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## **Impact On Tourist’s Switching Intention with The Mediating Effect of the Tourist’s Attitude Towards Greenwashing: Special Reference to Sri Lankan Hotel Chains**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to identify how greenwashing practices at the hotel chains in Sri Lanka would impact on the tourist’s switching intention via the mediating effect of tourist’s attitude towards greenwashing practices of hotels. Therefore, this research tries filling the empirical gap of the impact of greenwashing on the switching intention with the mediation effect, considering the scarcity of researches conducted on this phenomenon. The considered sample consisted of 200 tourists who stayed at green/eco-friendly hotels. A questionnaire was distributed for primary data collection to identify the tourists’ perspective towards greenwashing practices, as consumer behaviour related aspects such as attitude, is considered an influential factor leading to purchase intention, switching intention etc. Therefore, the first part of the questionnaire was developed in order to measure greenwashing practices at the hotels, while the second and third sections developed were on tourist’s attitude towards greenwashing practices and switching intention respectively. The analysis was then conducted to identify the impact of greenwashing on the switching intention of the tourists via the mediating effect of the attitude towards greenwashing practices by using both Smart PLS and SPSS software. Thus, this study found that there is a full mediation effect on the correlation between greenwashing and switching intention. The impact on tourist’s switching intention with the mediating effect of the attitude towards greenwashing, in the context of Sri Lankan hotel chain was hence proven by this contemporary study.

**Keywords:** Attitude towards greenwashing, Eco-friendly practices, Greenwashing, Switching intention

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## 1. Introduction

With 2017 declared the year of sustainable tourism by the United Nations, 'Green Traveling' is now officially at the top of the agenda in one of the fastest growing industries in the world (Inkson & Minnaert, 2018). Therefore, the stipulation for responsible and sustainable travel experiences from travelers has already started to rocket boost. With regard to this aspect of focusing on sustainability in the upcoming years, opening minds for tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities has become the expression of 'Sustainable Tourism' for the subsequent years ahead (United Nations Environment Programme, 2005). Under this vital step of future sustainable stability in the tourism industry, hospitality managers are confronted with decisions regarding environmental actions, business ethics, and social responsibility, while they still must ensure their property's sustainable economic success (Molina- Azorin, 2009).

Because of hospitality's high global visibility, the industry has the potential to save millions of dollars by going green as an environmental sustainability stride. A critical challenge for hotel marketers is to gain a better understanding of customers' desire for green consumption alternatives (H. Han, L. Hsu, and J. Lee, 2009) and to retain such green consumers. Especially their attitude towards green tourism, green satisfaction, green purchase intention and switching behavior etc. should be taken into account when practicing this concept. As a large sector of the tourism industry, the hotel industry is resource-intensive and thus has a great impact on the natural environment(H. Han, L. Hsu, and J. Lee, 2009). But, the hotel industry has been suggested to be the most harmful to the environment in all hospitality sectors (Rahman, Reynolds, & Svaren, 2012). As many as 91 percent of accommodations worldwide agree that being eco-friendly is important but only 77 percent actually have some sort of practices in place (TripAdvisor, 2013).

Greenwashing; "Disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image; a public image of environmental responsibility promulgated by or for an organization etc. but perceived as being unfounded or intentionally misleading" was defined by The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (10th Edition)("Pegasus," 2018). Thus, Green Tourism was used by researchers in the 1980s in a study that described the hotel industry's practice of placing green placards in each room that encouraged guests to reuse their towels. The study found that many hotels ultimately made little to no effort to actually conserve resources or reduce waste; they just wanted to appear to be environmentally friendly, or "green"("Rainforest Alliance," 2016).

Considering the fact that perceived green experiential quality significantly influences green equity and green image, which, in turn, result in green experiential satisfaction, green switching intention is influenced by green experiential satisfaction (Wu, Ai, & Cheng, 2016). Thus, unless a consumer develops any kind of attitude or perception towards experiential grounds, green experiential satisfaction would not take place in the minds of the consumers resulting in a switching behavior or green consumer retention.

