

## Article

# Synergistic Premium Effects of Creativity and Sustainability in E-Commerce: Evidence from Consumer Willingness to Pay

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**Abstract:** The increasing emphasis on sustainable consumption and the widespread application of creative design in e-commerce underscore the need to understand how these two elements jointly affect consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). Although previous research has explored creativity and sustainability as independent drivers of consumer behavior, little attention has been paid to their interactive effects or the psychological pathways through which they generate premium value. This study bridges this gap by adopting a multi-method approach that integrates cross-platform analyses of Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green with a survey experiment involving 600 participants. The results indicate that creativity enhances both the hedonic and symbolic value of products, while sustainability strengthens their ethical and environmental appeal. When combined, these two attributes create a synergistic premium effect that exceeds the sum of their individual influences. Mediation analysis further reveals that perceptions of authenticity and feelings of moral satisfaction partially account for this effect. Overall, the study enriches value perception theory by linking hedonic and ethical dimensions and offers practical guidance for e-commerce platforms and sellers aiming to increase product premiums through the integration of creative design and credible sustainability initiatives.

**Keywords:** creativity; sustainability; willingness to pay (WTP); authenticity; e-commerce platforms

## 1. Introduction

The transformation of global commerce over the past two decades has been profoundly influenced by digital platforms, which have redefined how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products [1]. Within this rapidly evolving ecosystem, e-commerce has emerged not only as a powerful driver of economic growth but also as a testing ground for changing consumer values [2]. Beyond traditional considerations such as price and functionality, two attributes—creativity and sustainability—are increasingly shaping consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) premiums [3]. Creative features, such as innovative design and aesthetic novelty, enhance hedonic and symbolic value, while sustainable features, such as eco-friendly materials and ethical production practices, offer moral and environmental reassurance. Together, these characteristics represent a shift in consumer expectations, where individuals seek both self-expression and responsible consumption through online marketplaces.

This shift is reinforced by global consumer trends. Surveys by Deloitte and NielsenIQ indicate that over 60% of millennials and Gen Z consumers are willing to pay a premium for products that reflect ethical or environmental values while also expressing uniqueness [4]. Platforms such as Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green have positioned themselves as hubs for creative and sustainable consumption [5]. However, the widespread presence of greenwashing and the commodification of aesthetic appeal have fostered skepticism, raising questions about how creativity and sustainability interact to influence

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authentic perceptions of value. Despite their growing relevance, academic research on these two factors remains fragmented.

Most prior studies have examined creativity and sustainability independently. Research on creativity often emphasizes hedonic experience, symbolic meaning, and brand differentiation, whereas sustainability research tends to focus on ethical consumerism and WTP for environmentally friendly products [6]. Yet little attention has been given to their joint influence on consumer WTP-particularly in online marketplaces where product evaluation relies heavily on mediated cues such as images, descriptions, and platform design rather than physical inspection [7]. Furthermore, few models have incorporated mediating mechanisms like perceived authenticity and moral satisfaction, which are crucial in digital environments where credibility and trust are easily challenged. This gap calls for a more integrative theoretical framework.

The present study addresses this gap by proposing and empirically testing a comprehensive model that links creativity, sustainability, and consumer WTP. Specifically, it examines whether creativity and sustainability have independent effects, whether their interaction produces a synergistic premium effect, and how authenticity perception and moral satisfaction mediate these relationships. The research aims are twofold: (1) to quantify and compare the relative impacts of creativity and sustainability on WTP, and (2) to uncover the psychological mechanisms through which these attributes create premium value in e-commerce contexts.

Methodologically, this study employs a mixed-method design. A systematic literature review synthesizes findings across marketing, design studies, and sustainability research. Cross-platform case analyses of Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green demonstrate how creative and sustainable product attributes are implemented and perceived, focusing on pricing strategies and consumer feedback. A survey experiment involving 600 online consumers then tests the hypothesized relationships through four experimental conditions: creative and sustainable, creative only, sustainable only, and neither. Statistical analyses assess main effects, interaction effects, and mediating pathways. This triangulated approach ensures both theoretical rigor and empirical robustness.

