THE PROJECTS OF GREEN HUSHING IN PAKISTAN'S TEXTILE INDUSTRY: WHY ORGANIZATIONS STAY SILENT ABOUT THEIR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

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ABSTRACT

The research study focuses on the understanding of the concept of Green Hushing (GH) in the textile sector in Pakistan, where the textile firms intentionally take silent sustainability measures. It examines how Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), Stakeholder Indifference (SI), and Organizational Inertia (OI) influence this strategic silence. The issue was analyzed by conducting a survey among the participants of the textile sector on sustainability and communication. The relationship between the proposed framework, consisting of RA, CP, SI, and OI, and GH was tested by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This research study's findings show that RA and OI positively affect GH, which is one of the manifestations of ineffective regulation and internal resistance to disclosure. GH is negatively affected by SI, and this demonstrates that transparency is promoted by the involvement of the stakeholders. CP is characterized by a conditional effect as market forces call on selective silence in some cases. The findings are limited to the textile industry in Pakistan, with the recommendation that another study can be conducted in other industries and countries. This necessitates changing the policy, organization, and stakeholder participation to reduce GH and facilitate plausible sustainability reporting.

Keywords: Green Hushing (GH), Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), Stakeholder Indifference (SI), and Organization Inertia (OI)

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INTRODUCTION:

The concept of sustainable communication has been a topic of discussion in recent years, as it is an essential theme for corporations that must navigate surrounding issues and rising social demands. The stakeholders, regulators, and the global markets are increasingly pressurizing firms to demonstrate transparency regarding the environmental and social activities of firms. However, there are those companies that boast about their green practices and report them with proactive disclosure as opposed to those that voluntarily conceal or remain silent about their sustainability efforts, which researchers refer to as green hushing (GH) (Gómez-Ortiz & Sánchez-Sánchez, 2022) Green hushing is a deliberate underreporting of the sustainability practices; however, no action is being taken to manage the environment, but it is done as a communication strategy (De Villiers & Marques, 2016) One very noticeable setting that may be utilized in the study of green hushing is the Pakistani textile industry. Textiles are regarded as one of the biggest industries in the country that produces more than 60 % of the total exports, and in the supply chain, millions of individuals are employed (Yusuf et al., 2024). The industry is becoming globalized, and there is an increasing demand to meet the requirements of sustainability among global customers, particularly in Europe and North America. Although more and more companies are becoming engaged in green activities, such activities are not disclosed by all companies (Wang et al., 2021). This silence raises some important questions as to the reasons why they remain silent in such an industry, which is not only vital to the economy of Pakistan but also to world supply chains. In India, companies discourage sustainability reporting because they are afraid of a negative response from the stakeholders and reputational risk. Chinese companies are using selective disclosure to bypass poor enforcement of strict regulations, even as they seek to address the demands of the global market (McKelvie et al., 2017). In Indonesia, firms do not report to help them eliminate political or reputational costs, whereas South African firms blame regulatory ambiguity and stakeholder indifference as incentives for silence. These findings support the topicality of the application of the green hushing to such industries as the textile industry in Pakistan, where the institutional and stakeholder pressures can also shape the disclosure practices (Bond & Zeng, 2022). The current studies in the area of corporate environmental communication focus mainly on greenwashing, i.e., when companies overstate or falsify their sustainability practices. Conversely, the studies on green hushing remain in their early stages, and the majority of them are located in Western settings and services (Szalavetz, 2018). The lack of research in developing economies is a grave one because the institutional and cultural setting might significantly influence the communication strategy. Specifically, the industry is a special place, and in a different way than in the developed markets, weak regulatory implementation, competition, organizational

inertia, and stakeholder dynamics in the Pakistani textile industry could have an impact on green washing. This study is premised on the stakeholder theory on the assumption that corporate behavior is defined by the demands and pressure of different stakeholder groups, and it entails the interplay of four main drivers: Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), Stakeholder Indifference (SI), and Organizational Inertia (OI), and its effect on green hushing (GH). Such dynamics are worth knowing to be able to gain a more theoretical and empirical insight into why a given firm may strategically choose to keep silent instead of disclosing (Ladista et al., 2023).

The green hushing research remains highly influenced by the developed economies, hence a critical gap in the context of the developing economies. In developing countries, a few studies prove that institutions are weak, not sure of the regulations, and stakeholders lack participation in the process, which emboldens the firms to not engage in communication of sustainability (Laub, 1999). The dynamics of these factors, however, are not well studied within the context of the textile industry in Pakistan, one of the world's most important industries under great pressure to abide by environmental regulations. Besides, the extant literature has not adequately studied the interaction of institutional pressures like regulatory ambiguity and organizational inertia, with stakeholder-related pressures, including indifference and competitive pressure. The identified gap is indicative of the necessity of the contextual details that incorporate the Institutional Theory and Stakeholder Theory to clarify why the firms in the new economies strategically avoid making sustainability disclosures despite being involved in environmental activities.