Considering the Sri Lankan context, with reference to an article published by Kanchana Wickramasinghe (Wickramasinghe, 2014), a study that was undertaken to measure the environmental management practices in the hotel sector in Sri Lanka revealed that majority of hotels which obtain groundwater do not maintain water consumption data, as water is obtained at zero price (apart from the cost of extraction). Comparatively, energy data is more available, as they are recorded in the electricity and fuel bills. The same study found that only 37 percent of hotels maintain good records on environmental management aspects (energy, water, and waste). Also, the midterm strategic plan for Sri Lanka tourism (2002-2004) stated that Sri Lanka had 1% of eco-tourists which is at a very low level compared to other destinations (Fernando, 2017). Therefore, based on the above mentioned literature and empirical findings, the main objective of researching in the hotel industry of Sri Lanka is due to the lack of studies in the area of greenwashing and other constructs such as purchase intention and switching intention etc., which greenwashing on switching intention was the empirical gap and the major concern which motivated to conduct this novel study.

In a more recent survey, as much as 79 percent of travelers indicated that implementing eco-friendly practices is important to their choice of lodging (TripAdvisor, 2013). With the upsurge in green consumerism, consumers are also becoming more critical of hotels' green practices, especially where the environment-friendly quotient is hard to verify. Consumers thus have become increasingly aware of hotels' greenwashing propensities (Rahman, Park, & Chi, 2015). As customers expect hotels to be green, and if a property fails to adopt environmentally responsible practices or communicates such adoption ineffectively, there is a potentiality to lose customers to greener competition (Butler, 2008).

Although there are only a few number of empirical studies on this particular phenomenon greenwashing, some studies have claimed that greenwashing not only negatively affected green trust but also negatively influenced it indirectly via green consumer confusion and green perceived risk (Chen & Chang, 2013). According to the previous research studies on green hotel practices in Sri Lanka along with the above explained literature findings, many eco hotels in Sri Lanka are engaging in Trojan horse tourism practices (Arachchi, Yajid, & Khatibi, 2015). Where they acclaim themselves as environmentally friendly but when it fact they are deceiving the tourists who utilize such hotels with the assumption and trust that

these hoteliers are maintaining good green practices at their premises in every aspect that is in contact with the tourists. Thus, there is a clear need for hotel managers to understand the varied aspects of consumer behavior if they genuinely want to implement an effective environmental management program rather than labeling themselves as 'green'.

As stated earlier, researches also seem to be somewhat lagging behind consumer behavioral aspects like attitudes, personality traits and all when addressing greenwashing practices influencing tourist behavior switching intentions apart from purchasing intentions, satisfaction, destination loyalty etc. in the hotel industry. Considering Sri Lanka being a country where a bigger contribution to the GDP is generated via the tourism industry under trade in services sector with an increase in earnings from tourism according to the Annual Report-2017 of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka; USD Million 349.60 in 2009 to 3924.90 in 2017, having witnessed that continuous industrial boost in future as well. Therefore, there is a clear empirical knowledge gap need to be investigated on the effect of greenwashing practices at hotels on the switching intention of tourists in order to retain the main service sector earning weighing on sustainable tourism practices in the future. Thus, the researcher has attempted to fill this knowledge gap by examining the following problem in this study especially highlighting the Sri Lankan contextual gap and the industrial gap related to the hotel industry of Sri Lanka with special reference to chain hotels.

