Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior in tourism industry: the mediating roles of green trust, customer-company identification and green corporate image

Idrees Waris, Norazah Mohd Suki, Adeel Ahmed and Waseem Barkat

Abstract

Purpose – *Environmental issues have triggered the need for sustainable behavior around the globe. The tourism industry's rapid growth also contributes to environmental degradation through natural resource depletion and excess water and energy utilization. Based on social identity theory, this study aims to assess the impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customers' citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the study assesses the mediating effects of green trust, customer–company identification and green image.*

Design/methodology/approach – *This study is a quantitative approach, and purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data from the hotels' customers from northern areas of Pakistan. This study used partial least square-structural equation modeling to analyze the data of 426 customers.*

Findings – *The study's findings show that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives significantly impact green customers' citizenship behavior, green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image. However, the relationship between green corporate image and green customers' citizenship behavior was insignificant. Furthermore, the study's results revealed that green trust and customer–company identification partially mediate between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customers' citizenship behavior.*

Practical implications – *The findings suggest that hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives improve green customer citizenship behavior, green trust and enhance customer–company identification. Therefore, hotel industry managers should consider reinforcing existing environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and make further efforts to highlight the importance of such initiatives for environmental sustainability, which ultimately affects customers' green customer citizenship behavior.*

Originality/value – *This research developed a novel framework to understand green customers' citizenship behavior in the tourism industry. It extended the literature on environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customers' citizenship behavior. In addition, the research adds value by confirming the significant direct and mediating role of customer–company identification in tourism industry context.*

Keywords *Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives, Green trust, Customer company identification, Green corporate image, Green citizenship behavior*

Paper type *Research paper*

Introduction

The hospitality industry is experiencing a surge in popularity, with more and more tourists venturing into far-flung destinations (Hao and Chon, 2022). The global hospitality industry has experienced substantial growth, establishing itself as one of the fastest-growing

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industries, playing a crucial role in providing services and amenities to meet the customers' needs (Martínez and Del Bosque, 2013). Due to the growing demand for tourist places, the hospitality industry is perceived as a potential contributor to the country's economic growth (Li *et al.*, 2022), job opportunities, improving infrastructure and employees' job security (Lam *et al.*, 2022). Recently, hotels worldwide have incorporated various eco-friendly practices into their daily operations, benefiting the hospitality industry (Wang *et al.*, 2023; Abdou *et al.*, 2022). For example, hotels have adopted various environmentally friendly initiatives, including reducing waste, conserving energy and water (Sun *et al.*, 2022; Khatter *et al.*, 2019), and enhancing hotels' efficiency (Kularatne *et al.*, 2019). Hotels' environmental initiatives have changed customers' preferences toward environmentally-friendly hotels (González-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020). Yadav *et al.* (2019) posit that environmental initiatives draw the attention of travelers increasingly inclined to visit green hotels.

Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives refer to organizational efforts that prioritize environmental responsibility beyond what is required by regulations and acknowledge accountability for any negative impacts their operations may have on the surrounding environment (Pan *et al.*, 2022; Vu *et al.*, 2022). In the tourism industry, environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives can include reducing waste, conserving water, reducing energy consumption and implementing eco-friendly practices (Khatter *et al.*, 2019). Green customer citizenship behavior in the hotel industry can include recycling, choosing environmentally friendly products and supporting environmentally responsible hotels (Abdou *et al.*, 2022; Pham *et al.*, 2019). Hotels that engage in environmental CSR and promote green customer citizenship behavior can benefit in several ways. For example, they can reduce operating costs by conserving resources, attract environmentally conscious customers willing to pay a premium for sustainable practices (Han *et al.*, 2011), and enhance their reputation as socially responsible businesses (Waris *et al.*, 2022).

Extant literature mainly concentrated on how environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives affect business sustainability (Li *et al.*, 2023), firm performance (Makhdoom *et al.*, 2023), technology innovation (Wu and Yu, 2023) and customer loyalty (Martínez and Del Bosque, 2013). However, the influence of environmental corporate social responsibility on green customers' citizenship behavior is still vague, especially in the tourism industry. Green customer citizenship behavior is essential from the perspective of tourism industry because it is closely linked to environmental issues (Kalyar *et al.*, 2021). In addition, past studies have reported that customers green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image are more prone to green citizenship behavior (Aljarah, 2022; Fatma *et al.*, 2022; Aljarah and Alrawashdeh, 2021). Researchers posited that an organization's success greatly depends on maintaining a positive and environmentally-friendly corporate image, as it offers a distinct edge over competitors and promotes business growth (Yadav *et al.*, 2016). A green corporate image enhances sales and attracts new investors and employees and fosters customers' citizenship behavior (Tuan, 2018; Branco and Rodrigues, 2006). In recent years, researchers have emphasized the nexus between customer–company identification and citizenship behavior (Fatma *et al.*, 2022; Hur *et al.*, 2020) and highlighted the significance of customers' strong sense of connection and closeness to a particular company (Glaveli, 2020). Customer–company identification is achieved through the subjective comparison of the consumer's own identity with the organizational entity (Hur *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, exploring how green citizenship behavior is transformed toward a hotel that implements environmental initiatives is essential (Youn and Kim, 2022; Khatter *et al.*, 2019). Through identification with hotels' environmental initiatives, customers can fulfill their self-definitional needs with environmentally responsible hotels.

