The Impact of Green Marketing Mix Strategies on Customer-Based Brand Equity in Green Hotels: Matale District in Sri Lanka

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INTRODUCTION

The hotel sector in Sri Lanka plays a major role simultaneously with the tourism industry to uplift the Sri Lankan economy last decade even with some unexpected situations. With some unforeseen situations and incidents, Sri Lankan hotel sector has shown strategic approaches with domestic values to maintain a reasonable market. Continuously shifting trend towards sustainability, concern for the environmental problems has been escalated progressively and customers, as well as businesses, are recognizing the seriousness of the environmental degradation and its consequences (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2016). As the hotel industry is a reimbursing industry in Sri Lanka, it is very significant to examine the economic development and sustainable growth of the industrycompared to the agriculture sector in 2019.

Several causes contribute to this green marketing trend, such as global warming, carbon footprint, climate change and increasing worries about air and water pollution, to name a fewand they are serious threats that negatively affect the health and wellbeing of a society in wide-ranging. Also, with the rapid growth of global industrial activities, the environmental degradation has become a by-product of human progress today. Atthis juncture, green marketing practices offer an opportunity for marketers in general to resolve these environmental issues and to fulfil the needs of consumers aiming to build a loyal customer base while creating competitive advantages (Sohail, 2017).Thus, the findings of this study would provide a logical platform forthe marketers in the hotel industry as well to incorporate GMSinto their marketing programs and accordingly attract a loyal customer base.

Research on brand equity in the tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector began to emerge sporadically in the last two decades and the demand for additional research is growing (Boyd, 2007).By embracing this modern customer-based brand equity strategy, this study is intended to provide insights into the importance of hotel brands. Furthermore,Kim, Sun, & Kim (2008)reveal that it is a relatively recent concept in service brand marketing to evaluatebrand equity based on the cognitive characteristics of customers rather than the financial values of companies.

Most researcherssuch as (Kim, Sun, & Kim 2008, Sohail M. S., 2013) identified that green marketing strategies as a competitive strategy to build brand equity in different markets. Consumers around the world are more apprehensive about environmental pollution and the detrimental environmental effects of the use of such goods. According to Prakash (2002), Green marketing also ties closely with issues of industrial ecology and environmental sustainability such as extended producers' liability, life-cycle analysis, material use and resource flows, and eco-efficiency and (Schubert, Kandampully, Solnet, & Kralj, 2010) stated that companies are recognizing the importance of green initiatives in marketing and developing appropriate strategies to create customer preference and competitive advantage. Further,Kim, Sun, & Kim (2008) believe that Brand equity is recently perceived to be one of the top problems in the hotel industry and Hotel customers are puzzled by the plethora of brands available to them, and so a hotel business that handles brand equity more effectively is likely to retain its competitive advantage.

From decades ago, Sri Lanka is still a developing country and service market contribution is remarkable to the economic development. As Plecher, (2020), in 2019, the share of agriculture in Sri Lanka's gross domestic product was 7.42 percent, industry contributed approximately 27.4 percent and the services sector contributed about 58.24 percent. The service sector contributes to the GDP by 56.83 (Central Bank Report 2018). Further in the central bank report of 2018 depicts that, the contribution of travel and tourism for GDP is 12.5 percentage. As stated by Udayanga (2019), Sri Lankan government has used several policies to make a stable economic circumstance in the country. Capital formation, Inflation rate and exchange rate management increase employment opportunities, expansion of business and market structure are highlighted among them. Sri Lanka has taken numerous attempts in being developed but unfortunately, due to several reasons, most of them were failed.

When considering the market performance of the tourism industry compared to previous years, the current industry performance isvery low (Central Bank Report 2018). It is true that there are fair reasons forthose failures, such as 30 years of Civil war, Easter Sunday Attack, Covid19 outbreak and political changes within the country; but as a nation, Sri Lankans should stand together to overcome this situation. As Tourism is one of the main target captures in Sri Lanka, if the hotel industry and the related components of this industry are well maintained, it could bring out this country to a well-developed position. The reason is there are so many tourist destinations with a lot of biodiversity, cultural, religious and various kinds of ethnic values' diversities. In the current scenario, Sri Lanka does not take the advantage of this precious resource. But if it proceeds marketing activities within hotels much more strategically, it could take advantage from even within those crisis situations. So then onwards global reasons may not have a chance to influence the status of the hotel industry.

