powerful, such that a person, who may initially have shied away from green products or services, will eventually resort to spreading positive news about green benefits. In this respect, a person who may not have used green products and services may still generate word-of-mouth and consequently influence other individuals who are leading or seeking positive word-of-mouth towards establishing purchase intention [17,55].

Despite positive word-of-mouth's popularity, existing researchers have mainly skewed their investigations on positive word-of-mouth so as to treat it as an outcome or endogenous variable [13,18,22,32,52,56,57], although a string of researchers has tested positive word-of-mouth as the exogenous variable for its abilities to trigger behavior outcomes [19,32,57,58].

Therefore, studies on positive word-of-mouth as the mediator are scarce, this despite the fact that the mediator's primary function is to accelerate or exert influence [59], where positive word-of-mouth perfectly fits. It is also noted that the existing literature on positive word-of-mouth as the mediator is either investigated in a non-green context [60] or eludes the consumption value perspective despite the authors' investigation of green settings [31]. As such, this study is poised to investigate positive word-of-mouth's role towards green purchase intention, followed by investigating positive word-of-mouth from a mediating perspective, i.e., between the value factors and green purchase intention. The proclivity of positive word-of-mouth to catalyze green produce will likewise also be tested as a determinant of green purchase intention directly.

**H6.** *Positive word-of-mouth has a positive relationship with green purchase intention.*

**H7.** *Positive word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between functional value and green purchase intention.*

**H8.** *Positive word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between emotional value and green purchase intention.*

**H9.** *Positive word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between social value and green purchase intention.*

**H10.** *Positive word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between conditional value and green purchase intention.*

**H11.** *Positive word-of-mouth mediates the relationship between epistemic value and green purchase intention.*

## 2.7. Methods

This research proceeded with quantitative analysis using covariance-based structural equation modeling (SEM-AMOS). The purposive sampling method was employed to receive information from specific target group [61]; the unit of analysis is an individual who has had experience using green product, obtained through screening questions.

The questionnaire comprises 35 items (Appendix B) excluding screening and demographic detailing queries. Since this study is cross-sectional [62], procedural treatment was employed using temporal proximity to address common method variance. All the seven variables were probed with five questions each. The functional value dimension covers the people's perception of green goods from the angle of performance (i.e., quality, durability, and reliability) and physical feature (i.e., attractiveness and price), adopted from work by [44,63]. Value tweaks on one's arousal with respect to emotion and sentiment upon using green products were adapted from [44] and [63]. Social value questions, adapted from [63] and [44], were scrutinized based on the association created with specific reference groups due to green item usage. The element of conditional value adapts questions from [63] on one's opinion hinging on the conformance practiced and relief gained when green products are embraced circumstantially. Epistemic value is gauged as per an individual's opinion of the curiosity and knowledge gained via green usage using the measure exhibited by [44,63]. The positive word-of-mouth dimension assesses one's enthusiasm in providing and receiving suggestions stimulating green product purchase. This dimension is measured following the work completed by [64–66]. Green purchase intention dimension is addressed by questions designed by [58,67,68] to observe the degree of willingness in using green products in the future. Instruments were adopted and adapted from the published established literature with reliability value of 0.7 and above. To test the respondents understanding of the items, a cognitive interview was conducted with five respondents to establish that they did not have any miscomprehension issues [69]. In addition, two experts were consulted to verify face validity in carrying out the data collection.

Data collection was conducted using a purposive sampling method via online questionnaire where only respondents who have used "green products" were eligible to answer. The filter question was "Have you ever used any green products?"; if the answer is yes,

the respondents will proceed with the rest of the questions; if the answer is no, they are instructed to stop. The questionnaire was sent via google link to 650 mobile phone users. We received 364 and proceeded with a second layer screening to check missing values via the count blank method [70] and suspicious pattern via straightlining [70]. There is no missing value but straightlining rule violation was observed hence 28 respondents were deleted. Usable responses were eventually 336 (see Appendix C for demography details).

