

"Elevating Brands: Unveiling the Power of Corporate Social Responsibility on Brand Reputation and Consumer Behavior"

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Abstract:

In today's competitive marketplace, the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become increasingly significant in shaping brand reputation and influencing consumer behavior. This paper investigates the impact of CSR initiatives on enhancing brand image and consumer perceptions. Through a comprehensive literature review and empirical analysis, key dimensions of CSR such as environmental sustainability, community involvement, and ethical business practices are explored as drivers of positive brand associations. The study employs both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine consumer responses to CSR activities across diverse industries. Findings reveal that strategically implemented CSR programs not only bolster brand reputation but also foster consumer trust, loyalty, and purchase intent. Moreover, the research identifies nuances in consumer preferences and expectations regarding CSR, highlighting the importance of authenticity and transparency in corporate actions. Practical implications for marketers and business leaders include recommendations for leveraging CSR to build resilient brands that resonate with socially conscious consumers. By elucidating the nexus between CSR initiatives and brand elevation, this study contributes to advancing understanding of sustainable branding strategies in contemporary business contexts.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Brand Reputation, Consumer Behavior, Brand Image, Sustainability, Community Involvement, Ethical Business Practices, Consumer Perception, Trust, Loyalty, Purchase Intent, Authenticity, Transparency, Sustainable Branding, Socially Conscious Consumers

I. Introduction

In the contemporary marketplace, where consumers are increasingly attuned to the ethical and social impacts of their purchasing decisions, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a pivotal strategy for businesses aiming to enhance their brand reputation and influence consumer behavior. CSR encompasses a spectrum of initiatives through which companies voluntarily integrate social and environmental concerns into their core operations and interactions with stakeholders. These initiatives not only reflect a commitment to ethical business practices but also serve as powerful tools for brand differentiation and competitive advantage.

The significance of CSR lies in its potential to foster positive perceptions among consumers, thereby shaping brand image and influencing purchasing decisions. Consumers today are not merely concerned with the quality and price of products or services; they also seek alignment with brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment

to social causes, environmental sustainability, and ethical conduct. As such, CSR initiatives that resonate authentically with consumer values can cultivate trust, loyalty, and goodwill towards the brand.

This paper aims to explore the multifaceted impact of CSR on brand reputation and consumer behavior. Through a synthesis of current literature and empirical analysis, it delves into the mechanisms through which CSR practices elevate brand perceptions and drive consumer engagement. By examining case studies and empirical findings across various industries, this research seeks to uncover the nuanced relationships between CSR activities and consumer responses.

Furthermore, the study seeks to elucidate key dimensions of CSR—such as environmental stewardship, community involvement, and ethical governance—that contribute significantly to brand elevation. It also addresses the evolving expectations of consumers regarding CSR, emphasizing the importance of authenticity, transparency, and accountability in corporate actions.

Ultimately, this research aims to provide actionable insights for businesses aiming to leverage CSR strategically to enhance brand equity and foster sustainable relationships with socially conscious consumers. By advancing our understanding of how CSR impacts brand reputation and consumer behavior, this study contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable business practices in a socially aware marketplace.

i. Profitability Vs Sustainability

Profit is the lifeblood of any business operation. It signifies success, ensuring market survival, expansion, and competitiveness. Investors, owners, and stakeholders naturally prioritize financial gains as they seek returns on their investments. This profit-driven mindset often leads to short-term decision-making, prioritizing immediate advantages over long-term sustainability.

However, as societal awareness grows, the importance of the human aspect within corporate ecosystems becomes increasingly evident. Companies are interconnected with employees, customers, communities, and society at large. Ignoring their needs can lead to employee dissatisfaction, alienation of customers, community backlash, and damage to reputation. Moreover, ethical considerations necessitate that firms respect human rights, promote diversity, uphold fair labor practices, and contribute positively to society.

The paradigm of sustainable development seeks to reconcile the perceived conflict between profitability and societal well-being. It integrates economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship into business practices. Sustainable businesses recognize that long-term profitability hinges on the well-being of people and the planet.

