

p-ISSN : 2708-2474 | e-ISSN : 2708-2482

DOI(Journal): 10.31703/gmsr

DOI(Volume): 10.31703/gmsr/.2024(IX)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX.III)

www.gmsrjournal.com



GMSR

GLOBAL MANAGEMENT SCIENCE REVIEW

HEC-RECOGNIZED CATEGORY-Y

VOL. IX, ISSUE III, SUMMER (SEPTEMBER-2024)

Double-blind Peer-review Research Journal

www.gmsrjournal.com

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Article title

Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility

Global Management Science Review

p-ISSN: 2708-2474 e-ISSN: 2708-2482

DOI(journal): 10.31703/gmsr

Volume: IX (2024)

DOI (volume): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX)

Issue: III Summer (September-2024)

DOI(Issue): 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III)

Home Page

www.gmsrjournal.com

Volume: IX (2024)

<https://www.gmsrjournal.com/Current-issues>

Issue: II Spring (June-2024)

<https://www.gmsrjournal.com/Current-issues/9/3/2024>

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Abstract

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Keywords: Mindful Consumption, Environmental Protection, Mindfulness, Ascription of Responsibility

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Pages: 21-35

DOI: 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03

DOI link: [https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024\(IX-III\).03](https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03)

Article link: <http://www.gmsrjournal.com/article/A-b-c>

Full-text Link: <https://gmsrjournal.com/fulltext/>

Pdf link: <https://www.gmsrjournal.com/jadmin/Author/31rvl0lA2.pdf>

Citing this Article

03	Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility						
	Author	Tayyba Fatima Tahir Mumtaz Awan Omer Farooq Malik		DOI	10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03		
Pages	21-35	Year	2024	Volume	IX	Issue	III
Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Fatima, T., Awan, T. M., & Malik, O. F. (2024). Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> , IX(III), 21-35. https://doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03					
	CHICAGO	Fatima, Tayyba, Tahir Mumtaz Awan, and Omer Farooq Malik. 2024. "Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility " <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> IX (III):21-35. doi: 10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03.					
	HARVARD	FATIMA, T., AWAN, T. M. & MALIK, O. F. 2024. Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> , IX, 21-35.					
	MHRA	Fatima, Tayyba, Tahir Mumtaz Awan, and Omer Farooq Malik. 2024. 'Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility ', <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> , IX: 21-35.					
	MLA	Fatima, Tayyba, Tahir Mumtaz Awan, and Omer Farooq Malik. "Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility " <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> IX.III (2024): 21-35. Print.					
	OXFORD	Fatima, Tayyba, Awan, Tahir Mumtaz, and Malik, Omer Farooq (2024), 'Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility ', <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> , IX (III), 21-35.					
	TURABIAN	Fatima, Tayyba, Tahir Mumtaz Awan, and Omer Farooq Malik. "Consumer Perception of Environmental Protection to Promote Mindful Consumption Behaviour through Mindfulness and Ascription of Responsibility " <i>Global Management Sciences Review</i> IX, no. III (2024): 21-35. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gmsr.2024(IX-III).03 .					



Global Management Sciences Review

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Abstract

The fast fashion business under fire for its detrimental effects on the environment, and the economy. A lot of companies are taking ethical marketing tactics to urge consumers to be more responsible and conscious while making purchases. Study measure the impact of consumer ethical marketing perception environmental protection on mindful consumption through mindfulness and ascription of responsibility. Quantitative cross-sectional survey approach used. Test model used 321 final responses. Variance-based partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to examine the survey data. The outcomes indicated that fostering a mindful consumption behavior marketing tactics can play significant role. Consumer perception of environmental protection strategies can enhance the consumer responsibilities and their mindful mindset. Which ultimately influence their behavior. The research offers insightful information on ethical marketing tactics that local markets may use to promote mindful behavior and to support sustainable policies and practices in the fashion industry.