### 3. Data Analysis and Results

The research model was evaluated using AMOS version 26 through a maximum likelihood estimate (MLE), in line with the 2-step approach suggested by [71]. AMOS is built for data analysis using the covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) approach. This approach is particularly apt for assessing models that were developed using a strong theory. It is important to have a solid theoretical framework or, at least, strong precedents from which one or a set of candidate models can be generated, tested, and compared [72]. Since our model is underpinned by the consumption values [28] which have been tested in many different settings, the use of AMOS is deemed most appropriate. Ref. [73] mentioned that the PLS approach is generally a better option on the condition that the phenomenon studied is nascent or evolving, or when the theoretical model is not well established. The use of AMOS in analysis is also supported by some recent papers published in the same journal, i.e., [74], using moderation analysis, and [75] for analyzing mediation.

Since data collection is conducted from one sole source, the single source bias was tested by running the full collinearity analysis as suggested by [76,77]. With that, the variables are regressed in relation to a common variable and should the  $VIF \leq 3.3$ , it can be concluded that no bias is observed from the single source data. As per the analysis (see Table 1), the VIF value is less than 3.3. Hence, single source bias or social desirability is not a prevalent concern in this study. Next, we tested multicollinearity through correlation assessment. The results of the correlations shown in Table 2 recorded the highest correlation value of only 0.778, which falls within the acceptable range as [78] posited that correlations above 0.8 are problematic. This further confirms that this study is not affected by concerns of multicollinearity. In addition, multicollinearity check among the constructs was also conducted using variance inflation factor (VIF). The full collinearity analysis shows that the highest VIF is only 2.0, which is very much lower than the threshold of 5 [76].

**Table 1.** Full collinearity.

Construct	Functional Value	Emotional Value	Social Value	Conditional Value	Epistemic Value	Positive Word-of-Mouth
VIF	1.702	2.016	1.727	1.248	1.387	1.945

**Table 2.** Measurement Model and Discriminant Validity (Fornell and Larcker Criterion).

Construct	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Functional Value	0.845	0.649	<b>0.806</b>						
2. Emotional Value	0.864	0.616	0.633	<b>0.785</b>					
3. Social Value	0.895	0.636	0.480	0.643	<b>0.798</b>				
4. Conditional Value	0.754	0.520	0.528	0.561	0.496	<b>0.721</b>			
5. Epistemic Value	0.843	0.575	0.376	0.399	0.322	0.431	<b>0.758</b>		
6. Positive Word-of-mouth	0.895	0.633	0.595	0.649	0.521	0.568	0.565	<b>0.796</b>	
7. Green Purchase Intention	0.908	0.667	0.520	0.728	0.552	0.563	0.624	0.778	<b>0.816</b>

Note: Values on the diagonals (bolded) are the square root of the AVE while the off diagonals are correlations.

Multivariate normality assessment was also conducted as suggested by [79] using the website <https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis/> (accessed on 6 November 2019). As demonstrated in the results, the data collected was not multivariate normal, given Mardia's multivariate skewness ( $\beta = 10.878$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Mardia's multivariate

kurtosis ( $\beta = 40.298, p < 0.01$ ). With that being said, we conducted a bootstrapping with 5000 resamples to test the hypotheses, adhering to the suggestions of [76].

### 3.1. Measurement Model

Next, an assessment of the measurement model fit was performed, followed by that of the convergent and discriminant validity. As suggested in the literature [80], the cut-off values for the fit measures include:  $CMIN \leq 3$ ,  $GFI \geq 0.90$ ,  $AGFI \geq 0.80$ ,  $TLI \geq 0.90$ ,  $CFI \geq 0.90$ , and  $RMSEA \leq 0.08$ . The fit values for the measurement model were  $CMIN = 2.494$  ( $\chi = 887.725, df = 356$ ),  $GFI = 0.846$ ,  $AGFI = 0.811$ ,  $TLI = 0.906$ ,  $CFI = 0.918$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.067$ , which were all better than the cut-off values except for the GFI which was slightly lower than 0.90. In line with these measures, it can be concluded that the measurement model fit was acceptable.

The assessment of convergent validity was performed based on factor loading, composite reliability, and variance extracted [81]. The factor loading surpassed the suggested level of 0.6 for all items [82]. Meanwhile, composite reliability exceeded the suggested level of 0.7 (see Table 2) and the average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the suggested level of 0.5, as per the recommendations by [79].