To make this industry a better one, especially hoteliers in Sri Lanka should take further consideration on the customers and their behaviour. In the current scenario generally, consumers around the world are more apprehensive about environmental degradation, ecological footprint and the negative impact of the use of non-green products and services on the planet. Several reasons contribute to this apprehension, such as global warming, climatic change and growing concern of air, soil and water pollution (Hill, 2010). Green marketing practices allow addressing these environmental concerns and meet the expectations of customers. Furthermore, firms can also create a competitive advantage and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. The study of Eneizan, Wahb, Zainon, & Obaid (2016) reflects that the Green marketing movement, much as green consumption, reflects businesses' responsibility toward society to ensure that they conduct their activities in a way that minimizes the negative effects on the environment.

According to Kim, Sun, & Kim (2008),brand equity is recently perceived to be one of the top problems in the hotel industry and Hotel customers are puzzled by the plethora of brands available to them, and so a hotel business that handles brand equity more effectively is likely to retain its competitive advantage. Most researchers identified that green marketing strategies as a competitive strategy to build brand equity in different markets. Therefore, researching about Green marketing Strategies follow by the hotel industry and considering the Customer Brand Equity would be equally important to fill the gap of this research area.

Scholars such as (Goh, Goh, Ariffin, & Salamzadeh, 2019) have done a study regarding How Green Marketing Mix Strategies Influence on Firm's Performance in Malaysian perspective. (Perera & Pushpanathan, 2015)have done a study on how green marketing strategies affecton customer satisfaction. Apart from that, (Mahmoud, 2018) has done a study on the Impact of green marketing mix on purchase intention. As well as (Sohail M. S., 2013) has researchedGreen marketing strategies: how do they influence consumer-based brand equity? These literature convey that literature is very limited in this research area in Sri Lankan Context.

Therefore, the authors decided to research about Green marketing Strategies follow by the green hotel industry and considering Customer Brand Equity would be equally important to fill the gap of this research area.

Dogreen marketing strategies make an impact on customer-based brand equity of the Green Hotels in Sri Lanka?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer-Based Brand Equity

Most studies have emphasized the significance of understanding brand equity from the customer's point of view. Positive CBBE can lead to greater revenue, lower costs, higher profits and the ability to charge higher prices (Yoganathan, Jebarajakirthy, & Thaichon, 2015). However, the studies of Xu & Chan (2010) and Sohail (2017) identifythere are three principle perspectives on Brand equity; they are Brand Loyalty, Perceived Brand Quality, Brand Trust.

Brand Loyalty: "Brand loyalty is the attachment that a customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991).Kayaman & Arasli (2007), use Brand Loyalty as one of the dimensions for CBBE. Loyalty leads to repeated purchases (Sohail M. S., 2013). Further, Xu & Chan (2010)has mentioned that brand loyalty as one of the dimensions to measure CBBE.

Perceived Brand Quality (PBQ): As (Aaker, 1996), Perceived brand quality is characterized as the opinion of the consumer on the overall excellence or superiority of a product compared to the alternative brand. Since PBQ has an impact on perceived hazards, there is a Strategic effect on the quality of brands and (Kim, Sun, & Kim, 2008) Suggest Product quality is comprised of seven dimensions (performance, features, conformance with specifications, reliability, durability, serviceability, and fit and finish), whereas service quality dimensions include tangibles, reliability, competence, responsiveness, and empathy.

Brand Trust: "The brand trust is a psychological variable mirroring a set of accumulated presumptions involved in the reliability, integrity, and intention that a customer attributes to the brand. In fact, trust is measured by the ability ofthe brand to deliver its promises. Trust can enhance or destroy a relationship between brand and customers" (Keller, 2001).

Green Marketing Mix

Green Product: In the past decade, words like green products, sustainable, environmentally friendly, pro-environmental, eco-friendly and ecological have often been used interchangeably by marketers to advise and tempt the consumers as a piece of Green Marketing (Gosavi, 2013). Environmentally friendly" refers to products or services that are not harmful to the outdoor environment. They can facilitate the long term objective of protecting and preserving our natural habitat namely, environmentally friendly products or environmentally awareness products, are referred to as products designed to lessen the consumption of natural resources required and minimize the adverse environmental impacts through the whole life-cycles of these goods (Tseng and Hung, 2013). A green product is defined as "a product that was manufactured using toxic-free ingredients and environmentally-friendly measures, and which is certified as such by an acknowledged organisation" (Kumar and Ghodeswar, 2015).