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Introduction

In the present era, current consumers' lifestyles, consumption patterns, and materialism lead to over-consumption. The way purchasers and consumers are destroying the resources in the environment cannot be continued at the existing pace (Lim, 2017; Peattie & Collins, 2009). Excessive consumption and waste, largely due to advertising and socio-cultural pressures, result in significant issues like clothing

waste and food waste. Fashion consumption for clothing and footwear in Pakistan was almost US\$52.87 in 2023 (Statisita, 2023). Fashion's explosive growth has led to an excess of clothes consumption, in particular among young people, who are more focused on fashion trends than any other demographic (Yee, Hassan, & Ramayah, 2016). The throwaway culture issue has grown and gotten worse as a result of the rapid fashion trend (Bernardes et al.,



2020). The upshot is that the fashion sector contributes more than 20% of the world's wastewater and approximately 10% of its carbon emissions (Ro, 2020). More than three times as much clothing is expected to be sold globally in 2050 as there are today, spurred by market expansions in Asia and Africa, which will have a substantial negative impact on the environment (MacArthur, 2017). Therefore people are being urged to re-evaluate their purchasing patterns since ethical and environmental concerns are widely highlighted and addressed in the media and in social settings. Hirsch (2010) states that behavioral modifications could be a solution to deal with environmental problems. Therefore, international organizations are focusing on the promotion of mindful patterns in consumption (United Nations, 2021). To promote mindful consumption an overall behavioral change is required (Kaur & Luchs, 2021).

In consumer culture socio-economic drivers are considered motivating factors for over-consumption. Over the past century, advertising and socioeconomic pressures have led to overconsumption, waste, and unsustainable resource use, largely encouraged by marketing efforts (Parvatiyar & Sheth 2023). To change this mindless consumption behavior into mindful behavior marketing strategies are required to change. Ethical marketing strategies are suggested techniques to bring change in consumer behavior (Kumar et al., 2023). Brands use different marketing strategies to meet sustainability standards. Consumer perception of environmental protection is one tactic that a brand can use and which can trigger mindfulness and responsibility in the consumer's mind (Kumar et al., 2023). Norm activation theory states that most consumers are likely to engage in helpful behavior when they become aware of the harmful effects of environmental issues and how their own consumption habits contribute to the development of these issues (Slavoljub et al., 2015). Mindful consumption is encouraged by a consumer's participatory feeling of duty toward the environment (Paul et al., 2015). Consumer awareness of self and environment leads to more favorable consumption behavior.

Prior literature largely focuses on the environmental or corporate social responsibility of organizations, to promote green marketing and sustainable consumption (Khan et al., 2021). Consumption literature is restricted to advocating recycling, green consumption, and anti-consumption as a behavioral field and anti-consumerism as a sociopolitical ideology that challenges the culture of perpetual acquisition and consumption of material goods (Cherrier & Lee, 2023; Lee & Heo 2009; Maseeh et al., 2022). In the last ten years, a renewed interest

in research was sparked by Sheth et al. (2011). Other scholars also contribute to the area of mindfulness and its relation with consumption and sustainability discussed (Bahl et al., 2012; Bahl et al., 2016; Gupta & Verma, 2019; Malhotra et al., 2012; Milne et al., 2019; Zahid et al., 2022). Researchers describe how it encourages changes in consumer behavior (Fischer et al., 2017), and pinpoint customer segment perspectives (Milne et al., 2019). Despite this interest, the literature hasn't yet thoroughly explained the necessary strategies to promote mindful consumption and ethical behavior. Mostly scholars have discussed the idea of mindful consumption qualitatively. Gupta et al., (2023) discuss the relation of mindful consumption with religious faith and mindfulness. On the other hand environmental problem are mostly discussed with regard to green consumption (Testa et al., 2020), green products (Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021), pro-environmental behavior (Valkengoed, Abrahamse & Steg, 2022), and sustainability. However, consumer perceptions regarding marketing tactics to promote environmental protection and mindful consumption remain understudied. Therefore, further empirical study is required to investigate mindful consumption from the viewpoint of the consumer. As mindful consumption involves both behavioral and cognitive components, it's critical to comprehend the attitudes and driving forces behind consumer behavior (Ahmed, Ahmed & Buriro, 2023). Thus to bridge this attitude-behaviour gap present research focuses on understanding the impact of consumer perception of environmental protection on mindful consumption. Further, this study will explain the underlying mechanism of consumer perception of environmental protection and mindful consumption through the ascription of responsibility and mindfulness. To achieve the objective of the study a quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted in major cities of Pakistan. This study contributes to the body of consumer literature and explains the mediating role of the ascription of responsibility and mindfulness between the consumer perception of environmental protection and mindful consumption.

