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From ESG to Brand Equity: The Mediating Role of Brand Reputation and Brand Attachment

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Abstract

As environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations become increasingly central to brand strategy, understanding how ESG practices influence consumer-based brand equity is both timely and theoretically significant. This conceptual paper explores the psychological mechanisms through which ESG practices affect brand equity, drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework. In this model, ESG dimensions function as external stimuli that shape consumer responses through two key internal mechanisms: brand reputation and brand attachment. Brand reputation reflects consumers' cognitive evaluations of trustworthiness and ethical standing, while brand attachment captures the emotional bonds consumers develop with value-aligned brands. This paper proposes a conceptual framework in which ESG practices positively influences both brand reputation and brand attachment, which subsequently drive brand equity. It also posits a sequential mediating relationship in which brand reputation fosters brand attachment, forming a dual pathway between ESG efforts and brand value. The paper contributes to the literature by integrating ESG, branding, and consumer psychology into a unified model, offering theoretical insights and practical implications for firms seeking to enhance their brand equity through responsible and emotionally resonant sustainability strategies.

Keywords: ESG Practices, Brand Equity, Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory

Introduction

In recent years, the integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices into corporate strategy has shifted from a voluntary initiative to a fundamental expectation. Driven by rising stakeholder awareness, global sustainability commitments, and regulatory pressure, ESG performance has become a key criterion for evaluating not only corporate responsibility but also brand value (Lee & Rhee, 2023; Nugroho et al., 2024). As consumers increasingly align their purchasing decisions with ethical, social, and environmental considerations, firms are recognizing that ESG is not merely a compliance mechanism—it is a strategic branding asset (Koh et al., 2022). This transformation calls for a deeper understanding of how ESG practices shape consumer responses and ultimately influence brand outcomes (Nugroho et al., 2024). However, despite the growing attention to ESG in both academic and managerial discourse, the mechanisms by which ESG impacts consumer-based brand equity remain underexplored, especially from a psychologically grounded perspective.

Existing research has established that ESG practices can enhance firm reputation, stakeholder trust, and customer loyalty (Cao, 2023; Kim et al., 2024; Rastogi et al., 2025). However, most studies remain focused on macro-level outcomes such as financial performance or investor behavior, with limited examination of ESG's influence on individual-level brand responses (Chen et al., 2023; Makridou et al., 2024; Porta, 2024). Moreover, few studies adopt an integrated theoretical approach that explains how ESG operates as a branding stimulus and how consumers respond cognitively and emotionally. In particular, while brand equity is widely regarded as a central outcome of successful brand management, there is a need to clarify how ESG contributes to the formation of brand equity through its impact on consumer perception and emotion.

To address this gap, this paper draws on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974) to propose a conceptual model linking ESG practices to brand equity. In this model, ESG is conceptualized as an external stimulus that shapes two key internal consumer responses: brand reputation (a cognitive evaluation of brand credibility and responsibility) and brand attachment (an emotional bond between consumer and brand). These two mechanisms represent the "organism" stage in the S-O-R process and jointly mediate the influence of ESG practices on brand equity. The model also posits that brand reputation enhances brand attachment, suggesting a sequential pathway that links cognitive and affective processes in consumer brand perception.

This paper makes two primary contributions. First, it extends the literature on ESG and branding by introducing a theoretically grounded framework that connects sustainability practices with brand equity through distinct consumer responses. Second, it advances the application of S-O-R model in the branding domain, particularly in the context of socially and environmentally conscious consumer behavior. The conceptual framework offers practical guidance for brand managers seeking to translate ESG investments into meaningful consumer-based brand value.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on ESG, brand reputation, brand attachment, and brand equity. Section 3 introduces the conceptual framework and develops a series of research propositions based on the S-O-R model. Section 4 and 5 outline the theoretical and practical implications of the framework. Section 6 indicates limitations and future research and section 7 is the conclusion of this study.

Literature Review

ESG as a Strategic Branding Stimulus

ESG practices have become increasingly integral to corporate reputation and branding. Originally designed as a framework for socially responsible investment, ESG has evolved into a comprehensive standard for evaluating corporate sustainability and ethical conduct (Giese et al., 2019; Li et al., 2021; Stewart, 2025). The environmental dimension focuses on ecological stewardship, such as carbon reduction and resource efficiency. The social dimension relates to labor practices, community engagement, and social equity, while the governance aspect addresses transparency, board diversity, and ethical leadership (Clément et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021; Stewart, 2025). These dimensions, when effectively communicated, act as corporate signals that inform and shape stakeholder perceptions (Cheng et al., 2024; Goncalves, 2024; Mu et al., 2023).

