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Green Strategic Marketing Practices and Their Influence on Long-Term Brand Competitiveness

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***Abstract* – Given rising environmental awareness among consumers, in addition to increased regulation, organizations need to adopt sustainable approaches in their marketing strategies. This study assesses the impact of green strategic marketing initiatives on long-term competitiveness of brands based on a comprehensive statistical analysis. Building on Resource-Based View and stakeholder theory, this study seeks to understand the effects of green product innovation, green communication, and green positioning on brand equity and competitive advantage. Data gathered from 250 marketing managers were analyzed by means of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The research results show that green marketing efforts substantially increase the trust, image, and loyalty of brands, thus contributing to competitive advantage. Green brand image is shown to play a mediating role, while consumer environmental concern is shown to moderate the relationships. The research offers useful recommendations for practicing managers to ensure that they are both profitable and environmentally responsible.**

***Keywords* - Green Marketing Strategy, Brand Competitiveness, Sustainable Competitive Advantage, Green Brand Image, Consumer Trust, Environmental Sustainability, Strategic Marketing**

I. INTRODUCTION

The current era of businesses has witnessed a paradigm shift in terms of its focus being the concept of sustainability in view of increased levels of consumer awareness, regulatory requirements, and most importantly the global need for taking care of the issue of climate change [2][3][5]. Organizational performance is not anymore measured just based on certain measures but more so on environmental sustainability and social responsibility [2][3][5]. In this regard, the role of green strategic marketing has changed dramatically from one of being just a mere differentiation tool to a very important component of the organization's strategy and its management [2][3][5]. The integration of environmental aspects in marketing activities such as product development, pricing, distribution and communication represents what experts call a green strategic marketing orientation [2][3][5].

The reasons why the organizations opt for green strategic marketing go beyond the ethical considerations of the issue [2][3][5]. Studies have shown how the application of certain green marketing practices has a positive effect on purchasing intentions and brand loyalty of consumers and helps the company in gaining competitive advantage [2][3][5]. As the market of today becomes more sensitive about green issues in relation to the companies, the application of green strategies serves as the source of sustainable competitive advantage [2][3][5]. Yet how these green marketing capabilities transform into something sustainable for a particular brand is still a complicated matter [2][3][5]. In the modern environment of consumers, being a green brand implies more than making some claims; it implies actually doing something [2][3][5].

There is a variety of theories and conceptual frameworks underlying the relationship between the two variables under discussion [2][5][10]. The Resource-Based View (RBV) states that competitive advantage of organizations comes down to the uniqueness, availability and inimitability of the resources they have at their disposal [2][5][10]. From this perspective, green marketing capabilities such as eco-innovation ability, environmental sustainability of the supply chain and competency in managing stakeholders may qualify as such kind of resource [2][5][10]. Another theory here is the one of stakeholders which states that organizations should cater to needs of multiple stakeholders such as environmentally concerned consumers, investors and other entities [2][5][10].

Even though green marketing has gained increasing attention from researchers recently, some important areas in this context still need to be addressed in future studies [7][8][9][10]. First of all, not enough empirical work has been done in the area related to understanding the holistic processes through which green strategic marketing practices affect the competitiveness of brands in the long term [7][8][9][10]. Secondly, it is still not clear in what circumstances these practices will result in the best outcomes and what mediators and moderators might exist for them, specifically such as green brand image and consumers' environmental values [7][8][9][10]. Thirdly, it should be explored how businesses could overcome potential obstacles on the way of creating real green

strategies [7][8][9][10]. Thus, this research will try to fill these gaps and develop a theoretical framework in order to understand how green strategic marketing practices affect brand competitiveness and why it happens so [7][8][9][10].

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

There have been significant changes within the literature regarding green marketing and brand competitiveness, with scholars showing more interest in investigating the strategic aspect of sustainable marketing [1][2][3][5][10]. Kuzmak formulated a conceptual framework that shows the link between emotional marketing techniques that are used to turn sustainability into responsible consumption and competitive behavior [1]. It should be stressed that triggers, which are both positive and negative when used together with sincere brand behavior, create a strong foundation for trust and loyal behavior, especially during the crises [1]. Thus, it proves the vital importance of authenticity within green communication since empty declarations will evoke consumers' skepticism [1].