'Greenwashing hotel practices have a degree of influence on tourists' switching intention with the mediating effect of attitude of tourists towards greenwashing'.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Switching Intention**

The dependent variable of this study is tourist' switching intention when it comes to the greenwashing practices of hotels in the Sri Lankan context. According to a study (Nimako, Ntim, & Mensah, 2014), the extent to which a consumer is willing to switch from one product (green product) to another (non-green product) is known as switching intention. Switching intentions indicating negative consequences for a service organization, referring to the likelihood of changing the current service provider for another was stated by another researcher (H. Han, Hsu, Lee, & Sheu, 2011). Therefore, this study investigated a novel variable assemble, switching intentions especially relating to the concept 'green', which is related to environmental concerns; in other words, relating to green practices of a service organization. Thus, it is (Nikbin, Ismail, & Marimuthu, 2012) referred to green switching intentions as the customer who stops purchasing environmentally-friendly products or services. A study (Sathish, Kumar, Naveen, & Jeevanantham, 2011) proposes that consumers'

switching behavior has much to do with the mental satisfaction level that consumers have. Therefore, (Dekimpe, Steenkamp, Mellens, & Abeele, 1997) switching intentions has the possibility of transferring consumers' existing transactions with an organization to a competitor considering how green the particular market offering is planted in the minds of the consumers with the help of consumer attitudes, perceptions etc. as said above. Also, another study (Wu, Cheng, & Hong, 2017) refers to define it as a consumer's environmental attitude toward replacing the current branded product with another. Similarly, switching intention in the present indicates negative consequences for a service firm, referring to the affirmed likelihood of exchanging the current service provider with another (H. Han, Kim, & Hyun, 2011). In both definitions, it shows that consumers are hesitant to consume the green-claimed services and would switch to genuinely practicing green services.

## **2.2. Greenwashing**

Greenwashing is an interesting topic that has not been frequently discussed or investigated in green marketing literature. "Greenwashing" is defined as the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service, according to GreenPeace International (Gallicano, 2011). Some scholars define the term as the intentional misrepresentation of a firm's environmental efforts (or the lack thereof) (Alves, 2009).

According to sciencedaily.com, hotels across the globe are increasingly encouraging guests to embrace green practices. Yet, while guests think they are supporting the environment by shutting off lights and reusing towels, they may in fact be victims of "greenwashing," a corporation's deceitful practice of promoting environmentally friendly programs while hiding ulterior motives. Thus, as said in the site, researchers (Rahman et al., 2015) have investigated the consequences of greenwashing in the lodging industry and suggest ways hotels can establish credibility in consumers' minds. Their paper, "Consequences of 'Greenwashing:' Consumers' Reactions to Hotels' Green Initiatives," comes at a time when as many as 79 percent of travelers worldwide agree that implementing eco-friendly practices is important to their choice of lodging. The results of the particular research showed that when ecologically conscious consumers know a hotel is not truly green, even though they would use the linen reuse program, but they will not revisit the hotel rather be switching to a hotel which is not engaging in greenwashing practices (Rahman et al., 2015). Meaning, research shows a majority are willing to boycott a company if misled (Rahman et al., 2015). According to studies examined (Bazillier & Vauday, 2009) on the greenwashing phenomenon in the context of CSR and marketing, in comparison, very few studies have reported consumer reactions to greenwashing (Bazillier & Vauday, 2009). Thus, this study will investigate the

impact of greenwashing practices at hotels on the switching intention of tourists with the mediating effect of the tourist attitude towards greenwashing.

### **2.3. Tourist's attitude towards greenwashing**

While there is extensive research in the field of consumer behavior as it relates to sustainability, researchers are still dissecting how this can be translated to guests' behaviors in a hotel setting. As with most industries, the hotel industry is consumer-driven (Price, 2018). Thus, as there is only a handful of studies have been conducted on having positive or negative attitude towards greenwashing practices at hotels.