The assessment of discriminant validity was performed through the comparison of the correlations between constructs and the square root of the variance extracted for a construct [83]. It can be observed that the measure had sufficient discriminant validity, given that the correlations for each construct did not exceed the square root of the AVE. Due to recent criticisms to the [83] criterion by [84], we also tested discriminant validity by observing the HTMT ratio, in line with the recommendations of [85]. Since the AMOS package does not have the test for HTMT, we used the plugin provided by [86] to run the analysis. In the case that the HTMT ratios do not exceed 0.85 or 0.90, it can be observed that the measures are distinct. On the other hand, if the HTMT ratios exceed the cut-off values, it can be observed that the measures are indistinct. As represented in Table 3, none of the HTMT ratios exceed 0.85; thus, it can be concluded that the respondents had a clear understanding that seven distinct constructs were employed. Taken together, the analysis suggests that the measurement model reflected acceptable levels of reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

**Table 3.** Discriminant Validity (HTMT ratio).

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Functional Value							
2. Emotional Value	0.618						
3. Social Value	0.478	0.685					
4. Conditional Value	0.596	0.613	0.574				
5. Epistemic Value	0.371	0.441	0.364	0.429			
6. Positive Word-of-mouth	0.578	0.659	0.581	0.608	0.566		
7. Green Purchase Intention	0.518	0.741	0.571	0.616	0.655	0.785	

### 3.2. Structural Model

The fit values for the structural model were  $CMIN = 2.670$  ( $\chi = 963.759, df = 361$ ),  $GFI = 0.836$ ,  $AGFI = 0.803$ ,  $TLI = 0.895$ ,  $CFI = 0.907$ , and  $RMSEA = 0.071$ , which were all better than the cut-off values except for the GFI which was slightly lower than 0.90. Based on these measures, we can conclude that the fit of the structural model was acceptable. Next, before testing the hypotheses, we assessed the multivariate normality using Mardia's coefficient, the value was 40.298, which was greater than 20 [87], suggesting data was not multivariate normal. Thus, we ran bootstrapping with 5000 resamples to correct the standard errors before testing the hypotheses we generated.

We had six direct relationships and five mediated relationships (see Table 4). Functional Value ( $\beta = 0.214, p < 0.01$ ), Emotional Value ( $\beta = 0.381, p < 0.01$ ), Conditional Value ( $\beta = 0.213, p < 0.05$ ), Epistemic Value ( $\beta = 0.267, p < 0.01$ ) had a positive relationship with



Positive Word-of-mouth while Social Value was not significant. This gives support to H1, H2, H4, and H5, while H3 is not supported. Positive Word-of-mouth ( $\beta = 0.656, p < 0.01$ ) also had a positive relationship with Green Purchase Intention, supporting H6. The  $R^2$  for Positive Word-of-mouth was 0.640 while it was 0.661 for Green Purchase Intention, indicating that 64% of the variance in Positive Word-of-mouth can be explained by the 5 values, while 66.1% of the variance in Green Purchase Intention can be explained by the Positive Word-of-mouth.

**Table 4.** Hypotheses Testing.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Unstd	Std	S.E.	t-Value	p-Value	CI LL	CI UL
H1	Functional Value → Positive WOM	0.214	0.166	0.074	2.878	0.002	0.092	0.336
H2	Emotional Value → Positive WOM	0.381	0.321	0.085	4.469	$p < 0.001$	0.241	0.521
H3	Social Value → Positive WOM	0.063	0.089	0.040	1.578	0.061	−0.003	0.129
H4	Conditional Value → Positive WOM	0.213	0.142	0.093	2.294	0.011	0.060	0.366
H5	Epistemic Value → Positive WOM	0.267	0.314	0.044	6.110	$p < 0.001$	0.195	0.339
H6	Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.656	0.813	0.054	12.133	$p < 0.001$	0.567	0.745
H7	Functional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.140	0.135	0.059	2.373	0.028	0.036	0.219
H8	Emotional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.250	0.261	0.102	2.451	0.006	0.091	0.413
H9	Social Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.041	0.073	0.030	1.367	0.194	−0.019	0.153
H10	Conditional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.140	0.115	0.075	1.867	0.034	0.025	0.222
H11	Epistemic Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase	0.175	0.256	0.040	4.375	0.001	0.172	0.365