These companies implement initiatives that strike a balance between economic prosperity, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship. They invest in employee development, foster inclusive workplaces, engage with local communities, ensure product safety and quality, minimize environmental footprint, and promote innovation for enduring success.

Central to sustainable development is the concept of creating shared value. Businesses align their goals with societal needs and aspirations, thereby generating value for both shareholders and stakeholders. By addressing societal challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation through core business activities, companies can open new markets, enhance brand reputation, and foster sustainable growth.

Achieving the goals of sustainable development demands visionary leadership and robust governance. Leaders must adopt a holistic view of success that goes beyond mere profit maximization, encompassing broader value creation. Boards of directors and management teams play pivotal roles in embedding sustainability into corporate strategy, nurturing an ethical and accountable organizational culture, and evaluating success beyond financial metrics.

The discourse on profit versus people transcends economic considerations, encompassing ethical, social, and environmental dimensions. While profit remains crucial for economic success, it cannot be pursued in isolation from human and environmental well-being. Sustainable development provides a compelling framework for

harmonizing economic prosperity with social equity and environmental responsibility, ensuring that businesses thrive in a sustainable future.

ii. Gandhian Trusteeship and Corporate Social Responsibility in India

Mahatma Gandhi, renowned as the apostle of peace and nonviolence, introduced the concept of trusteeship as a moral framework for socioeconomic interactions. In contemporary India, Gandhian trusteeship finds resonance in the realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), where businesses voluntarily contribute to societal welfare.

Gandhian trusteeship advocates for the equitable distribution of wealth and resources within society. Gandhi posited that individuals possess wealth not as owners but as trustees entrusted with the responsibility to utilize it for the common good. This philosophy emphasizes the moral duty of the affluent to uplift the less fortunate and address social injustices through voluntary sharing and service. It reframes wealth as a tool for serving society rather than a means for personal enrichment.

In recent years, CSR has gained prominence in India, driven by both legislative mandates and voluntary initiatives. The Companies Act of 2013 mandates certain enterprises to allocate a portion of their profits towards CSR activities. Many businesses, however, exceed these obligations, engaging in diverse CSR efforts such as education, healthcare, environmental conservation, rural development, and the empowerment of marginalized communities.

Gandhian trusteeship and CSR share foundational principles rooted in ethical conduct, social responsibility, and community welfare. Both philosophies underscore the importance for businesses to transcend mere profit maximization and contribute to the holistic development of society. Gandhian trusteeship provides a philosophical basis for CSR, framing corporate wealth as a trust to be utilized for the benefit of all stakeholders. It encourages businesses to adopt a compassionate and inclusive approach towards wealth distribution and social upliftment.

Despite the lofty ideals of Gandhian trusteeship and CSR, effective implementation faces challenges in India. These challenges include resource constraints, lack of awareness, regulatory compliance, accountability, and measuring social impact. Nevertheless, collaboration among corporations, civil society organizations, and government bodies presents opportunities to address these social concerns. Innovative approaches such as social entrepreneurship, impact investing, and cross-sector partnerships can facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals by leveraging the strengths of diverse stakeholders.

Several Indian corporations exemplify exemplary commitment to Gandhian trusteeship and CSR, setting benchmarks for ethical business practices. For instance, the Tata Group's longstanding tradition of community engagement and philanthropy embodies the trusteeship philosophy of its founder, Jamsetji Tata. Similarly, the Infosys Foundation's initiatives in education, healthcare, and rural development illustrate how corporate resources can drive meaningful social change. These case studies demonstrate the transformative potential of Gandhian trusteeship-inspired CSR initiatives in fostering equitable growth and human development.

Gandhian trusteeship serves as a moral compass for businesses navigating the complex landscape of CSR in India. Companies that embrace trusteeship principles move beyond narrow economic objectives to make a genuine impact on societal welfare. When imbued with Gandhian ideals, CSR transcends regulatory compliance to become a deliberate choice in upholding ethical values, advancing social justice, and fostering sustainable communities. As India pursues inclusive growth and equitable development, Gandhian trusteeship-inspired CSR emerges as a potent catalyst towards realizing Gandhi's vision of a just and compassionate society.

iii. Impact of CSR on the profitability of organizations in India

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a crucial component of corporate strategy, signaling a company's dedication to ethical, social, and environmental concerns. In India, CSR has gained traction driven by both regulatory mandates and heightened expectations from stakeholders. This article delves into the correlation

between CSR initiatives and organizational profitability in India, examining how responsible business practices can influence financial performance and long-term sustainability.