Thus, the current study explores the relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility and green customer citizenship behavior. It will also evaluate the mediating roles of green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image. The current study has three main contributions to the literature on green hotels. First, this study fills the gap by exploring the impact of hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green

customer citizenship behavior. Previous studies mainly focused on customers' intention to visit green hotels (Wang *et al.*, 2023; Raza and Farrukh, 2023; Pan *et al.*, 2022) but have overlooked the significant impact of hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer citizenship behavior. Second, the study highlights the importance of incorporating environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives to customer–company identification, build green trust and improve green corporate image. Third, the study will assess the mediating impact of green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. The current research will provide an understanding the role of the environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and help the management of hotels to formulate strategies that strengthen customer–company identification, enhance green trust and green corporate image and improve green customer citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the study's findings suggest useful managerial implications that attract environmentally conscious customers visiting hotels, promoting green customer citizenship behavior to improve hotel performances.

Literature review

Theoretical foundation

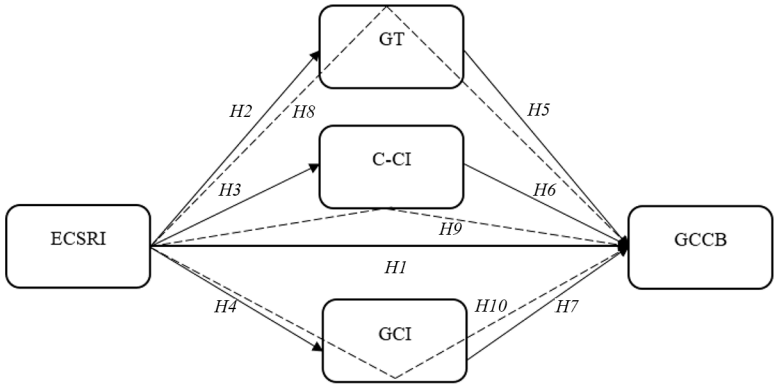
The current study conceptual framework is developed on the theoretical underpinning of social identity theory (SIT), which explains the influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer citizenship behavior, with the mediating role of green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image. SIT is a psychological theory that explains how individuals' self-concept is based on their membership in various social groups and the resulting social identities (Tajfel, 1978). This theory posits that individuals derive social identities from their group memberships, which shape their attitudes and behaviors toward members of their own and other groups (Ahmad *et al.*, 2022; Ma *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, SIT argues that an organization can influence individuals' behavior by reshaping their self-concept about the organization (Berezan *et al.*, 2014). Previous researchers have extensively used SIT to understand how consumers are encouraged to cultivate their sense of identity and affiliation with an organization engaged in environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives (González-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2020; García de Leaniz and Rodríguez Del Bosque Rodríguez, 2015). Fatma *et al.* (2022) used SIT and explored the influence of organization CSR on customer–company identification and citizenship behavior. Based on the SIT principle, this study contends that customers tend to identify themselves with a hotel that demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental responsibility. When customers' self-identity aligns with the hotels' environmental responsibility initiatives, it fosters a stronger connection that encourages them to view a hotel positively and actively participate in green initiatives (Abdou *et al.*, 2022; Font and Lynes, 2018; Ahearne *et al.*, 2005). SIT is relevant in green hotels because when customers observe a hotel engaging in environmentally responsible initiatives, it builds trust and enhances its green image by demonstrating its commitment to environmental concerns. Customers who trust the environmental initiatives of green hotels start identifying themselves with the hotel as members and recommend it to others (Wang *et al.*, 2018). Customer identification with green hotels fosters a psychological relationship, leading to green customer citizenship behavior (Shanti and Joshi, 2022; Tuan, 2018). The conceptual framework of the current study is shown in Figure 1.

