**2.Theoretical Framework**

**2.1 The rise of Ethical Fashion**

Consumers' awareness of environment-related issues and sustainability is growing in combination with their demand for ethical brands and environmentally friendly merchandise (Kong et al., 2020). Consumers, particularly those of the young generation, are becoming highly conscious around information concerning the material source of the apparel they buy (Kanchanapibul et al., 2014). They tend to search for more information about material suppliers before making a purchase to ensure that the fashion supply chain they choose to trust is ethical (Kanchanapibul et al., 2014). However, ethics and sustainability in the fashion industry are considered an oxymoron (Miotto & Youn, 2020). Apparel manufacturers are often accused of being engaged in unsustainable practices. The environmental impact of fashion industries is massive due to its inherent characteristics (Shen et al., 2014). The production process involves high water usage; pollutive chemical dyeing and preparation techniques; a high amount of waste produced during disposal; discharging of toxic chemicals and the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides (Blasi et al., 2020). Thus, fashion industries are also criticized for their fair-trade conditions, being accused of not paying fair wages and providing poor working conditions that violate human rights (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007).   
 Consumers' enlightenment about fashion industries operation conditions and the public criticism of some international brands, such as Nike and Gap, being accused of producing some of their merchandise in offshore sweatshops led to the increasement of responsible consumerism (Goworek, 2011). According to Danziger (n.d.), responsible consumerism was one of the six global consumer trends in 2019. This shift in sustainable consumption and consciousness provided the basis for the rise of ethical consumers. Ethical consumers can be identified as those who consider the impact that their consumption has on other humans, animals, and the physical environment (McNeill & Moore, 2015). Global warming, climate change, and the unprecedented times consumers experienced with the pandemic significantly increased their need to include sustainability in every part of their lives. According to Mortimer (n.d.), the latest [IAG New Zealand Ipsos poll](https://www.iag.co.nz/latest-news/articles/Climate-poll-2020.html) found that almost four out of five people (79%) say climate change is an important issue for them. An international study of 20,000 customers by grocery brand giant [Unilever](https://www.unilever.com/news/press-releases/2017/report-shows-a-third-of-consumers-prefer-sustainable-brands.html) identified one in three (33%) people were choosing to buy from brands they believe are doing environmental good. Consumers are increasingly concerned about their purchases' social impact, and they are willing to pay premium prices for ethical products (Kong et al., 2020). In response to this global interest, some brands engaged in new ethical and sustainable regulations.   
 Consumption changes and multiple media reports around fashion industries' environmental impact paved the way for the creation of an ethical clothing market (Goworek, 2011). According to Joergens (2006), ethical fashion can be defined as "fashionable clothes that incorporate fair-trade principles with sweatshop-free labor conditions while not harming the environment or workers by using biodegradable and organic cotton" (p.361). Ethical fashion is a broad concept that is used interchangeably with many other terms such as sustainable clothing, sustainable fashion, green fashion, and eco-fashion, all of them referring to conscious fashion practices (Joergens, 2006). There are various ways to identify sustainable fashion. Some of them include: textiles made by recycled materials; organic materials; transparency around materials sources and garment manufacturing; fashion that considers animal care; fair-trade fashion, and vintage fashion (Kim & Oh, 2020). However, the ethical fashion definition can be ambiguous because of its misuse by some fashion brands that define themselves as ethical while still engaged in unsustainable practices. Fashion industry has a complex supply chain that is considered less transparent than other sectors (Blasi et al., 2020). In this sector, there is difficulty in monitoring how all the suppliers work and considering all the environmental and social aspects, from fair working conditions to the garments' after-treatment and disposal.   
 From luxury to non-luxury and to fast fashion, fashion industries started to adopt sustainable techniques to reduce their environmental impact and enhance their workers' living conditions (Kong et al., 2020). Luxury brands are sometimes indistinctly perceived as synonymous with sustainability due to their timeless and high-quality products (Bae, 2019). Contrary to fast fashion brands that are engaged in mass production of affordable and trendy clothes that are not produced to be worn more than ten times (Miotto & Youn, 2020). Burberry is defined as a luxury brand. The company launched a sustainable agenda and committed to reducing its environmental impact and contributing to climate change by 2022 (Bae, 2019). Burberry publicly shared its agenda and commitments for a better future. Despite their efforts, the company encountered a backlash after the media revealed that the brand burned 38 million dollars worth of unsold garments in September 2018 (Bae, 2019), recanting their sustainable claims with their actions. Simultaneously, fast fashion brands such as H&M, Zara, and Uniqlo launched conscious collections to meet the consumers' new ethical demands. For instance, H&M, a Swedish multinational retail company, announced their commitment to transforming all the materials used in their garments into renewable ones by 2030 (Kim & Oh, 2020). However, according to The Independent (n.d.), new materials are much more sustainable than using many sustainable yarns already available on the market. As they stated, a fashion that "fast" can never be sustainable (Independent, n.d). Media are wide awake, monitoring all the efforts of fashion companies ready to detect misleading messages. To tackle the challenge of being criticized in every step, fashion companies incorporated new marketing strategies.