CSR initiatives centered around employees, such as health and wellness programs, skill development initiatives, and diversity and inclusion campaigns, play a pivotal role in enhancing employee engagement and productivity. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute innovatively and effectively, thereby boosting operational efficiency and creativity, ultimately driving profitability. Moreover, a robust employer brand forged through CSR efforts can attract top talent, reduce recruitment costs, and mitigate employee turnover rates.

Beyond bolstering internal dynamics, CSR activities help organizations mitigate social and environmental risks that could impact operations and reputation. Proactive measures to reduce environmental footprint, ensure ethical supply chain practices, and promote responsible governance mitigate the risk of regulatory penalties, legal disputes, and reputational damage. Companies demonstrating a commitment to sustainability are also better equipped to navigate market fluctuations and emerging trends, ensuring longevity and resilience in competitive markets.

Strategically, CSR serves as a gateway to new markets and investment opportunities. Companies prioritizing sustainable practices and social impact often garner support from socially responsible investors and ethical funds. Additionally, CSR initiatives targeting marginalized communities and unmet social needs can unlock new commercial avenues, expanding customer bases and revenue streams. Collaborations with governmental bodies, non-profits, and international development agencies amplify the impact of CSR projects, opening avenues for business expansion and sustainable growth.

In essence, CSR in India is not just a regulatory obligation but a strategic imperative that enhances organizational performance, resilience, and market competitiveness. By integrating CSR into core business strategies, companies not only fulfill their ethical obligations but also seize opportunities for innovation, growth, and societal impact. As businesses navigate a rapidly evolving landscape, leveraging CSR effectively can foster a sustainable future while bolstering financial success and stakeholder trust.

iv. CSR, Brand reputation, and consumer behavior

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives wield significant influence in shaping corporate reputation and consumer behavior. Companies actively engaged in CSR activities aligned with societal values and concerns bolster their brand image as socially responsible entities. In today's conscientious marketplace, consumers gravitate towards businesses demonstrating genuine commitments to environmental sustainability, ethical business practices, and social causes. Favorable perceptions of a company's CSR initiatives can foster consumer trust, loyalty, and preference, thereby influencing purchase decisions and cultivating enduring relationships.

Moreover, customers are more inclined to endorse and patronize companies that prioritize CSR, enhancing brand reputation and bolstering market competitiveness. Thus, CSR not only benefits society at large but also serves as a potent driver of corporate reputation and consumer behavior in today's ethical marketplace.

The issue of "Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Brand Reputation and Consumer Behavior" was selected for research due to its critical relevance in contemporary business environments. As consumers increasingly prioritize awareness of societal and environmental challenges, organizations must grasp how CSR activities impact both brand reputation and consumer behavior. Companies invest substantial resources into CSR initiatives to enhance their standing as socially responsible entities and attract conscientious consumers. However, the precise relationship between CSR efforts, brand reputation, and consumer behavior remains complex and multifaceted. Researching this issue statement aims to uncover insights into the effectiveness of CSR endeavors in shaping consumer perceptions, influencing purchasing decisions, and ultimately driving corporate success.

II. Literature Review

The impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on brands has been explored extensively through various lenses in recent research. Kim, H., Youn, S., & Lee, D. (2019) analyzed data from 311 college students to

identify drivers influencing purchase intentions across firms with differing CSR reputations. They found that subjective norms and perceived behavioral control positively affected purchase intentions for firms with positive CSR reputations, while attitude towards CSR, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control correlated positively with purchase intent for firms with poorer CSR reputations.

