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# Impact of Brand Image on Green Purchase Intentions: Mediating Role of CSR Perceptions

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, green consumerism is becoming the centre of attraction for many researchers. The dominance of environment-friendly consumer is increasing. In the context of Pakistan, this research issue is not fully explored, and the hospitality industry of Pakistan remains unexplored concerning the green purchase intention to the best of researcher's knowledge. It is also identified that the concept of green purchase is a relatively untouched area in the service industry overall. Therefore, current research aims to investigate the association of the brand image with purchasing intentions of green consumers, in the presence of the mediating effect of CSR. This study has collected the quantitative data where customers from the hospitality industry are selected. The sample size of the returned questionnaires on which the findings of the study have been based is 246. The findings of the study state that the role of brand image in green purchase intention is extensive. Further investigation of the mediating role of CSR indicates a partially mediation of CSR perception between the brand image and green purchase intentions of consumers. Hence, it can be significantly stated from the findings of the current research that the positive CSR perception is expected to play a complementary role in the overall green purchase intentions of consumers in the hospitality sector of Pakistan. The recommendations towards future research state the need for further industry perspectives to be explored in terms of CSR implications.

**Keywords:** green consumerism, green purchases, brand image, CSR

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concern about the environment has been significantly enhanced from last few decades. A steep rise in environmentalism can be seen globally. This enhancement in environmental awareness level has significantly affected the consumer behaviour regarding the hospitality industry. Nowadays, green consumerism is a significant and crucial topic for researchers. Over the past few decades, the hospitality industry has faced a remarkable boom in all over the world. The enormous rise in green consumer is a vital motivation for the hospitality industry to grow green. The environmentally friendly

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consumer is highly concerned about the reduction of waste, pollution, efficient use of energy and natural resources and many more factors that affect the environment (Foster, 2007). The hospitality industry is significantly enhancing its green services and products to satisfy the eco-friendly requirements of its consumers.

Today, consumers feel great responsibility regarding the green environment, and they contribute to this process by availing green services and products. Normally, consumers do not purchase those products and services that cause serious harm to human health and the environment. Recent studies found that consumers become more loyal to those hotels that have a pro-environment attitude in their practices (Abbasi, Khalid, Azam & Riaz, 2010). It has been highlighted by Suma (2016) that consumers from all social classes are environmentally concerned. Similarly, another study conducted by Roberts and Straughan found that the younger generation is more concerned about the environment these days. According to a recent report of United Nations Environment Program, about two-third of travellers prefer those hotels which consider eco-friendly practices and even they are ready to bear between 3% and 40% more charges for environmentally-friendly experiences (Choi, 2010). The current research will explore the impact of brand image on consumer's green purchase intention for the hospitality sector of Pakistan.

The notion that environmentally friendly experiences are highly significant is not much true for developing countries like Pakistan. The huge obstacles are there in green purchasing of consumers regarding the hospitality industry in Pakistan. Lack of environmental awareness and governmental policies regarding green practices, corrupt social and political system and lack of use of technology has created a situation of mistrust between consumers and entrepreneurs (Khan& Shaikh, 2011). Likewise, despite the potential, the hospitality industry in Pakistan has still lacked in growth due to several factors like law and order situation, terrorism, corruption and many more. This situation leads to a lack of research as well on consumer's green purchasing intention for the hospitality sector in Pakistan. Based on this trustless situation and lack of research on consumer's behaviour, it is significant to identify the behavioural patterns of green consumers that are shaping their buying intentions (Bashir & Nasir, 2013). The current study has found this lack of research on consumer's green purchasing behaviour and trust

less situation as an ideal opportunity to explore the impact of brand image on consumer's green purchase intention.

The main rationale for this research is on literature gaps which are found. Maichum, Parichatnon and Peng (2016) have studied green products in general instead of specific green products so that the findings could be different for different products. It was recommended that future research should test the proposed model for various specific green products, such as organic products, recycled products, green toys, eco-car, green-certified products, green restaurant, and green hotels and so on. Maichum et al. (2016) mentioned that future studies might include samples from a diverse demographic population for more informed findings. Their study was based on Adults of Thailand so that this research will consider adults (i.e. above 21 years) from Pakistan. Joshi has also examined the green purchase intention of customers in skincare products. Their study said that this study focuses on commodities sold on the green skincare market, which are mainly trusted goods. Future studies ought to investigate green products that sell both experience and goods. They also highlighted that while the focus of their study was on students, future studies could examine whether the approach used in this inquiry may be applied to potential customers. Joshi (2017) considered the impact of Spirituality, Environmental concern and Ecological knowledge on green purchase intention and it was highlighted that future studies might consider different variables, which were excluded (e.g. a brand image) in the present study. This may help future researchers to identify other factors affecting consumers green purchase intention. The authors mentioned studying CSR perceptions as mediators. So adding mediator variables of perception of CSR will minimize this gap. According to Ali and Ahmad (2016), the sampling frame for this study was only limited to four universities undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students as the subject. By considering this very limitation, it is recommended that future research shall utilize a broader demographic profile to analyze respondents. Based on these studies, this research will test the proposed model in the service industry, i.e. hospitality organizations who are adopting green practices. Moreover, selecting a hospitality organization will also minimize this gap. Likewise, previous studies have considered students, so when adults who are customers of selected hospitality

organizations will be selected; it will also be minimizing this gap as they will be the actual customers of green products.