Theoretical Underpinning

According to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), "human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocity in which behavior, cognition and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other" (Bandura, 1986). The idea that learning occurs in a social context where a person's surroundings, conduct, and behavior connect in an interactive and interactive

form gave rise to the SCT in 1986. SCT makes distinctions according to social impact and both internal and external social reinforcement. In other words, the internal, environmental, and behavioral aspects are all taken into account by the SCT framework. The present study incorporates the external factors i.e., consumer perception of environmental protection, and internal factors i.e., ascription of responsibility and mindfulness which all can collectively influence mindful consumption. As suggested by the SCT framework all internal external and behavioral factors are interconnected. The present study explains that consumer perception of environmental protection creates a favorable organism in the form of mindfulness and ascription of responsibility which ultimately influences positive consumer behavior in terms of mindful consumption.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Sheth, Sethia, and Srinivas (2011) introduced the concept of "mindful consumption" by focusing on consumers and addressing overconsumption through redirecting consumption patterns. Mindful consumption is defined as "temperance in acquisitive, repetitive, and aspirational consumption at the behavioral level, resulting from a mindset that reflects a sense of caring toward self, community, and nature" (Sheth et al., 2010, p. 30). Bahl et al., (2016) propose that mindful consumption is "an ongoing practice of bringing attention, with acceptance, to inner and outer stimuli and their effects on the consumption process" (p. 8). Attention can be highlighted through external stimuli i.e., advertisement, information, and awareness. Scholars suggest that informed consumers consider the firm practices in terms of production, pre-production, and post-production stages which ultimately affect their purchase decision (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023). Customers are prevented by psychological, political, and practical factors from narrowing the distance between their use and morality (Grappi, Romani & Bagozzi, 2013; Du & Xie, 2020). Marketing is an essential component of this. To make sure that its actions do not worsen the consumption issue, it must first embrace the socially responsible marketing (SRM) philosophy (Laczniak & Schultz, 2020; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2023). Societal marketing is frequently considered under the umbrella of corporate social responsibility (Lee 2021). Marketing establishes customer touch points acts as external stimuli through consumer interfaces and influences consumer choices (Sodhi & Ghosh, 2020). Research suggests that advertising and communication initiatives promoting sufficiency may establish a positive reputation for the company "while

positively positioning the firm in the mind of the consumer" (Ramirez, Tajdini, & David 2017, p. 300). This perception further helps in developing the consumer attitude and behavior. Firms that are actively focusing on environmental protection take strategic measures in terms of production and marketing as well to meet sustainability standards. This action creates a perception in the minds of the customer which ultimately influences their behavior (Grewal, et al., 2017). If consumers perceive a brand/firm is focusing on environmental protection they perceive it as external stimuli that influence their attitudes and actions (Grewal, et al., 2017). The impact of ethical marketing on environmentally conscious behavior, green consumption, and sustainable consumption has also been covered by earlier academics (Haider, Shannon, & Moschis, 2022). Subsequent research indicated that customers consider the environmental implications of a company's operations in addition to economic ones. When consumers perceive that a service provider is focusing on environmental protection they are more likely to engage in mindful consumption (Pralhad & Ramaswamy, 2000; Nadeem et al., 2019).

So keeping that in mind it is hypothesized as follows:

H₁: Consumer perception of environmental protection has a significant positive impact on mindful consumption.

Scholars suggest that mindfulness focuses mostly on how people digest information in order to make better decisions. Mindful consumers also see how their actions affect other people and society (Barber & Deale, 2013). Prior studies have emphasized the significance of environmental concern (Faujii, 2006), which is approximately equivalent to being aware of the implications this awareness would cause individuals to act sensibly (Gärling, Fujii, Gärling, Jakobsson, 2003). As stated by Antil (1984) customers' environmental views are reflected in their care for the environment, which is a driving force behind their purchase decisions. People who care about the environment and are aware of how consumption affects the environment can be quite effective in decreasing their own environmental impact and behaving mindfully (Bord, O'Connor & Fisher, 2000). Consequently, it seems that people who are conscious of the environment frequently find themselves in a dilemma about what to do in order to lessen their harmful impact. Therefore, brands focusing on environmental protection help individuals to reduce this tension and motivate them to think mindfully (Touchette & Nepomuceno, 2020).