Studies investigating empirical connections between green marketing strategy and competitive advantage show a consistent positive relationship [2][3][4][6]. Specifically, a study analyzing Indonesian firms showed the positive connection between green marketing strategy, including eco-innovation, energy efficiency and environmental communication, and both positive green brand image and sustainable competitive advantage [2]. As was stated above, green brand image acts as a mediator in the relation [2]. In its turn, Ahmed et al. conducted an analysis of Asian manufacturing facilities and proved a positive connection between green environmental practice and green purchase intention and brand competitiveness thanks to green entrepreneurial orientation, psychological benefits and green innovation, acting as mediators in this case [4]. Moreover, cross-national design including China, Pakistan, India, South Korea, and Bangladesh proves the generalization possibility of the found connection [4].

The relationship between CSR and the impact of green marketing campaigns has attracted great attention [3]. For example, research in North African emerging markets identified CSR as an important mediation factor connecting green marketing campaigns with consumer outcomes such as brand loyalty and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) [3]. The research indicated the "promise and paradox of CSR" meaning that while CSR offers an opportunity to build trust and consumer loyalty, false or artificial practices of CSR could result in consumer skepticism and the importance of genuine, strategically integrated CSR efforts that are consistent with operational strategies [3]. The above results coincide with studies suggesting that consistency is crucial in building credible green brands [3][8]. In Egypt, studies have shown that environmental concern, green marketing communications and green product packaging affect brand loyalty mediated by brand trust based on the Theory of Planned Behavior [3][8].

Strategic interaction of green marketing orientation and competitive advantage has been studied from the perspective of organizational capabilities [5][6]. The studies related to proactive environmental strategy showed that green marketing strategy and corporate environmental strategy are equally significant for signaling companies' environmental commitment; their combined impact creates synergy resulting in improved brand positioning and competitiveness [5]. In a study on B2B companies with environmental certifications, all the green marketing strategy dimensions (e.g., consideration of environment in design, green arguments in advertisements, usage of clean materials in packaging) exhibited high standardized regression weight, corroborating the multidimensionality of green marketing implementation [5]. In addition, in a study about interaction of green marketing orientation and internal green marketing, it was found that corporate social responsibility and pressure from stakeholders on environment issues affect green marketing orientation which affects in its turn competitive advantage and financial performance [6].

The mediating effect of the green brand image on the effectiveness of green marketing has been consistently found in various studies [2][7][8]. The results of a study that focused on the effects of sustainable fashion and lifestyle consumption of Gen Z in Bali revealed that innovations in green products do not have any direct effect on marketing effectiveness unless the brands are perceived by consumers as genuinely environmentally responsible [7]. It has been proven that the mediating factor of the green brand image was necessary for transferring the environmental innovations into consumer loyalty, trust, advocacy, and purchasing intents [7]. Moreover, the qualitative evidence has shown that younger consumers are especially sensitive to the authenticity and transparency of sustainability claims of a company; therefore, communication of green practices via online platforms becomes an important factor in successful marketing [7][8].

Green marketing's effect on brand competitiveness is theoretically based on Resource Based View (RBV) and Triple Bottom Line (TBL) models [10]. Application of the theoretical background in a study revealed that the positive effects of green marketing on the business performance are mediated by competitive advantages and green innovative marketing strategies [10]. It has been proved that the positive financial gains from green practices can be used for further investments in sustainability and the creation of vicious circles of continuous improvements and competitive advantages [10]. This finding agrees with the results obtained in the study of the footwear industry when the effects of green product, promotion, price, and place strategies on brand value and economic, environmental, and social sustainability were examined [9]. It has been

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found that green pricing strategy, reflecting the value of the products created with sustainability in mind, positively affected brand value, whereas green place strategy – including environmentally responsible product distribution and retailing practices – had a positive impact on sustainability perceptions [9].

III. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy and Approach

In this study, we adopt a positivist research paradigm based on the assumption that social reality is capable of being objectively measured and tested through the empirical examination of relationships between variables. We use the approach of a quantitative, cross-sectional research design for investigating relationships between the variables.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses Development

The theoretical framework of the current study will use a combination of resource-based view (RBV), stakeholder theory, and signaling theory to propose a complete model explaining the impact of green strategic marketing on brand competitiveness. According to the RBV, green marketing competencies may be considered valuable, unique, rare, and non-substitutable assets for creating a sustainable competitive advantage. Stakeholder theory states that environmentally-oriented strategies will consider stakeholders' interests increasing organizational legitimacy and trust. According to the signaling theory, green marketing strategies can signal firm's commitments to sustainability decreasing information asymmetry.