Current research aims to investigate the association of the green brand image with purchasing intentions of green consumers, in the presence of the mediating effect of CSR. The research will contribute to investigate the tendency of green purchasing amongst the customers of the hospitality industry of Pakistan. It will help to find out whether the green brand image affects the purchase intention or not. Moreover, it will help explore the role of CSR perceptions of customers in developing green purchase intention.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Green purchase Intention of Customers

From the last four decades, the concept of going green and guarding the environment has been a main issue and aim both in the academic and the business set up. With time the awareness about the environmental issue becomes the major topic of concern, which dedicate the researcher and scholars in this field to focus the research on the topic of green buying intention and green customer behaviour (D'Souza et al. 2007). Green purchasing refers to the tendency of consumers to purchase environmentally friendly products and thus restrain from buying products that can exert an adverse effect on the environment (Ajzen & Sheikh, 2013; Kautonen, Gelderen and Fink, 2015). The green purchasing of consumers is mainly measured by the green purchasing intentions and green purchasing behaviour of consumers. The concept buying intention is ‘the likelihood that a customer will buy a particular product’, “the personal behavioural tendency to a particular product” or “an individual’s conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand” (Albayrak, Aksoy & Caber, 2013). We can say that the purchase intention of the customer is the main reason for the actual buying behaviour for the product (Chen & Yang 2018).

Chen and Yang (2018) describes the term green purchase intention as an aim or purpose to buy a service or product, which is good enough for society and the overall atmosphere. In other words, this term can be explained as an internal wish or aspiration of people to purchase those products which are suitable for the entire environment.

Aman, Harun and Hussein (2012) said that green purchase intention is referred to the specific environmental friendly behaviour which shows the consumers concern towards their environment. It is a fundamental element to explain the consumer's tangible behaviour (Aman, Harun & Hussein, 2012). The green purchase intention of consumers captures the motivational factors, and thus they foster consumers to possess a positive attitude towards the green products to protect the environment (Arli & Lasmono, 2010).

It is important to consider that before embarking upon green purchasing intentions, and its theoretical perspectives, the understanding of the green product is of substantial importance (Foster, Green & Bleda, 2007). Green products might not be completely environmentally friendly, yet have a very less harmful effect on the environment and human health. Based on the views of Bashir & Nasir (2013) it has been found that green products have evolved due to increasing concerns for environmental protection, based on global warming, increasing level of pollution, the declining level of natural resources and increasing levels of waste (Cornally, 2014). The increasing concern for environmental protection is represented in the willingness of consumers to make purchases of green products, and thus consumers who have high concerns for environmental protection are called green consumers (Samarasinghe, 2012). Along with this, it is also important to mention that green products are not aiming to compromise the quality of life of individuals and they do not have to make a trade-off between the satisfaction of their needs and protection of the environment (Christopher & Luke, 2013). Therefore, green products offer additional benefits of minimizing consumption of natural resources, generation of toxic material and reduction of waste and pollutants, thus lowering the possible risk of compromising the ability of future generations to fulfil their needs. In light of these views, it can be mentioned that there is a great need to understand green consumption intentions and behaviour (Dutta & Singh, 2013). Therefore, in this research, the green purchase intention is used as a substitute for the real purchase attitude of people.

Peattie (1995) gives great importance to environmental issues in term of global warming, changes in weather, scarcity of water, natural possessions and other crucial ecological challenges. Traditional commercial environmental programs are usually not

enough to cater to the environmental concerns of this century because they only deal with conformity and smaller risk valuations (Peter & Ryan, 1976). Therefore, researchers have shifted their focus to recognized factors through which green consumption can be fostered to assure sustainability in the long run. For this topic, the main theories like “Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and Altruism & Pro-Social Behaviour” are most likely used for the areas of green buying intentions (Samarasinghe, 2012). For the present study, two theories are used as a foundation, and these are the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior.

Further to this, in numerous studies, the theory of planned behavior is used for consumer buying intention (Aertsens et al., 2009 Arvola et al., 2008). Moe (2007), whose study is based on planned behavior states that the green buying intention is about choosing products that are known to have a less environmental impact. Beckford et al. (2010) investigate that green purchase intention most of the time predicts consumer behavior. The present research uses the theory of planned behavior for studying consumer buying intention for green products and services. According to Ajzen (1985), this theory links beliefs with the behaviors of individuals. The foundation of this theory is the theory of reasoned action, where Ajzen (1985) tried to improve the predictive validity of previous concepts through this theory. In many studies, this theory is used for the understanding relationship between attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). The key concepts of this theory are normative, subjective and control beliefs, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, and behavior. Normative belief is about the perception which is developed in individuals for normative social pressures which guide /her behavior to not to be involved in a certain behavior (Mathieson, 1991). Subjective norm is about the perception of an individual that certain behavior is appropriate or not, as per the judgment of others which might include spouse, friends, teachers, and parents (Kautonen, Gelderen, and Fink, 2015). Control belief is about the existence of those factors through which a particular behavior is hindered or facilitated. This concept is somehow related to self-efficacy (Cornally, 2014). Perceived behavioral control refers to the perceived level of difficulty or ease in performing a certain kind of behavior. The sum of accessible control beliefs has the potential to influence perceived