Product is the centre of the green marketing mix and the most essential part whole green marketing strategy. However, it should be considered that green product is not limited to the last object only but

involves all the elements of the product, such as the materials it used, the production process, the package of the product, etc. (Fan and Zeng, 2011).Green products or environmentally friendly products are products that do not pollute the environment, do not waste resources,and are recyclable or reusable packaging. The green product helps to maintain and improve the natural environment by saving energy or resources and reducing or eliminating the use of toxic substances, pollution and waste. Products with recyclable or (Shabani, Ashoori, Taghinejad, Beyrami, & Fekri, 2013).

Green Price:"Price is a critical and important factor of green marketing mix" (Tiwari, Tripathi, Srivastava, & Yadav, 2011). The price is the cost paid for a product. It is a critical element of the marketing mix. The majority of consumers will only be ready to pay a premium if there is a perception ofadditional product value (Eric, 2007). This value may be enhanced performance, function, design, visual appeal, or taste (Sharma, 2011). Environmental benefits are usually an added plus but will often be the deciding factor between products of equal value and quality (Singh, 2013). Green marketing should get all these facts into consideration though charging a premium price (Bukhari, 2011). According to Hashem and Al-Rifai (2011); the green pricing refers to the price particular in the light of the company's policies with regard to environmental consideration imposed by rules and corporation instructions or its initiatives in this regard.

Most green products are offered at a price higher than similar products. Consumers are willing to pay a higher price for green products only if they can understand its added-value (Shabani, Ashoori, Taghinejad, Beyrami, & Fekri, 2013). Green pricing takes into consideration the people, planet and profit in a method that takes care of the health of employees and communities and ensures efficient productivity.

Green Place: The green place is about managing logistics to cut down on transportation emissions, thereby in effect aiming at reducing the carbon footprint (Shil, 2012),is related to distribution gates use that deal with green products, which are suitable for customers, in terms of facilitating their delivery, and to secure cycling procedures conducting inside environmental conditions and requirements (Hashem and Al-Rifai, 2011).Place represents the location where a product can be purchased. It can mean physical as well as virtual stores. Product distribution should be of satisfactory channels, and clearly and correctly placed at an environmentally safe place where there is no contamination whatever. For green businesses to be established and become competitively priced, companies have to make sure that their distributors are concerned about the environment and establish that they establish a green distribution strategy (Eric, 2007).

The place is not a cost generator factor, it has numerous features that can create revenue and certain outcome. This element of the marketing mix is dealt 'how-to-handle-distance' (Awan, 2011). Logistics is another part of the correlation because it approaches procurement, material handling, distribution, storage, material revival and disposition. The choice of where and when to make a

product obtainable by the organization, will have a significant impact on the customers. Very few customers will go out of their way to buy green products (Sharma, 2011) merely for the sake of it.

Within the study of Tiwari, Tripathi, Srivastava, & Yadav (2011) mentions that Green Place as the choice of where and when to make a product available will have a significant impact on the customers.

Green promotion: Green Promotion refers to providing genuine information about the products in a way that does not harm the materialistic and moral consumers' interests (Hashem & Al-Rifai, 2011). Significant promotion tools green advertising as promotional messages that may appeal to the wants and desires of environmentally concerned consumers (Ankit and Mayur, 2013). The objective of green advertisements is to influence consumers' purchase behaviour by encouraging them to buy products that do not hurt the environment and to direct their interest to the positive consequences of their purchase behaviour, for themselves as well as the environment (Rahbar and Abdul Wahid, 2011). Marketing communication is defined as a cross-functional activity. Engaging in green promotion may impact the likelihood that companies' claims are precisely monitored (Lao, 2014). Green promotion involves configuring the tools of promotion, such as advertising, marketing materials, signage, white papers, websites, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing and on-site promotions, videos and presentations by keeping the triple bottom line in mind (Shil, 2012). Green promotion means transferring actual environmental information to those consumers who are involved in a company's activities. Also, companies' commitment to protect natural resources is for the purpose of attracting the target market (Shirsavar and Fashkhamy, 2013).

Green Marketing Strategy (GMS) Matrix

Ginsberg & Bloom(2004)has introduced fourGMS according to the green Strategy Matrixbased on two factors as in Figure 1. According to them, companiescan consider the likely size of the green market in their industry as well as their ability to differentiate their products on "greenness" from those of competitors before choosing one of the strategies in the matrix. Thus, those strategies will help a company determine how much it should stress greenness as a differentiating attribute in its marketing, not how much it should invest in environmentally friendly business practices. How a company responds to that issue should be guided by a host of other considerations.