In the context of branding, ESG initiatives function as stimuli that influence consumer responses. Firms increasingly embed ESG into brand narratives to strengthen trust, build legitimacy, and differentiate in competitive markets (Tripopsakul & Puriwat, 2022). Consumers are more likely to support brands whose sustainability values align with their own, indicating that ESG-related actions can directly affect how a brand is perceived and valued (Holloway, 2024; Koh et al., 2022). Thus, ESG serves not only as a moral obligation but also as a strategic tool for consumer engagement and brand development.

Brand Reputation

Brand reputation is defined as the collective assessment of a brand's credibility, reliability, and integrity by its stakeholders (Chun, 2005; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). It reflects accumulated public perceptions based on the brand's past actions, communication, and performance. A strong brand reputation enhances trust, reduces perceived risk, and positively influences purchase decisions (Kim & Lennon, 2013; Suryati & Fenny, 2024).

ESG plays a significant role in shaping brand reputation. Companies that are transparent, ethical, and socially responsible are more likely to be seen as trustworthy and competent (Holloway, 2024; Li et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2018). This is consistent with signaling theory, which posits that observable firm behavior—such as sustainability reporting and ESG disclosures—can convey underlying values and quality to external stakeholders (Connelly et al., 2011). As such, ESG engagement sends strong signals about a brand's ethical orientation, enhancing its reputation in the eyes of ethically conscious consumers.

Brand Attachment

Brand attachment refers to the emotional bond that connects a consumer to a brand, often characterized by feelings of closeness, connection, and personal relevance (Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005). Unlike brand love, which captures passionate affection, attachment is marked by durability and relational depth (Choi et al., 2024; Schmitt, 2011). It plays a crucial role in driving consumer loyalty, brand defense, and long-term brand-consumer relationships (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019; Lee & Rhee, 2023).

Recent research suggests that brand attachment can be influenced by a brand's ethical and sustainable behavior. When consumers perceive a brand as aligned with their personal or moral values—as often communicated through ESG—they are more likely to internalize the brand into their self-concept (Rabbanee et al., 2020). This emotional internalization leads to stronger brand attachment. Moreover, attachment is not only a direct outcome of ESG-driven branding but can also be fostered through trust-based mechanisms such as brand reputation, suggesting a potential sequential pathway (Loureiro et al., 2017). According to Ahmadi and Ataei (2024) indicate that brand reputation has positively related to brand attachment and the brand reputation also has an indirect effect on brand advocacy through emotional attachment.

Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the added value a brand contributes to a product or service beyond its functional attributes (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). It encompasses consumer perceptions, brand associations, loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium. A high level of brand equity provides firms with strategic advantages such as customer retention, pricing power, and market differentiation (Aydın, 2024; Stahl et al., 2012).

Both brand reputation and attachment are recognized as critical antecedents of brand equity. Reputation enhances perceived quality and brand trust, while attachment strengthens emotional investment and brand loyalty (Aboalganam & Alzghoul, 2025; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2024; Rodrigues et al., 2023). Within an ESG framework, these two elements act as distinct but complementary pathways—reputation reflecting cognitive assessments and attachment representing affective responses—that together mediate the impact of ESG on brand equity.

Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model, introduced by Russell and Mehrabian (1974), provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how external environmental stimuli elicit internal psychological states (organism), which in turn drive behavioral responses. This model has been widely applied in consumer behavior research, especially in contexts involving emotional and ethical decision-making (Erensoy et al., 2024; Sohaib et al., 2022).

In this study, ESG practices are conceptualized as external stimuli, which activate two forms of internal consumer processing: cognitive (brand reputation) and emotional (brand attachment). These internal states represent the organism component and ultimately result in the response of enhanced brand equity. By applying S-O-R theory, this paper integrates ethical branding, consumer psychology, and value co-creation into a unified framework that explains how ESG influences brand-related outcomes.

Conceptual Framework and Research Hypothesizes

This study proposes a conceptual model grounded in the S-O-R framework to explain how ESG practices influence consumer-based brand equity. As illustrated in Figure 1, ESG practices serve as stimuli that trigger internal consumer evaluations—both cognitive and emotional—represented by brand reputation and brand attachment, respectively. These internal processes, in turn, lead to the response: the development of brand equity.