Research has indicated that many customers now have positive opinions of moral goods and businesses that follow socially conscious policies (Billock et al., 2004; Dawkins, 2004) and they think they can influence businesses to actions De (Pelsmacker, Driesen & Rayp, 2005; Teufer & Grabner-Kräuter, 2023). Therefore it can be hypothesized as follows:

H₂: Consumer perception of environmental protection has a significant positive impact on mindfulness.

Responsibility is considered an important predictor of behavior (Chao, 2011). Scholars have suggested that an individual's environmental behavior and sense of responsibility are strongly correlated (Stern, et al., 1999) Research shows a strong correlation between pro-environmental behavior and responsibility, with individuals being more motivated to take responsibility when they perceive a brand or company working towards environmental protection (Wu & Yang, 2018; Rodrigues & Domingos, 2008). This study makes the assumption that there is a strong correlation between consumer environmental protection perception and responsibility. People who care more about the environment are often more inclined to respond to environmental protection tactics and show responsibility to safeguard the environment (McDonald et al., 2015). Yue et al., (2020) suggest consumers who pay more attention to environmental issues perceive environmental strategies positively and develop a higher sense of responsibility because they thought that humans were to blame for the rise of environmental problems. According to White and Simpson (2012), Individuals with a strong sense of responsibility prioritize the environment's benefits and believe humans and the environment are interconnected, particularly in maintaining the delicate ecological balance (Shah et al., 2023). The aforementioned reasoning states that greater environmental protection strategies lead to greater responsibility. Therefore it is hypothesized as follows:

H₃: Consumer perception of environmental protection has a significant positive impact ascription of responsibility.

Mindfulness is rooted in Buddhist philosophy, modern mindfulness, which was made popular in the West by medical researcher Jon Kabat-Zinn (1982), is secular in nature. Scholars have mostly focused on this secular form of mindfulness in relation to sustainable consumption (Fischer et al., 2017). Kabat-Zinn (2011) defined mindfulness as "paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." Consumers who practice mindfulness are driven to buy goods that

won't damage the environment, their communities, or themselves (Rosenberg, 2004). Numerous empirical studies have focused on the connections between consumption and mindfulness (Daniel et al., 2024; Fischer et al., 2017). Fischer et al. (2017) further suggest that mindfulness encourages behavior modification by upsetting habits. This is due to the fact that mindfulness increases awareness of both internal and external stimuli, giving consumers the ability to see and alter previously unconscious (and possibly unsustainable) patterns of purchasing. Mindful consumption involves applying mindfulness to the consumption process, increasing awareness of consumer buying, and encouraging temperance (Sheth et al., 2010). Studies in the food sector show positive impacts, such as reduced overeating, impulsive eating, and meal skipping. This investigation focuses on the larger concept of mindful consumption, rather than specific categories (Bahl et al., 2013; Van De Veer et al., 2016). Further, studies show that consumers perceive the company's environmental protection act as positive stimuli which helps them to develop mindfulness (Sheth et al., 2010; Gupta et al., 2023). Positive connections between businesses and consumers are enhanced by mindfulness using environmental protection strategies.

So we posit as follows:

H₄: Mindfulness has a significant positive impact on mindful consumption.

H₅: Mindfulness mediates the relationship between consumer perception of environmental protection and mindful consumption.

The concept of personal responsibility is articulated in a variety of ways. Luchs et al. (2015) highlighted consumer responsibility for sustainable purchases using prosocial and pro-environmental principles. Certain scholars contend that human responsibility encompasses both protecting the environment and creating harm to it (Wells et al., 2011; Wu & Kou, 2016). It is understood as personal responsibility in line with Kaiser and Spencer's (1996) conceptualization of sentiments of responsibility, which is defined as an individual's sense of personal obligation towards the environment (Bamberg & Moser, 2006; Verma et al., 2022). Ascription of responsibility is essential for engaging in moral conduct, such as sustainable or conscious consumption (Schwartz, 1977). Research suggests that marketing tactics in terms of environmental protection influence the consumers' ascription of responsibility which ultimately influences their behavior (Yuan et al., 2017). Responsibility is demonstrated as a predictor of behavior. Consumers