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the underlying drivers of green hushing in Pakistan’s textile industry and to understand why organizations refrain from publicly disclosing their sustainability efforts despite implementing them internally.

- To examine the influence of regulatory ambiguity on green hushing behavior.
- To analyze how competitive pressure contributes to the decision to suppress sustainability communication.
- To evaluate the impact of stakeholder indifference on corporate sustainability disclosure.
- To explore how organizational inertia affects the transparency of sustainability practices.

In order to respond to the research aim and objectives, this study sets specific research questions, which are used to conduct the research. The questions will focus on the effects of regulatory ambiguity, competition intensity, indifference of stakeholders, and inertia on the green hushing

behavior in the Pakistani textile industry. These questions bring the conceptual framework to reality and allow testing the proposed relationships systematically.

1. What is the relationship between regulatory ambiguity and green hushing in Pakistan's textile industry?
2. How does competitive pressure influence organizations' decisions to withhold sustainability information?
3. What role does stakeholder indifference play in the suppression of sustainability communication?
4. How does organizational inertia hinder transparent sustainability reporting?

The proposed study is highly theoretical and practically significant. Theoretically, it contributes to the lack of knowledge that exists regarding green hushing, which has not been given much attention in the body of knowledge in the field of sustainability and organizational behavior. Practically, the study is highly applicable in providing a good insight to policy makers, environmental regulators, NGOs, and industry leaders. It is important to work on the causes of green hushing, as more effective regulation policies and incentive schemes contributing to the open exchange of ideas related to sustainability can be worked out. The identification of the factors behind the suppressed corporate sustainability communication should advance greater transparency, accountability, and competitiveness within the global textile market, where corporate culture should emerge in which the true environmental performance is not strategically camouflaged.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Concept and evolution of Green Hushing:

Recently, the green hushing has become a highly important concept in the area of sustainability communication, explaining the intentional underreporting or silence regarding the initiatives of environmental activity of firms despite the real involvement in such practices (Ibrahim et al., 2012). In contrast to greenwashing, when companies exaggerate or falsify their results, green hushing has to be an act of defense because organizations prefer to go unnoticed, to be accused of hypocrisy, or to avoid stakeholders’ outrage (Sahadev et al., 2022). The most recent research underlines that such silence is not merely a communication deficit, but a risk-management instrument calculated especially in those industries where environmental assertions draw a high level of disapproving feedback (China Water Risk, 2015). The initial sustainability reporting was heralded as a

demonstration of legitimacy, yet with the growing impact of the greenwashing debate, companies grew very mindful of their reporting (Khamisu et al., 2024). Firms that are authentic in their sustainability efforts take action today, fearing that their gains may be deemed unprofessional or unreliable due to inadequate performance and falling into what scholars define as a culture of silence (DiMaggio & Powell, 2021)

Green Hushing and Greenwashing:

The terms greenwashing and green hushing are commonly referred to as the same dialogue styles, but they are two different forms of communication, which we also discuss in Table 01. Whereas greenwashing is considered an attempt at validating claims to the environment, measured by exaggeration or covering up, green hushing is the intentional failure to disclose actual sustainability efforts (Evangelista et al., 2018).

Table 1: Comparative overview of Green Hushing and Greenwashing.

Dimension	Greenwashing	Green Hushing
Term	Portraying a false and exaggerated sustainability performance as a way to look more responsible (Zhao et al., 2021).	Knowingly reporting less or not reporting at all the sustainability victories, regardless of actual practices. (Darnall & Edwards, 2006)
Communication Style	Superfluous communication, which, more frequently, is symbolic than material (Cerciello et al., 2023).	Caution or strategic concealment as a form of under-communication or silence (Egbunike et al., 2018).
Risk Focus	The possibility of reputational cost in case of revelation as a deceiver (Roszkowska-Menkes et al., 2024).	The danger of being accused by the stakeholders of greenwashing, or failing to maintain the environmental protection efforts despite making them. (Carmo & Miguéis, 2022)
Organizational Motive	Establish credibility, be appealing to investors/customers, or improve image.	It is important not to be questioned, unjustly charged, or subjected to a negative reputation, but to comply nevertheless. (Gracia & Siregar, 2021)
Typical Industries	Sectors that are consumer-prone and competitive with high visibility (Shalhoob & Hussainey, 2023)	High intensity industries where the environment is under significant criticism, e.g., textiles, energy (Nair et al., 2023)

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Global sustainability:

The green hushing has grown to be associated with the textile industry in the emerging economies. Specifically, in Vietnam, firms do not disclose all sustainability indicators, but only those that are safe, as in areas such as the use of chemicals (Kumar et al., 2023). African textile manufacturers, such as those in Ethiopia or Morocco, also exhibit signs of sustainability silence, especially where institutions are strong (Jadhav et al., 2020). The findings provide support for the fact that green hushing is not a singular issue in Pakistan but a shared problem amongst Global South textile economies. In Table 02, we compare the developed and developing economies' context.