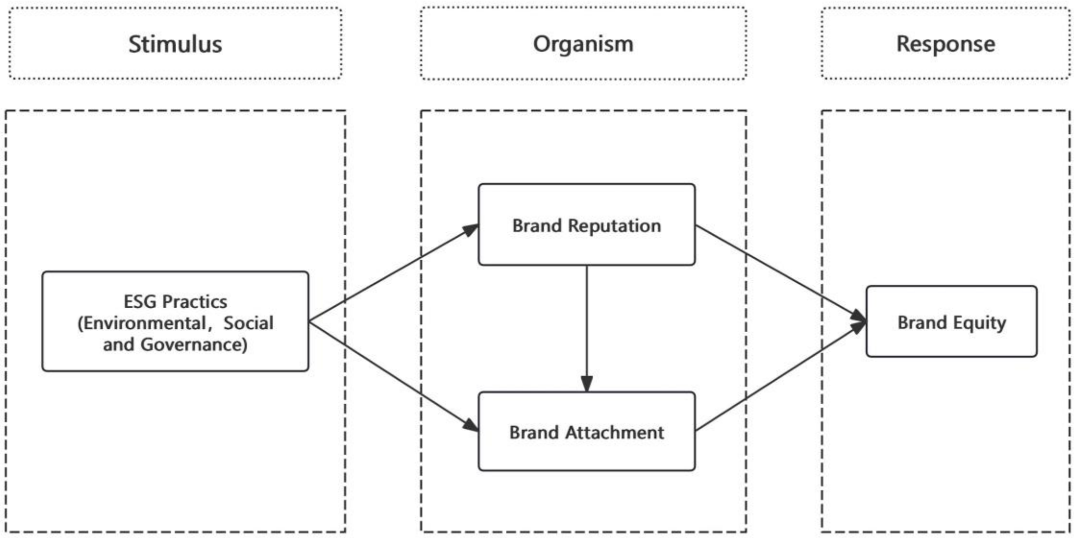

Figure 1 Research Framework

This section presents detailed theoretical rationales and empirical foundations for the proposed model, leading to the formulation of six research hypothesizes.

ESG and Brand Reputation

With developing of corporate responsibility, ESG practices have become a significant dimension through which consumers evaluate brand credibility (Koh et al., 2022). Firms demonstrating a visible commitment to environmental protection, social welfare, and ethical governance are increasingly perceived as trustworthy and reliable (Cao, 2023; Rastogi et al., 2025). Moreover, according to Fombrun and Shanley (1990) and Chun (2005), brand reputation is defined as the overall perception of a brand held by its stakeholders, based on cumulative judgments about the brand's past behavior, credibility, and trustworthiness. When firms actively disclose environmental policies, promote social responsibility, and demonstrate ethical governance, they signal integrity and long-term commitment to stakeholders (Cao, 2023; Kim et al., 2024). Empirical studies show that when brands actively disclose their ESG initiatives, consumers reward them with higher reputational assessments compared to firms with ambiguous or absent sustainability claims (Jeffrey et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2024; Koh et al., 2022).

The mechanism underlying this phenomenon is cognitive appraisal. Consumers, when exposed to ESG initiatives, cognitively process these cues as signals of the firm's values, long-term orientation, and ethical integrity (Hasan et al., 2024). ESG behaviors reduce skepticism and enhance perceptions of authenticity, which form the foundation of brand reputation (Zervoudi et al., 2025). Furthermore, ESG initiatives serve as meaningful environmental stimuli that shape favorable internal evaluations. Accordingly, this study proposes that ESG practices will enhance brand reputation by positively influencing consumers' cognitive assessments of a firm's ethical standing and credibility.

H1: ESG practices positively influence brand reputation.

ESG and Brand Attachment

ESG practices also can evoke emotional responses from consumers by aligning corporate behavior with deeply held personal values. When consumers perceive that a brand actively supports what they care about—such as climate action, diversity, and fair governance—they experience feelings of pride, admiration, and identification (Koh et al., 2022; Tosun & Tavşan, 2023; Xie et al., 2019). These emotional reactions lay the groundwork for affective consumer-brand relationships. Furthermore, brand attachment refers to the emotional bond that connects a consumer to a brand, marked by a sense of affection, connection, and commitment (Choi et al., 2024). It goes beyond mere satisfaction or brand preference, reflecting a deeper psychological integration of the brand into the consumer's self-concept (Lee & Rhee, 2023; Schmitt, 2011). Emotional attachment is essential for building durable customer-brand relationships and has been associated with increased loyalty, advocacy, and resilience to negative brand information (Heidari et al., 2023; Shimul, 2022).