Figure 1 presents the framework demonstrating the proposed relationships between the constructs. As it has been already discussed in the chapter above, Green Strategic Marketing is the independent variable represented by four dimensions: Green Product Innovation, Green Communication & Transparency, Sustainability-Oriented Positioning, and Stakeholder Engagement. Green Brand Image and Brand Trust represent mediating variables. The constructs, such as Consumer Environmental Concern and Perceived Greenwashing Risk are moderating factors. Long-Term Brand Competitiveness, which includes three components: Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity, and Sustainable Market Position is considered the dependent variable of the study.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Green Strategic Marketing and Brand Competitiveness

This is the conceptual framework of the study showing its integration. On the left-hand side, Green Strategic Marketing Practices are illustrated in four dimensions, namely: Green Product Innovation (ecological design, sustainable products), Green Communication and Transparency (reporting, certification transparency), Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (purpose, alignment of values), and Stakeholder Engagement (partnership, community involvement). Arrows pointing from the dimensions are drawn to mediating concepts, Green Brand Image and Brand Trust. From these mediating concepts, arrows are drawn to long-term brand competitiveness in the form of Brand Loyalty, Brand Equity, and Sustainable Market Position. Consumer Environmental Concern and Greenwashing Risk are represented as moderating factors.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The target group is made up of marketing directors, brand managers and sustainability executives of publicly traded corporations on stock markets of United States, United Kingdom, India and Singapore. The choice of countries is based on the differing regulations in those countries as well as the high level of consumer awareness on environmental matters and use of sustainability reporting practices in these markets.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling whereby an effort is made to identify corporations which have sustainability projects and green marketing in their business practice. Criteria used included:

- Having published sustainability report for at least three years running
- Holding environmental certifications like iso 14001 or other equivalents
- Being in industries that have high environmental impacts like manufacturing, consumer good, technology or retail industry.

Out of the 1,200 organizations meeting the set criteria above, 400 were randomly chosen to participate. In each organization, it was requested that at least two senior people responsible for sustainability, marketing or strategic decisions be part of the respondents. The survey data was collected using e-questionnaires distributed via Qualtrics online software from January to June 2025. Responses gathered amounted to 256, which was a response rate of 32%.

Measurement Instruments

The survey questionnaire included validated scales developed through previous research, adjusted for use in the current study. The variables were all rated on five-point Likert scales from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The Green Strategic Marketing Practices construct was measured by a 15-item scale developed through prior studies, which comprised four dimensions – Green Product Innovation (4 items), Green Communication and Transparency (4 items), Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (4 items), and

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Stakeholder Engagement (3 items). Green Brand Image was measured using 5-item scale gauging consumers' perceptions of environmental responsibility and sustainability management. Brand Trust was gauged using a 4-item scale indicating credibility, reliability, and confidence of environmental management practices. Long-term brand competitiveness was measured through three sub-constructs - Brand Loyalty (4 items), Brand Equity (4 items), and Sustainable Market Position (4 items). Individual level environmental concern was gauged using a 5-item scale, while Greenwashing Perception Risk was gauged using a 4-item scale.

Data Analysis Techniques

Two-stage data analysis procedure was utilized in line with the prescribed procedures of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). First, Measurement model analysis was performed to establish reliability, validity, and model fit. The internal reliability was determined by having Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha values higher than 0.70 while the convergent validity was confirmed by obtaining Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. The discriminant validity was measured using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait ratios (HTMT). The second step included the estimation of the structural model using the Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) method and the SmartPLS 4.0 tool to test the hypothesized relationships, direct, and indirect effects along with moderations. Bootstrap technique with 5,000 resamples was used for getting standard errors and confidence intervals on the parameters.

Figure 2: Research Methodology Flow Chart

This figure presents a graphical depiction of the methodological approach employed. Flow chart starts with Phase 1: Conceptualization which involves review of literature, gap identification and theorization. In Phase 2: Instrumentation, it covers operationalizing of constructs, questionnaire construction, content validation and pilot testing. In Phase 3: Data Collection, it includes sampling procedure, administering of the questionnaire, and managing of responses. Phase 4: Data Analysis includes data screening (missing values, outliers, normality), measurement model analysis (CFA, reliability and validity), structural model analysis (coefficients, R^2, effect size) and mediating/moderation effects analysis (bootstrapping). Lastly is the Phase 5: Interpretation which consists of hypothesis testing, findings discussion and implication generation.