**2.2 The rise of green marketing**

The growth of sustainable consumption increased environmental legislation and media exposure of ecological disasters (Paço & Reis, 2012). Consumers' need for environmentally responsible industries and stakeholders' tendency to invest in green sectors led to the rise of corporate environmentalism and green marketing strategies implementation (Jain & Kaur, 2004). As defined by Polonsky (1994), green marketing refers to "all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with a minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment" (p.2). Companies can apply green marketing to positively contribute to environmental and climate change and respond to the rapidly changing consumer needs. Thus, green marketing definition is not restricted to environmental claims and packaging development. It incorporates a broader meaning that encloses all those marketing activities needed to establish and sustain consumers' green attitudes and behaviors (including brand identification, green consumer trust, and demand for green products) in an environmentally friendly way (Jain & Kaur, 2004).  
Companies may build a green brand identity in order to promote their reduced environmental impact and establish their brand as eco-friendly (Hartmann et al., 2005). The power of consumers' green purchase behavior and the dramatic increase of green product sales stimulated companies to change their marketing strategies and engage in green marketing to satisfy consumers' informational needs around green production. According to Chen (2010), there are five reasons businesses engage in green marketing strategies: to accept environmental pressures; to gain a competitive advantage; to strengthen their brand image; to pursue new opportunities, and to increase product value. A well-implemented green strategy can enhance a company's socially responsible image, making it hard to imitate (Jain & Kaur, 2004). As mentioned above, the apparel industry has been criticized for its' socially responsible behavior, having a detrimental environmental impact, and jeopardizing workers' well-being (Birtwistle & Moore, 2007; Blasi et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2014;). However, in the last decades, an increasing number of fashion companies change their business model by partly engaging in green marketing. For instance, Bartels et al. (2020) reported that global retail sales of fair trade-certified products almost doubled between 2008 and 2015, reaching 7.3 billion, while fair-trade sales in the U.S. increased by 33% in 2015.  
 The manufacturing of eco-friendly apparel is an important strategy for fashion companies as it provides the chance to obtain a competitive advantage. Eco-design can increase customers' interest and loyalty (Shen et al., 2014). According to Chan and Wong (2012), green marketing could promote eco-fashion consumption. Nevertheless, a well-structured company deems sustainability as a chance to enhance social responsibility and as a key to corporate survival (Shen et al., 2014). Long-established fashion brands, including Levi Strauss, American Apparel, H&M, and ZARA, have responded to the growing media and consumer attention around sustainability by modifying their fashion to an ethical one, introducing lines with representative collection names. For instance, H&Ms' conscious collection is a great marketing technique since the name of the collection implies a promise for reducing their negative environmental impact (Shen et al., 2014). The aim of fashion companies' engagement in green marketing was twofold: first, to advertise their environmental claims, and second, to establish their presence in the green market (Yan et al., 2012).  
 Fashion-oriented consumers are willing to pay more for ethically manufactured garments; thus, they started checking their trademarks to reassure the materials' sustainable source (Phau & Ong, 2007). This has not gone unnoticed by the retailers. To communicate their new environmental image, retailers adopted trademarks such as "eco," "green," "natural," and "organic" to describe the attributes of their products and ensure consumers that environmental legislations and responsibilities are being respected (Phau & Ong, 2007). Trademarks are labels, words, or symbols, that identify a product's source (Berrone et al., 2017). Consumers can find trademarks in almost every textile hanging in a retail store, indicating the source of their materials. However, the number of green labels increased dramatically in the last fifteen years (Gruere, 2013). Since incorporating a green trademark does not require companies to have a specific environmental quality level, sustainable and unsustainable companies can both acquire them with similar costs (Berrone et al., 2017). The increased number and diversity of green trademarks by the fashion industries raised concerns around their reliability.

