Green Marketing and Green Brand Equity: Moderating Role of Religion

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of green marketing mix constructs, i.e., green product, green price, green place, green promotion physical evidence, and social media directly on green brand equity (GBE) and explores how these relationships are influenced under the moderating role of religiosity in the Pakistani context. The study is grounded in the Social Identity Theory (SIT techniques), the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm and conceptualizes green marketing efforts as stimuli, GBE as organism and green purchase behavior as the response. Quantitative Design was used and survey data of 235 Pakistani consumers were collected using an online administered questionnaire taken from verified resources. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to study the hypotheses. This study revealed that green prices, physical evidence and green promotion help in the development of green brand equity, which in turn stimulates purchasers to buy green products while green product attributes, social media and green places did not have a direct effect. Also result showed green brand equity (GBE) is a strong predictor of GPB. The study also showed that religiosity has a selective moderating effect, enhancing the effect of some marketing signals, while having no effect on other marketing signals, thus supporting the view that religious values moderate the ways in which green marketing cues are processed and evaluated by consumers. Finally, the findings offer valuable insights for organizations doing business in religiously sensitive emerging markets by stressing the importance of transparent pricing, believable promotions, and verifiable certification and labeling to enhance green brand equity and support sustainable consumption.

Keywords

Green Marketing, Green Brand Equity, Religiosity, Green Product, Green Pricing, Green Promotion, Social Media

Introduction

As the natural environment deteriorates rapidly, more and more people are adopting environmentally responsible behaviors and favoring businesses whose products align with their beliefs and ecological values. Because of this reason, businesses are forced to carefully

review the advantages and effects of using green marketing approaches in their branding (Leonidou et al., 2013). In this context, green marketing has emerged as an effective approach for firms to enhance their brand image and appeal to their environmentally aware customers (Lievano Pulido & Ramon-Jeronimo, 2023). This approach mainly increases brand's economic status by marketing eco-products, creating energy-saving plans and handling waste through clean technology projects. Its goal is to change people's opinions about the products and services offered and inspire them to purchase them. According to research, adding environmentally friendly features, using green pricing and advertising in environmentally aware ways drastically affects consumer habits and supports the company in attracting more traffic (Majeed et al., 2022). This attracts the brand's target market's eco-minded customers and encourages them to consume more eco-friendly products (Majid & Farooq, 2024).

Using and promoting goods or services with consideration for ecological sustainability is referred to as "green marketing" (Fernando, 2024). Citizens of Pakistan have grown mindful of and concerned with their surroundings because of both state and organizational measures that educate the general populace (Mahmoud, 2023). However, concern for the environment in people can vary both by region and by demographic group. Little research has been done on how marketing strategies and product offerings can affect both the opinions and choices of consumers. This study intends to close this gap among Pakistani consumers aged 18 and up, and it makes an effort to characterize how green marketing initiatives impact green brand equity, which in turn influences Pakistani consumers' green purchasing behavior, with religion acting as a constant moderating element. Religion is a significant contributor when it comes to brand image in Pakistani consumers with or without the green concept and very little study have been done combining both the green context and religion to brand equity and purchase behavior among Pakistani consumers (Zia et al., 2021).

This study examines the influence of Green Marketing on Green Brand Equity with Religiosity as a moderator. The study also empirically examines the relationship between Green Barnd Equity and Purchase Behavior.

Literature Review

People focusing more on environmental issues worldwide has led to using green marketing techniques within traditional business methods (Chen et al., 2024). Integrating green marketing strategies allows companies to connect with environmentally conscious customers, build their positive green brand reputation and inspire customers to make environmentally friendly decisions (Mohammadi et al., 2023). "Green marketing is the process of developing, promoting, and distributing sustainable, socially conscious, and environmentally friendly goods and services with the goal of minimizing environmental harm and optimizing societal benefits while simultaneously satisfying the demands and desires of stakeholders and consumers" (Ghodeswar & Bhimrao, 2022).