Table 2: Comparing Developed and Developing Economies.

Context	Characteristics	Source
Developed Economies	Good regulatory policies, conscientious consumer awareness, and NGO/media scrutiny. Green hushing has risen as an answer to reputational threats and greenwashing criticisms.	(Cheema et al., 2025)
Developing Economies	Lack of geographical learners in the enforcement of regulations, weak stakeholder pressures, and institutional lack. Green hushing comes about due to sanctions of fear of market punishment, buyer-imposed norms, and internal company momentum.	(Klp & Shoduo, 2023)

Regulatory ambiguity and Green Hushing:

Regulatory ambiguity should be defined as the degree to which government regulations, environmental regulations, and legal mechanisms of compliance with the law affect the overall corporate behavior (Bansal et al., 2015). On the contrary, however, paradoxically, more regulatory environments, with the latter probably being the reason, can result in so-called green hushing, through which companies artificially underreport or hide their sustainability performance on the premise that they may face scrutiny, lawsuits, or exposure of non-compliance with the said regulation (Ettinger et al., 2018). This ambiguity might yield two effects: firms might opt to greenwash, overstating their sustainable performance, and others would resort to green hushing, not to engage in legal issues or make misinterpretations (Anson, 2022). It has recently been demonstrated that the lack of a strong legal defense or guidance on how to interpret environmental information can leave companies in dangerous situations where they may face reputational or regulatory backlash even when they are trying to do the right thing (Coles et al., 2017). Iranian and

Chinese import pressure (on Pakistani textile producers, e.g. European Union, USA) usually forces these firms to make sustainable efforts without necessarily disclosing them to their local audiences due to fears of being out of step with the local laws or local production norms.

H1: Regulatory ambiguity has a significant positive impact on green hushing behavior among firms.

Competitive Pressure and Green Hushing

Competitive pressure can be defined as the outside pressures of competitors in a given industry, which affect the strategic choices of a given company, including the issue of environmental disclosure. Firms are likely to adopt a specific category of differentiation, cost leadership, or reputation management as a priority to sustain or develop their market position (Ginder et al., 2021). A recent study discovered that in industries where the competition is high, there is a potential that it is in the interest of companies to conceal or under-report their environmental initiatives to ensure that their rival firms cannot copy their sustainable innovation, or use their disclosures to benchmark their performance (Christis & Wang, 2021) As an illustrative example, a company that has already achieved some success in terms of a resource-efficient manufacturing process can decide not to draw attention to this innovation to preserve its competitive advantage (Falchi et al., 2022). Companies experience high levels of price-sensitive and highly fragmented competitive pressure in the textile industries in emerging economies, and Pakistan has always been one of them. Companies can run on narrow margins, and it may be seen as a threat along the lines of transparency on the environment, as it is not always seen as a strength (including when sustainability is not a significant consumer demand or market differentiator (Montero-Navarro et al., 2021).

H2: Competitive pressure positively influences green hushing in corporate sustainability communication.

Stakeholder Indifference and Green Hushing:

Stakeholder engagement must contribute to corporate sustainability strategies. Such ignorance of stakeholders may encourage the firms to strategically omit their sustainability disclosure, a condition termed as green hushing (Thakur et al., 2023). Green hushing tends to occur in an environment where sustainability is not well known, and/or seen as not a priority by the key stakeholder groups. In these situations, companies might discover that reporting on such environmental initiatives is not of enough reputational value or that it can be confusing or repellent to the non-interest groups. This is mostly obvious in business sectors or areas where all parties involved are focused on the financial

bottom line rather than on the environment in the long run (Galli et al., 2024). Empirical studies revealed that marginal firms tend to participate in sustainability reporting when the stakeholders within whom they operate are environmentally aware, and thus, they tend to promote transparency. This is the silence of the stakeholders that adds to the industry green hushing trend, especially when there is weak consumer activism or less serious regulatory monitoring (Swestiana et al., 2022).

H3: Stakeholder indifference is positively associated with green hushing practices.

Organizational Inertia and Green Hushing:

Organizational inertia can be defined as resistance to change that dwells in the structures, routines, and cultures of firms. This inertia is likely to act against all the adaptation quickness of the organizations to the changing market anticipation, particularly when it comes to sustainability communication (Font et al., 2017). The majority of firms are being pressured to adopt transparent and responsible environmental reporting; however, they are grappling with these frustrations of firm institutions by keeping them secret or postponing them (Ettinger et al., 2021). It may then result in green hushing as the companies either underrepresent it or do not publish the sustainability activities. In the cases where communication demands cross-departmental coordination, cultural buy-in, and allocation of new scarce resources, an organization with strong inertia might prefer to stick to the status quo instead of adopting new modes of transparency that might undermine routines (Chavez-Angel et al., 2023). In companies in which sustainability was never historically a part of the fundamental business model, any green efforts in getting publicity may be open to doubt or interpersonal resistance (Barman et al., 2023). Such disclosures can face an employee, manager, or the company, and the reasons they are presented may be questioned since they are regarded as a reputation threat or a deviation from the already-established image of the company. Such an anxious internal environment may cause communication paralysis, which secondarily strengthens green hushing (Cantarelli et al., 2018).

