
Consumer's Environmental Knowledge: Green Washing and Brand Hate

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ABSTRACT

Greenwashing of brands is increasing in the contemporary Pakistani market. The consumers with environmental knowledge and leapfrogging from brands for their greenwashing. The survival of brands in the market has become a challenge and brand hate has emerged. The objective of this study is to understand the impact of greenwashing, green purchasing, and negative WOM on brand hate with moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge. This research is based on primary data and responses are collected by brand consumers with a random sampling technique. The study concludes that green purchasing by consumers and their environmental knowledge can increase brand hate if the brands are greenwashing. This research has significant implications that are important to adopt by modern brands in Pakistani marketing to avoid negative WOM marketing and leapfrogging. This study contributes a significant theoretical framework to the body of knowledge. The relationship explained by this research has managerial implications to avoid the elements of brand hate in Pakistan. Future directions of this research have further areas of research to enrich the literature on consumer purchasing and brand hate.

Keywords: Brand hate, consumer environmental knowledge, green purchasing, greenwashing, negative word-of-mouth.

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INTRODUCTION

Business performance of sustainability of the environment is the concern of modern consumers (Xiao, Wang, & Guo, 2022). The brand managers intend to develop the business performance according to the goals of sustainability because they want to protect the environment (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Different brands in contemporary markets are working on business development while creating awareness about environmental protection (Nawaz, Jiang, Alam, & Nawaz, 2020). On the other hand, some brands are involved in betrayal communication with the consumers and they are not contributing to business performance (Stockman, Van Hoye, & da Motta Veiga, 2020). The responsibility of brand management is to communicate a positive message regarding environmental protection in the advertisement (A. J. Khan, Farooq, Bakar, & Murad, 2022). However, it is not an easy process because to some extent, every brand is using natural resources that are challenging to the sustainability of the environment (Platania, Morando, & Santisi, 2017). Modern consumers are mature and they are more interested to purchase products with green innovation and environmental sustainability (Stockman et al., 2020).

The greenwashing of brands refers to the prevention of brands regarding products and services (de Freitas Netto, Sobral, Ribeiro, & Soares, 2020). The brands that are not providing green products but pretend to be green, the marketing of these brands is negative for the consumers (Majláth, 2017). Mature consumers share ideas on social media platforms regarding products and services (Furlow, 2010; Sailer, Wilfing, & Straus, 2022). Positive and negative word of mouth (WOM) marketing matters a lot in the brands because the community is developing different strategies for working (Garcia et al., 2019). Indeed, brands with negative WOM are failed in large markets due to their bad brand image (Furrer, Kerguignas, & Landry, 2021). The intention of modern consumers is for green purchasing that can be possible for them to contribute to environmental sustainability directly (Lee, Chen, Chen, Lo, & Hsu, 2020). Brand management should avoid greenwashing because for marketing tactics, initially, it's a good strategy however, it can't be utilized in a long term (Azemi, Ozuem, & Howell, 2020). Leapfrogging and brand shifting is common nowadays which is a challenge for brands (Wen-Hai, Yuan, Liu, & Fang, 2018).

The earlier research on greenwashing has discussed it as a strategic tactic to attract consumers by advertising in a green way (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Furlow, 2010; Majláth, 2017; Sailer et al., 2022). The research has discussed that greenwashing is essential to persuade consumers in the target market (Akturan, 2018; Guo, Tao, Li, & Wang, 2017; Schmuck, Matthes, & Naderer, 2018; Lu Zhang, Li, Cao, & Huang, 2018). However, no research earlier has discussed the role of greenwashing from the perspective of a brand's negative image in the market (Brouwer, 2016; Guo, Zhang, Wang, Li, & Tao, 2018; H. Wang, Ma, & Bai, 2019; Xiao et al., 2022). Since consumers are well informed about modern business trends, therefore the brands should be conscious about their marketing (Fayyaz, Murad, Yaqub, & Sharif, 2022). A false marketing strategy can vanish a brand from the market (Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016). The competitors in the marketing and sharing the negativity of other brands with the consumers

to develop their positive WOM (Flavian, Gurrea, & Orús, 2020; Huang & Philp, 2021; Stockman et al., 2020; Talwar, Talwar, Kaur, Islam, & Dhir, 2021). This area of research has a significant gap because earlier research has nothing to contribute to the literature related to the role of greenwashing and brand hate.