IV. ANALYSIS

Descriptive Statistics and Respondent Profile

The participants of the study included men (62%) and women (38%) who were on average aged 42.7 years (SD=11.3). In terms of experience, the respondents reported on average 15.8 years (SD=8.2) in their career in marketing or strategic management positions. The sectors that the participants worked in included consumer goods (32%), technology (24%), manufacturing (21%), retail (15%), and other industries (8%). The participants came from the USA (34%), UK (28%), India (22%), and Singapore (16%). Most of the organizations (68%) belonged to large companies (annual turnover > $500 millions).

Measurement Model Assessment

Psychometrics analysis of the measurement model revealed satisfactory results. Reliability and validity of all constructs are summarized in Table 1. Composite Reliability values were found between 0.842 and 0.913, which is higher than 0.70 criterion, hence, suggesting the high internal consistency of the constructs being investigated. Values of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values fell between 0.512 and 0.671, surpassing 0.50 level of convergent validity. Factor loadings of all items have surpassed 0.60 significance level ($p < 0.001$).

Table 1: Measurement Model Assessment - Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Green Product Innovation	0.862	0.887	0.612
Green Communication/Transparency	0.845	0.874	0.589
Sustainability-Oriented	0.879	0.901	0.643

International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
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Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Positioning			
Stakeholder Engagement	0.831	0.862	0.541
Green Brand Image	0.901	0.913	0.671
Brand Trust	0.873	0.895	0.623
Brand Loyalty	0.854	0.881	0.598
Brand Equity	0.842	0.867	0.557
Sustainable Market Position	0.856	0.884	0.602
Consumer Environmental Concern	0.877	0.899	0.642
Perceived Greenwashing Risk	0.839	0.862	0.526

The psychometric characteristics of the measurement model are displayed in this table. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of more than 0.80 represents high reliability internal consistency. All the values of Composite Reliability are greater than 0.85, which implies consistent measures of the latent variables through their indicators. All the Average Variance Extracted values are above 0.50, which represents high convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was done by the use of the Fornell-Larcker rule whereby the square root of AVE of each latent variable was higher than the correlation among variables. Also, the HTMT values for the constructs were found to be less than 0.85, which confirmed their empirical separability. Acceptable model fit indices included: SRMR = 0.068 (less than 0.08 cut-off), NFI = 0.892, and χ^2/df = 2.34 (less than 3.0).

Structural Model Results

The structure model was estimated for testing the proposed relationship between green strategic marketing practices, mediators, moderators, and brand competitiveness consequences. The following figure (Figure 3) shows the coefficient values and their significant levels in the structure model for direct effects.

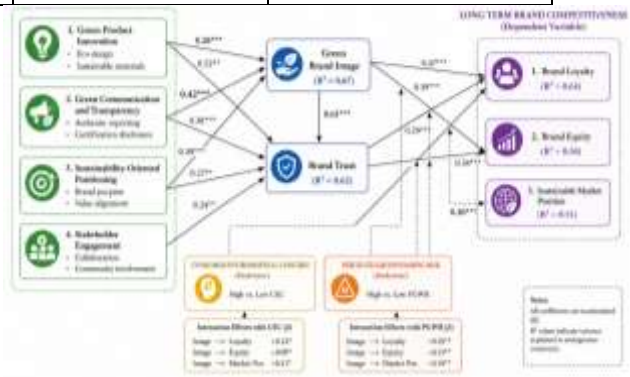

Figure 3: Structural Model with Path Coefficients and Significance Levels

The above-mentioned figure shows the results from structural equation modeling analysis using the standardized path coefficient. All the four components of the Green Strategic Marketing Practices have a positive and significant impact on the Green Brand Image and Green Communication Transparency is the component that has the most significant impact (β=0.42, $p<0.001$). In addition, there are also significant positive impacts of all the four variables on Brand Trust. The Green Brand Image is found to be a strong predictor for Long-Term Brand Competitiveness Components: Brand Loyalty (β=0.47, $p<0.001$), Brand Equity (β=0.39, $p<0.001$) and Sustainable Market Position (β=0.35, $p<0.001$). R^2 value of 64%, 58% and 51%.