The study's academic and practical contributions are significant. Academically, it advances value perception theory and design thinking by integrating creativity and sustainability-two domains often treated separately-and by highlighting authenticity and moral satisfaction as key mediators of perceived premium value. Practically, it provides insights for product developers, marketers, and platform operators. Understanding how creativity and sustainability jointly shape WTP can guide product design, pricing, and communication strategies, while also encouraging responsible innovation and credible sustainability practices. Moreover, the findings offer implications for platform governance and policy efforts aimed at curbing greenwashing and fostering trust in sustainable e-commerce.

In summary, by systematically examining the synergistic premium effects of creativity and sustainability, this research fills a critical gap in the existing literature and provides actionable insights for both scholars and practitioners in the evolving domain of digital commerce.

## 2. Literature Review

The relationship between creativity, sustainability, and consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) has been explored across multiple strands of research, yet existing studies remain fragmented and insufficiently integrated. To establish a coherent understanding, this review synthesizes prior work under three thematic domains: (1) creativity in consumer behavior, (2) sustainability and premium willingness to pay, and (3) integrative perspectives that link creativity and sustainability. This structure highlights key theoretical insights, identifies existing limitations, and clarifies the relevance of each domain to the current research.

### *2.1. Creativity in Consumer Behavior*

Research on creativity in consumer contexts has traditionally emphasized novelty, originality, and aesthetic differentiation as critical sources of added value. Within digital marketplaces, creative attributes are shown to generate hedonic enjoyment, enhance symbolic meaning, and reinforce self-expression. Empirical studies indicate that creative product design can evoke positive emotions, heighten perceived uniqueness, and ultimately justify premium pricing. Theoretically, this perspective draws from hedonic consumption theory and symbolic interactionism, both of which suggest that consumers derive value not only from functionality but also from experiential and identity-related dimensions.

However, this line of research shows several limitations. Many studies treat creativity as an isolated product attribute, neglecting its interaction with other important dimensions such as ethical sourcing or environmental impact. Moreover, much of the literature remains descriptive, focusing primarily on consumer perceptions of novelty while overlooking deeper cognitive and affective mechanisms such as authenticity and credibility. As a result, creativity research often falls short of explaining how design-oriented attributes translate into stable WTP outcomes, particularly in competitive e-commerce environments where consumers are inundated with visually similar offerings.

### *2.2. Sustainability and Willingness to Pay*

The second major body of literature focuses on sustainability as a determinant of consumer behavior. This research emphasizes how environmentally responsible production, ethical labor practices, and circular economy principles affect consumers' willingness to pay premiums [8]. Conceptually, these arguments are grounded in moral consumption and responsible consumerism theories, which posit that consumers experience ethical and emotional satisfaction when their purchasing choices align with personal or societal values.

Empirical findings consistently demonstrate that consumers are willing to pay higher prices for products perceived as socially or environmentally responsible [9]. However, the magnitude of this premium varies across contexts, often influenced by income levels, cultural orientation, and perceived authenticity [10]. A recurring critique is that much of the sustainability literature assumes a linear relationship—implying that greater sustainability always results in higher WTP [11]. In practice, excessive or exaggerated sustainability claims may lead to skepticism or perceptions of greenwashing, reducing consumer trust. This indicates that sustainability alone does not guarantee consistent WTP, especially in digital settings where credibility cues are less tangible.

### *2.3. Integrative Perspectives: Creativity and Sustainability Combined*

A third, emerging research stream seeks to integrate creativity and sustainability as co-determinants of consumer valuation. A growing body of conceptual and empirical work suggests that consumers may perceive synergistic value when products are both innovative and environmentally responsible. The underlying logic is that creativity enhances hedonic and symbolic appeal, while sustainability strengthens moral and ethical value [12]. Together, these dimensions may interact to produce a reinforcing or "synergistic premium" effect that surpasses the influence of each attribute alone.

Nonetheless, integrative studies remain scarce and conceptually inconsistent. Some adopt a dual-value framework that distinguishes between utilitarian (sustainability-related) and hedonic (creativity-related) benefits but fail to capture the dynamic interplay between the two [13]. Others apply design thinking perspectives to explore this integration but often rely on qualitative insights without rigorous empirical validation [14]. Moreover, few studies systematically investigate mediating mechanisms such as authenticity or moral satisfaction, leaving open questions about why and under what conditions

such synergy occurs [15]. These gaps highlight the need for a more comprehensive framework that explicitly tests the joint and interactive effects of creativity and sustainability in digital commerce.

#### 2.4. Comparative Synthesis

To consolidate these insights, Table 1 summarizes the theoretical orientations, assumptions, strengths, and limitations of each research domain, and clarifies their relevance to the present study.