Based on the evaluation of earlier literature, the theoretical framework of current research is designed. The objective of this study is to understand the impact of greenwashing, green purchasing, and negative WOM on brand hate with moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge. This research is based on a novel idea to understand the influence of negative word of mouth, green purchasing, and greenwashing in the contemporary market of Pakistan. This research has significant implications that are important to adopt by modern brands in Pakistani marketing to avoid negative WOM marketing and leapfrogging. In this regard, this study contributes a significant theoretical framework to the body of knowledge. The relationship explained by this research has managerial implications to avoid the elements of brand hate in Pakistan. The negativity of brands would be no more if the brand management is working to promote brands with positive marketing without deceptive communication.

Review of Literature

Negative WOM refers to the bad reputation of brands in any market that is based on the brand betrayal of the bad experience of the consumers (Garcia et al., 2019). Mature consumers are judgmental and they compare the quality and services of different brands to understand the contribution of the brand to the market (Azemi et al., 2020; Furrer et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2020). Brands are required to develop positive WOM in marketing because it is a strong marketing strategy that can influence any consumer (Wen-Hai et al., 2018). The brands in Pakistani marketing are required to be honest with the consumers who are willing to green purchasing (Weitzl, Hutzinger, & Einwiller, 2018). Consumers are less attracted to those brands that are not working for environmental sustainability (Flavian et al., 2020; Rouliez, Tojib, & Tsarenko, 2019; Septianto, Northey, Chiew, & Ngo, 2020). Therefore, the focus of consumers should be to develop positive WOM by satisfying the need of consumers in the best way among the contemporary brands (Huang & Philp, 2021). Brand marketing and brand claim about sustainability have a significant impact on the purchasing decision of consumers (Talwar et al., 2021). Therefore, consumers with positive intentions are more attracted to the brands with positive marketing and the best working for sustainability (Flavian et al., 2020; Stockman et al., 2020). The brands in American markets are working on sustainability because, in American culture, consumers are more interested to purchase from brands that have significant contributions to sustainability (Flavian et al., 2020; Rouliez et al., 2019; Septianto et al., 2020; Weitzl et al., 2018). The above-evaluated literature leads to the hypothesis;

Hypothesis 1: Negative word-of-mouth has an impact on green purchasing.

Greenwashing is the false claim of the brand for green purchasing because consumers in the modern markets are more interested to purchase products and services with green intentions (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). The more sophisticated consumers are willing to purchase green products and when they learn about green businesses, they purchase from them (Furlow, 2010; Sailer et al., 2022). Indeed, the green purchasing behavior of consumers is widely respected by the brands to contribute to the sustainability of the

environment (Majláth, 2017), but most of the brands are greenwashing and in reality, these brands have no green products or contribution to sustainability (Guo et al., 2018; Xiao et al., 2022). Brands with sustainable development can target more consumers if the behavior of consumers is concerned with green purchasing (Brouwer, 2016; Guo et al., 2017). The brands claim green products and services more than their actual contribution in this area of research (Akturan, 2018). The greenwashing of brands can be more effective if brands in the Pakistani markets encounter consumers having little knowledge of green purchasing (Akturan, 2018). The environmental knowledge of consumers is critical for green purchasing because consumers intend to work innovatively (Furlow, 2010). On the other hand, the green marketing of brands can motivate consumers for green purchasing who have the intention to purchase the products for sustainability (H. Wang et al., 2019). Indeed, modern brands working on green strategies for product development to contribute to sustainability (Brouwer, 2016; Sailer et al., 2022; Schmuck et al., 2018). The above-evaluated literature leads to the hypothesis;

Hypothesis 2: Greenwashing has an impact on green purchasing.