All four constructs of Green Strategic Marketing Practices significantly positively influenced Green Brand Image:

International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
www.ijnrefm.com
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Volume 4, Issue 4, July-Aug-2026, PP: 01-10

Green Product Innovation (β = 0.28, p<0.001), Green Communication and Transparency (β = 0.42, p<0.001), Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (β = 0.31, p<0.001), and Stakeholder Engagement (β = 0.19, p<0.01). Moreover, all of them significantly influenced Brand Trust: Green Product Innovation (β = 0.22, p<0.01), Green Communication and Transparency (β = 0.38, p<0.001), Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (β = 0.27, p<0.001), and Stakeholder Engagement (β = 0.23, p<0.001). The proportion of explained variance for mediating variables was quite high: Green Brand Image R^2=0.67; Brand Trust R^2=0.59.

In turn, Green Brand Image positively impacted Brand Loyalty (β = 0.47, p<0.001), Brand Equity (β = 0.39, p<0.001), and Sustainable Market Position (β = 0.35, p<0.001). On the other hand, variables measuring Brand Trust impacted Brand Loyalty (β=0.32, p<0.001), Brand Equity (β=0.28, p<0.001), and Sustainable Market Position (β=0.31, p<0.001). A notable variance was covered by the model in the predicted dependent variables, namely R^2=0.64, Brand Equity R^2=0.58, Sustainable Market Position R^2=0.51, indicating strong predictive power of the framework.

Mediation Analysis

The results from the bootstrapping analysis revealed the intermediary roles of Green Brand Image and Brand Trust in the linkage between green strategic marketing strategies and brand competitiveness performance. The indirect effect of the mediation is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Mediation Effects of Green Brand Image and Brand Trust

Path	Indirect Effect	Bootstrapped 95% CI	t-value	Significance
GSP → GBI → BL	0.197	[0.142, 0.258]	6.82	p<0.001
GSP → GBI → BE	0.164	[0.117, 0.216]	6.21	p<0.001
GSP → GBI → SMP	0.147	[0.098, 0.201]	5.43	p<0.001
GSP → BT → BL	0.122	[0.081, 0.167]	4.95	p<0.001
GSP → BT → BE	0.107	[0.069, 0.148]	4.28	p<0.001
GSP → BT → SMP	0.118	[0.076, 0.164]	4.67	p<0.001

GSP: Green Strategic Marketing Practices (aggregate), GBI: Green Brand Image, BT: Brand Trust, BL: Brand Loyalty, BE: Brand Equity, SMP: Sustainable Market Position

The results from the bootstrapping analysis revealed the intermediary roles of Green Brand Image and Brand Trust in the linkage between green strategic marketing strategies and brand competitiveness performance. The indirect effect of the mediation is shown in Table 2.

The findings provide proof that both Green Brand Image and Brand Trust function as complementary mediating variables, accounting for the most significant portion of the total impact of green strategic marketing efforts on competitive brand positioning. As far as the strength of the total indirect effect is concerned, there is a clear dominance of Green Brand Image over Brand Trust, indicating that perceptual positioning is more influential than brand credibility.

Moderation Analysis

The moderating effect of Consumer Environmental Concern on the linkage between Green Brand Image and

Brand Loyalty was significant (β=0.18, p<0.01) implying that the impact of green brand image on brand loyalty is more powerful for consumers having strong environmental attitudes. Likewise, Consumer Environmental Concern showed significant moderation of the linkage between Green Brand Image and Brand Equity (β=0.14, p<0.05). Contrary to this result, Perceived Greenwashing Risk served as negative moderator of the link between Green Brand Image and Brand Loyalty (β=-0.21, p<0.001).

Comparative Analysis

Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of green marketing practices across industries and geographic regions.

International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
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Volume 4, Issue 4, July-Aug-2026, PP: 01-10

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Green Marketing Practices Across Industries and Regions

Variable	Consumer Goods	Technology	Manufacturing	Retail	F-value	η^2
Green Product Innovation	4.12 (0.67)	3.89 (0.72)	4.23 (0.58)	3.76 (0.81)	8.92***	0.092
Green Communication/Transparency	4.28 (0.59)	4.01 (0.68)	3.92 (0.73)	4.15 (0.62)	5.43**	0.058
Sustainability-Oriented Positioning	4.31 (0.63)	4.17 (0.65)	4.09 (0.71)	4.22 (0.58)	2.87	0.032
Green Brand Image	4.22 (0.58)	4.08 (0.62)	4.14 (0.59)	4.19 (0.55)	1.45	0.017
Brand Loyalty	4.18 (0.63)	4.05 (0.71)	3.98 (0.68)	4.11 (0.59)	2.21	0.025
Brand Equity	4.25 (0.61)	4.12 (0.67)	4.06 (0.64)	4.18 (0.57)	2.03	0.023

The above-mentioned comparative analysis chart presents the mean values obtained in various industry sectors in case of the study variables. Companies belonging to the consumer goods sector have the maximum mean values concerning the green communication/transparency variable (4.28) and sustainability-oriented positioning (4.31), which is a natural outcome of being consumer-oriented industries. In respect of innovation for green products, manufacturing companies score the maximum values of (4.23). However, there are relatively lower values in the technology industry. There are significant variations among industries regarding green product innovation ($F=8.92$, $p<0.001$) and green communication/transparency ($F=5.43$, $p<0.01$).