In the current time, organizations need to adopt green marketing methods if they want to keep up with the competition in the market. Success of the new green sectors indicates that marketers from everywhere in the world have responded well to the growing demand for sustainability (Hidyantari et al., 2022). However, consumers may find out that green marketing increases brand equity and buy intention, depending on their level of religion. It has been demonstrated that religiosity affects consumer values, attitudes, and behaviors, including how they respond to green marketing campaigns. To apply these practices, firms are making thorough research and a considerable effort in exploring the dimensions of green marketing that have major effect on their brand equity (Saleem & Afridi, 2025).

Green marketing has recently attracted a lot of interest in Pakistan, especially from young and urban consumers (Soomro & Ali, 2020). Several variables of green marketing have a different role in building a brand's worth and may cause consumers to adjust how they buy. This covers brand reputation, how much people trust that brand, how happy its customers feel using it, the social initiatives it takes to gain a positive image and many similar factors. People Judge green marketing efforts by considering if following spiritual or cultural beliefs makes them right or wrong (Arli et al., 2021). All in all, the ideas and principles from home and personal life have an indirect impact on what and how people decide to purchase. Fundamental religious values are usually at the base of consumer behavior, and these can shape a person's decisions on purchases which can happen subconsciously (Mathras et al., 2016).

Green Marketing Mix

People focusing more on environmental issues worldwide has led to using green marketing techniques within traditional business methods (Chen et al., 2024). Integrating green marketing strategies allows companies to connect with environmentally conscious customers, build their positive green brand reputation and inspire customers to make environmentally friendly decisions (Mohammadi et al., 2023). Green products are mainly defined by their sustainability and minimal environmental impact, and they are very crucial in building green brand equity. Research by Rahman and Noor (2020) found that the credibility of the product and its certifications can significantly enhance consumer trust in the green brands. Moreover, the higher quality of a product and its durability further reinforce green brand equity and result in deriving purchase intent. Effective green pricing strategies can enhance consumer trust and reinforce brand equity such as showing the transparent cost breakdowns and implementing value-driven pricing (Chen & Chang, 2012).

Green place strategies strengthen a brand's green image and consumer trust as they include renewable energy-powered outlets, recyclable packaging, and eco-conscious product placement (Ha, 2021). Green promotion tells customers about a brand's dedication to protecting the environment. Emphasizing advertising, environmentally friendly packaging and CSR projects helps develop green advertising credibility which results in more loyalty and trust from consumers and increases the brand's value (Leonidou et al., 2014). Such

strategies like eco-labeling, connections with social causes and awareness campaigns improve consumer impressions and support the brand in being seen as environmentally responsible (Hayat et al., 2019). Social media strategies such as influencer collaborations, educational content, and interactive campaigns foster brand credibility and consumer trust, ultimately enhancing brand equity. Green physical evidence enhances the credibility of the brand and helps in reinforcing the consumer loyalty and advocacy (S. A. R. Khan et al., 2022).

Green Brand Equity

Green brand equity is the image or esteem in people's minds that eco-friendly brands possess due to their characteristics such as being reliable, safe, of good quality, trustworthy, responsible towards society and fair, causing customers to prefer them, be ready to buy them and pay an amount as they are helpful to the sustainability of the environment (Parsa et al., 2015). It causes consumers to prioritize environmental sustainability when they are making buying decisions, with the aim of living sustainably. This behavior is seen mainly when buyers actively seek products with eco-friendly production, packaging, and disposal practices, avoiding the products that have harmful effect on the environment, preferring to choose those alternatives that have lower ecological impact, and demonstrates a willingness to pay premium for the environmentally responsible products (Rohman & Rofiq, 2018).