Every consumer has a different mindset that is critical to determine by the brands to persuade him (Amoako, Dzogbenuku, & Abubakari, 2020; Yang, Wang, Gu, & Xie, 2021). Since modern marketing is not identical to traditional marketing trends, and information about products and services is available on digital platforms (Bósquez & Arias-Bolzmann, 2021; Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015; K. Sharma, Aswal, & Paul, 2022), consumers of modern times are evaluating information about their purchasing (Foo, Kanapathy, Zailani, & Shaharudin, 2019; García-Salirrosas & Rondon-Eusebio, 2022; S. A. R. Khan, Yu, & Farooq, 2022). The behavior of consumers is positive about green purchasing because they believe that green marketing is effective for them that could facilitate them to contribute to society (Akturan, 2018; He et al., 2021; Y. Wang, Li, Zhang, & Su, 2019). Consumers are not interested to purchase from brands that are not providing quality green products (Shimul, Cheah, & Khan, 2022; Lu Zhang et al., 2018). The webrooming of products has changed the traditional trend of purchasing and the consumers are more informative (Lavuri, 2022; N. Sharma, Saha, Sreedharan, & Paul, 2020). Modern consumers can't be deceived by the brands because these consumers intend to contribute to environmental sustainability (Sheng, Xie, Gong, & Pan, 2019). The external knowledge and information of modern consumers have changed the traditional way of purchasing, but now the decisions are made on the shared information for purchasing (Shao & Ünal, 2019). The brands with no green products and utilizing a lot of natural resources to develop the products are not welcomed by these mature consumers (He et al., 2021; Shimul et al., 2022; Y. Wang et al., 2019; Lu Zhang et al., 2018). Green purchasing is a reality and it must be understood by the top management of contemporary brands in the Pakistani market (Foo et al., 2019). The above-evaluated literature leads to the hypothesis;

Hypothesis 3: Green purchasing has an impact on brand hate.

The setting directions of purchase have evolved as a result of merchandise webrooming, and customers are now more knowledgeable (Shoaeinaeini, Govindan, & Rahmani, 2022; Widayat, Praharjo, Putri, Andharini, & Masudin, 2021; Linghong Zhang, Zhou, Liu, & Lu, 2019). As a result of their determination to contribute to ecological sustainability, modern customers cannot be fooled by companies (R. Wang, Hu, & Yang, 2022; Zhou & Duan, 2022). Modern consumers' access to outside data and knowledge has altered the traditional

method of making purchases, yet choices are now based on information exchange (Haq, Adnan, & Ali, 2021; Nassani, Khader, & Ali, 2013; Schmuck et al., 2018). These sophisticated consumers do not appreciate firms that do not offer any green items and that use numerous natural resources in the development of their merchandise (Cohen, 2022; Han, 2021). The senior leadership of modern businesses in Pakistani business must understand that green shopping is a reality (Han, 2021; Heydari, Govindan, & Basiri, 2021; Y. Zhang & Qin, 2022). The ability of a brand to influence a buyer depends critically on understanding his unique perspective (Tao, Zhou, Bian, & Lai, 2022). Consumers today are considering details before making purchases since brand advertising is different from previous digital advertising and data about the products and service is obtainable on online platforms (Santos & Gonçalves, 2019). Since customers feel that green marketing is useful to them and could help them participate in society, they are more likely to make green purchases (Cohen, 2022; Santos & Gonçalves, 2019; Widayat et al., 2021). Customers do not want to buy from companies that do not offer high-quality green items (Heydari et al., 2021; Tao et al., 2022; Y. Zhang & Qin, 2022). The above-evaluated literature leads to the hypothesis;

Hypothesis 4: Consumer's environmental knowledge moderates the relationship between green purchasing and brand hate.