Hypotheses development

Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives

Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives are based on environmental management principles and corporate social responsibility (Suska, 2021). Mazurkiewicz (2004) defined environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives as corporate environmental responsibility. Environmentally responsible organizations comply with environmental regulations and take measures to be responsible for any negative impacts caused by their operations. Environmental

Figure 1 Conceptual framework



Notes: ECSRI = environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives; GT= green trust; C-CI = customer–company identification; GCI = green corporate image; GCCB = green customer citizenship behavior. Direct effect; mediating effect = – –

Source: Authors' own creation

corporate social responsibility initiatives encompass eco-labeling, environmental initiative campaigns to build a company's positive image and fostering customers' citizenship behavior (Alam and Islam, 2021; Cheema *et al.*, 2020). The study conducted by Fatma and Khan (2023) found that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives have a positive influence on customers' citizenship behavior. Researchers have posited that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives positively influence customers' citizenship behavior (Abdou *et al.*, 2021; Yousaf *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, Fatma *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that CSR initiatives positively influence citizenship behavior. Furthermore, Deng and Yang (2022) found that an organization's environmental attributes positively influence green trust and customer citizenship behavior. Martínez and Del Bosque (2013) posit that hotel CSR initiatives positively influence customer company identification. Ali *et al.* (2023) argued that environmental corporate social responsibility is vital in shaping customers' perception of green corporate image. Past researchers also confirm that environmental corporate social responsibility positively contributes to a green corporate image (Alam and Islam, 2021). Based on past studies, it can be inferred that hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives will positively influence green customer citizenship behavior, green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image. Hence, we propose that:

H1. Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives will positively influence on green customer citizenship behavior.

H2. Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives will positively influence on green trust.

H3. Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives will positively influence on customer–company identification.

H4. Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives will positively influence on green corporate image.

Green trust

Green trust extends the concept of trust into an environmentally sustainable context, encompassing a customer's reliance on a particular product or brand due to the company's

dedication to environmental sustainability (Chuah *et al.*, 2020; Hameed *et al.*, 2019). According to Ahmad *et al.* (2022), green trust refers to people's belief and confidence in environmentally responsible actions by organizations. Organizations that prioritize environmentally friendly initiatives can instill greater trust and confidence among their customers (Lee and Chen, 2019). Deng and Yang (2022) explored the positive connection between green trust and green customers' citizenship behavior. The authors demonstrated that customers respond with positive behavioral support for the company's environmentally friendly initiatives. Based on these findings, we infer that customers' green trust in hotels' environmentally friendly initiatives will drive green customer citizenship behavior. Hence, we propose that:

H5. Green trust will positively influence green customer citizenship behavior.

Customer company identification

The concept of customer–company was first proposed by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) to understand customers' relationship with the company. Customers may possess a self-defined requirement, which the company can either fully or partially meet, allowing customers to establish a connection with the company (Hur and Kim, 2020). Building a strong customer and company bond is essential for effective relationship marketing strategies (Berry, 1995). Yi *et al.* (2013) stated that customers display citizenship behavior due to their connection to the company. This connection can be observed by assisting fellow customers, endorsing the company's services to others, providing feedback and sharing information. Researchers have confirmed the positive relationship between customer–company identification and customers' citizenship behavior (Fatma *et al.*, 2022). Based on prior empirical evidence, we assume that customer–company identification will positively influence green customer citizenship behavior. Hence, we propose that:

H6. Customer–company identification will positively influence green customer citizenship behavior.

Green corporate image

Green corporate image refers to collecting audience perceptions of an organization's commitment to environmental responsibility (Saran and Shokouhyar, 2023). Customers' growing concern for environmental issues has pressured businesses to develop a green corporate image (Alam and Islam, 2021). As a result, businesses have started several environmental initiatives to build a green corporate image (Luo and Qu, 2023). Kim *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that CSR activities in the tourism industry substantially impact customers' citizenship behavior. The study conducted by Deng and Yang (2022) extended the concept of customer citizenship behavior to green customer citizenship behavior and found a positive impact on green corporate image and green customer citizenship behavior. Based on previous studies, we assume that the green corporate image of hotels positively influences green citizenship behavior. Hence, we propose that:

H7. Green corporate image will positively influence on green customer citizenship behavior.

Mediating effects of green trust, customer company identification and green corporate image

The current study argues that green trust plays a pivotal role in green customer citizenship behavior in the tourism industry. Given the dominance of the environmental sustainability concept within the tourism industry (Pereira-Moliner *et al.*, 2015), environmental initiatives taken by hotels increase customers' green trust (Yadav *et al.*, 2019). Past studies have confirmed that hotels' green initiatives increase green trust, subsequently enhancing the likelihood of customers' citizenship behavior (Hameed *et al.*, 2022). Amin and Tarun (2020) found that green trust is a significant mediator for purchasing green products. Furthermore,

Sultana *et al.* (2022) conducted a study on customers' intention to visit green hotels and confirmed the mediating influence of green trust. Hence, we propose that:

H8. Green trust will mediate between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior.