Figure 1: Green Marketing Strategy Matrix
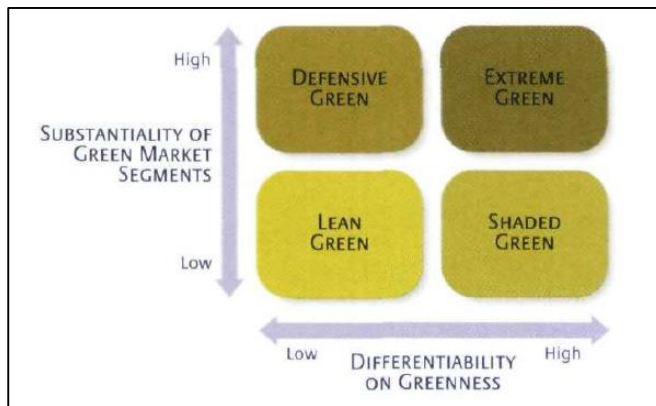
Source: (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004)

Lean Greens: are seeking to be good corporate citizens, and are not focused on publicizing or marketing their green initiatives. Instead, they are involved in lowering costs and improving productivity by pro-environmental practices, thus generating a lower-cost competitive advantage, not a green one (Ginsberg & Bloom 2004). Sitnikov, Vasilescu, Ogarcă, & Tudor (2015) explain Lean green as; uniform green and applied for companies which, while distinguished by socially responsible behaviour, do not make their behaviour aimed at green or ecological marketing public.

Defensive Green: Defensive Greens are mostly used as a precautionary measure (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). Sitnikov, Vasilescu, Ogarcă, & Tudor (2015), propose defensive green strategy often uses green marketing either as a precaution or as a response given to a crisis or to competitors' actions. Companies implementing this strategy try to strengthen their image and to reduce, or even eliminate, the negative effects of their activities.

Shaded Green: Shaded Greens primarily promote the direct, tangible benefits provided to the customer and sell their products through mainstream channels. Environmental benefits are promoted as a secondary factor (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). Shaded greens invest in long-term, system-wide,environmentally friendly processes that require a substantial financial and nonfinancial commitment.

Extreme Green: Ginsberg & Bloom (2004) demonstrate this strategy as Holistic philosophies and values shape extreme Green companies. Environmental issues are fully integrated into the business and product life-cycle process of these firms. Practices involve life-cycle pricing approaches, total-quality environmental management and manufacturing for the environment.

Primary Marketing Mix Tools in Green Strategy

The discrepancies between the four GMS can be seen when considering how the four elements of the marketing mix, product, price, location, and promotion, are used in each approachwhich is shown in the below figure 2.

Figure 2: Primary Marketing Mix tools in Green Strategy

	Product	Price	Place	Promotion
LEAN	X			
DEFENSIVE	X			X
SHADED	X	X		X
EXTREME	X	X	X	X

Source: (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004)

Hypotheses Development

Ginsberg & Bloom (2004) have concluded that, if any adopted all 4 P's of the marketing mix is known as Extreme Green Marketer. In this study the authors have used Brand Loyalty, Perceived Brand Quality and Brand Trust to determine CBBE. Any marketing initiative would be positively connected to brand value if it contributes to a more favourable behavioural reaction to the focal product than to the comparable unbranded product (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

Given the value of brand loyalty, initiatives are aimed at building brand loyalty in the marketing mix. As companies pursue green marketing strategies, it leads in several ways to build an attitude of brand loyalty, namely designing green goods to the preferences and needs of green consumers; justifying the benefits of green products with price premiums; communicating the benefits of green products through green promotional activities; distributing through channels where environmental responsibilities are considered essential (Davari&Strutton, 2014).

The actual product quality can vary from the perceived quality since this is the subjective measurement of consumer view (Erenkol&Duygun, 2010). If customers consider a brand to be of good quality, they are more likely to buy, pay a higher price and prefer the brand over rival brands (Lee, Kumar, & Kim, 2010). Companies using green marketing strategies may have better quality green goods and justify this at higher prices. PBQ is also a brand value factor, which causes customers

to choose a specific brand rather than a rival brand (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). As corporations adopt green marketing strategies, it leads in several ways to build an attitude of brand loyalty, namely designing green goods to the preferences and needs of green consumers; justifying the benefits of green products with price premiums; communicating the benefits of green products through green promotional activities; selling through channels where environmental responsibilities are considered essential (Davari&Strutton, 2014). Green companies are likely to benefit from the government support, which leads to lowering the cost of production and increasing the value of customer offering (Sohail, 2017), though that customer would have a positive perception towards the brand, which would be much helpful to acquire CBBE (Davari&Strutton, 2014).