H4: Organizational inertia contributes positively to the adoption of green hushing behavior.

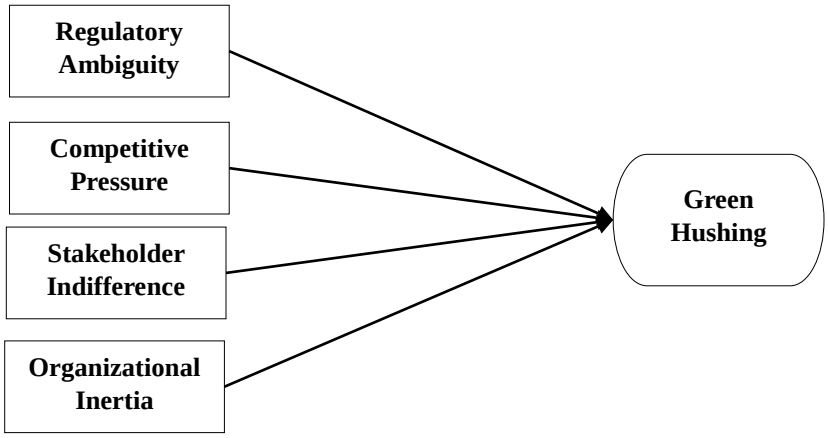

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of study.

Theoretical Framework and Research Gap:

The paper is informed by the Institutional Theory (Scott, 1987) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), to develop the emergence of Green Hushing (GH) in situations where the firms strategically keep quiet on sustainability despite internal efforts. The Institutional Theory illustrates how the structural pressures, Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), and Organizational Inertia (OI) affect the disclosure behavior. Organizations can hide information in unpredictable regulatory conditions to escape scrutiny or even being seen as liable. In comparison, the Stakeholder Theory highlights how Stakeholder Indifference (SI) is prevalent in developing economies, diminishes the incentives to report, and reputational risk can further deter open disclosure. The need for this integrative lens is supported by the evidence of emerging signs of the developing economies. The recent activity in the textile industry of Kenya highlights the institutional and awareness barriers to preventing the involvement of firms in public sustainability (Aggarwal & Kadyan, 2011). In the same line, the studies on green industrialization in Egypt note that a clear policy and harmonization of stakeholders can make sustainable transitions in industries. Based on the news related to Pakistan, it can be stated that, despite the fact that the issuance of green bonds is flourishing in the emerging markets by 34% in 2023, local industries cannot cope in the atmosphere of vague regulations and low consumer pressure, like textiles. Research on the concept of green value chains in Pakistan shows that there is institutional and structural misalignment, which may contribute to the exacerbation of the GH. GH is scarcely studied with such affiliated strands in the Pakistani textile industry, which is institutionally constrained but environmentally compulsory. The gap in this paper is that it uses both theories to introduce the interaction between RA, CP, SI, and OI to prevent transparency. The GH theorizing supposes it is one of the strategies, which is not a failure but a

situational one. It is a theoretically rich and empirically enriching method concerning the sustainability communication of the Global South.

METHODS

The research is conducted on the basis of quantitative research methodology that aims at discovering the institutional and organizational efficient features of the green hushing within the textile industry in Pakistan. To collect the empirical data, a cross-sectional survey was selected that will enable the collection of information related to the professionals who are directly engaged in the practice of environmental compliance, sustainability reporting, and corporate communication. This design was deemed to be a decent one to verify hypothesized connections and enable statistical generalization in the industry. A questionnaire that was self-administered was adopted, and this was structured and utilized to gather primary data in an effort to achieve more satisfactory results. The questionnaire was split into two categories: the first category surveyed the demographic and organizational background variables, and the second category contained measurement items that were used to measure the organizational constructs that incorporated Green Hushing (GH), Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), Stakeholder Indifference (SI), and Organizational Inertia (OI). The rating of each of the items was determined on a Likert scale of diversity (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). A purposive sampling approach was adopted to sample the mid-or senior-level professionals in medium-sized textile companies having hands-on experience with regard to sustainability projects. A total of 87% or 303 valid respondents out of 350 distributed questionnaires were received. Follow-ups, a guarantee of confidentiality, and communication of academic purposes were used to ensure that this unusually high response rate was obtained. To reduce the level of non-response bias, an early and late response comparison was done (Coutet, 2022). Analysis would be performed in SPSS (Version 26), and SmartPLS (Version 4) was used. The approach was appropriate because it was flexible in the analysis of complex models and analyses of small to medium sample sizes. The criteria were tested as parts of the measurement model evaluation: indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability (using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), convergence validity (using Average Variance Extracted), and divergent validity (using Fornell-Larker criterion and ratio of HTMT). The structural model was later tested to examine the postulated paths, which involved bootstrapping processes in the determination of the relevance of path coefficients, R^2 values, and the effect size value (f^2). The study was conducted on ethical lines. It was voluntary in participation, and all the respondents were informed.