behavioural control (Ajzen and Sheikh, 2013). Behavioural intention indicates the readiness of an individual to do a certain kind of behaviour. This is the most immediate antecedent of the behaviour of individuals. The attitude is about the subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and behaviour predict the behaviour (Greaves, Zibarras, and Stride, 2013). Behaviour is about the observable response of an individual to a certain situation. This behaviour depends on the intentions and perceptions which are formed about the behavioural control (Shaw, Shiu, and Clarke, 2015).

In this research, this theory is selected because this theory effectively covers the non-volitional behaviour of individuals. It has been highlighted by Ajzen & Sheikh (2013) that it is not enough to merely rely on the formation of intentions for understanding the behavioural patterns, but an understanding of control factors that act as constraints for consumer behaviour is also important. The non-volitional factors are such control factors which are needed to be understood for recognizing the intended behaviours of consumers (Cornally, 2014). The inclusion of non-volitional factors has improved the predictability of theory, as in addition to personal determinants and social surroundings, the inclusion of non-volitional determinants improves the behavioural predictability (Christopher & Luke, 2013). Many studies have already proved that this theory has a greater level of predictability and it can explain the social behaviour effectively, as it has improved the purchase intention's model validity (Shaw, Shiu, & Clarke, 2015), along with this, this theory has previously been considered by several researchers for studying the recycling behaviour, organic food consumption behaviour, and green purchase intentions of consumers. Therefore, the theory of planned behaviour is considered robust and it is selected for this research to gain an effective understanding of the consumer's green purchase intentions in the context of the hospitality industry (Kautonen, Gelderen, and Fink, 2015).

Chen & Yang (2018) explained the green purchase intentions in the prospect that customers would be keenly interested in purchasing those products which are environmentally friendly. Roe et al. (2001) endorsed this argument that consumers only buy those products which do not destroy the environment. He explains that three elements can be helpful to assess green purchase intentions. These items are buying green

products, switching to other brands because of ecological aspects, and lastly switching to a green version of a product. This is depicting that various factors could be used for explaining the green buying intention of customers. So, this research will further explore a few of the factors which are known to be the antecedents of green buying intention.

## **2.2. Green Brand Image**

According to Hartmann et al., (2005), brand image can be defined as the perception of the consumer about some specific brands linked with the consumer's mental visuals that illustrates a particular brand. The brand image is also considered an intangible property of the brand which is inherited in a particular brand name and a positive brand image might foster consumers to purchase a specific product based on the attractiveness of the name associated with the product (Tsarenko et al., 2013). Researchers have further mentioned that brand image is mainly considered as the spirit of a product or a service which is transferred to the consumers and led them to develop specific beliefs about the brand and assist them in making a purchase decision (Swaminathan, 2020; Shaw, Shiu, and Clarke, 2015).

It has been addressed by Suki (2013) that a green brand image has become significant for businesses based on prevalent environmental consciousness and international regulations for the protection and sustainability of the environment. Moreover, the green brand image not only serves as a way of complying with sustainability regulations but also fosters maximum satisfaction of consumers about environmental desires, sustainable needs of consumers, and their green expectations (Suma, 2016). Therefore, businesses are increasing their reliance on green marketing for ensuring that they and well address the green expectations of consumers green features of the products are promoted to develop a green brand image. According to Chen & Yang (2018), a green brand image is defined as a combination of conceptions, impressions, and apprehensions which are developed in the mind of consumers for a certain brand, and majorly the brand is known to be sustainable and eco-friendly, hence have a positive image. The aspect of developing a green brand image is linked with the notion that businesses create awareness among consumers about environmental sustainability and then foster them to purchase products that are sustainable (Schmeltz, 2012). It has been highlighted by Samarasinghe (2012)



that the green brand image is considered an important intangible asset that is a persuasive tool for a brand to differentiate itself from other competitors. It has also been mentioned by Ramayah, Lee & Mohamad (2010) that a green brand image contributes to increasing the meaningfulness of the brand, and thus businesses are striving hard to develop a strong green brand image. Green brand image is considered one of the most important research phenomena in green marketing, and thus underlying study has also chosen to consider it in the context of the hospitality sector of Pakistan.