Attitudes are essential to consumer behavior research and marketing often seeks ways to determine and modify attitudes about products, brands, and services. One function of knowledge is to help maintain strong attitudes (Bredahl, 2001) which are typically considered strong when they are resistant to change and persistent over time. Most analyses of an attitude's strength recognize that knowledge contributes to a high attitude level. A research (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) suggested that strong attitudes are often thought to be constructed on an extensive, well organized knowledge framework that provides an informational basis for reactions toward an issue of product. When considering the environment, increased knowledge is assumed to change environmental attitudes, and both environmental knowledge and attitudes are assumed to influence environmental behavior (Arcury, 1990). In a study (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002) on the relationship between environmental knowledge, environmental attitudes, and behavior using general consumer products, they found significant correlations between participant's attitudes and knowledge. It is stated that the basis for many environmental problems and issues is irresponsible environmental behavior, and one of the most important influences on this behavior is attitude.

A deeper understanding of customers' desire for and participation in green activities can lead to organizations designing more efficient and effective green programs. This research finds that the guests' assessment of the greatest effect on their attitude towards switching intention developed on a hotel having greenwashing practices.

As individuals become more aware of the environmental impact of various business activities, researchers suggest that an environmentally aware consumer may be more likely to demonstrate pro-environmental behavior than other consumers (Lee & Moscardo, 2005). So far, however, clear patterns have not emerged in this area with respect to causal links between knowledge and attitude, nor attitude and environmental behavior (Powell & Ham, 2008). A research suggests an inconsistency between consumers' expressed environmental attitudes and their actual behavior (Barber, Kuo, Bishop, & Goodman Jr, 2012). Thus, this study will be

investigating how the attitude towards greenwashing would make an impact on the tourists' switching intentions regarding hotels sector. That is, if the tourist has a negative attitude towards greenwashing practices would simply reject the fact of revisiting the purchased hotel, where the tourist would be switching to a non-greenwashing / genuinely green practicing hotel instead. Also, if the tourist has a positive attitude towards greenwashing practices; he/she does not care about greenwashing done by the hotel, such tourist will re-visit the hotel stayed / will not switch to a non-greenwashing / genuinely green practicing hotel.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology implemented for this study is in terms of the philosophical approach, conceptual framework and hypothesis, data collection methods, population and sampling, measurement and scaling and data analytical tools.

#### 3.1. Philosophical approach

This study followed the positivism philosophy under epistemology as the theory and relevant hypotheses were developed upon existing knowledge and theories concerned with possibilities, nature, sources and limitation of study. Thus, the findings are interpreted based on the data which was collected through the sample decided on a quantitative approach.

#### 3.2. Conceptual Framework

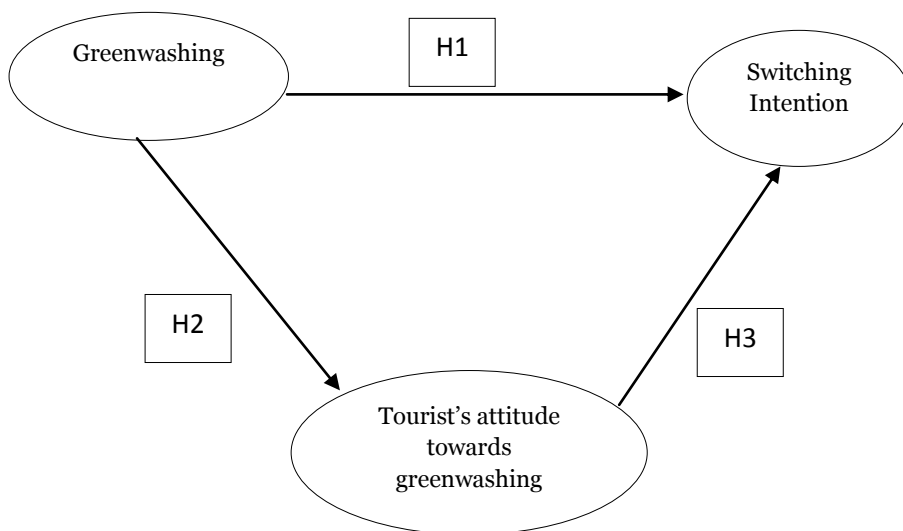


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

A deductive reasoning approach was followed in the research because greenwashing has an impact on tourist's switching intention on hotels when being mediated by the attitude the consumer has regarding greenwashing. Hence, hypotheses were developed based on this particular theory. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to test these hypotheses and thereby to confirm or reject the theory. The hypotheses were stated in line with the conceptual framework as below.