Chu, S. C., and Chen, H. T. (2019) investigated how consumers' CSR-related actions on social media impact their responses to businesses. Their study defined CSR-related actions as consumer engagement with CSR communication on social media platforms. Conducted among social media users in China, the research developed a theoretical model and experimentally explored links between CSR engagement, brand identity, and consumer behaviors such as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) intention, brand attitude, and purchase intention.

Rivera, J. J., Bigne, E., and Curras-Perez, R. (2019) examined CSR's influence on brand loyalty, proposing a model where CSR affects loyalty through brand awareness, brand attitude, and customer satisfaction. Their study surveyed 351 Spanish sportswear buyers, highlighting CSR's direct positive impact on loyalty and its indirect effects via enhanced brand recognition and consumer satisfaction.

Boccia, F., Malgeri Manzo, R., and Covino, D. (2019) explored how enterprises' socially responsible behaviors influence customer purchase decisions and willingness to pay premiums for ethically produced goods. Their findings underscored a positive association between CSR initiatives and consumer sentiment toward companies and their products, despite CSR considerations still ranking below conventional criteria like price in influencing purchasing decisions.

Muniz, F., Guzmán, F., Paswan, A. K., and Crawford, H. J. (2019) investigated the immediate effects of brand CSR communications on brand equity dimensions—awareness, perceived quality, and loyalty. Their research highlighted CSR communications as pivotal in enhancing brand equity, especially brand loyalty, underscoring its enduring benefits regardless of brand-cause fit.

Han, H., Yu, J., Lee, K. S., and Baek, H. (2020) constructed a comprehensive theoretical framework to predict consumer intentions towards socially responsible airlines, emphasizing the role of perceived CSR. Their findings underscored how CSR perceptions enhance brand attitude, trust, and consumer intentions, highlighting CSR's critical role in shaping airline consumer behavior.

Mahmood, A., and Bashir, J. (2020) demonstrated CSR's multifunctional role in transforming brand equity within the fast-food sector in Pakistan. Their study revealed that CSR moderates the relationship between brand reputation and brand equity, suggesting nuanced impacts across different CSR dimensions.

Wang, C. C. (2020) uncovered CSR's positive impact on business image, consumer satisfaction, and willingness to pay premiums. Their findings elucidated how CSR influences consumer behavior by bolstering business image and satisfaction, providing a robust foundation for future research and practical applications.

Gilal, F. G., Channa, N. A., Gilal, N. G., Gilal, R. G., Gong, Z., and Zhang, N. (2020) investigated how consumers' perceptions of CSR influence brand attachment, trust, and brand passion. Their study in Pakistan among young consumers highlighted the mediating roles of brand attachment and trust in driving brand passion through positive perceptions of CSR.

Phan, C. X., Le, L. V., Duong, D., and Phan, T. C. (2021) examined university social responsibility's effects on brand image and student satisfaction, revealing significant impacts on both university brand perception and student happiness, underscoring the importance of CSR in higher education settings.

Wang, S., Liao, Y. K., Wu, W. Y., and Le, K. B. H. (2021) evaluated how consumers' CSR perceptions influence purchase intentions through brand equity, credibility, and reputation, emphasizing CSR's strategic role in enhancing consumer perceptions and driving purchase intentions.

Nickerson, D., Lowe, M., Pattabhiramaiah, A., and Sorescu, A. (2022) differentiated between CSR activities aimed at correcting negative externalities versus those focused on cultivating goodwill, highlighting varying impacts on sales depending on CSR reputation and focus areas.

Araújo, J., Pereira, I. V., & Santos, J. D. (2023) examined CSR's impact on brand image, equity, and consumer satisfaction, using a quantitative approach to reveal CSR's indirect effects on satisfaction through enhanced brand image and equity.

Vuong, T. K., and Bui, H. M. (2023) explored how CSR components shape workers' perceptions of CSR activities, underscoring CSR's role in enhancing brand reputation and equity within Vietnamese businesses.

Ramtiyal, B., Garg, P., Johari, S., Rathore, A. P. S., and Thakrey, A. (2024) addressed corporate greenwashing's impact on sustainable consumer behavior, highlighting growing concerns about ethical practices in consumer decision-making.