Yazdanifard and Mercy (2011) come with this opinion that now a day's consumers are firmly and willingly allied to those brands that are in favour of atmosphere. Here is an example from the research that was conducted in Pakistan by using a sample of 400 respondents. According to this research study, consumers' green purchasing intention has a strong positive impact on the actual purchasing attitude toward green products by consumers. According to Ali et al. (2011), it can also be explained as an individual's positive intentions towards purchasing greener products that buy more than another individual who holds low or no such intentions. The model of Ali et al., (2011) says that a green purchase attitude influences the green purchase intention, which in turn influences the green purchase behaviour. This model also states that perceived product quality and price moderates the impact of green purchase intention on green purchase behaviour.

Nik Abdul Rashid, (2009) considered green purchase intention as someone's preference to buy and use particularly those products which have eco-friendly elements. Undoubtedly, consumers considered product ingredients information, eco-labeling, product appearance, and general assurance of user-friendliness as the important elements while purchasing goods (Maniatis, 2015). Producers do their best to explain environmental benefits to consumers, so they willingly opt for environment-friendly products (Rex & Baumann, 2007). Consumers are inclined toward buying green products because of their knowledge as well as green brand responsiveness (Ramayah, Lee & Mohamad, 2010).

Beckford et al., (2010) mentioned this point that green purchase intention is a significant interpreter of green purchase attitude, based on which it can be described as that purchase intention is positively affecting the probability of a customer decides that

he/she will buy green products. Therefore, this research is using the green purchase intention as the main variable which will be studied in terms of the hospitality sector of Pakistan. The overall societal and public considerations about environmental issues became serious as the manufacturing activities of the industries cause pollution in the environment (Chen, 2011). Now a day's people consider environmental problems more seriously than before, and they are only inclined towards purchasing those products which at least have less bad impact on the environment (Peattie, 1995). There are a large number of factors that could influence buying intention; these are characterized as individual and situational factors. The present research will focus only on brand image's role in the purchase intention of consumers. The next section sheds light on these factors concerning purchase intention for green products.

### **2.3. Relationship Between Variables and Hypotheses Development**

Suki (2013) argued that brand image has a significant influence on consumer green purchasing behaviour as it affects the consumer green perception. Brand image contributes significantly to consumer green perception, which leads toward its green purchasing attitude. Similarly, another researcher Martinez and De Chernatony (2004) stated that brand image has a significant influence on consumer perception, which consequently, affects its green purchasing attitude. Recent studies found that sometimes, the perception of consumers about some products is because of their emotions and wishes instead of some rational basis, and they preferred those products regardless of their impact on the environment. However, with the increasing emergence of green marketing and green brand image, consumers are becoming environmentally conscious, and brands are targeting their sustainable needs through the development of a positive green brand image. It has been highlighted in the study of Ramayah, Lee & Mohamad, (2010) that green brand image is well aligned with positive green brand choices and it has the potential to enhance consumers' intentions to use green brands. This is indicating that the emotional attachment of consumers to brands and the use of mere favourability to purchase a specific brand is more likely to be occupied by the green image of the brands (Rahbar & Abdul-Wahid, 2011). Moreover, it has also been mentioned by Nik Abdul Rashid (2009) that based on the views of social cognitive theory; consumers are

inherently willing to choose products that they consider better than others. Green products are undoubtedly considered better than non-sustainable products, and thus when a green brand image is developed in the minds of consumers, the likelihood of making a positive purchasing decision about that brand is expected to increase (Moe, 2007). The same has been mentioned in the theory of reasoned action that consumers use their beliefs as well as subjective norms to decide on the purchase of a particular product.

The beliefs of consumers enable them to expect the outcomes of specific actions and in turn, define their intentions and attitudes towards a specific action. It has been highlighted by Maniatis (2015) that a green brand image allows the consumers to think that purchase of sustainable and environmentally friendly products will lead to greater outcomes of environmental protection and will do good for society in general. The green brand image strengthens the beliefs of consumers about the sustainable benefits of using green products, and then the positive attitude of consumers will most likely lead to the development of positive purchase intention for the green product (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Moreover, it can be further seen in the notion of subjective norms that when consumers believe that engagement in a particular action will help them to gain the approval of the group, then their positive purchase intention is most likely to be developed. It has been highlighted by Lu, Zhao & Wang, (2010) that in green consumer groups, the green brand image is used as a parameter for judging the sustainable purchasing of members of that group. In the light of this view, it is notable that when consumers hold a positive view of the brand based on the green brand image, then they will develop positive purchase intention to gain consensus of their social group (Lee et al., 2012). Therefore, it can be mentioned that the theory of reasoned action has provided substantial grounds for explaining the association between green brand image and the purchase intentions of consumers for green products.