Based on the foregoing review of literature, the following hypothesis is formed;

H1: There is a significant impact of Green Marketing strategies on the customer-based brand equity of green hotels in Sri Lanka.

Marketers who wish to use the GMS must manufacture goods according to consumer standards. Currently, consumers are most concerned about the need to protect the environment and conserve finite resources to achieve sustainability. It should also increase the company's competitiveness. Products that can be recycled or reused include products manufactured from recycled materials, products that can be recycled or reused, efficient products that save water, energy, or fuel, save money, and minimize the environmental effect, products with environmentally sound packaging, products with green labelling, as long as they provide substantiation, and organic products that provide quality (Gopal, 2013).

Perera & Pushpanathan (2015), environmentally friendly goods can increase and decrease manufacturing costs; environmental-friendly production can increase companies and their suppliers' costs, but this can be offset by lower fuel bills through energy-saving initiatives or by an increase in sales due to a favourable picture of the brand. Brands communicate necessary information about the product, thereby creating trust in customers (Chiu, Huang, & Yen, 2010). In the study of(Sohail 2013), it is argued that firms that adopt GMS design and make green products lead to brand trust. Further, he hasmentionedthat, as firms pursue GMS leads to creating attitudinal brand loyalty in several ways, namely designing green products to green consumers' wants and needs. Companies using a green marketing combination may have better quality green goods and justify this at higher prices. PBQ is also a brand value component, leading customers to choose a specific brand rather than another rival brand (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

Given the above evidence from literature, the following hypothesis is therefore proposed.

H2: There is a significant impact of product strategies with green perspective on the customer-based brand equity of green hotels in Sri Lanka.

Consumers use price as a significant extrinsic measure of product quality or benefits. High priced brands are also seen to be of better quality and less vulnerable to competitive price cuts than low priced brands (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000), and it directly affectson Brand Equity. Brand-loyal customers are able to pay the full price for their preferred brand because they are less price-sensitive than non-loyal brand consumers are. Thus, changing the price level on its own does not impact brand loyalty. The price of the green marketing mix is a critical factor. If there is a perception of extra product value, most consumers will only be prepared to pay additional value. Performance, function, design, visual appeal, or taste may be enhanced by this value. Although charging a premium price, green marketing takes all these details into consideration (Tiwari, Tripathi , Srivastava , & Yadav , 2011). As Kotler (2012) stated, Price is the amount of money charged for a product or service; the sum of values that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service. The price of the sense is not only the money redeemable for a product or service, but more broadly again is the sum of all value given to all consumers benefit he received or used of a product or service. Kotler (2012) stated that the prices should be based on perceptions of consumers against value received, not on the cost of the seller and producers.

As (Thaler, 1985) there might non-directional connection between price and brand associations since both low and high prices can be equally strongly connected to the brand in memory for the benefits that each offers to customers. Also, he conveys theidea about a low-priced commodity will give value to the transaction whereas a high-priced commodity will have a high-quality picture or acquisition utility, leading to reduced risk to the customer.

Based onthe foregoing discussion, the following hypothesis is therefore proposed;

H3: There is a significant impact of price strategies with green perspective on the customer-based brand equity of green hotels in Sri Lanka.

The place where the product is available, and the time of its availability are the most crucial factors in the purchase behaviour of the customers. Most of the customersare not ready to goto faraway places or unknown places where the products are available. Their expectation is easy accessibility to the marketplace. Marketers who want to succeed in green marketing strategy should position themselves in the marketplace apart from appealing to them. The location also speaks the image of the company that it wants to project and differentiate it from the competitors (Gopal, 2013).

According to (Smith, 1992)When items are placed in many stores to cover the demand, distribution is intensive. Improve the picture of a product and get substantial. Service companies prefer to sell primarily or moderately rather than intensively. It has also been suggested that certain methods of distribution are suitable for certain types of goods. Consumers will be more pleased, though, if a product is sold in a wider number of shops, so they will be given the product where and when they want it.The rate of delivery is also strongly associated with brand equity. However, intense

distribution does not inherently indicate sales to poor picture shops. Having a product available in more shops affords ease, time savings, speedy service, and service accessibility while increasing customer loyalty. Also, for luxury goods, for which managers typically prefer to use a small number of vendors, this may be true (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000).