Peloza and Shang (2011) conducted a literature review on how consumers respond to CSR initiatives. They argued that the connection between CSR and consumer behavior is not always direct, suggesting that certain variables might mediate this relationship. For example, Deng and Xu (2017) confirmed the significant mediating effect of consumer–company identification between CSR initiatives and customer recommendation and purchase intention. According to SIT, CSR initiatives benefit companies by enhancing consumers' identification with the company, leading to extra-role behaviors such as positive evaluations and recommendations (Fatma *et al.*, 2019). The current study assumes that customer–company identification mediates the relationships between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. Hence, we propose that:

H9. Customer–company identification will mediate between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior.

Wang (2020) asserted that corporate image significantly mediates CSR and customer behavior. Fosu *et al.* (2023) conducted a study on the influence of CSR on social performance and supported the mediating role of corporate image. Extending the concept of corporate image to green corporate image, Luo and Qu (2023) confirmed the mediating impact of green corporate image between environmental corporate social responsibility and environmental performance. Based on these findings, this study assumes that green corporate image significantly mediates the relationship between environmental corporate social reasonability and green citizenship behavior. Hence, we propose that:

H10. Green corporate image will mediate between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior.

Methodology

Research instrument

The quantitative survey method was used to examine the hypotheses proposed in the conceptual framework. Following the recommendation of Hulland *et al.* (2018), a pretest survey was conducted. The questionnaire items were evaluated by five academic experts from management and marketing. Furthermore, five potential participants were requested to complete the questionnaire to gather suggestions and feedback regarding the survey's content and layout. After incorporating revisions, the survey was disseminated to 45 participants for pilot testing. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section outlined the study's purpose and requested consent from the participants. The second section was related to demographic information. The third section includes items measuring the scale. The variables sources are shown in Table 1. The measurement scale for environmental corporate social

Table 1 Measuring items sources

Variables	*No. of items*	*Sources*
ECSRI	5	Li *et al.* (2023), Vu *et al.* (2022)
Green trust	5	Chen and Chang (2012)
Customer company identification	4	Martínez and Del Bosque (2013)
Green corporate image	5	Deng and Yang (2022)
Green customer citizenship behavior	6	Deng and Yang (2022)

Source: Authors' own creation

responsibility initiatives included five items adapted from the studies of Li *et al.* (2023) and Vu *et al.* (2022). The measurement scale for green trust included five items adapted from Chen and Chang's (2012) study. The measurement scale for customer–company identification included four items adapted from Martínez and Del Bosque's (2013) study. The measurement scale for green corporate image and customer citizenship behavior included five and six items from Deng and Yang's (2022) study, respectively. The five-point Likert scale ranged from "1", indicating strongly disagree, to "5", indicating strongly agree, used to measure the questionnaire's items.

Data collection and sampling

To reach a large number of customers and facilitate an effortless survey process, the study collected data from the main cities (Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore) and tourist places in Pakistan. Tourist places include the areas of Swat, Kalaam, Hunza, Chitral Valley and Naran-Kaghan Valley. The current study's population was the tourists who have visited at least once in these areas. The data collection took around one month, from July 21 to August 16, 2022. Benter and Chou's (1987) guidelines were followed to determine sample size. Researchers recommend 5–10 responses for an item. The total number of items was 25; therefore, the sample size 250 was considered sufficient for this study. However, 558 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to achieve better reliability. Researchers purposively selected respondents above 18 years and sought informed consent to participate in the survey. Researchers first briefed the respondents about the purpose of the research and informed them that collected data would only be used for academic purposes. After discarding incomplete and unusable questionnaires, 426 were used for further analysis, with a response rate of 76.34%. Table 2 shows the demographic details of the respondents. The demographic information of the respondents is shown in Table 2.

Statistical technique

The partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) approach has been used for hypothesis testing due to the relatively small sample size (Hair *et al.*, 2016). It optimizes explaining variance in endogenous variables by exogenous variables rather than replicating the empirical covariance matrix (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, this technique is widely adopted across various disciplines (Hair *et al.*, 2022) because it can handle complex models (Cheah *et al.*, 2021).

Results

Common method bias

Common method bias (CMB) ensures that the collected data is free from bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). CMB occurs if a single variable explains more than 50% of the variance in data, and it will result in underestimation and overestimation of the study's findings. To identify the CMB, we have used a single-factor test. The results of CMB show that a single variable explains a 37.44% variance, which is less than 50%, depicting that data is free from bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

Measurement model

First, the study evaluated convergent validity by assessing factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), aiming for values greater than 0.70 and 0.50, respectively (Hair *et al.*, 2022). Furthermore, the data's internal consistency is assessed by evaluating Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability (CR). It is recommended that both CR and CA exceed 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Table 3 presents the findings for CR and CA, indicating that both conform to the recommended threshold value.