RESULTS:

These findings, based on the structural equation modeling carried out based on Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM), elaborate on the inferences of the results on the objectives and hypotheses of the research in the study. The study was done to investigate the impact of organization and external variables, that is, Organizational Inertia (OI), Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), Competitive Pressure (CP), and Stakeholder Indifference (SI) on Green Hushing (GH).

Demographic Characteristics:

Table 2: Categories of participants in terms of demographics.

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	210	69.3
	Female	93	30.7
Type of Textile Organization	Spinning	24	7.9
	Weaving	23	7.6
	Knitting	74	24.4
	Garment	81	26.7
	Other	101	33.3
Position in Organization	Middle Management	64	21.1
	Senior Management	161	53.1
	Other	78	25.7
Years of Experience in Industry	Less than 1 year	14	4.6
	1–5 years	74	24.4
	6–10 years	163	53.8
	Above 10 years	52	17.2
Organization Discloses Sustainability	Yes	74	24.4
	No	229	75.6
Size of Organization	Small	39	12.9
	Medium	111	36.6
	Large	153	50.5
City of Organization	Lahore	10	3.3
	Faisalabad	78	25.7
	Karachi	69	22.8

	Other	146	48.2

In Table 03, we present the actual information on the demographic background of the respondents, which gives insightful information concerning the makeup of the sample. Most respondents were men (69.3%) as opposed to 30.7 of the sample, which is in keeping with the current gender ratio in the Pakistan textile industry. The representativeness of the respondents was large, capturing different groups of textile bodies, with the garment (26.7%) and knitting (24.4%) responding the most, followed by spinning (7.9%) and weaving (7.6%). It was worth noting that 33.3 % of respondents represented organizations allocated to the category of others, which implied the presence of diversified textile-related activities. Looking at their position in the organization, 53.1 % of the participants were top managers, and 21.1 % belonged to the middle level management, which means that the study was significant in capturing the perspective of key decision-makers. Most of the respondents (53-8) have between 6 and 10 years of experience in the industry, thus representing informed views. Besides, 75.6 % of the respondents indicated that their organizations did not disclose sustainability practices as a possible area of concern. In terms of the size of organization, 50.5 % of the respondents were in large organizations, 36.6 % in medium-sized firms, and 12.9 % in small businesses, thus an equitable opinion across scales. The geographical distribution indicates that the respondents were spread across different cities (meaning a good coverage across the regions), 25.7 being Faisalabad, 22.8 being Karachi, and the rest being other cities. Such a spread of demographics guarantees the relevance and generalizability of the results of the study to the Pakistani textile industry at large.

Table 3: Correlation between the variables.

Variables	1. GH	2. RA	3. CP	4. SI	5. OI
1. Green Hushing (GH)	1				
2. Regulatory Ambiguity (RA)	.645**	1			
3. Competitive Pressure (CP)	.683**	.890**	1		
4. Stakeholder Indifference (SI)	.706**	.933**	.895**	1	
5. Organizational Inertia (OI)	.678**	.982**	.881**	.913**	1

Table 04 presents the values in the correlation matrix prove that there are significant and positive correlations among all independent problems under investigation, which are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. Green Hushing (GH) has positive correlations with Regulatory Ambiguity (RA) ($r = .645$), Competitive Pressure (CP) ($r = .683$), Stakeholder Indifference (SI) ($r = .706$), and Organizational Inertia (OI) ($r = .678$) which means that, when these factors increase, tendencies of

organizations to green hushing behaviors also increase. It is worth mentioning that the strongest relation is displayed by Stakeholder Indifference towards GH, implying that the less the stakeholders are interested or concerned in sustainability disclosures, the more the firms would like to conceal or understate their green practices. Also, the intercorrelations between independent variables are extremely high, including RA to OI (r = .982) and RA to SI (r = .933), which could indicate overlapping conceptual dimensions of the variables or suggest issues of multicollinearity in the model. These results depict that there is a multidimensional relationship between organizations and the environment that leads to greenwashing in the Pakistani textile industry. The correlation matrix showed that organizational interpretation was highly correlated with others, especially with regulatory ambiguity (RA) (r = .982). To circumvent this risk, the estimation of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was conducted and determined not to exceed the critical level of 5, as multicollinearity did not ruin the structural model (Hair et al., 2022).