**2.3 The phenomenon of greenwashing**

When some less transparent fashion brands are using trademarks such as "eco-design" or "eco-friendly", they frequently lack explicit meaning and avoid providing consumers with adequate information around the 'eco-fashion’ manufacturing process (Yan et al., 2012). Misleading claims used to overemphasize a company's environmental performance can create greenwashing concerns (Gruere, 2013). Greenwashing definition is implemented to explain a brand's dishonesty and deceptive environmental claims when indicating being green, eco, and sustainable while they are not (Parguel et al., 2008). Companies tend to adopt greenwashing behaviors due to their inability to perform based on their CSR promised actions (Y.-S. Chen, 2010). Specifically, more than 75% of the S&P 500 companies consistently share information about their environmental policies and performance on their websites. Almost 98% of products with environmental claims deceive consumers by being committed to one or more aspects of the "seven sins of greenwashing", including "sin of the hidden trade-off", "sin of no proof", "sin of vagueness", "sin of irrelevance", "sin of the lesser of two evils", "sin of fibbing" and "sin of false labels" (Zhang et al., 2018).  
 Greenwash can harm the market demand by creating consumer confusion and making them hesitant to green product purchasing (Pomering & Johnson, 2009). Eventually, consumer's green purchases will decrease. Consumer confusion is defined as "a consumer's failure to correctly interpret a product's environmental features due to information overload or poor communication between consumers and brands" (Turnbull et al., 2000, p.141). Consumer confusion can emerge from three primary sources: unlimited choice of products, product resemblance, and information ambiguity (Chen & Chang, 2013). Information overload is the main reason for the rise of consumer confusion (Chen & Chang, 2013). More specifically, too vague, too similar, and too ambiguous information can be hard to distinguish and be processed by consumers. For instance, consumers are so confused by green marketing terminology that they cannot distinguish the difference between terms such as "energy efficiency," "smart-energy," or "energy conservation" (Paço & Reis, 2012). The vast amounts of relevant information offered cannot be processed in the time available, causing confusion (Mitchell et al., 2005). Consumer confusion creates a misinterpretation of the green market and green product attributes. At the same time, consumers might appear indecisive due to the perceived physical similarity of the products available, also known as product resemblance confusion (Mitchell et al., 2005). Information ambiguity results from the misleading environmental claims conveyed through green marketing (Mitchell et al., 2005). According to Lyon and Maxwell (2011), consumers admitted that companies' claims around green products are perceived most of the time as a marketing technique, and they would distrust the green claims. As a result, greenwash may increase consumer suspicion around the reliability of green products and decrease their sales (Polonsky et al., 2010). Consumer confusion caused by some brands' greenwashing and the generalized difficulty in determining the "environmental truth" has created skepticism around green marketing (Paço & Reis, 2012).  
 Green skepticism can be defined as consumers' doubtfulness and distrust towards firms' green claims or public relation efforts (Forehand & Grier, 2003). Consumers can use skepticism as a defense mechanism to protect themselves from being victimized by a company's misleading green marketing techniques (Bartels et al., 2020). Consumer skepticism can damage green marketing's efficiency, and it may be induced by consumer perceptions of CSR (Kim & Lee, 2009). For instance, when a low CSR firm may engage in green marketing, its' environmental claims may seem to be inconsistent with the firms' existing performance reputation. This can result in consumers questioning the firm's motives and create mistrust of the brand (Kim & Lee, 2009). Increased consumer skepticism may lead to negative attitudes towards a company's green initiatives and green campaigns. For instance, according to Cone Communications (n.d.), most of the consumers respond that if they feel deceived by a company, they will punish it by boycotting a product (71%) or even all the company's products (37%). Based on other research (Bartels et al., 2020; Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2017; Vries et al., 2015), the higher the consumer skepticism levels, the less positive their attitudes, brand evaluation, and word-of-mouth intentions, and the lower the consumers' purchase intentions. Besides, Leonidou and Skarmeas (2017) found that consumer skepticism around a company's CSR initiatives can lead to a diminished intention to speak positively or even speak negatively about a brand.