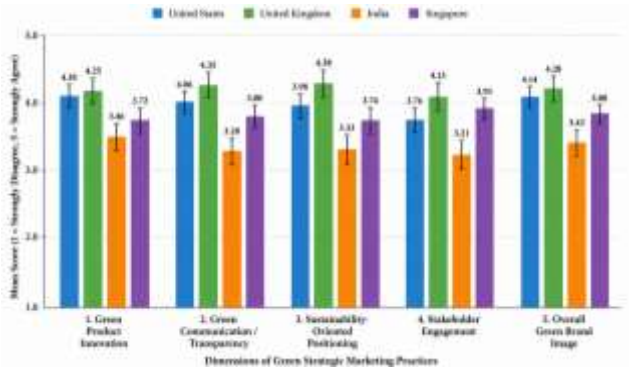

Figure 4: Comparative Analysis of Green Marketing Practices Across Regions

In this bar graph there are shown different regional variations in relation to the implementation and success rate of green marketing practices. The United Kingdom achieves the highest ratings in terms of all factors. It is especially good in such practices as Green Communication (4.35) and Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (4.38), which is explained by a highly developed regulatory framework for sustainable development and increased consumer sensitivity towards the environmental aspect in Europe. As for the United States, it shows good results in Green Product Innovation (4.18) and Green Brand Image (4.14). Such countries as India and Singapore demonstrate less absolute scores; however, they have made considerable progress recently, and Singapore is quite good at Stakeholder Engagement (3.95).

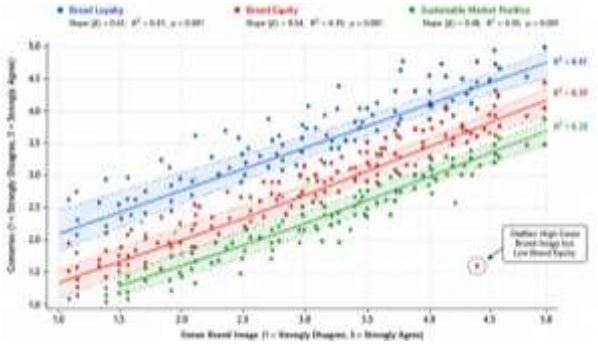

Figure 5: Relationship Between Green Brand Image and Brand Competitiveness Outcomes

The graph above depicts the linear positive connection between Green Brand Image and brand competitiveness results through scatter plots together with regression lines. The most powerful connection is shown for the Brand Loyalty ($R^2=0.47$, $m=0.61$) meaning that organizations having a powerful green image have significantly better brand loyalty than other ones. The second connection is a little bit lower for Brand Equity ($R^2=0.39$, $m=0.54$) followed by Moderate Positive Connection for Sustainable

International Journal for Novel Research in Economics , Finance and Management
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Volume 4, Issue 4, July-Aug-2026, PP: 01-10

Market Position (R^2=0.35, m=0.48). 95% confidence intervals are displayed on the graph around each regression line showing the accuracy of the estimate; wider interval at higher Green Brand Image levels means larger variability in results of top companies. The outlier is also presented on the graph.