Measurement Model Evaluation:

Table 4: Measurement Model.

Construct	Item Code	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Competitive Pressure (CP)	CP1	0.816	0.829	0.895	0.741
	CP2	0.854			
	CP3	0.91			
Green Hushing (GH)	GH1	0.496	0.703	0.69	0.379
	GH2	0.443			
	GH3	0.506			
	GH4	0.905			
Organizational Inertia (OI)	OI1	0.854	0.857	0.903	0.7
	OI2	0.86			
	OI3	0.822			
	OI4	0.811			
Regulatory Ambiguity (RA)	RA1	0.729	0.83	0.887	0.663
	RA2	0.826			
	RA3	0.853			
	RA4	0.843			
Stakeholder Indifference (SI)	SI1	0.891	0.834	0.886	0.662
	SI2	0.86			
	SI3	0.733			
	SI4	0.761			

In Table 05, we present measurement model results, item loadings, and internal consistency reliability, along with convergent validity, which were comprehensively assessed. Most items also had an outer loading greater than 0.70, a value that was recommended to demonstrate that indicators were well related to their latent constructs. In particular, very strong loadings were identified on all items of the Competitive Pressure (CP), Organizational Inertia (OI), Regulatory Ambiguity (RA), and Stakeholder Indifference (SI) subscales, with an average load ranging between 0.910 and 0.729 in favor of the construct validity of these items. To that end, values of Cronbach Alpha (0.829 to 0.857) and Composite Reliability (0.886 to 0.903) of all these constructs were high beyond the acceptable range of most researchers of 0.70 and above, hence proving a good internal consistency measure. (Holmbeck & Devine, 2009). And also, their Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was 0.662 to 0.741, which is greater than the minimum requirement of 0.50; therefore, they met the high criterion of assurance of good convergent validity. Certain concerns were raised with the Green Hushing (GH) construct. Although the loading of one factor (GH4) was strong (0.905), the loading of the rest of the items (GH1 to GH3) was low and less than 0.50, indicating weak reliability of the indicators. This is also evident in the relatively poor Composite Reliability (0.690) and AVE (0.379), which shows that it has poor convergent validity. Nonetheless, the retention of the GH construct can still be reasonable in terms of theory, especially when GH4 reflects an essential aspect of the underlying concept. It is suggested that researchers avoid this construct in future work or re-specify it to make it psychometrically sound. On the whole, the measurement model is quite reliable and valid concerning a majority of constructs, which confirms its eligibility to be used to analyze a structural model. The factor loadings of some of the green hushing constructs were not particularly strong (AVE < 0.50, CR < 0.70). As a theoretical prerequisite, the construct was left in place, and future research was advisable to maintain it further by reintroducing it into the CFA (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 5: Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) validity.

Construct	1	2	3	4	HTMT (CP↔OI)	HTMT (CP↔RA)	HTMT (CP↔SI)	HTMT (OI↔RA)	HTMT (OI↔SI)	HTMT (RA↔SI)
1. CP	**0.827**									
2. OI	0.494	**0.896**			0.588					
3. RA	0.652	0.67	**0.882**		0.76	0.817		0.781		
4. SI	0.702	0.675	0.767	**0.888**	0.787	0.788	0.847	0.79	0.755	0.844

In Table 06, we show that both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio were used in determining the discriminant validity of the constructs. The square root of the

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct must be more significant than the correlations of a construct with others, according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The square roots of the AVE are CP = 0.827, OI = 0.896, RA = 0.882, and SI = 0.888 in this study, and all of them exceed their respective inter-construct correlations, which proves the discriminant validity. All the HTMT values were below the conservative threshold of 0.90, and the ratios of the HTMT were between 0.588 to 0.847. Particularly, the values of HTMT of CP↔OI (0.588), CP↔RA (0.760), CP↔SI (0.787), OI↔RA (0.781), OI↔SI (0.790), and RA↔SI (0.844) are close to 0, which denotes reasonable discriminant validity between the constructs. All these results can be taken as corroborative evidence that the constructs of the measurement model are empirically independent and satisfy the requirements of discriminant validity.

Structural Model Evaluation:

Table 6: Structural Model Assessment – Path Coefficients and Total Effects.