Table 2 Respondents' profile

Demographics		*Frequency*	*%*
Gender	(*N* = 426)	462	100
	Male	267	62.67
	Female	159	37.33
Age	(*N* = 426)	462	100
	18–30 years	52	12.20
	30–40 years	203	47.65
	40–50 years	163	38.26
	More than 50 years	8	1.8
Education	(*N* = 426)	462	100
	High school and below	47	11.03
	Bachelor	220	51.64
	Masters	145	34.03
	PhD	14	3.28
Profession	(*N* = 426)	462	100
	Employed	228	53.52
	Own business	163	38.26
	Student	35	8.21
Monthly income	(*N* = 426)	462	100
	0–50,000PKR	90	21.12
	50,001–75,000PKR	74	17.37
	75,001–100,000PKR	63	14.78
	100,001–12,500PKR	78	18.30
	125,001–150,000PKR	55	12.91
	More than 150,000PKR	66	15.49

Note: *N* = Sample size
Source: Authors' own creation

Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is distinct from another (Hair *et al.*, 2016). This study evaluated discriminant validity using three criteria: Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria, heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) and cross-loading values. First, discriminant validity is achieved when the AVE squared values exceed their corresponding correlation values (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Table 4 displays that the AVE square roots are greater than the corresponding correlation values. Second, it was assessed through the HTMT values, which should be at most 0.85 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). Table 5 displays that all constructs HTMT values are below 0.85. Third, it was assessed by cross-loading values, which state that items belonging to each construct should exhibit higher cross-loading values than those of other constructs. Table 6 displays cross-loading values.

Inner model predictive power

An inner model's effectiveness in predicting endogenous latent variables' values based on exogenous latent variables is known as its predictive power. Various measures of goodness-of-fit, such as R^2 and cross-validated redundancy (Q^2), which can be used to evaluate the predictive power of the inner model. R^2 denotes the proportion of the influence of exogenous variables on the endogenous variable. The R^2 values for the endogenous variables customer–company identification, green trust, green corporate image and green customer citizenship behavior are 43.4%, 39.0%, 33.8% and 43.8%, respectively, moderate to high variances. We used the blindfold approach to determine the Q^2 values for the proposed model. The Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model's predictive validity is confirmed. The Q^2 values for

Table 3 Measurement model

Constructs	*Items*	*SFL*	*VIF*	*CA*	*CR*	*AVE*
Customer–company identification	C-CI1	0.812	1.769	0.803	0.872	0.629
	C-CI2	0.775	1.681			
	C-CI3	0.817	1.776			
	C-CI4	0.768	1.578			
Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives	ECSRI1	0.786	1.927	0.868	0.904	0.654
	ECSRI2	0.821	2.124			
	ECSRI3	0.831	2.125			
	ECSRI4	0.832	2.176			
	ECSRI5	0.774	1.785			
Green customer citizenship behavior	GCCB1	0.788	2.056	0.907	0.928	0.682
	GCCB2	0.824	2.287			
	GCCB3	0.850	2.541			
	GCCB4	0.819	2.271			
	GCCB5	0.839	2.479			
	GCCB6	0.833	2.446			
Green corporate image	GCI1	0.730	1.473	0.790	0.856	0.543
	GCI2	0.742	1.585			
	GCI3	0.725	1.414			
	GCI4	0.764	1.627			
	GCI5	0.722	1.540			
Green trust	GT1	0.766	1.597	0.824	0.876	0.586
	GT2	0.763	1.754			
	GT3	0.762	1.708			
	GT4	0.768	1.640			
	GT5	0.767	1.564			

Notes: SFL = standardized factor loading; VIF = variance inflation factor; CA = Cronbach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 4 Discriminant validity analysis

Constructs	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Customer–company identification	0.793				
Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives	0.659	0.809			
Green customer citizenship behavior	0.547	0.616	0.826		
Green corporate image	0.480	0.581	0.360	0.737	
Green trust	0.551	0.625	0.523	0.569	0.765

Notes: The bold diagonal values refer to the square root of the AVE of each construct. All correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$)
Source: Authors' own creation

Table 5 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) results

Constructs	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
Customer-company identification					
Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives	0.787				
Green customer citizenship behavior	0.640	0.693			
Green corporate image	0.599	0.698	0.420		
Green trust	0.677	0.733	0.599	0.706	