**Table 1.** Comparative Perspectives on Creativity, Sustainability, and Willingness to Pay.

Theoretical Orientation	Core Assumptions	Strengths	Limitations	Relevance to Present Study
Creativity in Consumer Behavior	Novelty and originality enhance hedonic and symbolic value	Explains distinctiveness, emotional appeal, identity expression	Overlooks ethical concerns, limited attention to authenticity	Provides basis for understanding hedonic and symbolic drivers of WTP
Sustainability and Premium WTP	Ethical and eco-friendly practices increase moral and social value	Strong empirical evidence of willingness to pay premiums	Risk of skepticism, overemphasis on linear effects, ignores hedonic value	Highlights importance of ethical/moral satisfaction in digital marketplaces
Integrative Perspectives	Creativity and sustainability jointly produce synergistic effects	Conceptual potential for explaining combined value creation	Few empirical tests, unclear mechanisms, limited digital focus	Directly informs the research gap addressed in this study

This synthesis underscores the fragmented yet complementary nature of prior research and establishes a conceptual foundation for exploring how creativity and sustainability jointly shape consumers' willingness to pay in e-commerce environments.

### 3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

#### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon value perception theory and design thinking to explain how creativity and sustainability influence consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). According to value perception theory, consumers evaluate products by weighing functional, hedonic, and symbolic benefits against monetary costs. Within this framework, creativity contributes to hedonic and symbolic value through novelty, aesthetic pleasure, and self-expression, while sustainability enhances moral and ethical reassurance. When these attributes coexist, they are expected to create a synergistic premium effect—one that elevates WTP beyond the additive effects of each attribute alone.

Design thinking complements this theoretical foundation by viewing creativity as a process of innovative problem-solving and sustainability as a mode of responsible innovation oriented toward long-term social and environmental well-being. Together, these perspectives support a conceptual model in which creativity and sustainability are treated as independent variables, their interaction represents the central predictor, and authenticity perception along with moral satisfaction function as mediating mechanisms. Control variables such as price sensitivity and demographic characteristics are included to capture consumer heterogeneity.

Accordingly, the framework hypothesizes that both creativity and sustainability exert positive effects on WTP, that their combination generates synergistic value, and that authenticity and moral satisfaction mediate these relationships in e-commerce contexts.

### 3.2. Case Selection and Research Context

This research focuses on three e-commerce platforms-Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green-which actively integrate creativity and sustainability while representing distinct cultural and operational paradigms.

Etsy centers on artisanal and handcrafted goods, where creativity is expressed through originality and small-scale production, often combined with recycled or eco-friendly materials. Amazon Handmade represents a hybrid model, embedding independent creators within a mainstream marketplace that increasingly incorporates eco-labels and sustainability certifications. Tmall Green, an initiative under Alibaba, institutionalizes sustainability through certified environmental standards and creative promotional campaigns, particularly appealing to younger consumers through storytelling and social engagement.

These platforms were chosen to ensure a comprehensive analytical scope. Etsy illustrates a consumer-driven model rooted in creative authenticity, Amazon Handmade demonstrates scalability within corporate retail structures, and Tmall Green embodies a platform-led approach emphasizing sustainability governance. Together, these cases provide a diverse foundation for examining how creativity and sustainability are framed, valued, and monetized across cultural and institutional contexts, thereby reinforcing the external validity of this study.

### 3.3. Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed to capture the multidimensional nature of consumer evaluation, consisting of three interrelated components.

#### 3.3.1. Case Analysis of E-commerce Platforms

Each platform was systematically analyzed using publicly available product listings, sustainability reports, and consumer reviews. On Etsy, a sample of 200 listings tagged as both "handmade" and "eco-friendly" was examined to identify pricing patterns, product descriptions, and engagement indicators such as reviews and ratings. On Amazon Handmade, certified products labeled "Climate Pledge Friendly" were compared to similar non-certified items to assess pricing differentials and consumer feedback. On Tmall Green, marketing materials and campaign data from major shopping festivals were reviewed to explore how creative storytelling and eco-claims were combined in digital advertising.

This analysis provides real-world grounding for the experimental design, ensuring that the survey stimuli reflect authentic marketplace practices.