As told by Young et al., (2010), consumers often have few brands which they consider their favorite, so these might be preferred over the brands which are known to be green so their preference for some other brand as per their personal choice can have a negative influence on purchase intention. Concerning the theory of planned behaviour, when individuals have subjective or normative norms that purchasing green brands will

be appreciated by others and significant others are also doing similar, they also start involved in behavioural intentions to purchase such brands. Rahbar and Wahid (2011) said that brand image also depends on the level of trust that consumers have in certain brands, if this level of trust is higher, there are more chances that a positive brand image will be formed which will positively influence over the green purchase intention. The trust fosters the attitude of consumers towards a particular behaviour, as mentioned in the theory of planned behaviour and the presence of the green brand image, the attitude is most likely to be positive, thus fostering positive purchase intentions of consumers (Joshi, 2017). Moreover, behavioural control is also an important aspect of the theory of planned behaviour which addresses volitional aspects of consumer behaviour and thus explains the association between green brand image and purchase intentions of consumers. As mentioned by Khan & Shaikh, (2011) two factors control the behaviour of the individual and also develop a perception about the difficulty of getting engage in specific behaviour, including; resource limitation and self-efficacy. In the presence of the green brand image, the consumer will think about the sufficiency of resources, and thus resource availability will enhance their positive purchase intentions about green products (Kautonen, Gelderen, and Fink, 2015).

Moreover, self-efficacy addresses the personal competence of individuals from getting engaged in a specific behaviour. It has been highly by Lee et al. (2012) that a green brand image is considered the way of backing the self-efficacy of consumers and by focusing on a positive aspect of purchasing sustainable products, the consumers are most likely to develop positive purchase intentions. Therefore, in the light of these views, it can be mentioned that all aspects of the theory of planned behaviour support the notion that a green brand image will lead to the development of positive purchase intentions of consumers. Joshi and Rahman (2015) said that there are very few studies actually which have considered the role of brand image on green purchase intention. Therefore, there is a need for more studies. This research will also explore this research issue.

Many factors have been used as mediators among determinant factors and purchase intention of green products and services; examples include attitude towards purchasing green products, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Businesses are

highly engaging themselves in CSR practices to attract green consumers (Vesal et.al 2021) and to impact positively on the green purchasing intention of consumers. Numerous studies show a link between CSR and the green purchasing intention of consumers. When organizations conduct CSR practices, consumers often reward them by using their products and services (Hartmann et al., 2012).

CSR is commonly referred to as those activities which are perceived as obligations of the organization towards a society. Likewise, customer perception of CSR is said to be about those initiatives where customers recognize that an organization is helping society by participating in a social cause. The purpose of adding the customers' perception of CSR in the framework of this research is to add the buyer perspective of CSR activities which could not be done through other ways (Yeon Kim & Chung, 2011). As three dimensional model of CSR tells, there are three dimensions of CSR activities, namely philanthropic, environmental, and ethical CSR (Carroll, 1979). Later on, studies like Carroll (1991) have also focused on legal concerns which are handled by the organizations for dealing with the issue of doing well for society through some noble cause. McWilliams & Siegel (2001) have also pointed out that CSR is about all those activities which are being done by the organizations for the good of society, but it is not required by law, but it is something beyond the legal requirements. The first pillar of Carroll's (1999) model is philanthropy which is about the voluntary donation of time, money, or resources for helping society members without having any personal gain. Now, many organizations do involve in philanthropic activities, and customers also expect their involvement in such causes. The second pillar, which is about ethics says that an organization should improve the workplace and society in all possible manners going above and beyond what is asked by legislation (Lee et al., 2012).

Similarly, the third pillar of this model is about the environmental responsibility of organizations where it is considered obligatory now to be involved in such activities through which organizations can reduce the negative and harmful effects of their business activities on the environment (Schmeltz, 2012). So basically it is about influencing the ecosystem. Though, the other two dimensions are also important; for the present study, the environmental responsibility in the CSR model is more relevant to green purchase

behavior by customers hence it will be of core focus (Arli & Lasmono, 2010). From studies like Ramasamy and Yeung (2009) and Dutta and Singh (2013), it is found that in all of these activities, positive perceptions are developed in the customers regarding the products which are offered by the organizations. The theory of reasoned action stated that when organizations get involved in CSR, customers are more likely to have a favorable attitude towards them, which is demonstrated in the form of positive CSR perceptions. The theory of reasoned action is about the basic motivation of an individual to be involved in certain behaviour. As also said by Lee et al., (2012), the involvement of organizations in CSR motivates individuals to become their customers. So they are positive the attitude becomes the foundation for their positive behaviour. Previous studies have examined this variable as the mediator between various other variables, and it is yet not analyzed whether or not this variable acts as the mediator among identified individual and situational variables and the green buying behaviour of customers. Moreover, this research uses CSR perceptions as a mediator because it is recommended by Joshi (2017) to study this variable as the mediator between these variables.

In this study, it is proposed that when organizations engage themselves in environmentally friendly practices or conduct such practices that result in a reduction of waste, efficient use of energy, and minimal impact on the environment then certain individual factors including perceived consumer effectiveness, knowledge and trust and situational factors including brand image, product and price are influenced by these practices and consumers perceive that certain organization has good CSR policy which consequently leads to the development of green purchase intention of consumers.