Therefore, ESG practices can foster emotional resonance by appealing to consumers' values and moral identities. Brands that embody social or environmental ideals can create deeper emotional connections with consumers who see those brands as extensions of their own self-concept (Mkhize, 2010; Rabbanee et al., 2020). Recent studies confirm that ESG practices can strengthen emotional bonds, Sim and Kim (2024) found that ethical brand behavior significantly predicts brand attachment among environmentally conscious consumers. ESG engagement may also directly cultivate brand attachment.
H2: ESG practices positively influence brand attachment.

Brand Reputation and Brand Attachment
While brand reputation and brand attachment are conceptually distinct, they are functionally interconnected. Brand reputation represents a rational, cognitive evaluation of a brand's reliability and performance, while brand attachment reflects the emotional closeness a consumer feels toward the brand (Aboalganam & Alzghoul, 2025; Choi et al., 2024). The development of brand attachment often depends on a foundation of trust and respect, which are cultivated through a strong reputation (Ahmadi & Ataei, 2024).

According to relationship marketing theory, trust precedes emotional commitment in the development of relational bonds (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). A favorable brand reputation signals consistent performance, ethical conduct, and credibility—conditions that reduce psychological risk and encourage emotional investment. Empirical studies support this sequential logic. For instance, Loureiro et al. (2017) found that corporate reputation positively predicts brand attachment and brand loyalty in automobile sector. In another study, Suryati and Fenny (2024) indicated reputable brands provide psychological assurance, reducing perceived risk and enhancing consumers' willingness to develop deeper relationships beyond transactional exchanges. When consumers perceive that a brand consistently acts in accordance with socially acceptable norms and delivers on its promises, this cognitive trust triggers emotional identification and connection. Ahmadi and Ataei (2024) also showed that brand reputation has positive effect on brand attachment. Thus, this study proposes that a positive brand reputation strengthens emotional attachment by fostering trust, admiration, and relational commitment between consumers and brands.
H3: Brand reputation positively influences brand attachment.

Brand Reputation and Brand Equity
Brand equity refers to the intangible value that a brand adds to a product or service, often manifested in consumer preference, loyalty, and willingness to pay a premium (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). A positive brand reputation contributes directly to brand equity by influencing

consumer perceptions of quality, reliability, and social responsibility (Aboalganam & Alzghoul, 2025; Han et al., 2015; Vuong & Bui, 2023). Empirical research shows that consumers are more likely to maintain enduring relationships with brands they deem reputable and trustworthy (Han et al., 2015).

As consumers increasingly factor ESG into brand evaluations, reputation as becomes a pivotal lever for building long-term brand value (Kim et al., 2024; Lin, 2024). A strong reputation simplifies consumers' decision-making process, enhances expectations of future performance, and elevates the perceived utility of the brand. As a result, consumers allocate higher mental, emotional, and financial resources to reputable brands, leading to stronger brand equity outcomes.
H4: Brand reputation positively influences brand equity.

Brand Attachment and Brand Equity
Emotional bonds are essential drivers of brand equity, particularly in markets where differentiation through functionality is limited. Brand attachment increases consumer engagement, reduces switching behavior, and fosters word of mouth (Suo & Huang, 2023). Brand attachment represents one of the deepest forms of consumer-brand relationships. It represents a deeper form of brand loyalty, characterized by a personal connection that goes beyond utilitarian value (Japutra et al., 2018). Attached consumers are more resistant to negative information, more likely to repurchase, and more willing to advocate on behalf of the brand (Lee & Rhee, 2023; Park et al., 2010; Thomson et al., 2005).

The mechanism underlying this influence is emotional commitment. Thus, consumers with high brand attachment perceive the brand as irreplaceable and central to their identity, resulting in heightened brand advocacy and reduced the sensitivity of price. Valencia-Arias et al. (2025) indicated that people willingness to pay a premium price for sustainable initiatives in the fashion products. Emotional bonds enhance not only behavioral loyalty but also the psychological value consumers attribute to the brand (Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019). Therefore, in the context of ESG, brand attachment can increase their purchase intention and significantly contributes to brand equity.
H5: Brand attachment positively influences brand equity.

Mediate Effect
While brand reputation and attachment are valuable as independent mediators, their sequential interplay may offer a more comprehensive explanation of how ESG practices shape brand equity. ESG initiatives may first build a cognitive foundation through enhanced brand reputation, which then nurtures emotional attachment. This integrated pathway aligns with the S-O-R model, wherein stimuli (ESG) activate internal cognitive and affective processes (reputation and attachment) that together shape behavioral outcomes (brand equity).