These studies collectively enrich our understanding of CSR's multifaceted impacts on brands, consumer behaviors, and organizational strategies, emphasizing its growing importance amid evolving global and local business landscapes.

III. Research Methodology

The researcher has tried to understand the impact of CSR activities on the brand reputation of company. Branding and brand image is a marketing related aspect and the only way to examine the impact of CSR was to find the perception of the consumers. Further the nationalist sentiments are growing in the global scenario. So, the consumers surely may be affected by a company's CSR. For the present study the researcher has considered following objectives:

- 1- To study the impact of CSR on Brand Reputation and Consumer Behavior
- 2- To suggest the ways to find consumer behavior in favor of Brand

Research Population

The concept of CSR is affecting the people in whole country. The one who is a buyer is always have a concern that whom he is buying from. In such case every one who is a buyer could be a prospect respondent in the study.

Sample

Researchers have selected a non-probability sampling technique, convenience sampling for the present study. As the sample characteristics are not changing and everyone who is an active buyer can be considered for research so it is easy to go for the selected sampling method. The researcher has confined the geographical area of Delhi NCR for the present study. Data was collected with the help of mall intercept technique in the month of August 2023 till January 2024. Sample size for the pilot survey for questionnaire development was based on KMO test. The sample consisted 250 participants for the pilot survey.

Further with the help of Raosoft sample size calculator the researcher has found that for a confidence level of 95% and with 05 % margin of error a suitable sample for a population more than 1.5 lakhs a sample size 384 will be suitable. For the symmetry and surety of the response the researcher has selected 500 samples for the final data collection. Respondents for the pilot survey and final survey are different.

Tool for the research

Researcher needed to measure the perception of the buyer towards the brand with CSR activities. The researcher has developed a 05-point questionnaire for the study, where 01 suggested the strongly disagree for the statement and 05 suggested the strongly agree, and like wise. The questionnaire consisted 25 statements that were further considered for factor analysis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.739
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7353.410
	df	300
	Sig.	.000

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Table 3.1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

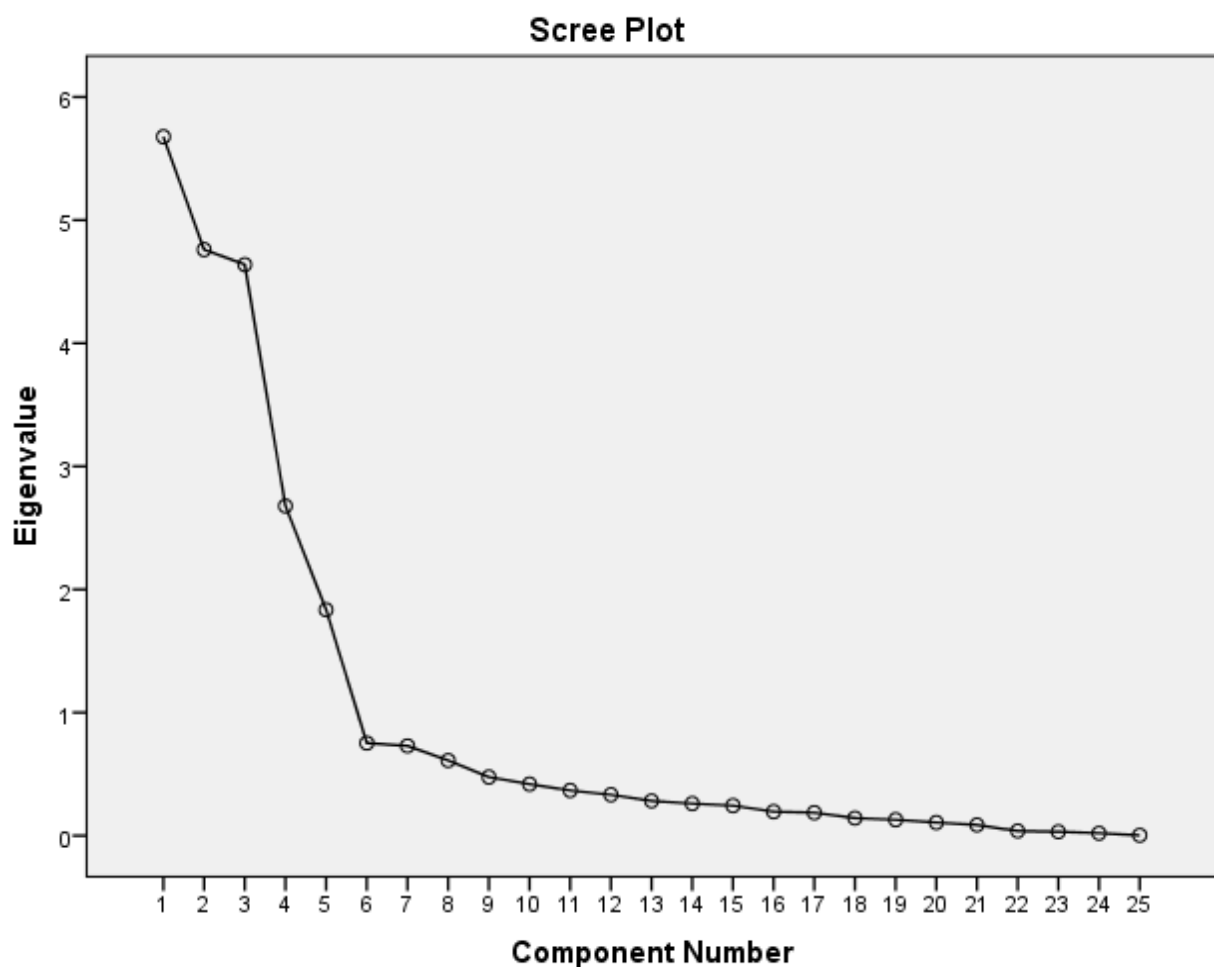
KMO and Bartlett's Test of sphericity is a measurement that data is suitable for the factor analysis of not. The present sample of 250 respondents shows the KMO value 0.739. The researchers found that Sig value 0.000 is suitable for sampling adequacy.