It has been mentioned in the study of Vahdati, Mousavi & Tajik (2015) that CSR perceptions of consumers act as the mediating variable between the association of individual and situational factors with the green purchasing intentions of consumers. It has been highlighted by the authors that consumers use their knowledge about green aspects of the products as the basis of developing CSR perceptions, and it further fosters them to enhance the green purchasing intentions of consumers (Vahdati, Mousavi & Tajik, 2015). The CSR perceptions are formed based on the evaluation of the company, which includes an assessment of both individual as well as situational factors and thus

assures that consumers will develop positive perceptions about the green behaviour of the company and will develop position purchasing intentions (Christopher and Luke, 2013). Therefore, it is reasonable to mention that CSR can mediate the association of individual and situational factors with the green purchasing intentions of consumers. The overarching theory for this research is taken from the model presented by Brown and Dacin (1997) regarding how corporate associations and CSR help consumers to have positive evaluations of the products. In this model, it is asserted by authors that corporate ability and corporate social responsibility help in developing positive perceptions regarding the offerings of the organization and this eventually helps in having a positive evaluation of the product offered by the organization (Joshi, 2017).

Moreover, it has been addressed in the research of Joshi & Rahman, (2015) that perceived CSR enables the consumers to develop a perception that whether or not a specific a business firm can develop products in a socially and environmentally responsible manner, and consequently, it is deemed to have a substantial influence on the decision-making abilities of the consumers (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibañez, 2012). More specifically, when specific green brands provide clear information about the ingredients, eco-labeling, and assurance that the product is of high quality and it is not harmful to individuals, society, and the environment, then positive CSR perceptions are likely to develop (Greaves, Zibarras & Stride, 2013; Hydock et. al. 2020). In light of this view, green brands are substantially engaged in positioning the environmental benefits of green brands in the minds of consumers, to arouse positive purchasing decisions. Moreover, it has been highlighted by Dutta & Singh (2013) that when consumers have significant knowledge of the brand and the image of the brand is strongly and positively ingrained in their minds, then their attitude and intention for purchasing that particular brand are more likely to be positive. However, it has been furthered by the scholars that in the presence of positive perceptions about a particular brand, this linkage is expected to become stronger and the likelihood of developing positive purchase intention can also increase (Christopher & Luke, 2013; Wang et.al. 2021). These studies are indicating that CSR perceptions are likely to mediate the association between brand image and the green purchasing intentions of consumers. So, this research takes the stance that when one

organization can work effectively and offers green products, it helps in having positive perceptions of CSR, which helps develop the positive purchase intention among environmentally conscious consumers.

The green purchasing behaviour of consumers is highly focused these days globally. The research on the consumption of green products and services has obtained vital attraction of consumers (Young et al., 2010). In western countries, significant consideration has been given to the green purchasing behaviour of consumers in the hospitality industry by researchers, but in developing countries more specifically in Pakistan still, there is lack of research on the green purchasing intention of consumers in the hospitality industry (Ali, 2011; Aschemann- Witzel & Zielke, 2017; Nuttavuthisit and Thøgersen, 2017; Fuerst, Gabrieli & McAllister, 2017; Rahnama & Rajabpour, 2017; Hardiani, 2020; Loudiere & Tessier, 2020). The hospitality sector of Pakistan is mainly accused of violating the sustainability standards, and there is limited valid and up-to-date research for guiding the practitioners about the benefits of green practices in terms of developing positive behaviours of consumers. The underlying research can be considered as a fruitful addition to the existent stream of green marketing research in the context of Pakistan. Furthermore, prior research has incorporated the impact of many factors, but the green brand image has not been studied effectively. Based on the increasing importance of green brand image, instead of mere brand image, the need was felt to study the association of this variable with buying behaviours of consumers. Moreover, while investigating the prior research base of Pakistani studies in the context of green marketing, it has been highlighted that corporate social responsibility has not been studied as a mediator between green brand image and green purchase intentions of consumers. The current study has found this scarcity as an opportunity, and it will focus on the impact of individual and situational factors on the green purchasing intention of consumers for the hospitality industry in Pakistan by encompassing CSR as a mediator.

Similarly, the research studies of Lee and Shin (2010), Kang, Stein, Heo, and Lee (2012), and Johsi (2017) have recommended that CSR should be studied as the mediator between green buying behaviour and purchase intention. This is usually because when green products are introduced in the market, this acts as the tool which develops a



positive perception about CSR activities and this, in turn, results in positive purchase intention. This argument is not empirically tested yet. Likewise, Joshi and Rahman (2015) said that there are very few studies actually which have considered the role of brand image on green purchase intention; therefore, there is a need for more studies. This research will also explore this research issue. Hence, this research study is working to minimize the literature gap, which is found in a recent study, hence, minimizing the literature gap will add to the growing body of knowledge about green purchase intention.