Religiosity

A person's religion can change how they form opinions on the principles of buying and the advertisements that are exposed to them. Many studies suggest that religious people often care about caring for the environment (Orellano et al., 2020). Cleanliness of the environment is a main aspect of Islamic values (Chaudhry, 2022). Strong belief in religion may encourage people to rethink the approach of green marketing to form brand equity (Casidy et al., 2024). It is possible for some very religious people to see taking care of the environment as a way to be true to their faith and values (Muralidharan et al., 2024). Because of this, more consumers in this group will appreciate eco-friendly companies, so firms can reach them with green marketing at a lower cost (Parsa et al., 2015). Studies prove that religious beliefs influence how strongly a person feels about making green buying choices. Consequently, it was successfully established that applying religions alongside green marketing may boost a company's brand equity (Wang et al., 2020). Passionately dedicated citizens are more supportive of green marketing mainly because they regard environmentally friendly behavior as a moral obligation that comes outside their personal beliefs (Arli et al., 2021).

Theoretical Framework

This study explains customer behavior for green marketing using The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Social Identity Theory (SIT) with religiosity as moderator. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) paradigm explains how external factors from green marketing change how people think and

feel, which ends up influencing their purchasing decisions. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), consumers show certain behavioral intentions due to their attitudes, the subjective norms and perceived control over their actions (Brookes, 2022). Green marketing changes how consumers feel about shopping, based on what society thinks, their attitude about eco-friendly goods and how they feel about choosing a product in control. According to SIT, people's sense of themselves comes from the groups they are part of, and those who want to fit into groups concerned with the environment often engage in eco-friendly purchasing, to boost their social reputation (Islam et al., 2024).

Hypothesis Development

Based on the study's research framework, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

Green Pricing and Green Brand Equity

A study found that green pricing greatly increases brand loyalty, which shows that consumers often perceive eco-friendly pricing strategies of the brands as trusted and responsible brands (Mohammadi et al., 2023). Similarly, many others have proposed this hypothesis as research found out that green pricing is positively influencing perceived brand quality and suggested that eco-pricing strategies can enhance a consumer's quality perceptions for a brand (Ghobbe & Nohekhan, 2023). Another study proposed that green pricing has a contribution in increasing brand awareness and further highlighted the role of eco-friendly pricing in enhancing brand visibility and recognition by customers (Nohekhan & Barzegar, 2024). The following hypothesis has been proposed:

H1: Green pricing has a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Green Product and Green Brand Equity

Green products were observed to help green brand equity increase in Vietnamese consumers (Nguyen-Viet, 2022) and similar research uncovered that they impact a brand's quality quite significantly which is one aspect of a brand's equity (Ghobbe & Nohekhan, 2023). A study shows that people who are loyal to a brand are also more likely to choose its environmentally friendly products (Mohammadi et al., 2023). One more research noted that using eco-friendly practices or green products, helps to build green brand equity by increasing trust in the brand and lowering doubts among customers (S. A. R. Khan et al., 2022). There were some studies that challenged or rejected this also. For example, a study revealed that if there is excessive use of product packaging it can lead to despite its greening claims, to greenwashing perceptions which are consumers thinking that the claims are a fraud and can cause consumer distrust and confusion, which will negatively impact the green brands (Qayyum et al., 2022). The following hypothesis has been proposed:

H2: Green Product has a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Green Places and Green Brand Equity

Previous research has found to have concluded a positive relation between the two such as a study found that green place programs, such as eco-friendly distribution or placement channels and green retail environments, positively influence trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, which is helpful in enhancing green brand equity (Nguyen-Viet, 2022). A further study on young consumers in Bangladesh found that a green image along with green activities in stores is related to better brand equity (Tanim & Hussain, 2022). Greenwashing practices, which also include the misleading on green place claims to the customers slowly undermine a customer trust on brand and its BE reduces in their mind (Zhang & Ismail, 2024). Another research discovered that green brand identity influenced by green place strategies may result in better green trust and satisfaction and brand equity (Ha, 2021). The following hypothesis has been proposed:

H3: Green Places have a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Green Promotion and Green Brand Equity