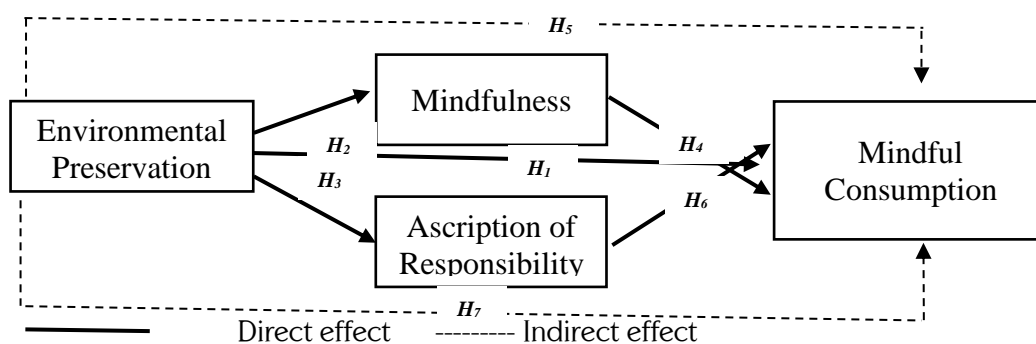
are willing to adopt responsibility for the availability of relevant information. Marketing strategies focusing on environmental protection increase consumer responsibility (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). Consumer sense of responsibility encourages the consumer to be involved in pro-environmental behavior (Wells et al., 2011; Sheth, 2020). Further, studies have also witnessed that companies' marketing strategies focusing on environmental protection increase

consumer responsibility which ultimately influences their behavior mindfully.

H₆: Ascription of responsibility has a significant positive impact on mindful consumption.

H₇: Ascription of Responsibility mediates the relationship between consumer perception of environment protection and mindful consumption.

Figure 1
Model



Methodology

To achieve the objective of the present study a quantitative survey method technique was used. Major cities i.e., Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Quetta, and Peshawar were included in the data collection process. The population of the study includes young consumers i.e., aged < 40 who are spending a lot of their money on apparel products. To collect the data respondents were contacted through an online survey using the purposive sampling technique. To increase the response rate convenient sampling was also applied. A sample size of more than 300 respondents is considered appropriate as Hair et al.,(2011) suggested that an acceptable ratio of ten to one independent variable is enough for hypothesis testing. So, for this study, data was collected from more than 300 respondents following the Hair et al.,(2011) rule to validate the results. The instruments for measuring variables are well-defined and have been used in previous studies. Mindful consumption was modeled as a second-order construct using the total 15-item scale adopted from Gupta and Verma, (2019) study. Environmental protection was measured by 6 6-item scale adopted from (Nadeem et al., 2022) study, ascription of responsibility 3 item scale adopted from (Kim, Che & Jeong, 2022). Finally, mindfulness was measured by 12 items adopted from (Gupta & Verma, 2023). All the items were measured on a five-point

Likert scale. Age and gender were used as control variables in the present study. The response rate was 52%. Initially, 365 responses were received among which 325 were finally used in data analysis after data screening. An online self-completion questionnaire was used to gather data from the same respondents. This process can result in biases which could affect the results. As recommended by earlier studies, Harman's single-factor test was employed to counter this possible issue. (Aguirre-Urreta, & Hu, 2019; Fatima et al., 2023). The main purpose of this test is to ensure that more than one factor is not responsible for the variation. Consequently, the test's cumulative percentage came to 36%, indicating that bias did not pose a significant risk to the present investigation because the result is within the permitted range relative to the threshold level. (i.e., <0.50). Finally, the Structural Equation Modeling technique was employed to test the hypothesized relationship using the Smart PLS4 as suggested by previous scholars (Fatima et al., 2021).

Data Analysis and Results

Data were analyzed in two steps. In the first step model was validated through measurement model analysis and in the second step all hypothesized relationships were measured by applying the bootstrapping technique (Fatima et al., 2021). To test

the second-order variable repeated indicator two-step approach was used as suggested (Sarstedt et al., 2019) and applied in different researches (Fatima et al., 2021).

Evaluation of Measurement Model

Measurement Model is assessed through reliability and validity analysis. Cronbach's alpha is used to measure internal uniformity, with an acceptable range of 0.7. (Sekaran, 2005; Goh, Hall, & Rosenthal, 2016). Validity is measured through convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity measures

the degree to which measures' perfect correlation accurately represents the same construct. Fornell and Larcker's criterion evaluates shared discrepancy among experimental variables, with average variance extracted (AVE) being a widely accepted approach for convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The present study results show that variables are reliable as the value for Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability lies in the acceptable range i.e. >7 as shown in Table Outer Loadings are also given in Table 1 showing that all items are showing the loading >7 which is acceptable.