In assessing the mediation effects, the indirect effect is bootstrapped [57]. Functional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase ( $\beta = 0.140, p < 0.05$ ), Emotional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase ( $\beta = 0.250, p < 0.01$ ), Conditional Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase ( $\beta = 0.140, p < 0.05$ ), and Epistemic Value → Positive WOM → Green Purchase ( $\beta = 0.175, p < 0.01$ ) were all significant, with no 0 straddling the lower and upper confidence intervals while Social Values was not mediated. Thus, H7, H8, H10, and H11 were supported, and H9 was not supported.

#### 4. Discussion

Establishing TCV as the fundamental method for investigating green consumption, this research has spelt out five core values as independent variables, namely, functional value, emotional value, social value, conditional value, and epistemic value, while positive word-of-mouth has been investigated in a multi-angle capacity, namely exogenous variable, endogenous variable, and mediator.

The result reveals that functional value is a highly sought-after factor in spreading positive word-of-mouth. Although past studies have had divided opinions on the importance that functional value holds in disseminating positive word-of-mouth about green [23,64], this study has proven a concrete assertion that functional value, especially from a value for money perspective, and quality can impact one's outlook in positively discussing green products in public. A similar pattern was also observed in a study by [64] in the UK, while research conducted by [88] to ascertain behavior of green consumption among customers in the UK and China found that value for money consciousness strengthens the likelihood of purchasing a green product, thus reiterating the importance of functional value. On the other hand, despite the revelation that individuals may have a higher tendency to exhibit a uniquely attentive character with regard to free products [56], green quality offerings may still yield positive word-of-mouth for its holistic contribution to mankind. Similarly, one may not deny that quality and price are indeed sensitive elements in everyday life; therefore, a consumer approaches a product with the expectation of acquiring the best value

for money, and this includes green items. As a result, spreading positive word-of-mouth about green items must be conducted in a careful and considerate setting, touching on the aspect of value for money to attract prospects.

Besides that, emotional value is seen to sway positive word-of-mouth in an efficacious manner. Recent advertisements, media coverages, and campaigns on global warming and other environment-damaging activities have perhaps evoked a sense of remorse and repentance among people in Malaysia. Hence, from the evidence provided by the current study, people have a strong inclination to generate positive word-of-mouth on green products, perhaps to make up for their irresponsible doings, i.e., they have been unvigilant to nature in the past. A similar pattern was also observed in a thin segment of the healthy food industry which is coined as super food industry, underlined by high levels of either nutrient or bioactive phytochemicals [64,89]. Therefore, it is not surprising to observe that customers ought to be more vocal and supportive towards super foods as the detrimental impact of the alternative on the surroundings via pollution and others could harm future generations. The arousal of positive feelings and affection towards the environment encourages people to circulate green awareness through positive word-of-mouth to their acquaintances, especially friends and families.

Social value is seen not to influence positive word-of-mouth. Ostensibly, word-of-mouth spreading is independent of one's social circle status, perhaps due to the eastern culture of not being distinctive when discussing green issues. In fact [12], research which found that social value's effect bore a significant impact on green trust among Chinese organic food consumers, reflects emotional acceptance, yet eastern culture prevails upon the need to discuss and spread positive word-of-mouth. Social value, although not leading to word-of-mouth, is nevertheless key in its role as the direct antecedent of green and healthy food consumption [15,90]. Therefore, one may have no intense will to speak positively about green products yet would not hinder others from consuming green and healthy products.

Conditional value drives positive word-of-mouth constructively. On a general note, Malaysians may find that seasonal discounts and promotions play a large role in compelling one to speak and share about the promotion to others. The euphoria of not wanting to miss such a golden opportunity often motivates one to share with others for a greater benefit. Furthermore, a sudden health condition that provokes a want for healthier solutions may spur the sharing of insights on healthy living. In fact, conditional value's influence towards purchase intention speaks volume about conditional value's position [29].