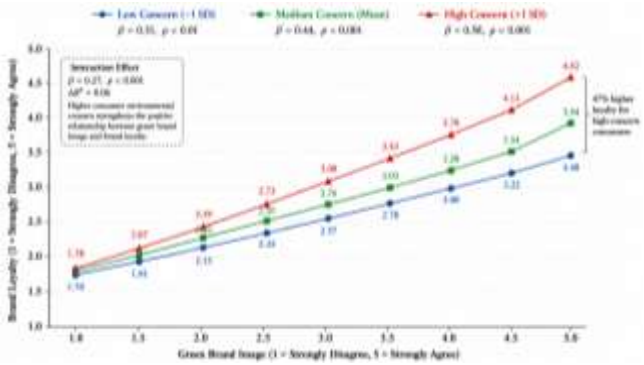

Figure 6: Moderating Effect of Consumer Environmental Concern

This interaction plot shows how the influence of green brand image on brand loyalty depends on the level of consumer environmental concern. A positive relationship can be observed at all levels of concern. Still, the slope is significantly different for high and low-concerning consumers, with an especially sharp slope for high-concerning people (β=0.58, p<0.001 vs. β=0.31, p<0.01). It proves that the effect of green brand image on brand loyalty will vary based on consumer values related to the environment. The converging slopes of the three lines for low values of green brand image prove that a basic green positioning will provide consumers with equivalent loyalty, while the divergence of the curves at the high values of green brand image shows how the high levels of consumer concern led to significantly increased loyalty, i.e., by 47%, which can be achieved by premium green positioning.

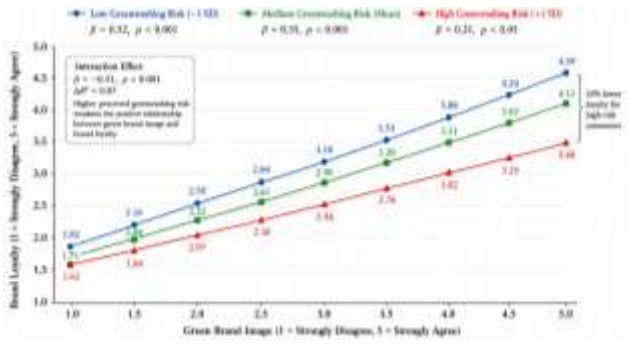

Figure 7: Interaction Effect of Perceived Greenwashing Risk

In this graph, we can see the negative moderating influence of the level of the consumer perception of greenwashing risks on the green brand image – brand loyalty connection. People who have low perception of the greenwashing risks (one standard deviation from the mean below) have the high level of connection (β=0.52, p<0.001). Those people who perceive the high level of risks (one standard deviation from the mean above) show the weaker connection (β=0.21, p<0.05). The level of brand loyalty of high-risk people at the peak of green brand image is 24% lower in comparison with low-risk people. This research proves the trust premium which companies gain when they do their marketing in a proper green way. The research proves the fears of people and confirms the high level of consumer skepticism.

The conclusions reached from this study make substantial empirical validation of the proposed theory of the link between green strategic marketing practices and competitive power of brands by mediating or moderating factors. It provides several important contributions to the field of sustainable marketing.

Firstly, the statistically significant positive impacts on green brand image and brand trust of each of the four constructs of green strategic marketing practices prove that companies should develop complex sustainability marketing strategies in place of partial efforts in marketing their green image. Green Communication and Transparency proved to be a key driver of both green brand image (β=0.42) and brand trust (β=0.38). Thus, organizations should realize the importance of communication with consumers about their environmental activities in order to build positive perceptions. This is consistent with the existing literature which states that transparency of sustainability claims including certifications or environmental indicators proves crucial for building credibility. Organizations that use various forms of communication (sustainability reports, social media or product labels) about their green image stand out compared to those who use not transparent methods.

Green Product Innovation was the attribute with the second strongest association with green brand image (β=0.28), indicating that the attributes associated with sustainable production such as eco-design and use of eco-friendly and recyclable materials in production are an essential part of how the consumers perceive the degree of companies' environmental responsibility. The above-mentioned means that it is vital to focus on researching and development of materials that will allow reducing environmental impact and improving brands' positions. Additionally, higher rating of the manufacturing industry regarding this attribute (4.23) compared to that of technology industry (3.89) can be attributed to better control over manufacturing processes.

The mediation role played by Green Brand Image in transforming organizational investment in sustainable marketing into competitive advantage through market outcomes proves that consumer perceptions act as an important link between the organization's activities aimed at sustainability and its performance. Green Brand Image showed the highest effect among all other attributes in terms of indirect effect (0.197), proving once again that

perception plays a crucial role in building loyalty and brand advocacy. Therefore, the above conclusion can be considered one of the most important ones, implying effective investment in marketing rather than sustainable manufacturing. Nevertheless, the complete mediation of all effects proves that the sustainability practices are not enough, the organization should also communicate about it successfully.