Research demonstrated that green promotion greatly affects brand loyalty (Ghobbe & Nohekhan, 2023). However, research also indicated that greenwashing practices such as misleading claims when doing green promotion can substantially decline customer trust in brands (Zhang & Ismail, 2024). They also highlighted that although having a green image for a brand forms part of BE, this image cannot be influenced only by green promotions, so green promotion might not always help a brand achieve better equity (Hidyantari et al., 2022). A study also brings into question that green brand affect does not always make someone want to purchase a green brand, thereby showing that green promotion might not ensure better brand equity (Afifa et al., 2025). The following hypothesis has been proposed:

H4: Green Promotion has a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Physical Evidence and Green Brand Equity

Brands use things like eco-labels, certifications, and sustainable packaging as proof that they can back up their environmental promises and sustainability causes. But how these aspects affect directly on brand value hasn't been studied outside of Western countries. This idea aims to fill that gap, suggesting physical evidence plays a role in boosting green brand value by giving solid and visible proof of a commitment made by company for sustainability when studying the Pakistani market. According to a study done in the banking sector, improving integration between physical branches and digital channels can boost how customers view a brand and improve their overall experience (Kencebay & Ertugan, 2025). The following hypothesis has been proposed:

 H5: Physical Evidence has a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Social Media and Green Brand Equity

Green advertisements on social media can influence positively and effects on consumer perceptions and result in their purchase decisions when the green authenticity perception is mediating their relationship. When investigating luxury brands in Malaysia, a study concluded that social media has helped increase their brand equity and make their brand better known to consumers. This other study found that user interactions on social media can help improve how loyal people are to green brands, thanks to social media marketing practices (Bulmer et al., 2024). The hypothesis for this study is as follows:

H6: Social Meda has a positive impact on Green Brand Equity.

Green Brand Equity and Green Purchase Behavior

Green brand equity results in a better consumer trust, satisfaction level, and brand loyalty which leads to influence green purchase behavior. Research by K. U. Khan et al. (2022) suggests that having strong brand equity leads consumers to act more sustainably. Having a green brand that consumers like and trust encourages people to buy more and make them loyal customers (Watson, 2024). One study report that strongly religious individuals are likely to choose sustainable items because for them it is their moral responsibility (Zhang et al., 2022). The findings indicate that what determines whether a customer buys environmentally friendly products has to do with their loyalty, view of the brand's quality and notice of green branding (Reddy et al., 2023).

H7: Green Brand Equity has a positive impact on Green Purchase Behavior.

Religiosity moderates the relationship between Green Marketing Mix Elements and Green Brand Equity

Many studies have also explored related constructs which provide views into how religiosity may have an influence on consumer behavior and brand perceptions. Researchers view religiosity as a factor that shapes consumer behavior, but not many studies have looked at its particular role in how green pricing connects to brand equity. This proposal aims to investigate if religious values strengthen or weaken the effects that green pricing strategies have. In Pakistan, Islamic teachings encourage environmental responsibility, and many consumers have positive perceptions of eco-friendly products. These pro-environmental values could be directly converted into attitudes rather than interacting with commercial cues (Ali et al., 2019). Stated differently, Pakistani consumers, regardless of their religious beliefs, may also perceive green pricing as an indication of a brand that upholds ethical standards. Moreover, Pakistan's certified green product market is still in its early stages of development (Salam et al., 2021). Religion significantly moderates the relationship between brand equity and physical evidence, according to the current research that is present in scarce as there has

not been much systematic study regarding how religiosity affects how physical evidence, like eco-labels, affects brand equity (Martín & Indelicato, 2025).

The following moderator hypotheses have been proposed:

H8: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between Green Pricing and Green Brand Equity.

H9: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between Green Product and Green Brand Equity.

H10: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between Green Places and Green Brand Equity.

H11: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between Green Promotion and Green Brand Equity.

H12: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between Physical Evidence and Green Brand Equity.

H13: Religiosity has a significant positive influence on the relationship between social media and Green Brand Equity.