Table 1

Reliability and Average Variance Extracted

	ACQ	AR	ASP	EP	MC	MF	REP	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
	-							0.917	0.918	0.753
ACQ1	0.841									
ACQ2	0.906									
ACQ3	0.808									
ACQ4	0.910									
ACQ5	0.868									
		-						0.755	0.769	0.671
AR2		0.786								
AR3		0.872								
AR4		0.797								
			-					0.927	0.927	0.774
ASP1			0.834							
ASP2			0.905							
ASP3			0.863							
ASP4			0.906							
ASP5			0.888							
				-				0.836	0.840	0.547
EMEN1				0.695						
EMEN2				0.716						
EMEN3				0.804						
EMEN4				0.778						
EMEN5				0.750						
EMEN6				0.689						
								0.912	0.915	0.511
MF1						0.755				
MF10						0.715				
MF11						0.618				
MF12						0.567				
MF2						0.722				
MF3						0.740				
MF4						0.775				
MF5						0.736				
MF6						0.725				
MF7						0.752				
MF8						0.714				
MF9						0.733				
								0.888	0.896	0.694
REP1							0.733			

	ACQ	AR	ASP	EP	MC	MF	REP	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
REP2							0.855			
REP3							0.906			
REP4							0.808			
REP5							0.853			

EP=Environmental protection, AR=Ascription of Responsibility, MF=Mindfulness, ACQ=Acquisitive, REP=Repetitive, ASP=Aspirational,

In this study, mindful consumption was assessed as a second-order concept. The higher level of this formative concept was validated by weight significance and multicollinearity evaluation (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). The results of the bootstrapping indicate that every weight for the

perceived value component was significant. Weights should have values larger than 0.1, indicating that the dimension is influencing the variable in some way. While the t-value should be greater than 1.96. as shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Weights and Significance

Variables	Weights	Significance
ASP	0.433	0.000
ACQ	0.396	0.000
REP	0.394	0.000

ACQ=Acquisitive, REP=Repetitive, ASP=Aspirational,

Discriminate validity measures to what extent independent variables are different from each other. Fornell & Larcker criteria are typically utilized to show discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2011). According to Hesel, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2015), the Fornell-Larcker criteria is not a good measure for discriminant validity in SmartPLS4. Therefore, in

order to assess discriminant validity using SmartPLS4, a different validity metric—the Heterotrait-Monotrait correlation ratio—was employed. This metric, according to Henseler, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2014), is more accurate. Its value should be less than 0.9 as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio of correlation)

	ACQ	AR	ASP	EP	MC	MF
AR	0.512					
ASP	0.453	0.371				
EP	0.245	0.273	0.177			
MC	0.853	0.552	0.883	0.222		
MF	0.456	0.570	0.308	0.537	0.454	
REP	0.557	0.481	0.632	0.123	0.930	0.356

EP=Environmental protection, AR=Ascription of Responsibility, MF=Mindfulness, ACQ=Acquisitive, REP=Repetitive, ASP=Aspirational,

Evaluation of Structural Model

After the measurement model has been constructed, the structural model is assessed to measure the relationship between the variables. (Hair et al., 2014). The purpose is to provide empirical evidence related to the hypothesized study model (Hair et al., 2014). The structural models are evaluated using beta (β), R2, and t-values, which are obtained by applying a bootstrapping technique with 5,000 resamples (Hair

et al., 2017). A bootstrapping technique with 5000 subsamples was applied to test the hypotheses. The hypothesis results indicate that the value for adjusted R2 is 0.287 which means the overall change in the model is 29% due to all constructs. Further hypotheses and results indicate that environmental protection does not have a significant impact on mindful consumption. The direct impact of environmental protection is insignificant as $t < 1.64$.

Therefore H1 is not accepted. However, further results show that consumer perception of environmental protection is having a significant positive impact on mindfulness and ascription of responsibility. As beta value for mindfulness ($B=0.481$, $t=9.691$, $p=0.000$) suggests that environmental protection will significantly increase consumer mindfulness leading to acceptance of H2. Similarly, environmental protection significantly influences the ascription of responsibility ($B=0.231$, $t=3.463$, $p=0.000$) so H3 is also accepted. Moreover, the Impact of mindfulness on mindful consumption was measured which also showed significant positive results. It indicates that ($B=0.272$, $t=4.266$, $p=0.000$) which means that mindfulness significantly positively influences mindful consumption, so H4 is accepted.