### **3.3. Hypotheses**

Considering previous literature provided, the researcher has used the below stated hypotheses to derive the acceptance or the rejection of the theory of this particular study.

H1: Greenwashing is positively affecting in to create tourist's switching intention.

H2: Greenwashing is positively affecting in to create negative attitude of tourists toward greenwashing.

H3: Tourists' negative attitude towards greenwashing is positively affecting tourist's switching intention.

### **3.4. Data collection methods**

The researcher distributed a questionnaire among the population in order to collect the relevant primary data from tourists, the respondents. However, the researcher collected necessary secondary data from journals, articles, newspapers and online sources. Also, the data was collected in a mono-way method in order to secure the convenience of the tourists as they are mostly staying at the eco-hotels for the purpose of relaxation and that they highly value their leisure time. Thus, considering that particular fact, sample size being 200 responses and also due to the reason that the data should be collected as well as findings of this particular study should be presented during the months considered as 'seasonal' on the basis of tourist arrivals (December to April; as per the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority sources), this was a cross-sectional study as the researcher conducted the research once and not in time lapses. The questionnaire consisted of a demographic section and 20 statements on a 5 point Likert-scale indicating 5 for "strongly agree" and 1 for "strongly disagree" to measure the variables. Thus, the questionnaire consisted of close-end questions supporting dependent, independent and mediating variables. Items for each variable were selected and ranked appropriately according to the reliability, adequacy and the significance respectively, of the items in the scales used in previous studies supporting this novel research.



### **3.5. Population and sampling**

The population of the study consisted of both local tourists and foreign tourists who stay at eco/green hotels of the major hotel chains in Sri Lanka (Aitken Spence Hotels, Jetwing Hotels, Cinnamon Hotels, and LSR Hotels) spread across the island. Specific district or districts were not selected as eco-hotels are located island-wide. Therefore, the researcher has selected the sample size as 200 considering the convenience of the tourists as well as other limitations. The researcher used the probability sampling and convenience sampling for this study as a part of the research methodology.

### **3.6. Data analytical tools**

Quantitative data analytical tools were utilized in analyzing data gathered from the study. Hence, via deriving the indicator reliability was the purpose to assess the most accurate indicators that supported the relationship between greenwashing and the attitude towards greenwashing practices leading to switching intention. Thus, the measurement model and the structural model were analyzed in order to prove that greenwashing impacts the switching intention of tourists via the mediating effect of the attitude towards greenwashing practices.

### **3.7. Data analytical method**

In order to analyze the gathered data, the researcher used the SPSS software to analyze the demographic questions. In order to analyze the measurement model and the structural model, the researcher used the Smart PLS software (version 3).

## **4. Data Analysis and Findings**

The researcher developed and distributed 200 questionnaires among the population, but only 150 questionnaires were received in an analyzable manner. Out of the 200 responses, 50 questionnaires were rejected as they were not in a state of analyzing.

### **4.1. Demographic analysis**

Most of the respondents of the survey were foreigners exhibiting a 73.3% out of the total no. of tourists. Local tourists exhibited 26.7% of the total respondents while an equal response rate of 50%-50% was shown by both the genders. Most of the tourists are in the age range of 25-35 years representing a 44% proportion of the total respondents while 28.7% of the tourists amidst the type, represented the age range of 35-45 years of age. When analyzing the educational levels of the tourists, 49.3% of the total respondents exhibited to be graduates

while 28.7% denoted the category of other; where tourists who have obtained, certificate level, diplomas, advanced diplomas etc.