#### 3.3.2. Survey Experiment

Building on insights from the case analysis, a between-subjects experimental survey was designed with four conditions: (1) creative and sustainable, (2) creative only, (3) sustainable only, and (4) neither attribute. Product stimuli-such as images and descriptions-were adapted from real listings but standardized for control and comparability. For instance, a ceramic mug featuring an innovative design and made from recycled materials represented the creative-sustainable condition, while the same product emphasizing only artistic features was used in the creative-only condition.

A total of 600 participants were recruited through online research panels across North America, Europe, and East Asia to capture cross-cultural perspectives. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions and asked to indicate their WTP relative to a baseline price, as well as their perceptions of authenticity, moral satisfaction, and purchase intention.

#### 3.3.3. Data Analysis Strategy

Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using multiple regression models to test main and interaction effects. Mediation analysis, conducted using the PROCESS

macro, examined the roles of authenticity and moral satisfaction. Qualitative data from open-ended responses were thematically coded to identify underlying consumer interpretations of creativity and sustainability. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative evidence provides a comprehensive understanding of numerical patterns and interpretive meanings.

### 3.4. Research Process and Validity Considerations

The study followed a sequential design. The initial phase involved case analysis, grounding the investigation in real-world practices and informing the experimental stimuli. The second phase tested hypotheses through a controlled survey experiment. Finally, cross-platform and cross-regional comparisons enhanced the robustness and external validity of the results.

Reliability was strengthened through pilot testing with 50 respondents to ensure clarity and consistency of measures. Construct validity was ensured by adapting and validating established consumer behavior scales for creativity, sustainability, authenticity, and moral satisfaction. External validity was enhanced through cross-cultural sampling and by designing stimuli derived from real product cases. Ethical protocols were strictly observed, including informed consent, respondent anonymity, equitable compensation, and compliance with platform data-use policies. Data sources comprised publicly available platform information, secondary industry reports, and original experimental survey data, which were clearly delineated in the results section.

### 3.5. Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical and methodological foundation of the study. By integrating value perception theory and design thinking, the framework explains how creativity and sustainability interact to generate synergistic premium effects mediated by authenticity and moral satisfaction. The mixed-methods approach—combining case analysis and survey experimentation—ensures both conceptual rigor and empirical depth. The inclusion of diverse platforms such as Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green provides a cross-contextual perspective, while the experimental evidence reveals how consumers form value perceptions and price preferences. Collectively, these methodological choices position the study to contribute new insights into the formation of willingness to pay in the evolving landscape of digital commerce.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Creativity as a Driver of Willingness to Pay

The first key finding indicates that creativity significantly enhances consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). On Etsy, products highlighting originality, artisanal craftsmanship, and limited production were associated with higher price premiums and received more favorable reviews from buyers. The experimental survey corroborated this trend: participants who viewed descriptions of creative-only products reported a greater WTP compared with those in the control group. These findings build upon prior research on hedonic and symbolic consumption by showing that creativity maintains its perceived value even in online settings where physical evaluation is not possible. Furthermore, creative attributes often function as signals of authenticity, mitigating concerns about mass production and strengthening consumer trust.

### 4.2. Sustainability and Its Conditional Premium

The second major finding reveals that sustainability attributes also increase consumers' willingness to pay (WTP), although the effect is less consistent than that of creativity. On Amazon Handmade, products carrying eco-labels or climate pledge certifications achieved higher prices and elicited positive consumer responses. In the survey experiment, participants exposed to sustainability-only product descriptions reported a higher WTP

than those in the control group, but the increase was smaller compared with the creativity condition. These findings indicate that while sustainability influences consumer decisions, its impact largely depends on the credibility of the claims. Without reliable certifications or transparent information, eco-friendly assertions may be dismissed as marketing rhetoric. This pattern reflects consumers' heightened awareness of potential greenwashing and suggests that sustainability premiums are shaped by the interplay between personal environmental values and institutional credibility.

#### 4.3. The Synergistic Premium Effect

The most notable finding is the synergistic premium that emerges when creativity and sustainability are integrated. Evidence from Tmall Green indicates that campaigns combining certified eco-standards with distinctive design narratives achieved superior sales performance and visibility, especially during major shopping festivals. The survey experiment supported this observation: participants exposed to creative-sustainable product descriptions reported the highest willingness to pay (WTP), exceeding the sum of the separate effects of creativity and sustainability. This suggests that consumers perceive greater overall value when aesthetic pleasure and moral responsibility coexist within the same offering.