Epistemic value is another element that supports the proliferation of positive word-of-mouth among people. It may be due to customers in Malaysia have a tendency to delve deeper into the subject of green products and are thus more open to discussing these products. In addition, new knowledge, especially about the novelty of green products and consumption value, can foster a value-adding conversation between friends or acquaintances, thus enabling an opportunity for two parties to exchange words and share compliments about green products.

Apart from that, positive word-of-mouth has a positive and significant effect on green purchase intention. Perhaps, considering that more members of society are encouraged to gain information about green goods, the majority of them, even without personally trying green goods, may perhaps have a firmer and more reliable opinion of its benefit to oneself and one's surroundings [52]. More importantly, positive word-of-mouth is a two-way street where the motivation to patronize green can be exercised by people suggesting or advocating green products, as well as those who are receiving remarks or good feedback about green products. As the advocates of green products continuously preach about green products during informal chats, or even in an official sharing session within a focus group, it may have made the speakers and the listeners feel more obligated to purchase green goods to show proof that green goods are worth believing. As such, green consumption, especially in Malaysia, can be enhanced by employing micro-influencers, especially among youngsters such as Generation Y and Z, who are the next decision-makers

and purchasers [91,92]. In addition, positive word-of-mouth among a community may lay a foundation for greater assurance and more confidence amongst members in society to lean towards liking and trying green products. In this respect, positive word-of-mouth did render a mediating impact on four values, namely, functional value, emotional value, conditional value, and epistemic value, clearly reiterating its gravity on green purchase intention. On the contrary, positive word-of-mouth failed to render a mediating impact to social value and purchase intention relationship. This outcome is foreseeable in this study, as social value did not influence purchase intention primarily. Basically, social value gravitates along one's sense of belonging to certain groups or cohorts, and perhaps in Malaysia, pressure to conform to groups on green matters is still trivial; thus, injecting positive word-of-mouth into social value does not significantly influence purchase intention. Moreover, that the majority of respondents in this research belong to Gen X and Gen Y says a lot about their characteristics of being more individualized, self-centred, and given to strive towards freedom of choice [91,93,94]; thus, conforming to a social group or cohort may not interest them although, despite their being tech savvy and engaged in digital communication [94].

#### *Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study*

Despite careful practices in conducting the study, there are inevitably certain limitations. One of the limitations lies in the age demographics of the respondents. The distribution of survey partakers is exposed to some partiality as almost one-third of the respondents are below the age of 30. This could be because of the distribution of the survey using a Google Form. Apparently, such a method may have prompted a significant number of younger Malaysians to reply; they may feel highly savvy and comfortable in attending a survey via mobile phones or computer devices compared to other age groups who may have had a harder time adjusting to Google Form surveys. Evidently, the unequal distribution of survey participants may have skewed the outcome to be more partial toward the younger generation's likings. Future research shall be more sensitive to cater for all categories of age and be distributed via a hybrid mode of online forms and hard copy forms as well.

The Klang Valley region, which encompasses Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, was chosen as the location of this study. Thus, a sound reflection of the perspectives of rural households may not be provided from these two largely urbanized areas. Not only that, given that degree holders make up 50% of the respondents, this may not be an adequate representation of the larger and actual fabric of education in Malaysia. Therefore, future studies that are based in Malaysia may consider being inclusive of households residing in other states, as well as corporations.

Another idea that could intensively open up the discussion for future research is the incorporation of moderating variables, including income and education level, which could produce deeper and more dissected findings on the customer's intention to speak highly of green goods and purchase them. This may affect the study as differences in educational background and salary may prompt one to produce different opinions over what drives them to spread positive word-of-mouth about, and purchase, green goods. This research also did not consider separating green products that are within affordable range (i.e., biodegradable plastic bags, paper straws) from those in the range of luxurious items (i.e., electric cars, air conditioners with inverter functionality). It is expected that such scrutiny may provoke different reactions in people regarding the consumption values they may consider prior to buying green products.

#### **5. Conclusions**

This study offers a valuable perspective regarding green purchase intention whilst enriching the body of knowledge on consumption values with the inclusion of positive word-of-mouth. Additionally, this study clearly expresses the core of the purchase intention, and further reiterates positive word-of-mouth which should be harvested as a determinant

of green purchase intention. This conclusion is crucial; we observed the significant impact of positive word-of-mouth on purchase intention and its function as a mediator to functional value, emotional value, conditional value, and epistemic value.