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 6 Cross loadings

Items	*C-CI*	*ECSRI*	*GCCB*	*GCI*	*GT*
C-CI1	*0.812*	0.554	0.458	0.369	0.425
C-CI2	*0.775*	0.459	0.410	0.327	0.411
C-CI3	*0.817*	0.563	0.412	0.443	0.481
C-CI4	*0.768*	0.506	0.453	0.380	0.431
ECSRI1	0.566	*0.786*	0.410	0.487	0.479
ECSRI2	0.506	*0.821*	0.484	0.522	0.558
ECSRI3	0.537	*0.831*	0.527	0.459	0.558
ECSRI4	0.522	*0.832*	0.542	0.469	0.491
ECSRI5	0.536	*0.774*	0.525	0.412	0.435
GCCB1	0.429	0.468	*0.788*	0.312	0.410
GCCB2	0.476	0.526	*0.824*	0.320	0.424
GCCB3	0.483	0.520	*0.850*	0.337	0.461
GCCB4	0.425	0.509	*0.819*	0.267	0.425
GCCB5	0.462	0.520	*0.839*	0.269	0.453
GCCB6	0.432	0.505	*0.833*	0.278	0.419
GCI1	0.351	0.458	0.306	*0.730*	0.441
GCI2	0.336	0.396	0.237	*0.742*	0.463
GCI3	0.370	0.454	0.270	*0.725*	0.434
GCI4	0.371	0.431	0.292	*0.764*	0.376
GCI5	0.337	0.391	0.205	*0.722*	0.379
GT1	0.416	0.499	0.415	0.442	*0.766*
GT2	0.437	0.420	0.340	0.409	*0.763*
GT3	0.384	0.460	0.365	0.501	*0.762*
GT4	0.450	0.485	0.386	0.460	*0.768*
GT5	0.424	0.513	0.477	0.373	*0.767*

Source: Authors' own creation

the endogenous constructs customer–company identification, green trust, green corporate image and green customer citizenship behavior are 42.9%, 38.4%, 32.8% and 37.4%, respectively, above zero, indicating highly moderate predictive relevance. The model fitness is also assessed using the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value. The value of SRMR was 0.069, which falls within the recommended threshold of <0.08 (Ramayah *et al.*, 2017).

Structural model

After confirming the validity of the measurement model, the study evaluated the variance inflation factor (VIF) values to assess the presence of multicollinearity. Becker *et al.* (2015) recommended a below cut-off value of 3. Table 4 presents the VIF values of all items, which fell within the range of 1.414–2.541, confirming the absence of multicollinearity. Next, following Hair *et al.* (2016) recommendation, the study conducted 5,000 bootstrapping subsamples. The acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses was

Table 7 Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	*Beta*	t-*value*	p-*value*	*Decision*
H1: ECSR → GCCB	0.398	6.471	0.000	Supported
H2: ECSR → GT	0.625	19.287	0.000	Supported
H3: ECSR → C-CI	0.659	20.412	0.000	Supported
H4: ECSR → GCI	0.581	14.261	0.000	Supported
H5: GT → GCCB	0.210	3.336	0.001	Supported
H6: C-CI → GCCB	0.214	3.248	0.001	Supported
H7: GCI → GCCB	−0.094	1.605	1.108	Not supported