## **4.2. Measurement model**

Hence reliability is a condition to ensure the validation of the study; indicator reliability is tested at first to ensure that the associated indicators have much in common of the respective latent constructs(Wong, 2016). Certain indicators were removed due to the outer loadings being smaller than the required threshold level of 0.4 (Joseph F Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013). Also, if certain outer loadings were found to be between 0.4 and 0.7, a loading relevance test was performed then. If the derived composite reliability and the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of the respective constructs were over 0.5 thresholds, such constructs were retained in the model(Wong, 2016). Therefore, considering the above thresholds respectively, 'what is the chance that you will stay with the same green hotel again' indicator was removed in the first place as it was way below the required threshold of 0.4, at a -0.745 and 'Hotel does not change sheets on stays of 3/more nights=0.485, Hotel has no key-cards to turn power to the room off and on=0.509, Hotel does not use a towel re-use policy=0.529, Hotel does not sort waste in guestrooms, offices, kitchens=0.669', out of these figures, researcher then removed the indicator 'Hotel does not change sheets on stays of 3/more nights=0.485' as it was the least figure in the 0.4-0.7 threshold. Considering the newly derived figures and are in the range of 0.4 to 0.7; 'Hotel does not use a towel re-use policy=0.509, Hotel has no key-cards to turn power to the room off and on=0.503, Hotel does not sort waste in guestrooms, offices, kitchens=0.661', the researcher then removed all the 3 indicators as it resulted in a significant increase or maintaining of the reliability values of composite and AVE reliability respectively to; switching intention 0.897 and 0.743, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.942 and 0.730 and, greenwashing 0.936 and 0.746 as per the final model, from the original model denoting of switching intention 0.633 and 0.612, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.917 and 0.535 and, greenwashing 0.936 and 0.746(Wong, 2016). Also, when using the Smart PLS software, more than the Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability is considered to measure the measurement model's internal consistency reliability. As prior researches suggests that a threshold level of 0.7 or higher is required to demonstrate a satisfactory composite reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), considering the final model, the composite reliability is on a satisfactory level above the required threshold where,switching intention 0.897, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.942 and greenwashing 0.936.

Convergent validity refers to the model's ability to explain the indicator's variance (Wong, 2016). Thus, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) can provide evidence for convergent

validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to previous researches, it suggests that a threshold level of 0.5 as evidence of convergent validity. Thus, considering this study conducted, the AVE figures prove that the model's ability to explain the indicator's variance is sufficient and acceptable at switching intention 0.743, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.730 and greenwashing 0.746. And, the Fornell-Larcker criterion (1981) is considered as the common approach on attaining discriminant validity. According to prior researches, it is said that the square root of AVE of each latent variable should be equal or larger than the Latent Variable Correlation (LVC)(Urbach & Ahlemann, 2010). Thus, this study has achieved discriminant validity as well successfully where the square root values of the AVE values; switching intention 0.854, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.864 and greenwashing 0.863 are equal or larger than the LVC values; switching intention 0.854, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels 0.864 and greenwashing 0.862.

### **4.3. Structural Model**

For further validation, the VIF collinearity statistic was derived where the threshold is considered as the VIF value to be of 5 or lower (i.e., Tolerance level of 0.2 or higher) to avoid the collinearity problem (Joe F Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). According to the conducted study, the VIF values for all three constructs exhibited below 5 where greenwashing and tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels has 1.000, tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels and switching intention has 1.771 and greenwashing and switching intention has 1.771. In practice, a typical marketing research study would have a significance level of 5%, a statistical power of 80%, and  $R^2$  values of at least 0.25 (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016). Considering the previously stated parameters, the conducted survey exhibited that there is a 43.5% (0.435) impact of greenwashing on the tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels as well as that there is a 28.5% impact of tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels on the switching intention of tourists.