Finally, mediation results show that mindfulness mediates the relationship between environmental protection and mindful consumption ($B=0.131$, $t=3.969$, $p=0.000$) leading to acceptance of H5. The impact of the ascription of responsibility on mindful consumption and the mediating role of the ascription of responsibility was measured. The study results signify the impact of the ascription of responsibility on mindful consumption leading to acceptance of H6 ($B=0.348$, $t=5.841$, $p=0.000$), and the mediating role of the ascription of responsibility between environmental protection and mindful consumption was also established as ($B=0.080$, $t=2.787$, $p=0.000$). So H7 was also accepted. All results are given in Table 2 and Fig 2 also represents the structural model results.

Table 4

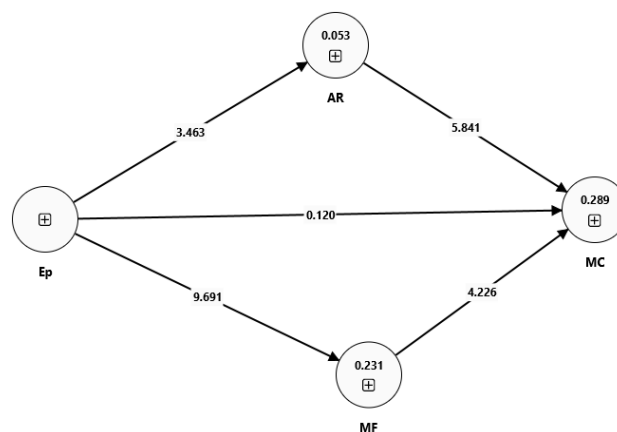
Structural Model Results

Sr. No	Hypotheses	Beta	T-Value	P values	LLCI	ULCI	Results
H ₁	EP -> MC	0.007	0.120	0.452	0.079	0.104	Not-Accepted
H ₂	EP -> MF	0.481	9.691	0.000	0.392	0.554	Accepted
H ₃	EP-> AR	0.231	3.463	0.000	0.116	0.338	Accepted
H ₄	MF -> MC	0.272	4.226	0.000	0.159	0.371	Accepted
H ₅	Ep -> MF -> MC	0.131	3.969	0.000	0.076	0.183	Accepted
H ₆	AR -> MC	0.348	5.841	0.000	0.248	0.443	Accepted
H ₇	Ep -> AR -> MC	0.080	2.787	0.003	0.039	0.113	Accepted

EP=Environmental protection, AR=Ascription of Responsibility, MF=Mindfulness, ACQ=Acquisitive, REP=Repetitive, ASP=Aspirational,

Figure 2

Structural Model Results



Discussion

The study was conducted to determine the impact of consumer perception of environmental protection on mindful consumption. Further, the mediating role of mindfulness and ascription of responsibility was also measured. This study extends the corpus of research in consumer behavior and sustainability literature by

studying mindful consumption behavior to promote sustainability. This study was conducted in major cities of Pakistan who are driver of fashion and apparel over-consumption. This study tries to explore the link between marketing practices in terms of environmental protection influence on consumer behavior through consumer responsibility and mindfulness. Firstly, this study measures the direct

impact of environmental protection on mindful consumption. Which were found to be insignificant. Consumer perception regarding environmental protection does not directly influence behavior. The social cognitive theory suggests that external stimuli first influence the consumer's internal processing. Therefore in line with these findings, the result of this study also indicates that external stimuli do not directly predict behavior instead they influence the consumer's cognitive processing (Bandura, 1986). Secondly, the model of the present study establishes the link of environmental protection with mindfulness and ascription of responsibility. Consumer perception of environmental protection significantly influences mindfulness and responsibility. This means that consumers perceive the external stimuli from a company to protect the environment. It increases the sense of responsibility in consumers regarding the environmental effects of their consumption (McDonald et al., 2015). Consumers in this regard started paying more attention to their consumption patterns and thinking mindfully (Touchette & Nepomuceno, 2020). These results are in line with previous results therefore Hypotheses 2 and 3 were accepted.