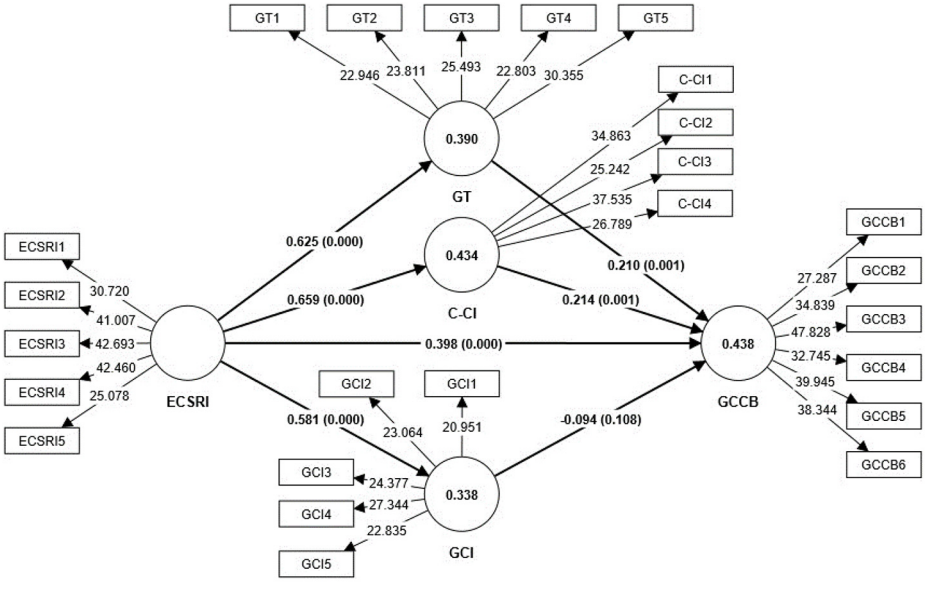
Source: Author's own creation

based on the *p*-value and *t*-value as shown in Table 7. *H1* proposed the positive influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer citizenship behavior is supported ($\beta = 0.398$; $t = 6.471$; $p > 0.05$). *H2* proposed the positive influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green trust was supported ($\beta = 0.625$; $t = 19.287$; $p > 0.05$). *H3* proposed environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives positive influence on customer–company identification was supported ($\beta = 0.659$; $t = 20.412$; $p > 0.05$). *H4* proposed environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives positive influence on green corporate image was supported ($\beta = 0.581$; $t = 14.261$; $p < 0.05$). *H5* proposed positive influence of green trust on green customer citizenship behavior was supported ($\beta = 0.210$; $t = 3.336$; $p < 0.05$). *H6* proposed positive influence of customer–company identification on green customer citizenship behavior was supported ($\beta = 0.214$; $t = 3.248$; $p < 0.05$). *H7* proposed positive influence of green corporate image on green customer citizenship behavior was not supported ($\beta = -0.094$; $t = 1.605$; $p > 0.05$). Figure 2 showing the structural model.

Mediation analysis

To assess the mediating effects of the variables, we have used a method proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008). The bootstrapping method was used, involving 5,000 resamples. The mediating effect was assessed by analyzing *p*-values, confidence intervals and *t*-values. The mediation effect was considered statistically significant when the *t*-value surpassed 1.96, the confidence interval did not include zero and the critical value for a two-tailed test value below 0.05. The mediation analysis results revealed that green trust and customer–company identification are significant mediators between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. However, the results show that the mediating impact of green corporate image is insignificant. Hence, we conclude that *H8* and *H9* are supported, whereas *H10* is not supported. Table 8 shows the results of the mediation analysis.

Figure 2 Structural model



Source: Authors' own creation

Table 8 Mediation results

Hypotheses	*Beta*	p-*values*	t-*values*	*C.I*	*Decision*
H8: ECSR → GT → GCCB	0.131	0.001	3.254	0.054, 0.213	Partial mediation
H9: ECSR → C-CI → GCCB	0.141	0.002	3.133	0.053, 0.232	Partial mediation
H10: ECSR → GCI → GCCB	−0.055	0.118	1.564	−0.124, 0.013	No mediation

Notes: Path coefficients (beta); significant at $p < 0.05$
Source: Authors' own creation

Discussions and conclusion

This study explores the relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. In addition, the study evaluated the mediating roles of green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. The data of 426 customers were collected from the tourists who have visited northern areas of Pakistan. PLS-SEM has been used to analyze the data. Based on the underpinnings of SIT, the study explored the significant influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green trust, customer–company identification and green customer citizenship behavior. The study's findings revealed that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives taken by the hotels operating in the northern areas of Pakistan significantly influence on green customer citizenship behavior.

The study's findings highlight the importance of the hotel's environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives. The results indicate that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives have positive influence on green trust. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Malik *et al.*, 2021; Chuah *et al.*, 2020). The findings also confirmed the significant effect of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on customer–company identification, a relationship previously confirmed by Vu *et al.* (2022) and Fatma *et al.* (2019). Moreover, the results indicate the positive influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green corporate image. This relationship has been confirmed in past studies conducted by Gürlek *et al.* (2017), Alam and Islam (2021) and Ali *et al.* (2023). The findings provide support for the belief that the environmental initiatives implemented by hotels play a significant role in enhancing their green image. The study findings reveal the significant impact of green trust on green customer citizenship behavior, consistent with Deng and Yang's (2022) study. The findings indicate that customers perceive that hotels are actively contributing environmental sustainability through environmental initiatives such as water and energy conservation, waste reduction and recycling, thereby influencing their behavior positively. Furthermore, the results reveal that customer–company identification positively influences green customer citizenship behavior, which is consistent with the Fatma *et al.* (2019) findings. These findings indicate that customers are attached to hotels that implement environmental initiatives. Therefore, they are likely to engage in green citizenship behavior by visiting and recommending hotels. However, the findings suggest that the green corporate image has an insignificant influence on green customer citizenship behavior. This finding is inconsistent with the past studies (Norouzi and Teimourfamian Asl, 2023; Deng and Yang, 2022; Hwang and Lyu, 2020). The insignificant impact of green corporate image on green customer citizenship behavior can be attributed to greenwashing. Greenwashing adversely influences hotels' green practices (Majeed and Kim, 2023; Abeyratne and Arachchi, 2021). Moreover, due to a lack of environmental knowledge, customers cannot understand the green initiatives taken by hotels, thereby diminishing customer citizenship behavior. In addition to the direct effects, the study findings confirmed the mediating effects of green trust and customer–company identification between the environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior relationships. These

results signify that hotels' water and energy conservation, recycling and waste minimization initiatives enhance green trust and customer–company identification, leading to green customer citizenship behavior.