Given the above evidence from literature, the H4 is therefore proposed as;

H4: There is a significant impact of place strategies with green perspective on the customer-based brand equity of green hotels in Sri Lanka.

Brand value is weakened by sales campaigns and must be used with great care. Despite short-term financial success, depending on sales promotions, which can be inconsistent with high quality and image, decreases the brand value in the long run. Uniform pricing is more attractive without price promotions because it leads to the continuity between the anticipated and the actual prices and implies a high quality of the commodity. Managers should invest in advertisements to build brand value instead of delivering price promotions (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). It is a promotion thatinforms the customer about the availability of the green product. Users of green marketing strategy adopt a variety of techniques in promoting their products. Such techniques include paid advertising, public relations, sales promotions, direct marketing and on-site promotions. For example, many companies in the financial industry are providing electronic statements by email, e-marketing is rapidly replacing more traditional marketing methods, and printed materials can be produced using recycled materials and efficient processes, such as waterless printing (Gopal, 2013).

Further, brand trust is enhanced through promotingthe green features of the product and utilising green distribution channels (Sohail, 2017).Communicate the benefits of green goods through green advertising activities; distribute through networks where environmental responsibilities are considered important (Davari & Strutton, 2014). Companies could promote ecological values through green promotion, via public relations and other programs for promotion. Companies may also use green distribution networks and, by green location decisions, create value for customers (Sohail, 2017).

Based onthe foregoing discussion, the H5 is therefore proposed as;

H5: There is a significant impact of promotion strategies with green perspective on the customer-based brand equity of green hotels in Sri Lanka.

Figure 3 illustrates the conceptual framework is prepaid to make an insight into the impact of Green Marketing Strategy on CBBE in Green Hotels.
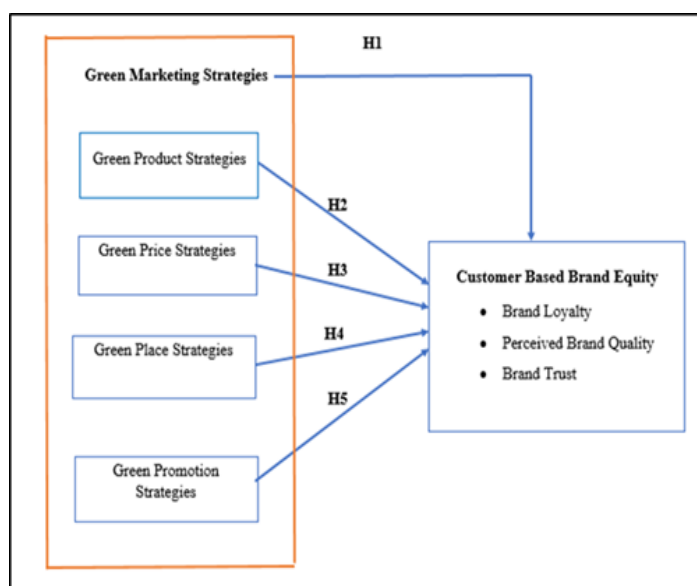
Figure 3: Conceptual framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Concept	Variables	Dimensions	Source
Extreme Green Marketing Strategies	Green Product Strategy	Producing environmentally friendly products.	(Sohail M. S., 2017)
		Green Design and quality of product	
		Pioneer in introducing green products.	
		Green Packaging and labeling decisions	(Davari & Strutton, 2014)
		Environmentally friendly contents, ingredients, and raw materials.	
		Manufacturing process includes 4R	Own developed
	Green Pricing	Brand charges higher prices	(Sohail M. S., 2017)
		Pay more to purchase environmentally friendly products.	

	Strategy	Price comparison between Green services are and non-green alternatives in the market.		In this study, the authors have used a survey research strategy, because it allows to collect quantitative and qualitative data on many types ofbusiness research. This study comes under correlational study which is conducted in a natural environm
		Reasonable prices	Own developed	
		Competitive prices		
		Environment friendly payment methods		
	Green Place Strategy	Availability of green hotel service within other hotels	(Sohail M. S., 2017)	
		Environmentally friendly themselves.		
		Carbon foot print	Own developed	
		Availability of green service	Own developed	
	Green Promotion Strategy	Information about its Green Products are available in firm's advertisements.	(Sohail M. S., 2017)	
		Special promotions and deals for green products.		
		Emphasizes environmental impact of products in marketing campaigns	(Davari & Strutton, 2014)	
		Update firm's website with information related to the environmental protection.		
		Devotes an environment day		
		Environment-friendly promotion materials	Own developed	

ent with minimal interference by the authors with the normal flow of events.Thus, this study comes under a non-contrived setting because there are not any artificial arrangements for gathering data. An individual customer who visited the selected green hotels in the Matale district during the recent pastis the unit of analysis.As per the research objectives, this is a cross-sectional study than a longitudinalone since it was run a one-time investigation.