The relationship between ESG practices and brand equity is complex and operates through both cognitive and emotional pathways. ESG initiatives first influence consumers' cognitive evaluations by enhancing brand reputation. This favorable reputation, in turn, facilitates emotional bonding, leading to the development of brand attachment. Together, these cognitive and emotional processes shape the consumer's final behavioral response: the formation of brand equity.

The dual mediation mechanism reflects sequential internal processing. Initially, consumers cognitively assess the brand's credibility based on its ESG engagement. As trust builds, emotional attachment develops, creating a strong, multifaceted consumer-brand relationship. This sequential mediation structure provides a more comprehensive understanding of how external stimuli translate into enduring brand outcomes (Russell & Mehrabian, 1974). Based on this theoretical reasoning, it is proposed that brand reputation and brand attachment jointly mediate the relationship between ESG practices and brand equity.

H6: Brand reputation and brand attachment have mediator effects on the relationship between ESG practices and brand equity.

Theoretical Contributions

This study makes several key theoretical contributions to the literature on sustainable branding, consumer behavior, and corporate responsibility by offering a conceptual model that explicates how ESG practices influence consumer-based brand equity through brand reputation and brand attachment. By integrating the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory with constructs from branding and sustainability research, this paper enriches the theoretical understanding of how external sustainability stimuli activate internal consumer mechanisms to shape long-term brand value.

While ESG has received increasing attention in finance and management literature, its influence on consumer psychology remains underexplored. Most prior studies have emphasized ESG's impact on firm performance, investor relations, or organizational legitimacy (Cheng et al., 2024; Yuanlun, 2024; Zhao et al., 2023), often overlooking its consumer-facing consequences. This study contributes by shifting the analytical focus from firm-level outcomes to consumer-level responses, positioning ESG not only as a governance framework but also as a strategic branding stimulus. By doing so, it extends the domain of ESG research into the field of marketing and consumer-brand relationships.

A core contribution of this model lies in its identification of two distinct but complementary mechanisms—brand reputation and brand attachment—through which ESG influences brand equity. Previous research has typically treated reputation and attachment as isolated predictors of brand outcomes (Park et al., 2010; Walsh et al., 2009), with limited discussion on their sequential or combined effects in a sustainability context. By proposing a dual-pathway mediation structure, this study illustrates how ESG practices can influence both cognitive appraisals (i.e., reputation) and emotional bonds (i.e., attachment), offering a more holistic and psychologically grounded understanding of consumer responses.

Furthermore, the model posits a reputation-to-attachment sequence, suggesting that trust in a brand's ethical standing serves as a foundation for emotional investment. This sequence is theoretically supported by relationship marketing and attachment theory (Reimann et al., 2012; Thomson et al., 2005), but has been underutilized in ESG branding literature. The introduction of this sequential mediation logic enhances the explanatory power of current models of ethical branding and consumer engagement.

The use of the S-O-R framework represents another significant theoretical contribution. While S-O-R theory has been widely applied in retail, service environments, and experiential marketing (Erensoy et al., 2024; Eroglu et al., 2003; Jacoby, 2002), its integration with ESG and sustainable brand equity is still limited. This study extends the applicability of S-O-R Theory by demonstrating its relevance in ethically charged branding contexts, where external corporate practices serve as environmental stimuli that activate internal psychological states leading to brand-related outcomes.

Moreover, by positioning ESG as a structured, multidimensional stimulus, this study offers a template for applying S-O-R Theory in other complex consumer decision contexts that involve moral, emotional, and cognitive factors—such as green consumption, ethical retailing, and prosocial brand campaigns.

Practice Implications

The proposed conceptual framework offers several important implications for brand managers, sustainability officers, and corporate communication professionals seeking to strengthen consumer-based brand equity through ESG engagement. By highlighting the dual-pathway influence of ESG practices—via brand reputation and brand attachment—this model provides a roadmap for how companies can strategically position sustainability as a driver of both cognitive and emotional brand value.

Traditionally, ESG has been managed from a compliance or investor relations standpoint. However, this study underscores the need to reframe ESG as a strategic branding lever. For brand managers, this means integrating ESG narratives directly into brand identity, marketing campaigns, and customer engagement platforms. Rather than treating ESG as an ancillary initiative, firms should embed sustainability messaging across brand touchpoints, allowing consumers to experience ESG values through packaging, advertising, service interactions, and digital content. Such an approach can help build brand legitimacy and position the firm as a values-driven organization. Companies that communicate ESG initiatives in a consistent, transparent, and authentic manner are more likely to trigger consumer perceptions of integrity, thereby strengthening brand reputation and equity.