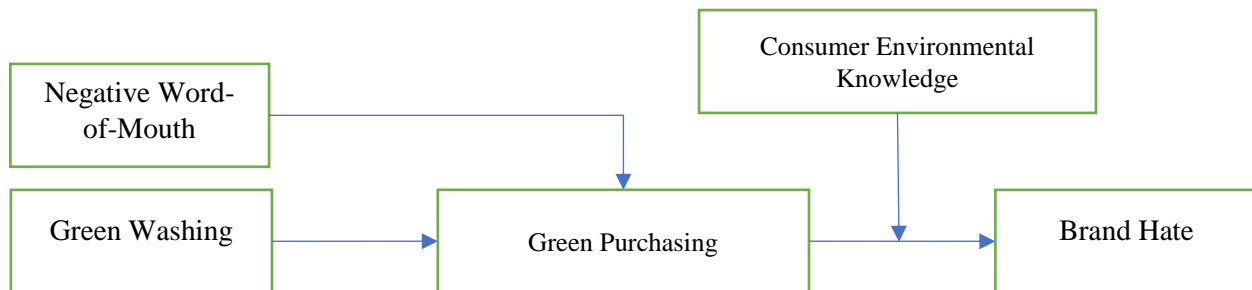


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

Methodology

The research related to consumers and brands is based on primary data. Therefore, this research is grounded on the quantitative data collected on a Likert scale questionnaire. The cross-sectional data for this study is considered because it helps to get the empirical evidence. The measurement scale for this study was adapted from the existing literature and developed scale by confirming the reliability and validity of Cronbach's alpha. The scale for negative WOM (Maisam & Mahsa, 2016) used in this study questionnaire to understand its impact on green purchasing. Secondly, the scale for greenwashing (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015) used in this study questionnaire to understand its impact on green purchasing. Thirdly, the scale for green purchasing (Kumar & Ghodeswar, 2015) used in this study questionnaire to understand its impact on green purchasing. Fourthly, the scale for brand hate (Raof et al., 2021; Abdulmuhsin et al., 2021; Basheer et al., 2021; Hameed et al., 2021; Yan et al., 2020; Nuseir et al., 2020) used in this study questionnaire to understand its impact on green purchasing. Lastly, the scale for consumer environmental knowledge (Asada et al., 2020; Junoh et al., 2019; Basheer et al., 2019a; Muneer et al., 2019; Basheer et al., 2019b; Basheer et al., 2018; Hameed et al., 2019) used in this study

questionnaire to understand its impact on green purchasing. These items were collectively used in the questionnaire. The questionnaire for this research was printed and a random sampling technique was adopted to collect the data from the respondents. The respondents from Bahawalpur and Multan targeted in this research are visiting different brands. 600 questionnaires were distributed and 409 questionnaires were collected back and considered for the study. The respondents were honest with the questionnaire and there were thanked for their time for response.

Findings

The structural model and measurement model are used in this study for finding. The results of this study's reliability and validity are determined by the measurement model using Smart PLS 3. The reliability and validity of items are checked with Cronbach's alpha value. All the constructs achieved the recommended value of 0.70. Furthermore, the factor loadings threshold 0.60 (Ringle, Da Silva, & Bido, 2015) was achieved by each scale item, the composite reliability (CR) threshold 0.70 (Henseler et al., 2014) was achieved by constructs, and the average variance extracted (AVE) threshold 0.50 (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014) was achieved by this study (see Table 1). The results described in Figure 1 of the measurement model describe the reliability and validity of study items.