Population And Sample

Since there is no standard sample frame for the study authors had to have telephone interviews with hoteliers and acquire relevant information about the customers. Based on that information, there had 18,250 average customers each year and the authors had to conclude there might come 200,750 total customers for the green hotels in Matale district. Then the population of the study is all the customers who have visited the green hotels located in Matale district, Sri Lanka.Two-stage sampling technique was adapted. The authors have selected400 customers as the sample. Based on the 20 green hotels in the Matale district, 11 hotels were selected for the study sample focusing the purposive sampling techniques, which is non-probability sampling.

Operationalization for Green Marketing Mix Strategy

Operationalization for Customer Based Brand Equity

Concept	Variables	Dimensions
Customer Based Brand Equity	Brand loyalty	Prefer to buy this brand over every brand
		Do not buy similar Brands made by other firms.
		Customer's first choice
		Customer's brand loyalty.
	Brand quality	High consistent in quality.
		Perform better than other brands.
		Product is high quality.
		Firm's Green products are the best in their class.
	Brand trust	Brand is safe to use.
		Brand is honest.
		Customer trusts brands made by firm.

	Source: (Sohail M. S., 2017)	

RESULTS

This study collected data from male and female green hotel customers and the response rate was 65%. Out of the total respondents, 53.6% are male and 46.6% are female. Out of the total respondents, 44% respondents are below 30 years. 34% of respondents are within the 31- 40 years age category. 17% of respondents are in the 41-50 years age group. Only 3.5% of respondents are within over 50 years and they are only male respondents.

Table 01: Results of Reliability Analysis

variable	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Green Product Strategy	06	0.853
Green Price Strategy	06	0.638
Green Place Strategy	06	0.796
Green Promotion Strategy	06	0.875
Customer-Based Brand Equity	11	0.921

Source: Survey Data (2020)

Cronbach's alpha value should be greater than 0.60 in the exploratory researches which should consider those questions that can be accepted (Taber, 2018). So, all the variables in the survey instruments have been accepted since all variables of this study were relatively higher than the general cut-off 0.6 as in Table 01.

Table 02: Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.865
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	274.508
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Source: Survey Data (2020)

The tolerance values are higher than 0.10 and the VIF values for each relationship are in between 1.955 and 3.583.KMO value is 0.865 which is excellent, which proves the adequacy of the sample is excellent as it is closer to 1.

The sig value for Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is 0.000, which proves thatall the hypotheses in the correlation matrix are identity matrixes and factor analysis may be useful with the available data set.

The ANOVA one-way test was aimed at identifying significant age, educational level, occupation, income level, seasonal and hobbies in customer-based brand equity. The results of the ANOVA test show that the respondents' CBBE does not differ based on their age (F=1.604, p>0.05). A post-hoc test was used to determine the variation across groups.

Table 03: Descriptive Statistical Analysis.

Variable	Mean	Std. De	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Green Product Strategy	4.2698	.57787	-1.053	.263
Green Price Strategy	3.9028	.49034	.189	.263
Green Place Strategy	4.1052	.59041	-1.112	.263
Green Promotion Strategy	4.0079	.67162	-1.143	.263

(Survey data, 2020)

According to the results, it shows that all the GMS are practiced by the sample hotels ata moderate level. As Ginsberg& Bloom (2004) GMS matrix Green Hotels in Matale District mostly follow a Shaded GMS. Thus, the authors have concluded 27% of the green hotels in the sample are following Extreme GMS and 26% of hotels are following Lean GMS, 29% of hotels follow Shaded GMS. Finally, other 18% of hotels follow up the Defensive GMS.

The Extent of Using The Primary Green Marketing Mix Tools in Green Hotels In Matale District

Table 04 presents the summary of the usage of green marketing strategies by all green hotels based on the mean value of the descriptive statistical analysis of the study.