Relationship	Original Sample (β)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T-Statistics	P-Values
Competitive Pressure → Green Hushing	0.617	0.617	0.072	8.557	0.000
Organizational Inertia → Green Hushing	0.653	0.641	0.22	2.969	0.003
Regulatory Ambiguity → Green Hushing	-1.068	-1.055	0.166	6.446	0.000
Stakeholder Indifference → Green Hushing	0.657	0.655	0.096	6.845	0.000

In Table 07, we present the structural model that was assessed to examine proposed hypotheses about relationships between the latent constructs and Green Hushing. The direction and the strength of these relations can also be determined through the path coefficients (beta), and these values have t-values and p-values, which display the degree of fitting of the relationship and how significant they are. It should be emphasized that the Competitive Pressure was very strongly and positively related to Green Hushing (beta = 0.617, t = 8.557, $p < 0.001$), which implies that organizations that face increased competition in the market are more prone to hide their green initiatives, probably to ensure that they retain their competitiveness or avoid being targeted. Correspondingly, Organizational Inertia was observed to have a strong and positive impact on the dimension of Green Hushing (b =

0.653, t = 2.969, p = 0.003), which argues that inner resistance to change may block the tendency towards proactive communication about environmental protection and support silence. Green Hushing was also strongly and positively associated with Stakeholder Indifference (0,657, t = 6,845, p < 0,001), possibly stating that when stakeholder interests or demand towards sustainability disclosures are low, companies have less incentive to disclose environmental performance. Conversely, Green Hushing was significantly negatively related to Regulatory Ambiguity (beta = -1.068, t = 6.446, p < 0.001), whereby under conditions of unclear or inconsistent regulation frameworks, organizations can also choose to be more transparent as opposed to not speaking at all when they may fear being misinterpreted or having trouble conforming in the future. In general, the hypothesis was statistically significant (p=0.05), as well as all the postulated relationships, which validates the theoretical expectations and shows the overall way the internal or external motivations can interact and lead to the concept of Green Hushing in a complex manner.

DISCUSSION:

This research was aimed at examining the antecedents of green hushing behavior, whereby the roles of competitive pressure, the inertia of the organization, the ambiguity of the regulation, and the stakeholder indifference were examined about the corporate sustainability communication practices. The research question was aimed at determining whether, and how, these organizational and contextual determinants encourage the adoption of green hushing, which is a practice in which firms voluntarily underdetermine or camouflage their environmental sustainability. Both key and theoretically important relationships were found using the analysis, and this confirmed the conceptual model based on the stakeholder theory and the literature on organizational behavior.

The results confirm that the competitive pressure has a highly significant positive influence on the treatment of green hushing behavior (beta = 0.617, p < 0.001). This implies that in a very competitive market, the companies might decide to withhold or minimize their disclosure of environmental practices, perhaps out of fear of copying, social awareness, and second, reputational threat. These findings are consistent with other research studies that have stated that due to competitive forces, there can be strategic opacity regarding the communication of sustainability, especially when companies consider disclosure as a weakness (Bond & Zeng, 2022). The finding confirms the propositions that market competitiveness can definitely act as an incentive to prevent disclosure of information to the organization, not because of a lack of green initiative, but because of the pragmatism of not wanting to create exaggerated expectations among their stakeholders. Organizational inertia also showed a strong and positive correlation in green hushing (beta = 0.653,

p<0.01), and this shows that firms that are stuck in the rigid routines and conventional management structure have a high likelihood of resisting transparent sustainability reporting. This observation would support the hypothesis that deeply institutionalized norms of culture or procedure may be a barrier to the tenderness of outside pressure on environmental accountability. The previous studies confirm that organizational inertia most of the time can be a prop for innovation and flexibility to environmental standards alterations (McKelvie et al., 2017). The structure of organizations that are less agile or even lack the motivation to communicate sustainability publicly may be very rigid, and publicly may necessitate a change of structure or even interdepartmental coordination (Sahadev et al., 2022). The results substantiate the anticipation of the theoretical assumption of institutional inflexibility periodically fostering strategic silence or omission in narratives of sustainability.

Regulatory ambiguity, on the other hand, was a good negative force on green hushing. The extra observation of this negative relationship is also a hassle to the supposition that regulatory uncertainty must necessarily lead to non-disclosure. To explain further, in uncertain regulatory environments, companies can reveal more to indicate compliance or to act as an indication of voluntary adherence to sustainability preferences in the case of non-existent legal regulations (Carmo & Miguéis, 2022)The result obtained also indicates a likelihood of the more robust and clear-cut regulatory codes to be conversely effective in enhancing green hushing since the firms that have partial/non-claim disclosure have the likelihood of repercussions or increased interest being applied against them (Nair et al., 2023). Accordingly, the regulatory context has a subtle effect on the disclosure behavior, and any future policy changes should take into account how disclosing ambiguity as opposed to disclosing clarity affects firm communication strategies. The association between indifference of stakeholders and green hushing was also statistically and positively significant (0.657, 0.001), which confirmed the hypothesis that when critical stakeholders (e.g., consumers, investors, or local people) express less interest and concern over the environmental practices, the companies feel relieved to report their green efforts. Where the interests of stakeholders in having disclosure are not a major concern, organizations, in their rightful thinking, might consider expending fewer resources in the process of transparency, thus green hushing may continue to rise. This could be attributed to the stakeholder salience model of viewing firms as strategic in their responsiveness to the perceived power, legitimacy, and urgency of stakeholder claims (Anson, 2022). According to recent research, it is true that on the one hand, proactive and voluntary sustainability report in current markets is perceived as having less chance of occurrence when stakeholders are not highly involved in environmental matters (Ettinger et al., 2018).