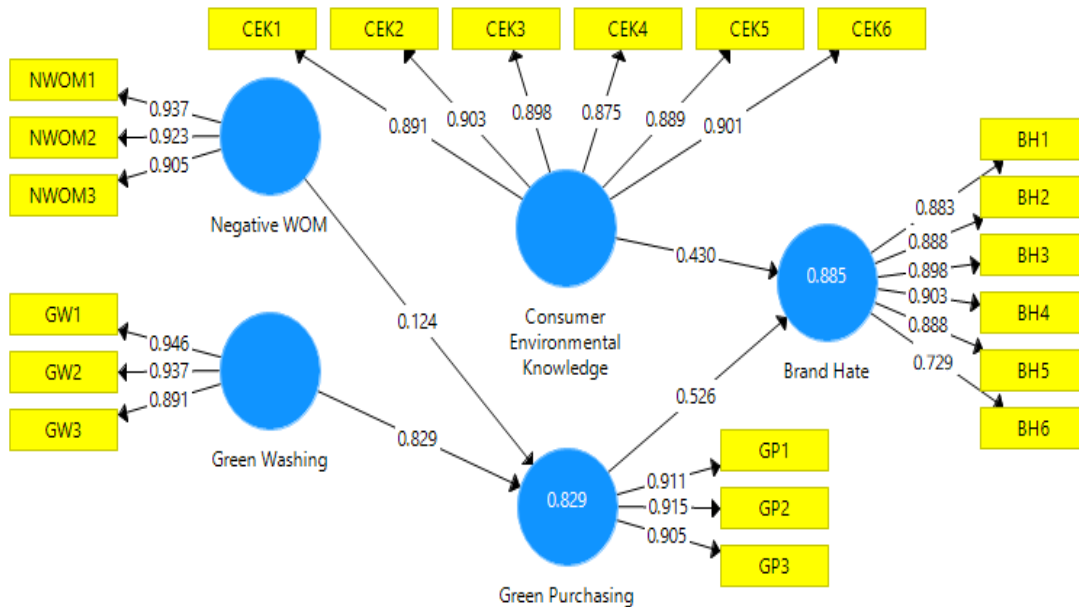


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 1. Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Items	Description	Factor Loadings	α	CR	AVE
Consumer Environmental Knowledge	BH1	I think environmental protection is meaningless.	0.883	0.949	0.959	0.797

	BH2	For a green product, good value for money exists in its features.	0.888			
	BH3	I prefer green products over non-green products where their product qualities are similar.	0.898			
	BH4	I find the green product relevant to my lifestyle.	0.903			
	BH5	Ingredients of an environmentally friendly product are recyclable.	0.888			
	BH6	Supporting environmental protection makes me feel meaningful.	0.729			
Green Purchasing	CEK1	I often buy products that often use recycled/recyclable packaging.	0.891	0.897	0.935	0.829
	CEK2	Even if I trust the performance of the green product, I will not pay above a certain price level.	0.903			
	CEK3	I choose to buy environmentally friendly products.	0.898			
Green Washing	CEK4	I feel good about buying brands that are less damaging to the environment.	0.875	0.915	0.947	0.856
	CEK5	I refuse to buy the product from companies accused of being polluters	0.889			
	CEK6	Companies are not producing green products in reality.	0.901			
Brand Hate	GP1	I am angry with Brand X.	0.911	0.923	0.941	0.729
	GP2	I am annoyed with Brand X.	0.915			
	GP3	I am disgusted with Brand X.	0.905			
	GW1	I am mad at Brand X.	0.946			
	GW2	I am aggravated with Brand X.	0.937			
	GW3	I do not use Brand X to order products and services.	0.891			
Negative WOM	NWOM 1	I will not recommend this brand to my friends.	0.937	0.912	0.944	0.850
	NWOM 2	People speak negatively about the advantages of this brand.	0.923			
	NWOM 3	I share my personal experiences about this brand with others.	0.905			

The study discriminant validity is used to check the distinction between the scale items. The study used a new method of Heteritrait-Monotrait (HTMT) for discriminant validity.

Gold, Malhotra, and Segars (2001) claimed that the value of the discriminant validity test should not exceed 0.90. The results of the current research available in Table 2 described the discriminant validity of the study.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Brand Hate	Consumer Environmental Knowledge	Green Purchasing	Green Washing	Negative WOM
Brand Hate					
Consumer Environmental Knowledge	0.784				
Green Purchasing	0.714	0.709			
Green Washing	0.711	0.706	0.701		
Negative WOM	0.664	0.652	0.636	0.618	

The study used a structural model for testing the relationship between the variables of the study. The acceptance and rejection of variables are tested with t-value and p-value. The $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$ is the threshold for reliability and validity (see Table 3 and Figure 2). Hypothesis 1 findings are ($t = 3.285$ and $p = 0.001$) and the relationship between negative WOM and green purchasing is accepted. Hypothesis 2 findings are ($t = 28.104$ and $p = 0.000$) and the relationship between greenwashing and green purchasing is accepted. Hypothesis 3 findings are ($t = 9.220$ and $p = 0.000$) and the relationship between green purchasing and brand hate is accepted. Finally, hypothesis 4 findings are ($t = 4.871$ and $p = 0.000$) and the moderation of consumer environmental knowledge in the relationship between green purchasing and brand hate is accepted. The study findings further disclosed that the moderation of consumer environmental knowledge strengthens the positive relationship between green purchasing and brand hate (see Figure 4).