**2.4 eWOM intentions.**

Green marketing has become a fascinating tool to attract ethical consumers. In the last decades, more and more firms are becoming environmentally friendly (Jain & Kaur, 2004). As a result, terms such as "sustainability," "eco," "green" are widespread and overused by industries. The overused green claims can be misleading, vague, and as a result, lack trustworthiness. Deceived consumers may engage in word of mouth (WOM) to send strong environmental messages and force companies to change their marketing strategies (Chen et al., 2014). WOM is defined as a verbal, informal, person-to-person communication about a brands' or an organizations' products or services (Zhang et al., 2018; Eisingerich et al., 2015; Chu & Kim, 2011)**.** WOM has proved to be a significant driver for consumers purchasing decisions (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004)**.** WOM is created and shared by a more trustworthy source of information (friends, relatives) about products and brands. Thus, consumers tend to trust WOM instead of the company's compelling advertising messages when searching for information about a product they want to purchase (Chu & Kim, 2011). However, there was a general swift towards e-commerce that made the traditional WOM model be replaced by eWOM (Eisingerich et al., 2015). In a nutshell, the emergence of web 2.0 provided consumers more options for collecting objective product information from other consumers and the chance to express their own experiences with a product by engaging in eWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).   
 The emergence of social networking sites (SNSs) offered companies new communication opportunities with their consumers and became a valuable platform for sharing their CSR activities (Fatma et al., 2020). According to Du and Vieira (2012), SNSs usage may strengthen CSR communication because users can easily share information with others. The SNSs that companies mostly use for their corporate communication is Facebook (Tao and Wilson, 2015). SNSs such as Facebook are a worldwide phenomenon. Facebook is considered one of the largest "news" organizations globally, with over one billion active users globally while over 50% of all users log on to Facebook daily (Gans, 2011). SNSs provided the opportunity for the rise of eWOM, which proved to be more effective than offline WOM (Eisingerich et al., 2015). With SNSs, consumers got the chance to connect with one another and the brands they support easily. eWOM communication may include non-textual communications, which can be identified by peers such as "liking" or "sharing" a brands Facebook page or post, "retweeting" a story on Twitter, as well as writing reviews or comments about experiences or opinions around a brand and its products on SNSs (Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Unlike WOM, the lack of geographical restrictions and information sharing (preferred time and speed) characterizing eWOM in SNSs, made consumers feel more comfortable sharing experiences and emotions, making the messages and the platform (Facebook) very personal (Eisingerich et al., 2015). There are a lot of reasons making consumers willing to engage in eWOM.   
 Consumers tend to gather and form online communities to exchange ideas with people who share the same interests. SNSs have transformed from a social platform into a forum where consumers share their comments and opinions about the products and the services they choose to purchase (González-Soriano et al., 2020). These comments have an impact on the purchase decision of the people who read them. Consumers may engage in eWOM because of their willingness to help other consumers with their purchase decisions, protect others from negative experiences or both (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Consumers' environmental concerns may also play an important role to consumers willigness to enage in eWOM. According to (Toti & Moulins, 2016), there is a dilema when it comes to ethics of consumption in which the issue is the perception of morality; how much consumer ethics worth to them? This means that some people may have build a stronger enviromental identity than others. More specifically, environmental self-identity refers to the extent to which someone perceives their actions as good for the environment (van der Werff et al., 2013). People with a strong environmental identity may engage more easily in pro-environmental behavior (ethical consumption) in contrast with those who have a weak environmental identity (van der Werff et al., 2013). This means that ethical consumers may be more likely to engage in eWOM when they see a post concerning sustainability or a brands’ green initiatives than consumers with less ethical or even unethical consumption habits.   