The conceptual framework of the conducted research was premised on stakeholder theory, which presented the fact that organizations operate within the landscape of interrelationships and are extremely reliant on the demands and perceptions of stakeholders. The framework was detailed as it enabled taking into account the contextual variables that may interfere with the green hushing (the regulatory ambiguity and market competition) and internal dispositional (organizational inertia) to make it a strategic response. The theoretical framework, which comprises four independent variables (competitive pressure, organizational inertia, regulatory ambiguity, and stakeholder indifference) and one dependent variable (green hushing), was useful in analyzing the study to address different factors that can influence corporate communication behavior. This study identified a solution to the gap in the research since the results went beyond the greenwashing practices of one company and assessed organizational and environmental antecedents. Greenwashing, the false or exaggerated claims of sustainability, has attracted much of the prior literature, whereas green hushing has been neglected (Thakur et al., 2023). By diverting attention to the strategic suppression or under-reporting of sustainability activities, the current study adds new information to the understanding of the underlying reasons for selective disclosure, particularly within the context of emerging markets. Answering the research question, the research, on the one hand, proves the importance of certain organizational and contextual aspects and their role in cultivating green hushing behavior. This leads to the promotion of non-disclosure by competitive pressure, stakeholder indifference, and organizational inertia, but the ambiguity of the regulatory environment appears to mitigate green hushing, possibly present through strategic signaling behavior. The research project to investigate the causes of green hushing and add a theoretical perspective to strategic silence in the corporate sustainability communication was therefore achieved successfully, as the hypotheses were verifiable and proven through empirical research.

Conclusion:

In this research paper, the researcher explored the factors behind green hushing in the textile industries in Pakistan, one of the most problematic economic sectors in this country, and with major effects on the global environment. The article incorporates the theory based on stakeholders and a conceptual framework of four independent variables, such as organizational inertia, perceived stakeholder pressure, regulatory ambiguity, and competitive Pressure. One of the dependent variables, such as green hushing, the research aimed at explaining why organizations with active sustainable programs decide to be silent concerning the programs. The results that were justified by the structural equation modeling proved that regulatory ambiguity and organizational inertia play a significant role in green hushing, implying that green communication of sustainability is negatively

encouraged by the inflexible institutional climate and the unwillingness to change on the part of the organization. On the contrary, the perception of stakeholder pressure was identified to hurt green hushing, which proves that active stakeholder involvement encourages companies to report their environmental activities. Competitive Pressure displayed a moderate association level with green hushing, which signals the ability to make strategic communication decisions based on what is happening in the market and thinking that they will be at a market disadvantage. These insights do more than just shed light on the core research question because they also satisfy the objectives of the study by supporting all the hypotheses put forward, denoting the strength of the theoretical and the conceptual frameworks used, and adding knowledge on a major gap in the research, either in the context of an emerging economy. The study contributes to the academic study of sustainability communication since it conceptualizes green hushing as a strategic activity with context sensitivity, not to be treated as a mere oversight. In the majority of the literature, it will do so. Pragmatically, the results outline a necessity to control regulation, capacity-building, and more stakeholder involvement in order to establish more transparency. Overall, the study suggests a concept that a middle ground is needed as companies must feel encouraged and ready to disclose their actions towards the environment, and in that regard, reliable relationships, competitiveness, and sustainable operations in the textile sector could be maintained.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

On the basis of the findings given in this study, a number of both practical and theoretical recommendations appear. First, companies ought to invest in developing clear sustainability news communication tactics in order to reduce the rates of green hushing. The regulatory bodies would also make an effort to reduce uncertainty in environmental laws by providing clear guidelines for compliance and more efficient monitoring schemes. This will assist in making companies discuss freely on sustainability without reputational loss or legal uncertainty. It is possible to share knowledge through industry associations, as well as develop industry norms, which strengthen transparency rather than punish the concept of being perceived as underachievers. The stakeholders should be more involved, especially under these circumstances, whereby perceptions of non-involvement are used to suppress information. To increase the visibility and appreciation of sustainability by consumers and the local communities, firms ought to embark on education campaigns to the stakeholders, as well as put in place feedback processes. The issue of organizational inertia can be dealt with by making leadership development and change management tools a part of incorporating the issue of environmental responsibility within the company culture.

LIMITATIONS:

This study is focused on Pakistan's textile sector may limit how broadly applicable its conclusions can be. The results' completeness might have been impacted by the use of self-reported data and limited access to internal company data. Notwithstanding these limitations, the study provides insightful information about sustainability disclosure practices and organizational silence.

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