Analysis

The research uses a quantitative approach that is in line with the positivist research philosophy to assess the links between green marketing activities, religiosity, brand equity and green purchase behavior. The survey approach was used in this study to gather information from the sample population. In quantitative research, surveys are frequently employed because they allow researchers to gather vast amounts of data in an organized and economical way. Online questionnaires that were then spread through social networks and online consumer organizations have been employed to obtain data, thus providing availability and an improved sample size. Unit of analysis was individual and respondents were consumers.

The study applies Structural Equation Modeling" (SEM), a second-generation data analysis method for multivariate studies used for testing theoretically supported research frameworks, by using SMART PLS 4. When analyzing a study's theoretical model, Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS-PM) aims to explain the variance in the dependent variables. Since PLS-SEM may be applied to complicated equation models with many constructs and does not require normal data, it is mostly utilized for testing structural equation models. Based upon the research objectives of this study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used for data analysis.

The PLS-SEM analysis consists of two steps, i.e., the measurement model analysis and the structural model analysis, commonly referred to as the outer and inner models, respectively. The measurement model, or outer model, examines the connections between the latent

constructs and the items utilized to measure these constructs. Conversely, the structural model, or inner model, evaluates the relationships among the different latent constructs within the research framework. The analysis of the measurement model indicates the effectiveness of the items in defining their corresponding constructs by assessing validity and reliability. In contrast, the structural model illustrates how the latent constructs are interrelated with one another simultaneously.

Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement Model Analysis was conducted to assess convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to measure the data's internal consistency reliability. Convergent validity refers to the degree to which the correlation between the measures within the same construct is higher than in other constructs and is assessed through calculating the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Lastly, the discriminant validity is assessed through the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlation (HTMT) analysis. The Measurement Model Analysis is depicted in Figure 1.
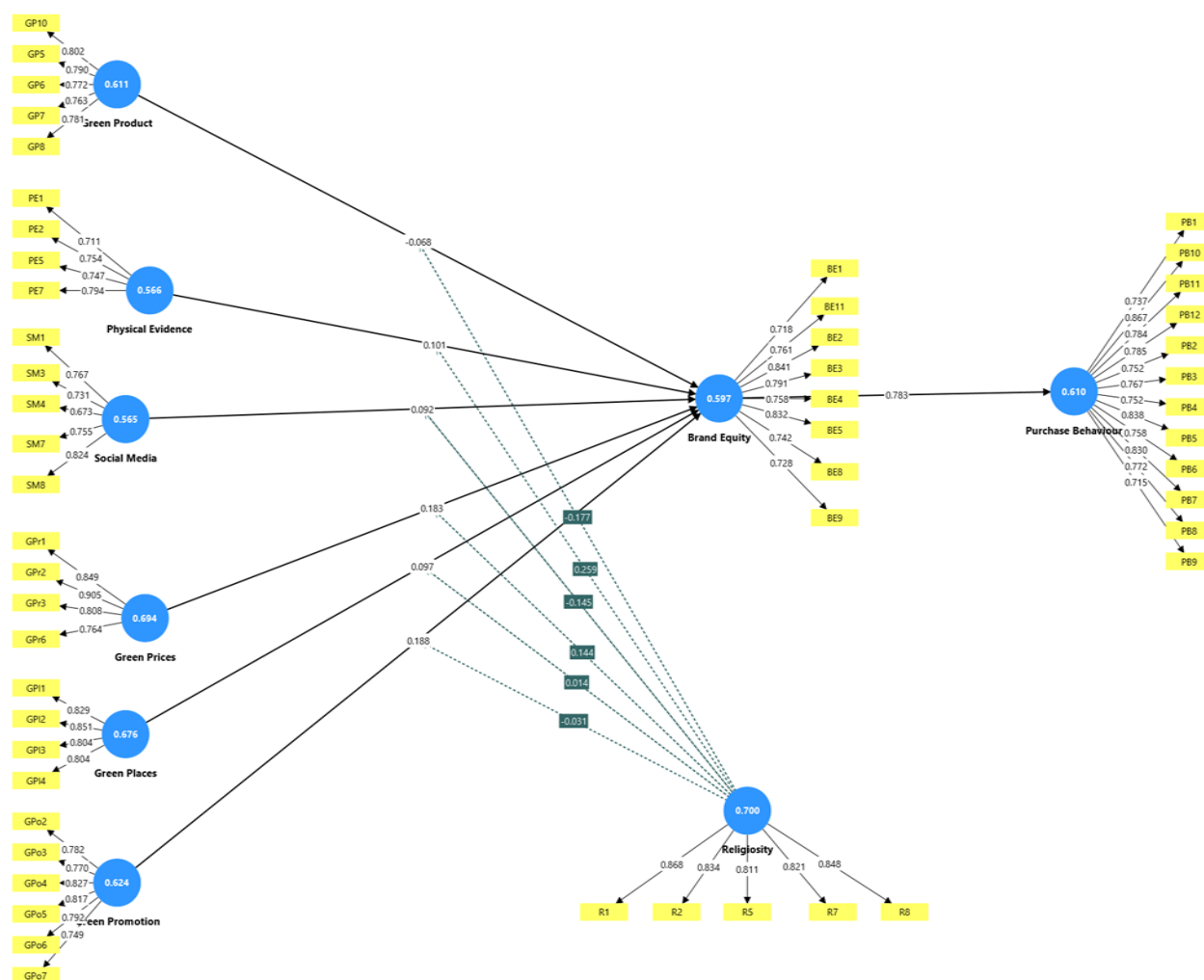
Figure 1: Measurement Model Analysis