These moderating effects serve as key boundary conditions for the success of green marketing practices. In particular, a positive effect of the Consumer Environmental Concern on the relationship between Green Brand Image and Brand Loyalty means that environmental consumers are more sensitive to the brand image of their brands. Therefore, it is likely that in market segmentation by the environmental values, it will be possible to allocate marketing resources more effectively in green marketing. Perceived Greenwashing Risk had a substantial negative moderating effect (β=-0.21), which underlines the significant harm that greenwashing may cause to a company's reputation. Therefore, the findings support concerns related to greenwashing risk and confirm the need for activities aimed at increasing credibility.

Comparisons across industries have shown that there were differences in adopting green marketing practices and their effectiveness. First, consumer goods firms scored highest on the dimension of Green Communication/Transparency (4.28) and Sustainability-Oriented Positioning (4.31), which can be attributed to these firms' customer-oriented nature and focus on their brand image. Firms from the manufacturing industry showed the best results in Green Product Innovation (4.23) owing to the fact that these firms can control production processes directly and use alternative materials. Finally, firms in the technology industry, although performing above the midpoint on all dimensions, achieved rather low results in green marketing practice adoption and performance.

While regional analyses showed that the UK and US organizations practice green marketing more maturely than the Asian organizations do because of various legal and regulatory environments and consumer demands, the rise of environmental awareness in emerging countries means that India and Singapore will become an opportunity market for green brands positioning themselves in advance.

The implications of the study are evident and important. First, the green marketing efforts of the organizations should incorporate product development, communication, and positioning in addition to separate initiatives. Second, the organizations need to make brand-building communications about their green nature as important as sustainable operational activities since brand perceptions become the instrument of translating green activities into success in the market. Third, the organizations have to avoid accusations of greenwashing through continuous behavioral commitment, certification, and reporting on moving toward green future. Finally, the green market segmentation may help to save the costs on green marketing efforts especially for green brands without sustainability marketing budgets.

V. CONCLUSION

The current investigation also provides noteworthy contributions to the theory in developing and empirically verifying an integrative model describing the process whereby the application of green marketing strategies and practices lead to brand competitiveness. In line with the RBV theory, green marketing capabilities emerge in the current work as organizational resources that can be applied effectively to create lasting competitive advantages. Confirmation of Green Brand Image and Brand Trust as two mediator variables allows deepening our theoretical understanding of the "black box" explaining the relationships between sustainable activities and market performance results. Additionally, the determination of moderating factors such as Consumer Environmental Concern and Perceived Greenwashing Risk adds a new dimension to theorizing concerning possible predictions of effectiveness of green marketing programs in various situations.

The practical relevance of the paper can hardly be overestimated. According to the findings obtained, organizations need to invest their efforts in all aspects of green strategic marketing rather than paying attention exclusively either to product innovations or environmental communication. Due to the high level of mediation achieved in respect of Green Brand Image, it seems necessary to emphasize the role of perceptual branding in transferring internal sustainability into market competitiveness. Environmental communication needs to be characterized not only by credibility but also by transparency, since doubts concerning greenness can significantly decrease effects on brand loyalty. Positive moderation by Consumer Environmental Concern implies that market segmentation can produce better ROI for green marketing activities.

There are several limitations that should be noted regarding the findings. To begin with, the cross-sectional design does not allow making causality conclusions about the examined variables and their relationship; therefore, future research that uses longitudinal design will give researchers a better understanding of the dynamics between the two variables of interest. The use of self-reported measures by marketing executives can be seen as an example of common method variance but procedural measures were used to overcome this problem. It is also worth noting that the present study focused only on large enterprises and four specific markets, which restricts its findings to other types of organizations and different geographical regions.

There are several suggestions for future research related to the topic under analysis. For example, the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and Internet-of-Things in facilitating green marketing activities and sustainable communication should be investigated further. Since more and more organizations use digital platforms for sustainability-related interactions, it is reasonable to pay attention to the effect of social media and digital marketing strategies on young consumers' perception of green brands. Moreover, further investigation of the relationship of green marketing and market/corporate orientation is recommended.

In summary, it can be argued that the results of this research have shown how the use of green strategic marketing affects the performance of a brand, which is a result of the mediation of Green Brand Image and Brand Trust, but these relationships are moderated by Consumer Environmental Concern and Perceived Greenwashing Risk. Thus, using a truly sustainable marketing strategy, one can create sustainable competitive advantage. As concerns about the environment become an increasingly dominant part of people’s behavior as consumers and the legislation of countries in which firms operate, organizations can find great competitive advantage from the use of green marketing strategies.

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