## 2.4. Hypotheses

**H<sub>1a</sub>:** *Positive brand image leads to the green purchasing intention of consumers.*

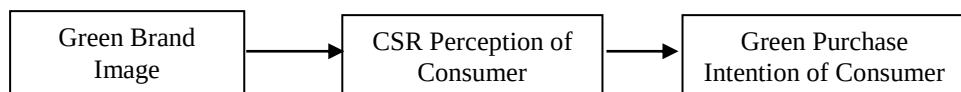
**H<sub>1b</sub>:** *Green brand image has a positive impact on CSR Perceptions of customers.*

**H<sub>1c</sub>:** *CSR Perceptions have a positive impact on the green purchase intentions of consumers.*

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *CSR perception of the customer significantly mediates the association of the brand image with the green purchasing intentions of consumers.*

## 2.5. Research Model

The below figure presents the model of this research, which is further examined in this research with the help of empirical analysis



**Figure1. Theoretical Framework**

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research design

This study uses a quantitative research approach, which is based on various advantages of quantitative studies, such as increased generality and result validity (Creswell, 2013). The level of impartiality is always higher in quantitative research because it is numerical. This reduces the risk of misinterpretation and allows the same topic to be explored in a different environment, increasing the generalizability of the results. The use of statistics in quantitative research design allows the researchers to grasp

the data's most important qualities. This method of data gathering is also known to be quicker, so the study can be completed in a fair amount of time. Because statistically valid random models can be utilized, the survey results can be extrapolated to the entire population.

### **3.2. Data Collection Method.**

In terms of data collecting, there are two options: primary and secondary. Primary data collection involves gathering new information, which is used to answer underlying research questions. Secondary data, on the other hand, is referred to as pre-collected, and the researcher used it to further investigate study concerns (Saunders, 2011). The current study is based on the collecting of primary data. The major data collecting strategy was chosen because it supplied the appropriate degree of current information for this research topic.

### **3.3. Population and Sampling**

Consumers of products and services of the hospitality industry in Pakistan are the population of current research. The hospitality industry is majorly affecting individual health and the environment, so the consumption of green services and products of the hospitality industry are significantly focused these days. The purposive sampling technique is applied in current research to select the consumers of the hospitality industry. The researcher has significantly considered the balance of gender in research to gather a view of both genders effectively. Additionally, past research has explored that the purposive sampling method can draw a highly relevant sample, and it can increase the validity of research as well.

Creswell and Clark (2007) have said that realistically, only a 20 to 40% response rate of the questionnaire should be expected. Therefore, a response rate of 25% is expected. Initially, 1200 questionnaires will be distributed to get at least 246 responses which are considered fair as said by Garson (2008). The sample is drawn from hotels in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad, which includes Pearl Continental, Marriot Hotels, Avari, and Sarena. The rationale for their selection is that these hotels are actively involved in green product strategies. Regular customers are selected for this study, and first-time visitors are not considered as it is expected their knowledge will be insufficient to be a part of this

study.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedure**

For all underlying variables of research, scales are included in the survey questionnaire. The researcher personally approached all respondents in hotels. The importance of current research was revealed to every respondent to enhance the response rate. Behavioural nature of current research was explained to motivate those consumers who are aware of green products. The adopted questionnaire is used where all variables scales are taken from previous studies. CSR perceptions were measured using the scale of Wu and Wang (2014), while measures of Cretu and Brodie (2007) were utilized for tapping responses on the Brand image. Green purchase intentions of customers are measured using Aman, Harun, and Hussein (2012) scale.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

An empirical investigation of data is conducted by hierarchical regression. The mediation is analysed through the method of Barron and Kenny (1986), and it is selected because it is the model which is more widely used by management and social science researchers and its validity and accuracy are also higher compared to other methods (Shah, Hashmi & Chishti, 2016).

## **4. FINDINGS & ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. Demographics Analysis**

For every research, it is important to analyze the demographics of the respondents who have participated in the survey. The descriptive analysis technique is used here for examining the demographics. The analysis shows that majority of respondents of this research belong to the age group of 31-40 years as there was fifty-eight percent of respondents from this age group. The analysis of gender reveals that the majority of respondents who participated in the survey were males. There were seventy-one percent of respondents were males. The majority of customers were having master's and bachelor's degrees as there were forty-four and forty-five percent of respondents belonging to this group. The majority of respondents mentioned that their salary is between 50,001PKR to 100,000 PKR. There was seventy-eight percent of respondents

who have said that their salary is 50,001 to 100,000PKR.

#### 4.2. Reliability Analysis

Reliability is about the degree to which consistent results are produced by a scale when the measurement is being done several times. The reliability could be estimated/determined through the systematic variation proportion in a scale, and this can be done by investigating the association which exists among the scores obtained from distinct scale administration. In this manner, if the association is found to be higher, it means exceptionally reliable results are found in a research study. The acceptable statistics for reliability analysis are 0.6; hence the results must be equal to or greater than 0.6. The reliability analysis results are presented in Table 1. It has been found that reliability statistics for all three variables are above 0.6, hence these are reliable.

| <b>Table 1: Reliability Statistics</b> |                          |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>                | <b>Variables</b>         |
| 0.81                                   | Green Brand Image        |
| 0.79                                   | CSR perceptions          |
| 0.91                                   | Green purchase intention |

Source: Author developed using survey data (2019)

#### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

The results shown in Table 2 demonstrate that all three variables do have linearity as the correlation is found to be significant. The correlation between CSR perception and green purchase intention is 0.562, which highlights a moderate correlation which is also significant. The correlation between brand image and green purchase intention is 0.690, and it is also significant; hence a moderation correlation exists. The correlation between brand image and CSR perception is also found to be 0.600; hence it is also moderate. Once the linearity among variables is proved, it is reasonable to move to the next statistical analysis.

| <b>Table 2: Correlation</b> |             |                |                    |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                             | Brand Image | CSR perception | Purchase Intention |

|                    |        |        |   |
|--------------------|--------|--------|---|
| Brand Image        | 1      |        |   |
| CSR perception     | .600** | 1      |   |
| Purchase Intention | .690** | .562** | 1 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.4. Regression Analysis

The mediation model intends to examine the process that underlies an observed relationship consisting of the independent and dependent variable through the path of a third variable known as the mediator. The mediation model consists of the brand image as an independent variable, CSR perception as a mediator, and green purchase intention as the dependent variable.

| Table 3: Model Statistics |          |         |      |
|---------------------------|----------|---------|------|
| Model                     | R Square | F       | Sig  |
| 1                         | .477     | 222.297 | .000 |
| 2                         | .511     | 126.867 | .000 |

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Image & CSR Perception
- c. Dependent: Green Purchase Intentions

There are two models which are under study now. Model 1 is without the mediator variable, while model 2 also has the mediator variable along with the independent variable. Model 1 indicates that brand image alone brings a 47.7% change in the green purchase intention. When a brand image and CSR perception are included both at the same time, it is found that the R square value has increased to 51.1%. This indicates that the mediator variable has some role to perform in between the brand image and green purchase intention. The direct difference between Adjusted R Square, in this case, is 0.032 which shows that mediation has caused a difference that should not be ignored.

**Table 4: Mediation Effect**

| Model                                     |                | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                                           |                | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1                                         | (Constant)     | 1.708                       | .138       |                           | 12.336 | .000 |
|                                           | Brand Image    | .548                        | .037       | .690                      | 14.910 | .000 |
| 2                                         | (Constant)     | 1.116                       | .197       |                           | 5.670  | .000 |
|                                           | Brand Image    | .438                        | .044       | .552                      | 9.845  | .000 |
|                                           | CSR perception | .272                        | .066       | .231                      | 4.114  | .000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention |                |                             |            |                           |        |      |

The analysis of the brand image indicates that alone brand image does have the potential to bring a 69% change in the green purchase intention. The f value and t value tell that this impact of brand image on green purchase intention is significant. The brand image impact has reduced to 55.2% when the mediator variable of CSR perception has been added. Brand image and CSR perception impact on the green purchase intention is significant. Therefore, it is concluded that partial mediation exists.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study indicate that the brand image significantly impacts the green purchase decision. Hence, it can be significantly determined that the overall implications of brand image are critical in terms of the subsequent green purchase decisions of consumers. Green brand knowledge is a critical variable in terms of the consumer perspective when it comes to the overall green purchase intention. If the consumer possesses such knowledge regarding the green perspective of any given brand, then the overall implications of brand perception become critical in this regard. The brand perception, in such scenarios, can become the sole determinant of the green purchase intention on the part of the consumers. Similar findings have been consistently approved within the current study. The findings of the study significantly indicate that the overall brand perception plays an important role in the green purchase intention. This means that a brand that has a green or environmentally friendly perception within the market is expected to gain significant consumer interest from consumers seeking green purchase

decision-making as the consumer decision-making process is significantly complemented through the environmentally positive perception of the brands in a comprehensive manner in such regards. This impact can be further analyzed in the way that the general consumer making a purchase decision related to hospitality in the Pakistani market is expected to make a complementary purchase decision if the brand perception is perceived to be environmentally friendly. The brand perception of the hospitality industry hotels becomes complementary to their consumer and market application in this regard.

The mediating role of CSR perceptions is perceived to be affirmatively positive in the case of green purchase intentions of consumers. The overall primary objectives of the study have been extensively covered within the findings, and related discussion of the study as the study concludes that the CSR perception as a mediating factor partially complements the practical implications of green purchase intentions concerning the brand image of the hospitality sector consumer decision-making within the Pakistani

## 6. CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the analysis that there exists partial mediation by CSR perception between the brand image and green purchase intention. It means that brand image directly also has an impact on green purchase intention while it also has an impact on green purchase intention through the path of CSR perception. The findings of the study significantly indicate a partially significant mediating role of CSR perception within the brand image and green purchase intentions of the hospitality sector consumers of Pakistan.

Further study of the subject matter can be performed from varied perspectives. There is a need for the study of CSR perception and associated brand implications in terms of the overall varied industries within the developing nations. Therefore, either varied industries within the Pakistani sector or hospitality within varied developing nations can be focused upon in terms of future studies. Furthermore, in terms of future research implications, the sampling can be done in a more precise manner to focus on millennials. As CSR awareness is critically high in such consumer segments, and this consumer segment holds the highest spending power in current markets. Therefore, the results

related to such consumer segments can further generate critical findings for the business managers.

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