The analysis of the data indicated that the measurement model used in the study possesses sufficient validity and reliability, and that the gathered data and the estimated model were a good fit. Once the analysis of the measurement model was finalized, the researcher proceeded to analyze the structural model. This step included evaluating the relationships among the latent variables within the structural model, also referred to as the inner model.

Structural Model Analysis

Structural Model Analysis revealed that Brand Equity significantly influences Purchase Behavior. Green Pricing, Green Promotion, and Physical Evidence positively affect Brand Equity. The interaction of Religiosity with Physical Evidence significantly impacts Brand Equity. However, other variables, including Green Places, Green Product and social media do not significantly impact Brand Equity. Most interaction effects involving Religiosity were not statistically significant, except for its interaction with Physical Evidence. The results of the Structural Model Analysis are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Hypothesis Testing*

Hypotheses	Path Relationship	T-Statistic	P-Value	Decision
H1	Green Prices → Brand Equity	2.646	0.004	Accepted
H2	Green Product → Brand Equity	1.239	0.108	Not Accepted
H3	Green Places → Brand Equity	1.396	0.081	Not Accepted
H4	Green Promotion → Brand Equity	2.326	0.010	Accepted
H5	Physical Evidence → Brand Equity	1.752	0.040	Accepted
H6	Social media → Brand Equity	1.482	0.069	Not Accepted
H7	Religiosity × Green Prices → Brand Equity	1.445	0.074	Not Accepted
H8	Religiosity × Green Product → Brand Equity	1.679	0.047	Accepted

H9	Religiosity × Green Places → Brand Equity	0.146	0.442	Not Accepted
H10	Religiosity × Green Promotion → Brand Equity	0.279	0.390	Not Accepted
H11	Religiosity × Physical Evidence → Brand Equity	2.264	0.012	Accepted
H12	Religiosity × social media → Brand Equity	1.562	0.059	Not Accepted
H13	Brand Equity → Purchase Behavior	19.520	0.000	Accepted

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the study demonstrated clear effects of the green marketing mix elements on brand equity which derives purchase behavior. Among the Green Marketing elements, green price, physical evidence, and green promotion significantly enhanced green brand equity, while green product attributes and social media did not. In turn, brand equity strongly predicted purchase behavior. It means that consumers' impressions of a brand's greenness, which influences their intention to purchase, are greatly improved by transparent product prices, visible green signals and appealing promotional activities (advertising, sponsorship). These results confirmed that in Pakistan, consumers' judgments of brand "greenness" rely more on pricing, prominent eco-friendly labels or symbols, and credible communication when campaigning for promotion of brands than on product features alone. This research advanced a comprehensive model that tested multiple green marketing elements together rather than in isolation. The significant GBE-GPB effect is consistent with the customer-based brand equity (CBBE) and theory of planned behavior (TPB) literature; when consumers experience a brand as credible and trustworthy, they are more likely to act upon such experiences.