 Moreover, there are three more distinct motives for consumers to engage in Ewom: *concern for other consumers;* related to the concept of altruistic or prosocial behavior, *helping the company;* satisfied consumers willing to give the company something in return for their good experience and *social benefit*; affiliation with a virtual community, feeling of belonging (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to the *social benefit* motive, SNSs provided consumers the chance to feel that they belong in a group and enhance both their personal and social identity. Social identity theory suggests that the self-concept is comprised from personal identity (i.e., self-identity) and social identity (i.e., group membership), both used to maintain positive self-worth (Kim et al., 2018). Social identity is an important factor for the generation of eWOM while it can also influence consumers' willingness to participate in positive eWOM (González-Soriano et al., 2020). Facebook is a very personal platform, including multiple information related to social identities such as gender, age, or hometown. Having several social connections and generating the feeling of belongingness in a group made the platform a source for increased self-worth and self-integrity (Kim et al., 2018). Specifically, consumers' eWOM messages can be more valuable and helpful to consumers who share a similar social identity because social identity information is prominent on Facebook. In particular, based on the concept of social identity, similarity between the source and the receiver can enhance eWOM’s influence because people choose to connect with those similar to themselves (Kim et al., 2018). This means that when a person defines him/herself as an ethical consumer and reads a post about an honest green organization, they will probably engage in positive eWOM because it corresponds to their identity and enhances their social presence.   
 Furthermore, companies engage in CSR for many reasons, and one of them is to gain positive eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020). Companies with strong environmental performance and transparent green operations may increase consumers' willingness to engage in positive eWOM. Based on the social identity theory, consumers who identify with a socially responsible brand tend to engage in positive eWOM and share positive comments about the brand. This enhances their self-esteem and projects an ethical consumer's image (Fatma et al., 2020). Companies' engagement in CSR through SNSs provides favorable terms for consumers to assess a company's green activities and enage in conversations that may result in positive eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020). In addition, positives views of a brand's CSR activities among consumers can also lead to positive eWOM (Liu & Keng, 2014). When consumers read reviews about a brand or a product based on positive eWOM and positive social media posts, they may engage in further positive actions such as positive reactions and message sharing (Liu & Keng, 2014).   
 Conversely, when consumers see a post disclosing negative information about an organization, they will be less motivated to share something positive because it will be opposed to their already shared ethical, social image. Consumers' social behavior may be motivated by the “concern for others.” Consumers may engage in negative eWOM communication to deter or even protect their online community (consumers who share the same social identity) without expecting anything in return, only to prevent them from experiencing the same failures as they did (Fu et al., 2015). For instance, consumers may engage in negative eWOM when they feel victimized by a brand's greenwashing behavior and have read a message that provides ambiguous information about a brands’ green activities (Zhang et al., 2018). The individuals may spread the word about the brands' misleading green messages in order to warn or even deter other potential consumers from trusting the brands' green claims (Liu & Keng, 2014). Thus, after experiencing an inconsistency based on the products promised characteristics and the actual ones, they want to expose the company and feel powerful by protecting other potential consumers from falling into the same greenwashing trap. According to Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), negative eWOM can affect the way a company's brand image is perceived. In conclusion, the increasing availability and accessibility of information combined with the increasing speed they can spread created a new challenge for businesses; Web-based opinion platforms and the rise of eWOM shifted the power from companies to consumers who can now impact a companys’ performance by engaging in eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020). Based on the information above, the following hypotheses were formed:

H1: Participants that receive non-greenwashing information will have higher positive eWOM intentions than participants that receive greenwashing information and the control group.

H2: Participants that receive greenwashing information will have higher negative eWOM intentions than participants that receive non-greenwashing information and the control group.

**2.5 The mediating role of trust**

As mentioned above, in the last decades, companies seem to incorporate CSR and sustainability strategies as a tool to enhance their legitimacy and brand image (Ioannou & Serafeim, 2019). Brand image plays an important role, especially in markets where the products' characteristics are similar, such as fashion clothing. A brand image can be defined as consumers' perceptions about a brand and its product attributes (Cretu & Brodie, 2007). Based on this definition, Chen (2010) described a green brand image as consumers' perceptions around a brands' environmental commitments and environmental concerns. Green brand image has proved to be important for companies nowadays under the rise of ethical consumption demand. Specifically, by implementing a green brand image, companies can avoid potential threats such as environmental protests or eWOM punishment, but most importantly, they can respond to consumers' sustainable expectations and needs, increasing consumer satisfaction and trust. However, to promote their brand image successfully, brands should be capable of integrating their green ideas into all aspects of marketing (Kong et al., 2020). Consumers expect sustainable brands to make a long-term environmental commitment that they can keep.   
 Moreover, a brand's engagement in CSR can also enhance a brand's legitimacy by improving its environmental performance. Corporate legitimacy is defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructive system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions'' (Suchman,1995, p. 574). Legitimacy is approved only when behaviors, values, and beliefs are shared with various stakeholders, in other words, when it is transparent and responsibly shared (Miotto & Youn, 2020). Corporate legitimacy is vital for a company's survival since it provides access to resources necessary for a successful operation (Miotto & Youn, 2020). Corporate legitimacy can also foster consumer trust in the company and create a favorable perception of a brands' products and operation (Fatma et al., 2020). Trust is defined as a positive psychological state regarding the belief of an exchange party's ability, credibility, benevolence, and predictability to fulfill his/her obligations in uncertain or vulnerable circumstances (Chen & Chang, 2013). Thus, green trust is the willingness to rely on a product or a service based on the expectations resulting from its integrity, benevolence, and ability about environmental performance ( Chen, 2010).   
 Customer satisfaction is regarded as an important antecedent of trust (Chen & Chang, 2013). A buyer's overall satisfaction with a product or service he/her purchased can lead to higher trust and brand loyalty (Chen & Chang, 2013). Brands that have a strong environmental performance and incorporate transparent green actions can increase the levels of consumers satisfaction. Based on the “help the company” motive mentioned above, satisfied consumers may engage in positive eWOM to share their experiences with other potential consumers and pay off the company for their excellent experience (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). In adittion, consumers perceived quality of a product or a service is also an important prerequisite for trust (Chen & Chang, 2013). Perceived quality has a crucial role in the environmental era since consumers' perception of a high-quality product can lead to high levels of trust in the product or the brand (McKnight et al., 2004). Increased perceived quality can foster positive eWOM. This means that when companies meet consumers' environmental expectations and indicate a strong enviromental performance consumers' trust will be increased (Kong et al., 2020). Highl levels of trust can lead to positive eWOM.   
 Hilgh levels of trust can diminish perceived risk or consumers' skepticism around a company's environmental performance. However, many companies fabricate their environmental performance to increase the price and value of their products (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011). Precisely, some companies implement CSR and sustainability only as a way to enhance their image and legitimacy while continuing to produce and promote new products that encompass misleading and dishonest green claims (Chen, 2010). By exaggerating their environmental performance and their products, green quality brands can increase consumers' perceived risk (Zhang et al., 2018). When brands incorporate misleading and confusing green claims about their products’ attributes, consumers may be reluctant to trust and pay premium prices for their green products. Perceived risk can minimize both consumers' willingness to purchase a brand's products and negatively impact their attitude towards the brand leading to trust loss (Chen & Chang, 2013). For instance, consumers' satisfaction and perceived quality will be decreased when they realize that the product they purchased does not apply to their green expectations and the brand was greenwashing. Poor perceived quality and low levels of satisfaction may diminish trust ( Chen & Chang, 2013). In a nutshell, greenwashing behavior can damage consumers' trust because in case consumers realize that a green message is ambiguous or dishonest, they will feel deceived (Kong et al., 2020). Deceived consumers may engage in negative eWOM to prevent other potential consumers and exert power on the greenwashing company by exposing their actions online (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). When companies engage in greenwashing actions and mislead their consumers, the latter will not be willing to build a long-term trust relationship. Besides, consumers will embody a general distrust towards the company's environmental efforts, impede the progress towards real sustainability and lose stakeholder support in their strategies (Chen & Chang, 2013).   
 Distrust in a brand may lead consumers to speak negatively about their experience with the brand (Paço & Reis, 2012). Negative eWOM has a stronger influence on consumers' brand perception than positive eWOM (Nam et al., 2020). That means that negative eWOM can impact consumers' purchase intentions and negatively influence a brands' sales. Consumers are more likely to memorialize negative than positive eWOM information (Nam et al., 2020). However, when brands behave according to the CSR strategies, showing their strong enviromental performance and reporting their contribution on enviromental change consumers' trust will be increased. High levels of trust can encourage consumers to speak positively about a brand (Kong et al., 2020). Positive eWOM can lead to a more favorable attitude towards a brand or a product and preserve consumers’ trust in the brand (Nam et al., 2020). Based on the information above, it is assumed that trust is a mediator in the relationship between greenwashing and eWOM intentions. This information has led to the following hypotheses:

H3: The effect of greenwashing on positive eWOM is mediated by trust.

H4: The effect of greenwashing on negative eWOM is mediated by trust.

**2.6** **Conceptual Models**

**Trust  
 Mediator**

**H3**

**H4**

**H1+H2**

**positive/negative eWOM  
 Dependent variable**

**Greenwashing  
 Independent variable**

Figure 2.6.1. Conceptual model including the hypotheses.

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