This study lays a strong foundation towards achieving [4] the advancement of green growth for sustainability and resilience for green proponents. Not to mention, this study may serve as a timely reference for Malaysian policymakers. For instance, the Ministry of Education could instil green awareness in school curricula. Malaysia would be following in the footsteps of successful countries, such as Sweden, Germany, Indonesia, and Portugal, in which green products have been incorporated as a core part of their educational systems. These policies provide a blueprint for green education at the primary level to growing pupils and would be a highly influential factor on pupils' opinions from a young age. Moreover, the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation, in collaboration with relevant departments and agencies such as Department of Environment (DOE), could cohesively present green benefits by creating awareness. In fact, the awareness program could commence by invoking functional value benefits, such as value for money, in using green products through social media and other online platforms in an effort to entice society members, especially Gen Y and Z, towards embracing green products. This method would not only foster the green purchase but also pave the way to internalizing the right values. These common practices will be able to plant the right values within the young citizens of Malaysia. Government policies could start with local state governments reserving spaces in every district to be used for green purposes such as growing trees or even working with property developers to build more solar-powered dwellings to move more people to use clean energy.

Government, on the macro scale, could embolden the policy to proliferate more green entrepreneurs in the country, ensuring that they cater to the needs of the growing number of green customers while also enticing more citizens of the country to heavily support green products via more exposure. Some of the alternatives to fuel rises are to provide funding to green entrepreneurs while also boosting purchase among green buyers by allocating specific green subsidies. With such an initiative, additional demand for green products and services could improve, thereby paving the way for more green entrepreneurs. All this will lead to the appreciation of green practices, which could also indirectly trigger intentions to acquire green products.

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## Appendix A. Literature Survey

No	Title	Authors/Year	Country	Key Takeaways/Findings	Theory
1	Effect of consumption values on customers' green purchase intention: a mediating role of green trust	Amin and Tarun (2022)	Bangladesh	Emotional value has significant impact on green purchase intention (GPI). Functional value and social value did not lead to GPI. All three values have significant relationship with GPI when mediated by green trust.	Theory of Consumption value (TCV)
2	Sustainable consumption in Chinese cities: green purchasing intention of young adults based on the theory of consumption value	Awuni and Du (2016)	China	Social value and emotional value leads to GPI. Functional, conditional, and epistemic values failed to render its effect on GPI.	TCV
3	Consumption value dimension of green purchase intention with green trust a mediating variable	Dewi and Anas (2022)	Indonesia	Emotional value, upon mediated by green trust, leads to GPI. Functional and social values did not lead to GPI despite the presence of green trust as the mediator.	TCV
4	Investigating consumers' green purchase intention: examining the role of economic value, emotional value and perceived marketplace influence	Joshi et al. (2021)		Economic and emotional values lead to attitude towards purchasing green products. Perceived marketplace influence, economic and emotional values lead to attitude towards purchasing green.	TCV & TPB
5	The influence factors on choice behavior regarding green products based on the theory of consumption values	Pei-Chun and Yi-Hsuan (2012)	Taiwan	Emotional, conditional, and epistemic values lead to green product choice. Functional and social values failed to render its impact.	TCV
6	How do ethical consumers utilize sharing economy platforms as part of their sustainable resale behavior? The role of consumers' green consumption value	Tan et al. (2022)	Nordic countries	Recreational(emotional), generative(conditional), societal(social), protester(epistemic), economic (functional), practical (functional) values lead to green consumption. Green consumption leads to sustainable resale behavior.	TCV
7	The influence factors on young consumers' green purchase behavior: Perspective based on theory of consumption value	Wang et al. (2018)		Conditional and epistemic values lead to green purchase. Functional, social, and emotional values did not render its impact on green purchase.	TCV
8	Food consumption values and the influence of physical activity	Thome et al. (2022)	Brasilia, Brazil	A. Healthy food: social and emotional values lead to consumption. Functional, conditional, and epistemic values failed to render its effect; B. Hybrid food: emotional, conditional, and epistemic values lead to consumption whereas functional and social values did not deliver its impact; C. Unhealthy food: emotional and conditional values lead to consumption. Functional, social, and epistemic values did not render its impact on consumption.	TCV