Further, the mindful consumer is more aware of their own self, society, and environment. So when mindfulness develops in response to environmental protection stimulus they become more aware of their environmental concerns and their actions regarding the environment. Which ultimately influences their consumption behavior. Present research signifies this relation and verifies that mindfulness significantly influences mindful consumption behavior in terms of temperance in consumption (Sheth et al., 2011). More mindful consumers are more willing to show mindful consumption behavior as prior researchers have also witnessed (Bahl et al., 2013; Van De Veer et al., 2016). When consumers are more aware of internal and external stimuli during consumption situations they avoid the habitual pattern and focus more on transformative behavior (Bahl et al., 2016; Gupta et al., 2024).

Finally, responsibility is an important element of behavioral outcomes. Consumers with a higher sense of responsibility show more favorable behavior i.e., (green consumption, pro-environmental behavior, conscious consumption, and mindful consumption) (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2021). When a company/brand shows a favorable attitude towards the environment it enhances the consumer's sense of responsibility towards the environment regarding their consumption patterns. Consumer perception of

environmental protection enhances their ascription of responsibility to act in a way in their purchasing decision to protect the environment as previous scholars also verified (Celani & Singh, 2011; Öberseder et al., 2013). When consumer feel their responsibility to consume in a way that does not harm the environment they are involved in more positive behavior in response to marketing stimuli (Lee & Lin, 2021; Mahrinasari, 2019).

Conclusion

Over-consumption in the fashion industry is one of the major concerns in consumer culture. To overcome this challenge marketing strategies are considered crucial to behavior modification. In this regard, ethical marketing is the latest concept to promote mindful consumption. In general, a growing concern about mindful consumption is evidenced; therefore this paper studies the drivers and underlying mechanisms of mindful consumption. Results of the study demonstrate that ethical marketing strategies in terms of consumer perception of environmental protection do not directly influence mindful consumption. However, a consumer with a higher sense of environmental protection are more mindful and develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Mindful and responsible consumers foster positive consumption behavior in terms of temperance in consumption. Mindful consumer do not overconsume or go for low consumption instead they are aware of their consumption and think carefully about the impact of their consumption on the environment and take action according to that. This study holds practical and theoretical importance, as discussed further.

Implications

This study exhibits several theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the present study contributes to the body of literature. It adds value to the literature on consumer behavior. Further, it is one of its one-of-a-kind studies that establish the link between consumer perception of environmental protection and mindful consumption. Social Cognitive theory suggests that environment, individual cognition, and behavioral outcomes all are interlinked. This study proves this notion and establishes the link among the three facets of the theory i.e., consumer perception of environmental protection (external stimuli) mindfulness ascription or responsibility (internal stimuli), and mindful consumption (behavioral outcome). Moreover, it explains the underlying mechanism of mindful

consumption. This study proves the mediating role of mindfulness and the ascription of responsibility between consumer perception of environmental protection and mindful consumption.

Practically, this study proves that companies should invest in ethical marketing activities in terms of environmental initiatives. These marketing initiatives enhance the perception of the businesses in the mind of the customer which ultimately boosts their propensity to purchase mindfully. Secondly, this study shows that a brand's environmental protection tactics engage the consumers in making a contribution to environmental preservation. It explains how customers can assist in adopting sustainable behaviors and well-being in addition to supporting environmentally conscious firms. Finally, this study benefits the marketers to understand how to overcome the problem of excessive consumption without sacrificing their sales and also meet the sustainability standards.

Limitations and Future Directions

In spite of having multiple theoretical and practical contributions, this study has some limitations. The study's main focus is on consumption, specifically in the Pakistan fashion industry. However future

research can also consider other developing and developed nations. Furthermore, information was gathered using an online survey and only young consumers were targeted. The data were gathered via Internet means; future researchers should consider including a wider range of nations and demographic groupings. This will increase people's awareness and comprehension of mindful consumerism. Since convenience sampling was used in this study to get data from consumers, other sample techniques might be used in the future to improve the findings.

Future studies may include additional moderating variables i.e., social embeddedness and self-efficacy. Other internal and external factors i.e., norms, values, and cost of product should also be considered in future research. As scholars have suggested that socio-economic factors and consumer culture also play a significant impact in developing consumer behavior (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023). Future research could also consider the role of consumer networks in shaping mindful consumer behavior. As Teufer and Grabner-Kräuter (2023) highlighted in their research consumers do not make decisions solely instead their networks, peer groups, and other network members influence their behavior.

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