One of the key managerial insights from this framework is the role of ESG transparency in shaping brand reputation. Managers should prioritize proactive disclosure of ESG-related actions and progress, using sustainability reports, ESG dashboards, certifications, and third-party endorsements to communicate credibility. Additionally, incorporating consumer-facing ESG metrics (e.g., carbon footprint per product, fair-trade sourcing) can enhance perceived reliability and differentiate the brand in competitive markets. Because brand reputation serves as both a direct and indirect driver of equity, improving trust-based cues such as ethical sourcing, responsible governance, and social inclusivity can significantly amplify consumer confidence and perceived brand quality.

The model also highlights the potential of ESG to foster emotional bonds with consumers. ESG themes such as environmental protection, social justice, and ethical leadership resonate with consumers' personal values and identities. Brands that align with such values have greater potential to create emotional attachment, which drives loyalty and resilience. To cultivate brand attachment, companies should consider storytelling strategies that humanize ESG efforts—for example, showcasing employee-led sustainability programs, community partnerships, or narratives of positive social impact. By creating emotionally compelling content and campaigns around ESG commitments, brands can activate deeper levels of consumer engagement and foster long-term relational loyalty.

To sum up, marketing and ESG departments should collaborate to design integrated campaigns that address both informational and emotional dimensions, thereby maximizing consumer response and sustainable brand outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research of the Study

Despite the contributions in this research, the present study is not without limitations. As a conceptual model, it lacks empirical testing, which is necessary to validate the hypothesized relationships and examine their boundary conditions. The relative influence of brand reputation and attachment may vary across product categories, industries, or consumer segments, depending on factors such as ESG salience, involvement level, or cultural orientation.

Future research should therefore pursue empirical validation of the model through structural equation modeling or experimental designs. Studies may investigate moderating variables, such as consumer environmental consciousness, brand familiarity, or generational cohort, to understand when and for whom ESG-based branding is most effective. In addition, cross-cultural studies could examine how perceptions of ESG, and their impact on reputation and attachment, differ across markets with varying regulatory standards or social norms. Researchers are also encouraged to explore the longitudinal effects of ESG practices on brand equity over time, and to consider reverse causality—whether strong brands attract more attention to their ESG efforts. Finally, qualitative approaches, such as consumer interviews or ethnographic studies, could uncover deeper insights into how individuals internalize ESG values and integrate them into their brand relationships.

Conclusion

This conceptual paper developed a theoretical framework to explain how ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) practices influence consumer-based brand equity through two key mediators: brand reputation and brand attachment. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) Theory, the model positions ESG as an external stimulus that activates consumers' internal cognitive (reputation) and emotional (attachment) responses, which in turn shape brand equity as the final behavioral outcome. By articulating a dual-pathway mechanism and proposing a sequence between reputation and attachment, the framework offers a more nuanced understanding of how sustainability efforts translate into long-term consumer value.

This study makes several important contributions to the existing body of knowledge on sustainable branding and consumer behavior. Theoretically, it extends the application of the S-O-R framework by integrating ESG practices as strategic branding stimuli that influence both cognitive and emotional consumer responses. This dual-pathway model, emphasizing the mediating roles of brand reputation and brand attachment, offers a more comprehensive understanding of how sustainability efforts translate into brand equity. By doing so, it bridges the gap between sustainability strategy and consumer-based brand value, contributing to interdisciplinary theory development in marketing, corporate social responsibility, and consumer psychology. Contextually, this research provides valuable insights for brand managers and policymakers operating in markets increasingly shaped by ethical and environmental concerns. In the context of growing consumer awareness and regulatory pressures surrounding ESG, the proposed framework helps organizations understand how to leverage sustainability communication to build stronger brand relationships and long-term equity. This is particularly relevant for brands seeking to differentiate themselves in saturated markets by appealing to ethically conscious consumers. The framework not only advances academic discourse but also provides practical guidance for firms aiming to align their branding strategies with evolving societal expectations.

In summary, this study lays the conceptual groundwork for future empirical exploration of ESG's role in branding. It highlights the importance of ethical and sustainable practices not only as organizational imperatives, but as psychological levers that shape how consumers think, feel, and behave toward brands in an increasingly values-driven marketplace.

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