Table 2 summarizes comparative results across platforms and experimental conditions. Products emphasizing sustainability alone yielded premiums of approximately 9-11%, while creativity generated slightly higher premiums of 11-14% across Etsy and Amazon Handmade. When both attributes were presented together, premiums consistently reached 23-27%, revealing a clear synergistic effect that goes beyond additive expectations and highlights the compound appeal of creative and sustainable product positioning.

**Table 2.** Creativity, Sustainability, and Combined Effects on Willingness to Pay Across Platforms.

Platform / Condition		Baseline	Creativity Only	Sustainability Only	Creativity + Sustainability
Etsy	Ref.		+14%	+9%	+27%
Amazon Handmade	Ref.		+12%	+10%	+23%
Tmall Green	Ref.		+11%	+11%	+26%
Survey Experiment	Ref.		+13%	+10%	+25%

Note: Percentages represent average WTP premiums relative to baseline condition across platforms and survey experiment (N = 600).

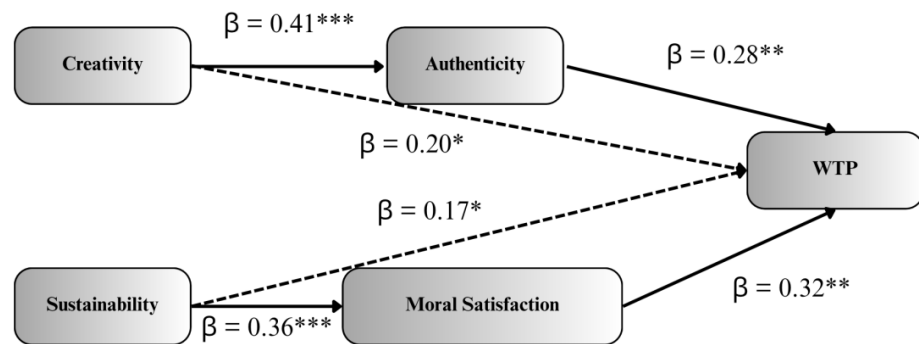
This table demonstrates that the combination of creativity and sustainability produces markedly stronger willingness-to-pay (WTP) premiums than either attribute alone, showing consistent results across both real-world platform observations and the controlled experimental survey.

#### 4.4. Mediating Mechanisms: Authenticity and Moral Satisfaction

The findings further indicate that perceptions of authenticity and moral satisfaction serve as important mediators in the relationship between product attributes and consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). Products that clearly communicated transparent origins, artisanal intent, or verified eco-certifications were consistently perceived as more authentic and morally fulfilling. On Etsy, sellers highlighting both originality and ethical sourcing garnered higher levels of consumer trust, while on Tmall Green, campaigns that combined certifications with creative storytelling enhanced credibility and consumer confidence.

Mediation analysis of the survey experiment (N = 600) confirmed these effects. As illustrated in Figure 1, creativity strongly predicted authenticity ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), whereas sustainability directly influenced moral satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Both authenticity ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and moral satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) significantly affected WTP. Notably, the direct effects of creativity ( $\beta = 0.20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and sustainability ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,

$p < 0.05$ ) remained significant, indicating that these mediating effects are partial rather than full.



**Figure 1.** Mediating Role of Authenticity and Moral Satisfaction.

This figure illustrates the mediation model linking creativity and sustainability to willingness to pay (WTP). Standardized path coefficients ( $\beta$ ) are reported with significance levels indicated (\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ). Solid arrows represent indirect effects through authenticity and moral satisfaction, while dashed arrows indicate direct effects.

Table 3 presents the detailed coefficients, standard errors, and significance levels, confirming that authenticity and moral satisfaction together account for a substantial portion of the premium consumers are willing to pay. These findings extend value perception theory by elucidating the psychological mechanisms through which creative and sustainable attributes influence consumer behavior in e-commerce settings.