No	Title	Authors/Year	Country	Key Takeaways/Findings	Theory
9	What affects Malaysian consumers' intention to purchase hybrid car?	Wen and Noor (2015)	Malaysia	Functional, emotional, and conditional values render its impact on purchase intention of hybrid cars. Symbolic and novelty values failed to render its impact on hybrid car purchase intention.	TCV
10	The moderating effect of price sensitivity on the relationship between consumers environmental knowledge and green purchase intention	Marwat et al. (2022)	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan	Environmental knowledge does not lead to GPI. Price sensitivity renders its impact as the moderator between environmental knowledge and GPI.	TPB

### Appendix B. Questionnaire

Latent Construct	Questionnaire Item
Functional value	FV1. The green product has an acceptable standard of quality. FV2. The green product would perform consistently. FV3. The green product offers value for money. FV4. The green product would be economical. FV5. The green product is made from non-hazardous substances
Emotional value	EV1. Buying green product would feel such as making good personal contribution to something better. EV2. Buying the green product would feel such as the morally right thing. EV3. Buying the green product would make me feel such as a better person. EV4. I enjoy using green products. EV5. Overall, the use of green products makes me feel good.
Social value	SV1. Buying the green product would help me to feel acceptable. SV2. Buying the green product would improve the way that I am perceived. SV3. Buying the green product would give its owner social approval. SV4. Purchase of green product will make a positive impression on peer groups. SV5. I would buy green products on peer's suggestion or preference.
Conditional value	CV1. I would buy the green product instead of conventional products under worsening environmental conditions. CV2. I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when there is a subsidy for green products. CV3. I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when there are discount rates for green products or promotional activity. CV4. I would buy the green product instead of conventional products when green products are available. CV5. I would buy green products when they are easily accessible.
Epistemic value	EPV1. I prefer to check the green-labels and certifications on green products before purchase. EPV2. I would prefer to gain substantial information on green products before purchase. EPV3. I want to have a deeper insight of the inputs, processes and impacts of green products before purchase. EPV4. I am willing to seek out new information on green product. EPV5. I such as to search for the new and different green product.
Positive word-of-mouth	PWOM1. I would say positive things about green products to other people. PWOM2. I would recommend green products to someone who seeks my advice. PWOM3. I would encourage friends and relatives who wish to buy green products. PWOM4. I generally regard my family, friends and neighbors as a good source of advice about green products. PWOM5. I would post positively about green products on social media.

Latent Construct	Questionnaire Item
Green purchase intention	GPI1. Given a choice between two products, I intend to choose the one having more green credentials.
	GPI2. While purchasing the goods in future, I will consider whether it has green credentials.
	GPI3. I intend to switch to a green version of a product.
	GPI4. I plan to purchase green products.
	GPI5. I will purchase green products in my next purchase.

### Appendix C. Demography

Profiling		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	177	52.7%
	Female	159	47.3%
Age	18–29	120	35.7%
	30–39	96	28.6%
	40–49	60	17.9%
	50–59	51	15.2%
	60 and above	9	2.7%
Race	Malay	160	47.6%
	Chinese	33	9.8%
	Indian	131	39.0%
	Other race	12	3.6%
Highest Education Level	SPM	5	1.5%
	Foundation/Diploma	40	11.9%
	Degree	189	56.3%
	Master	81	24.1%
	PhD	18	5.4%
	Others	3	0.9%
Profession	Student	37	11.0%
	Non-Executive	44	13.1%
	Executive	198	58.9%
	Entrepreneur/Business Owner	25	7.4%
	Educator	20	6.0%
	Others	3	0.9%
	Retiree/Housewife	9	2.7%
Monthly Income Range	Less than RM 2000	20	6.0%
	RM 2000–RM 4999	123	36.6%
	RM 5000–RM 7999	85	25.3%
	RM 8000–RM 10,999	46	13.7%
	RM 11,000 and above	29	8.6%
	No income	33	9.8%

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