In order to determine the relationships between constructs, a bootstrap was run by the researcher. According to the conducted analysis, it is seen that two of the structural model relationships; tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels → switching intention and greenwashing → tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels are significant as the P-values shown were 0.000 in both paths while the T-values showed 4.501 and 11.638 respectively. Therefore, the initial impact (hypothesis 2 and 3) to be proven by the researcher considering the parameter of the hypothesis can be accepted, in the case of a significance level of 5%, the path coefficient will be significant if the T-statistics is larger than 1.96 (Wong, 2016). Also when considering the path coefficients between the

constructs, greenwashing has a strong effect on the switching intention having 0.660, while tourist's attitude towards greenwashing has a relatively moderate effect with a 0.450 on the tourist's switching intention and a weak direct effect from greenwashing on switching intention having 0.285, hence proving the denoted significance levels accordingly.

When deriving the F-Square statistic, Jacob Cohen has suggested that the values of 0.10, 0.25, and 0.40 represent small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Borenstein, Cohen, Rothstein, Pollack, & Kane, 1990). Thus, considering the conducted study, the F-Square value for greenwashing on tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels represented larger effect size as 0.771. As an extension of testing the research hypotheses, a test of predictive relevance for the reflective endogenous latent variable was further conducted based on Stone-Geisser's formula:  $q^2 = \frac{Q^2_{included} - Q^2_{excluded}}{1 - Q^2_{included}} = 0.411$  (Ismail & Yunan, 2016). The result was greater than zero (0) for the reflective endogenous latent variable, indicating that it has predictive relevance as tourist's attitude to towards greenwashing practices of green hotels denotes 0.289 and switching intention as 0.180.

#### **4.4. Mediation model**

According to researchers (J. Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, & Chong, 2017), mediation occurs when a third variable mediates between two other variables. According to the results, there was no direct effect from greenwashing on switching intention of a tourist, unless it happens via the mediation effect (indirect effect) of tourist's attitude towards greenwashing. Firstly, the direct impact of greenwashing on the switching intention was significant with the P-value of 0.000 and the T-statistic of 3.769. Thus, then the mediating variable was inserted to the model and was hence tested via bootstrapping which derived the direct impact to be insignificant with the P-value of 0.440 and the T-statistic of 0.774. In this situation, the indirect paths; tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels → switching intention and greenwashing → tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels became significant with their P-values as 0.000 and their T-statistics respectively as 4.501 and 11.638. Therefore, then the role of mediation was tested where the T-value for the entire model was derived as 668.465, which is larger than the threshold value of 1.96 (Wong, 2016). Hence, it was proven that there is a mediation effect and thus the magnitude of the mediation (VAF value) was then calculated with a 0.932878, which denotes that there is a full mediation of 93.29% from attitude towards greenwashing on the relationship between greenwashing and switching intention.

## 4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Table 1:Hypothesis testing

	T Statistics	P Values	Accepted /Rejected
H3: Tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels → Switching Intention	4.501	0.000	Accepted
H2: Greenwashing→ Tourist's attitude towards greenwashing practices of green hotels	11.638	0.000	Accepted
H1: Greenwashing→ Switching Intention	0.774	0.440	Rejected

Source: Greenwashing Survey (2019)

## 5. Conclusion

Therefore, considering all the facts analyzed and the proven impact on the switching intention of a tourist due to greenwashing practices conducted by hotels, via the mediation effect on the tourist's attitude towards greenwashing, few strong recommendations can be suggested to the hoteliers amidst being a hotel chain, in order to ensure the service quality of green claimed hotels as well as the overall betterment of the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. Also as responsible citizens, it is wise to take into account which Cone Green Gap Trend Tracker noted in their 2011 study that 77% of consumers would actively boycott any company that made intentionally misleading claims about their environmental stewardship (<http://www.conecomm.com/research-blog/2012-cone-green-gap-trend-tracker>). Therefore, it is essential not to not exaggerate environmental claims at the hotels, maintain transparency, track the green-data of the property to prove their stakeholders, get proper internationally recognized green-certifications etc.

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