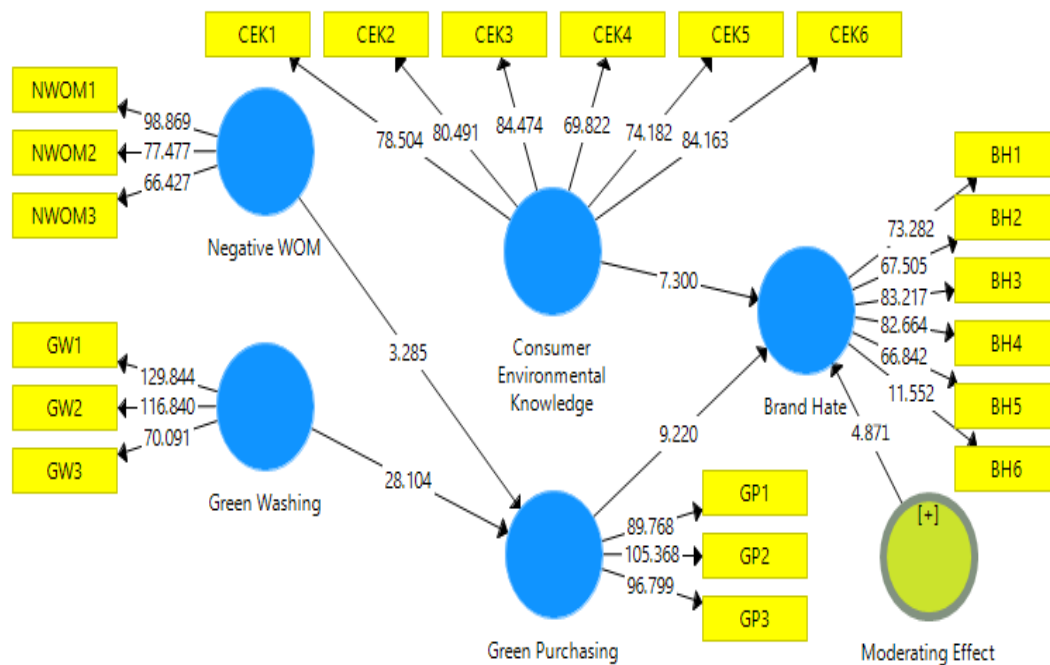


Figure 3. Structural Model

Table 3. Structural Model

Path	Original Sample	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Negative WOM -> Green Purchasing	0.124	3.285	0.001
Green Washing -> Green Purchasing	0.829	28.104	0.000
Green Purchasing -> Brand Hate	0.524	9.220	0.000
Moderating Effect -> Brand Hate	0.130	4.871	0.000



Figure 4. Consumer Environmental Knowledge Moderation

Conclusion

The objective of this study is to understand the impact of greenwashing, green purchasing, and negative WOM on brand hate with moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge. This research is based on a novel idea to understand the influence of negative word of mouth, green purchasing, and greenwashing in the contemporary market of Pakistan. The hypotheses of this research are tested with structural equation modeling. All hypotheses of this research are significant. The relationship of hypothesis 1 is significant and negative WOM has an impact on green purchasing. The results of this relationship are identical to the results of earlier studies that are based on the relationship between green purchasing (Shao & Ünal, 2019; Sheng et al., 2019). Indeed, green purchasing is an emerging trend among consumers and they are more interested to purchase products with green marketing and sustainability (Lavuri, 2022; N. Sharma et al., 2020). Products with green innovation are acceptable to consumers because they want to contribute to environmental sustainability (He et al., 2021; Lu Zhang et al., 2018). The appropriate development of products in green innovation can influence the green purchasing behavior of consumers (He et al., 2021; Y. Wang et al., 2019). The relationship of hypothesis 2 is significant and greenwashing has an impact on green purchasing. The results of this relationship are similar to the findings of earlier studies that are based on the relationship