Scree Plot:

Scree plot have shown that there are 05 factors which have been extracted from 25 items. Those items having eigen value above 01 are considered as a factor.

Fig 3.1: Scree Plot

Source: Researchers computation for primary data



Pattern Matrix

Pattern Matrix					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
VAR00001	.936				
VAR00011	.921				
VAR00013	.906				
VAR00016	.898				
VAR00012	.862				
VAR00002		.983			
VAR00018		.979			
VAR00010		.952			
VAR00007		.889			
VAR00020		.740			
VAR00006			.916		
VAR00017			.910		
VAR00004			.850		
VAR00005			.796		
VAR00003			.771		
VAR00014				.882	
VAR00008				.860	
VAR00015				.839	
VAR00009				.749	
VAR00019				.640	
VAR00025					.865
VAR00023					.814
VAR00021			-.455		.813
VAR00022					.682
VAR00024					.613
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.					
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.					

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Table 3.2: Pattern Matrix

With promax rotation method the researchers have found that which specific item is loading on which factor. Item 21 have strong loading (0.813) on 5th factor where as a slight loading on 3rd factor too. The loading was strong with factor 5th so the item is retained in the questionnaire. Further these factors were named with the help of literature review and nature of questionnaire.

Reliability analysis

Reliability Statistics				
Cronbach's Alpha			N of Items	
.835			25	
Item-Total Statistics				
	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
VAR00001	92.5320	157.503	.536	.823
VAR00002	93.2400	165.211	.276	.834
VAR00003	92.7880	166.240	.275	.833
VAR00004	92.1240	164.487	.458	.827
VAR00005	92.7400	172.908	.077	.839
VAR00006	92.2320	161.488	.521	.825
VAR00007	93.1480	158.159	.471	.825
VAR00008	92.5120	165.424	.373	.830
VAR00009	92.6040	167.124	.268	.833
VAR00010	93.1880	165.479	.266	.834
VAR00011	92.7000	159.970	.429	.827
VAR00012	92.5400	159.663	.466	.826
VAR00013	92.6760	161.666	.379	.829
VAR00014	92.5720	171.322	.134	.838
VAR00015	92.5080	163.898	.407	.829
VAR00016	92.5440	158.972	.486	.825
VAR00017	92.6960	171.080	.203	.835
VAR00018	93.2600	164.450	.296	.833
VAR00019	92.6760	161.746	.452	.827
VAR00020	93.1680	160.976	.407	.828
VAR00021	92.1600	169.083	.215	.835
VAR00022	92.5960	158.282	.524	.824
VAR00023	92.9000	159.608	.432	.827
VAR00024	92.7120	156.423	.502	.824