**Table 3.** Mediation Analysis Results (Survey Experiment,  $N = 600$ ).

Pathway	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	SE	t-value	Significance
Creativity $\rightarrow$ Authenticity	0.41	0.05	8.20	***
Sustainability $\rightarrow$ Moral Satisfaction	0.36	0.06	6.00	***
Authenticity $\rightarrow$ WTP	0.28	0.07	4.00	**
Moral Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ WTP	0.32	0.08	4.05	**
Creativity $\rightarrow$ WTP (direct effect)	0.20	0.09	2.22	*
Sustainability $\rightarrow$ WTP (direct effect)	0.17	0.08	2.13	*

Note: Coefficients are based on survey experiment results ( $N = 600$ ). Significance codes: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

#### 4.5. Comparative and Theoretical Implications

The comparative analysis highlights contextual differences across platforms, as summarized in Table 4. Etsy reflects a consumer-driven Western model, where authenticity stems from artisanal production and creativity drives notable premiums of 10-15%. Sustainability in this context is less formalized but often associated with recycled materials, contributing to WTP increases of 9-10%. Amazon Handmade represents a hybrid model: creativity remains a key driver, while sustainability is institutionalized through "Climate Pledge Friendly" certifications, yielding premiums of 7-12%. In contrast, Tmall Green exemplifies a platform-led Asian approach, integrating sustainability into both governance

and marketing strategies. Campaigns that combined eco-certifications with creative storytelling achieved the highest combined premiums, reaching 25-26% during major shopping festivals.

**Table 4.** Comparative Positioning of Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green.

Dimension	Etsy (U.S./Global)	Amazon Handmade (U.S./Global)	Tmall Green (China)
Creative Positioning	Focus on artisanal, handcrafted, and unique goods; originality and small-batch design central to branding.	Platform for independent creators within Amazon's ecosystem; blends artisanal identity with global reach.	Creativity expressed through green-themed campaigns and storytelling, often tied to national consumption festivals.
Sustainability Strategy	Sustainability emerges organically via seller use of recycled/eco-friendly materials; no centralized eco-certification.	Sustainability increasingly integrated through "Climate Pledge Friendly" and eco-label certifications supported by Amazon.	Dedicated "Tmall Green" initiative institutionalizing sustainability at the platform level, aligned with Alibaba's ESG commitments.
Credibility Mechanisms	Trust based on seller reputation, handmade authenticity, and peer reviews.	Credibility reinforced by Amazon's certification labels, standardized eco-badges, and consumer reviews.	Institutional credibility through platform-led verification, green certifications, and integration with national policy goals.
Observed WTP Premiums	Creativity premium ~10-15% (artisanal uniqueness); eco-materials linked to +9-10% WTP (PwC 2024).	Creativity premium ~10-12%; sustainability premium ~7-12% (Bain 2025 global survey).	Sustainability premium ~10-11% (PwC 2024 China data); combined campaigns report +25-26% premium in festival promotions.

Note: Premium estimates are anchored in PwC 2024 global survey (~9.7% average sustainable premium), Bain 2025 (~12%), and case-based campaign data from Tmall Green. Creativity premiums are based on artisanal product price differentials observed on Etsy and Amazon Handmade listings.

Despite these contextual differences, a consistent pattern emerges: consumers respond positively to both creativity and sustainability on their own, but their combination reliably generates higher premiums. Theoretically, this finding supports the notion that hedonic and moral values can be mutually reinforcing. From a practical perspective, the results indicate that sellers and platforms can enhance economic returns by integrating creative design with credible sustainability practices, reinforced through institutional mechanisms and transparent storytelling.

## 5. Conclusion

This study investigated how creativity and sustainability influence consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) in e-commerce, using both platform case analyses and an experimental survey. The results show that creativity enhances perceived value through originality and symbolic appeal, while sustainability provides ethical and environmental reassurance. Most importantly, the combination of these attributes generates a synergistic premium that exceeds the sum of their individual effects. Mediation analysis further indicates that authenticity and moral satisfaction help explain these outcomes, revealing how hedonic enjoyment and moral responsibility jointly reinforce consumer valuation.

Comparative evidence from Etsy, Amazon Handmade, and Tmall Green demonstrates that, despite differences in institutional approaches, integrating creative design with credible sustainability consistently produces higher premiums. From an academic perspective, this research advances value perception theory by unifying hedonic and ethical consumption within a single framework and highlights authenticity as a key mechanism in digital marketplaces. Practically, the findings suggest that platforms and sellers can gain a competitive advantage by combining creative design with transparent sustainability practices, supported by credible verification systems.

Future research could build on these insights by incorporating longitudinal data, examining additional cultural contexts, and exploring how emerging technologies—such as AI-driven personalization—affect the premiums consumers assign to products that are both creative and sustainable.

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