Table 04: Summarization of Usage of Green Marketing Strategy

	Poor	Moderate	High
Green Product Strategy			✓
Green Price Strategy		✓	
Green Place strategy			✓
Green Promotion Strategy			✓

(Source: Survey data, 2020)

As Ginsberg& Bloom(2004) GMS matrix appeared in Figure 02greenhotels in Matale district,are using Green Product strategies, Green Place Strategies, Green Promotion other than Green Pricing Strategy. Therefore,the authors concluded that Green Hotels in Matale District in Sri Lanka are mostly following a Shaded Green marketing strategy.

Ranking of Hotels Based on Their Usage of Green Marketing Strategy Tools

Authors have done this ranking based on the average mean value, which is 3.67. Authors decided if 75% of respondents of a particular hotel have agreed about the usage of relevant GMS, to consider those hotels as green hotels which follow GMS. Respondents agreed that 27% of hotels use all four GMS;therefore, authors concludedthat those hotels which are following Extreme GMSas figure 01 by (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). As per the respondents, 9% of hotels are following a completely Shaded Green Strategy. However, 18% of hotels are much closer to Shaded Green Strategy as they follow three (3)GMS within their premises. In 19% of hotels, they have used Defensive Green Strategy, 27% of hotels are using a Lean Green Strategy. Summarization has presented in table 05.

Table 05: Ranking of Hotels Based on their Usage of Green Marketing Strategy Tools

Hotel	Green Product Strategy	Green Price Strategy	Green Place Strategy	Green Promotion Strategy	Related Green Marketing matrix tool
Hotel 01	✓	●	✓	●	Closer to Defensive Green Strategy
Hotel 02	✓	✓	✓	✓	Extreme Green Strategy
Hotel 03	✓	✓	✓	✓	Extreme Green Strategy
Hotel 04	✓	✓	✓	●	Closer to Shaded Green Strategy
Hotel 05	✓	✓	✓	✓	Extreme Green Strategy
Hotel 06	✓	✓	●	✓	Shaded Green Strategy
Hotel 07	✓	✓	✓	●	Closer to Shaded Green Strategy
Hotel 08	✓	●	●	●	Lean Green Strategy
Hotel 09	✓	●	●	●	Lean Green Strategy
Hotel 10	✓	●	●	●	Lean Green Strategy
Hotel 11	✓	●	●	✓	Defensive Green Strategy

Source Survey data (2020)

✓	Using of the Green Strategy(Above the men value of 3.67)
●	Not using of the Green Strategy(Below the men value of 3.67)

Discussions

The correlation analysis concluded that there isa positive relationship between GMS and CBBE. Since the β value is 0.955, it shows that GMS have a strong positive impact on CBBE and 0.566 of Adj R square emphasize that 56% of variations of CBBE is explained by GMS. According to the results,

there is no significant impact of green product strategies on CBBE, while there is a significant impact of green price strategy on CBBE in these green hotels. As the β value is 0.303, the green place Strategy shows a moderately positive impact on CBBE in the green hotels in Matale district.

LIMITATIONS, FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

While this study reveals interesting results, a few inherent limitations need to be mentioned. First, future studies should consider more variables as well as the extended Marketing mix (7Ps) elements to further explore the factors influencing brand equity. Second, this study selected only three dimensions of CBBE. It will be interesting to see the effects of CBBE onscholars and marketers, with a comprehensive study of other dimensions of CBBE. Third, respondents were drawn from a section of the consumers in Sri Lanka, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Further studies in other locations are required. To finally conclude, this study reports the initial findings in areas of growing importance to marketers: increasing global coverage on ecological concerns, emphasis on greener and cleaner alternatives and innovations in marketing, and calls for more research on environmentally conscious marketing against the backdrop of growing competitiveness.

Further, there is no significant impact of green promotion strategies on CBBE in green hotels in this district but the β value is 0.081, whichshows that green promotion strategies have a weak positive impact on CBBE in green hotels in Matale district.

Therefore, it can be recommended to enhance more GMS practices at green hotels in Matale District since GMS could explain CBBE by 56.6 percent. To achieve CBBE, green hotels management might obtain Brand Loyalty, PBQ and Brand Trust. Also, if some green hotel needs to gain their PBQ, the management should concern; maintain their quality of products and services continuously and consistently as there is a huge competition among the hotels in Matale district, existing Green hotels should thrive their quality over their competitors while maintaining the existing quality implement measures to increase their existing quality. Finally, to achieve the PBQ, as most of the customers who visit green hotels prefer to engage in environmental activities which gains much pleasure and relaxation, should be concerned about the class of the products and hotel services.

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