VAR00025	92.7200	161.664	.466	.826
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Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Table 3.3: Reliability Statistics and Item-Total Statistics

The researcher has found that Cronbach's alpha value for the present tool is 0.835. A value more than 0.700 is considered good. For present tool the reliability fit as after excluding and of the item there is no change in reliability. In such cases where researchers have already assumed that which item is going to measure which factor, there researchers have to measure Cronbach's alpha for each factor but here it is not required.

CSR

1. I believe that Company must conduct its business in an ethical manner.
2. I think that CSR initiatives have a positive impact on the community.
3. The CSR activities must be genuine and not just for publicity.
4. Company's efforts to protect the environment make me view them more favorably.
5. I am more likely to recommend products to others because of the manufacturer's CSR initiatives.

CSR Communication

1. The company must regularly disclose comprehensive and detailed information about its CSR activities
2. I believe that 'Knowing is growing'. The more we know about the good activities of any company more we build trust for it
3. Information about the company's CSR initiatives is easily accessible
4. If I will be knowing the welfare causes of company I will get associated with them.
5. I like to be a part of any welfare campaign of companies with my possible means

Brand reputation

1. I admire the company which is consistently involve its CSR initiatives over time rather their occasional efforts
2. Reputed companies address public concerns and feedback regarding its CSR activities promptly and effectively
3. Reputed companies actively engage sustainably with stakeholders including customers, employees, local communities, and investors
4. Welfare activities by companies brings their brands closer to customer
5. Customer get an additional value of prestige while using the products of those companies which are highly engaged in social welfare

Brand Retention

1. I am able to easily recall the products of those companies which are involved in social welfare
2. Those brand which engaged in social welfare are automatically advertised
3. People keep talking about those brands which are engaged in social welfare
4. People prefer those brands whose CSR activities seem genuine and not just for publicity.
5. CSR activities leads to brand retention like any other marketing and advertising effort

Buying Decision

1. I prefer buying products of a company which have been engaged in social welfare
2. Companies with genuine CSR has higher preference among buyers than alternative brands
3. I feel a part of the value create by a company engaged in social welfare after buying its product
4. CSR activities by any company effect the brand image and attract purchase
5. I try to support those companies who are engaged in social welfare by purchasing their products

Based upon the research gap, objectives of the research, and extracted variables the researcher has developed following hypothesis in the line of problem statement:

H₀₁- There is no significant relationship of CSR with CSR communication

H₀₂- There is no significant relationship of CSR with Brand reputation

H₀₃- There is no significant relationship of CSR with Brand Retention

H₀₄- There is no significant relationship of CSR with Buying Decision

IV. Findings and Suggestions

i. H₀₁- There is no significant relationship of CSR with CSR communication

Fig 4.1: Hypothesis Testing Table-01

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Correlations			
		CSR_Communication	CSR
CSR_Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
CSR	Pearson Correlation	.369**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CSR communication involves the strategies and methods companies use to inform internal and external stakeholders about their CSR activities. This communication can take many forms, including sustainability reports, press releases, social media posts, and community engagement initiatives. Effective communication ensures that stakeholders are aware of a company's efforts, understand their impact, and feel engaged with the company's goals. Without effective communication, even the most ambitious CSR projects can go unnoticed, failing to achieve their potential to attract customers, investors, and employee support.