Implications

Theoretical implications

There have been very few studies in the past conducted on how hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives affect tourists' green trust, customer–company identification and the impact of green corporate image on green customer citizenship behavior, especially past studies have been limited to assess the impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer citizenship behavior in the tourism and hospitality industry. This study contributes to SIT by establishing the link between hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior. The study results depict that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives substantially impact green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image toward green customer citizenship behavior. In addition, this study contributes to SIT by confirming the mediating effects of green trust and customer–company identification. By implementing environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives, hotels can establish green trust; as a result, customers exhibit green citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the findings reveal the positive influence of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer–company identification and green corporate image, depicting that the green initiatives by the hotels significantly contribute to building customer–company identification and improving green corporate image. The study further contributes to the literature by confirming the mediating impact of green trust and customer–company identification in the relationships between hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior.

Managerial implications

The findings of the current study have several managerial implications. First, the findings reveal a positive relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and tourists' engagement in green customer citizenship behavior. This shows the importance of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives leading to green customer citizenship behavior. Therefore, hotel industry managers should consider reinforcing existing environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and make further efforts to highlight the importance of such initiatives for the environmental sustainability, which ultimately effects customers' green customer citizenship behavior. Ecologically conscious customers honor the sustainability that benefits society and in engage green customer citizenship behavior for long-term environmental sustainability. To trigger green customer citizenship behavior, hotels can introduce marketing programs that encourage them to share sustainability initiatives taken by the hotels. These efforts help customers to understand hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives in-depth and recognize the sustainable efforts of hotels. Furthermore, the findings indicate the positive impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on customers' trust. This shows that hotel customers believe that hotels have taken environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives for sustainable development. Therefore, hotel managers should increase the environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives that cover the organization's social, ethical and environmental aspects. For example, hotel marketing strategies can depict the efforts of hotels honoring child labor, reducing environmental footprint and participating in community building. When customers trust green initiatives the hotels take, they will respond by representing green customer citizenship behavior. These

efforts will strengthen customers' belief in hotels sustainability initiatives and increase green customer citizenship behavior.

Furthermore, the findings reveal the positive significant impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on customer–company identification and green corporate image. These findings show that the hotels' green initiatives significantly impact customer–company identification relationships and improve green corporate image. Therefore, it is suggested that top management share the sustainability reports of the hotels to customers detailing the environmental achievements, metrics and challenges faced while implementing green initiatives. In addition, hotels can use various marketing channels to encourage customers' participation in sustainability initiatives. In this way, customers start identifying with green hotels and support the green initiatives. However, the result indicates the insignificant impact of green corporate image on green customer citizenship behavior in the tourism industry context. This indicates that a green corporate image does not drive to green customer citizenship behavior. Green corporate image is developed when customers perceive that hotels actually have green identity. To improve hotels' green corporate image, managers should actively communicate environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives to customers via different mediums such as social media, TV advertisements and publicity. This can be done by highlighting hotels' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives efforts through on the spot advertisements in the waiting areas, reception and placing flags in the rooms. Furthermore, hotels can use social media platform such as WeChat, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to engage with customers and enhance their green image. Furthermore, the findings show that environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives have indirect impact (via green trust and customer–company identification) on green customer citizenship behavior. This signifies that along with environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives, green trust and customer–company identification also significantly impact green customer citizenship behavior. It shows that hotels' green practices help to develop green trust and help to develop customer–company identification, making customers more likely to promote green hotels. For example, if a customer believes that hotels have implemented green initiatives such as conserving water and using renewable energy, it increases customer–company identification and builds green trust. Customers start trusting and connecting with green hotels and encourage others to become part of environmental sustainability by visiting and promoting green hotels. Therefore, it is recommended that hotel managers should emphasize building customers' trust and improve customer–company identification for the long-term sustainability of green hotels.

Limitations and future research scope

Although the current study has multiple contributions, it has some limitations that can be addressed in future studies. First, the sample selected for this study was obtained through the purposive sampling, which may not be fully representative. Also, the data was gathered from customers who had visited the northern areas of Pakistan. Therefore, it is suggested to future researchers to gather customers' data by including hotels located in different provinces. The current study is focused only on the hospitality industry; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to other industries. Future research should consider using data samples from various industries to establish the impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on green customer citizenship behavior across industries. Finally, the study used a cross-sectional survey method. It analyzed the relationship between environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives and green customer citizenship behavior via green trust, customer–company identification and green corporate image. Future researchers may conduct a longitudinal study by including additional mediators (e.g. customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and word of mouth) or examining the moderating effect of green corporate image.

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