Results indicated that green price is a signal of investment and moral commitment: green price paid by consumers brings greater equity if the brand conveys the internalization of environment costs clearly (Sherwani et al., 2021). Cross-national literature shows a willingness to pay green premiums when pricing is perceived as legitimate and supported by information or social proof; in emerging markets price signals often substitute for other quality cues (Shi & Jiang, 2023). The results of the study support the idea that a comprehensive green marketing strategy, especially when aligned with culturally resonant values, can significantly enhance brand equity and drive environmentally responsible consumer behavior in emerging markets like Pakistan. This confirms that highly religious consumers are more inclined toward sustainable purchasing when brand values align with their ethical beliefs. However, the results showed that religiosity does not uniformly strengthen green marketing effects in Pakistani

consumers; instead, it acts selectively: the interaction terms for price, promotion, social media and place were found to be non-significant with religion as moderator (Nickerson et al., 2022).

The study showed that religiosity is not reshaping how product attributes or distribution cues are translated into brand equity it may be because these features are judged on functional and practical grounds that cut across religious identity, or because they are insufficiently salient to activate faith-based filters in Pakistani consumer's minds. The moderating role of religiosity is consistent with previous researchers who demonstrated that intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity enhances green brand perceptions when environmental evidence aligns with religious values (L. Wang et al., 2020). When looked into Western contexts, religiosity was loosely linked to environmental values and rarely boosts brand evaluations for green products, while in Muslim-majority or religiously embedded societies religiosity can strengthen responses but primarily when green labeling is associated with religious norms or credible certification. The study results showed religiosity significantly affecting product and green brand equity relation. In Islamic contexts, this behavior is often rooted in stewardship principles, as highlighted by Ahmed, who noted that religiously motivated consumers in Pakistan are more responsive to ethical and green symbols and labels (Milewska, 2022).

The current research develops a comprehensive model that examines the collective of multiple green marketing mix elements on green brand equity and green purchase behavior. This approach offers a more holistic understanding of various marketing factors combining to define consumer perceptions and acts, compared to studies that focus on individual elements. A central theoretical contribution is the explicit integration of religiosity as a moderating variable in the relationship between green marketing, brand equity, and purchase behavior. This is mainly required in the Pakistani context, where religious beliefs strongly influence consumer attitudes and decisions. By demonstrating how religiosity strengthens or weakens the impact of green marketing efforts, this study adds a crucial layer of complexity to existing models.

Conclusion

This research is specifically focused on Pakistani consumers. This contextual focus is important because it acknowledges the different cultural, social, and economic aspects that define consumer behavior in Pakistan. Many existing theories are developed in Western contexts, and this study contributes to the development of more culturally relevant theories and models for green marketing in Pakistan. The study addressed a gap by measuring the interplay of Green Marketing Elements, religiosity, Brand Equity, and Green Purchase Behavior. The study argues that   previous research has often focused on broader aspects of green marketing or religiosity in isolation, without adequately exploring their complex interactions. The studies emphasizes that there is limited research on the combined influence of green marketing and religiosity on brand equity and purchase behavior among Pakistani consumers. This study directly addresses this gap, potentially providing novel insights into

the role of religious beliefs in shaping green consumerism in Pakistan. This research is focused on the millennial and youth segments in Pakistan, along with the influence of social media. This specific focus differentiates this study from older research that has not adequately addressed these demographics or the impact of social media.

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