between green purchasing and greenwashing (Guo et al., 2018; Xiao et al., 2022). Certainly, greenwashing is deceiving the consumers because the brands and claiming what they don't have in reality (Brouwer, 2016; H. Wang et al., 2019). This kind of negativity is not acceptable to modern consumers as they are well-informed and have all the related information about the products and services (Brouwer, 2016; Guo et al., 2017). The brands are required to produce the original products with greenwashing and reduce environmental degradation and this will enhance the consumer's psychology (Furlow, 2010; Sailer et al., 2022). The relationship of hypothesis 3 is significant and green purchasing has an impact on brand hate. In the same way, the results of this relationship are identical to the results of earlier studies that are based on the relationship between green purchasing and brands working in the modern markets (Shao & Ünal, 2019; Sheng et al., 2019). However, in the modern market, consumers are mature and green purchasing is an emerging trend for consumers (Lavuri, 2022; N. Sharma et al., 2020). Products with sustainability are accepted by consumers for consumption (Foo et al., 2019; He et al., 2021; Y. Wang et al., 2019). Moreover, modern consumers are attracted to products with green innovation because they want to contribute to environmental sustainability and reduce environmental degradation (Amoako et al., 2020; Shao & Ünal, 2019; Lu Zhang et al., 2018). The sustainability of the environment is possible when both consumers and brands are on the same page for purchasing and selling (Foo et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2021). The moderating relationship of hypothesis 4 is significant and consumer environmental knowledge moderates the relationship between green purchasing and brand hate. The results of this relationship are not identical to the results of earlier studies because this moderating relationship was not introduced in the earlier research (Guo et al., 2018; Xiao et al., 2022). This relationship is significant in the conclusion of many studies that are based on the green purchasing behavior of employees (Brouwer, 2016; Guo et al., 2017; H. Wang et al., 2019). Employees with green behavior are more innovative and they want to purchase a product with sustainable intentions (Guo et al., 2017; Schmuck et al., 2018; Lu Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, the brands should provide reliable and sustainable products to consumers. By and large, this study concluded that the impact of greenwashing, green purchasing, and negative WOM on brand hate with the moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge is significant. Pakistani brands are required to avoid greenwashing because it is the reason for brand hate by consumers with environmental knowledge. Rather, the study emphasized that the brands should work on actual green products and services for the consumers to develop a competitive advantage in the target market.

Implications

The study has novelty as the new framework contributed to the body of knowledge. The study has enriched the literature on brand hate and consumer behavior by introducing significant variables. The relationship between negative WOM and green purchasing was not discussed in the earlier research. This study has introduced this relationship in the existing body of knowledge. The relationship between greenwashing and green purchasing was not discussed in the earlier research. This study has introduced this relationship in the existing body of knowledge to enhance the theory of brand development. The relationship between green purchasing and brand hate was not discussed in the earlier research. This study has introduced this relationship in the literature to highlight further dimensions of brand hate. The introduction of moderating relationship of consumer environmental knowledge between green purchasing and brand hate is also new in the literature because

no previous study deliberated this relationship. These implications of this research are remarkable for the literature to enhance the understanding of future research for designing the conceptual framework.

The study has practical implications that can enhance brand development and reduce brand hate in Pakistan. These implications of brand hate are required to be practiced by Pakistani brands to avoid leapfrogging consumers and their brand hate. The brands are required to produce products with green innovation by not compromising sustainability. The R & D of brands should be effective to work on the sustainable development of products for consumers. Secondly, the brands should avoid greenwashing because it is negative WOM marketing when the consumers are mature in the market. These tactics are not reasonable to deceive modern consumers. The rival brands are exposing each other in marketing strategies. In this regard, the greenwashing of the brands can be exposed to the consumers and there would be no worth of consumers in the market. Brand management should develop products according to the requirements of the consumers to ensure that the consumers are satisfied with the products. On the other hand, brand management should work in real-life sustainable products to contribute to sustainability by not wasting natural resources and damaging the environment. By working on these implications, the management of Pakistani brands can develop brand equity in the market and the element of brand hate can be reduced.

Future Directions

The objective of this study is to understand the impact of greenwashing, green purchasing, and negative WOM on brand hate with moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge. The study has novelty as the new framework contributed to the body of knowledge. The study has enriched the literature on brand hate and consumer behavior by introducing significant variables. However, this study has some limitations that recommend the further area of research to explore. The study has used greenwashing but it has not discussed the purpose of greenwashing. Therefore, future research is required to focus on the impact of innovation resistance on greenwashing. Secondly, this study has discussed the moderating role of consumer environmental knowledge, but the sources of environmental knowledge are not discussed. Hence, a further framework should be developed to explore the impact of climate change on the environmental behavior of consumers. Lastly, this research is limited to the role of brand hate by green purchasing, however, there could be further reasons for brand hate. In this regard, future research is required to explore the role of the product price and low quality in brand hate.

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