The relationship between CSR and its communication is multifaceted, influencing several key areas. First, it impacts stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders are more likely to support and align with companies that communicate transparently and effectively about their CSR activities. This transparency fosters trust and strengthens stakeholder relationships, crucial for long-term success. Second, CSR communication plays a vital role in shaping company reputation. However, the effectiveness of CSR communication depends largely on its authenticity. Communication that is perceived as insincere or merely as a marketing tool can lead to skepticism and could damage a company's reputation more than no communication at all. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to ensure that their CSR communication is accurate, sincere, and aligns with their corporate actions.

The relationship between CSR and CSR communication is significant and complex, with effective communication being essential to maximize the impact of CSR initiatives. This relationship is not merely operational but strategic, influencing public perception, consumer behavior, investor confidence, and employee satisfaction. Companies that recognize and capitalize on the importance of integrating CSR with thoughtful communication strategies are likely to see enhanced benefits, both in terms of societal impact and corporate success.

ii. H_{02} - There is no significant relationship of CSR with Brand reputation

Fig 4.2: Hypothesis Testing Table-02

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Correlations		CSR	Brand_reputation
CSR	Pearson Correlation	1	.368**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Brand_reputation	Pearson Correlation	.368**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has increasingly become a pivotal element in shaping the reputation of brands in the global marketplace. Today, consumers are not just passive buyers; they are ethically engaged individuals who are keenly aware of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions. As such, a company's commitment to CSR can significantly enhance its brand reputation, creating a distinctive competitive advantage. Consumer perception plays a critical role in this dynamic. In the digital age, where information is readily available and shared rapidly across social media platforms, a company's CSR activities—and any perceived shortcomings—are highly visible. Positive news about a company's CSR initiatives can go viral, boosting a brand's image almost instantly. Conversely, any failure in a company's CSR commitments can lead to significant reputational damage that can be difficult to repair. Thus, the alignment of CSR with corporate values is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity.

The significant relationship between CSR and brand reputation is evident in how consumers, employees, investors, and other stakeholders perceive and interact with a brand. A well-executed CSR strategy not only mitigates risks and fulfills ethical obligations but also enhances brand loyalty, attracts investment, and drives innovation. As global awareness and expectations on corporate responsibility rise, the integration of CSR into the core operations of a company becomes not just beneficial, but essential for maintaining a strong, positive brand reputation in a competitive market environment. This evolving landscape makes CSR an invaluable facet of modern corporate strategy.

iii. H_{03} - There is no significant relationship of CSR with Brand Retention

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is becoming an increasingly crucial element in shaping a brand's identity and its ability to retain customers in a competitive market place. As consumers grow more socially and environmentally conscious, companies that actively engage in CSR activities are finding that these efforts not only contribute to societal good but also foster brand loyalty and retention. The relationship between CSR and brand retention hinges on several key factors that influence consumer behavior and perceptions.

Fig 4.3: Hypothesis Testing Table-03

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Correlations		CSR	Brand_Retention
CSR	Pearson Correlation	1	.432**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Brand_Retention	Pearson Correlation	.432**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Moreover, in the digital age, customers are more connected and informed than ever before. Social media and other digital platforms allow customers to easily share and access information about a company's CSR efforts. Positive online discourse about a company's CSR initiatives can enhance its reputation and appeal, attracting new customers and reinforcing the loyalty of existing ones. Negative information, conversely, can spread just as quickly and damage a brand's reputation, underscoring the importance of authentic CSR practices.

In conclusion, the significant relationship between CSR and brand retention is rooted in how well a company can align its ethical practices with customer values, build trust through transparency, improve product quality, foster employee advocacy, and leverage digital platforms to enhance its reputation. In today's market, a company's commitment to CSR is not just about contributing to the public good but is also a strategic imperative for maintaining customer loyalty, competitive edge, and long-term profitability. By effectively integrating CSR into their core business strategies, companies can not only ensure sustained brand retention but also drive overall business success.

iv. H₀₄- There is no significant relationship of CSR with Buying Decision

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a pivotal factor in shaping consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions in today's market. As consumers become more socially and environmentally conscious, the role of CSR in influencing their buying choices has expanded significantly. This relationship is underpinned by the increasing demand for ethical practices and sustainability, which prompts companies to align their operations with societal expectations and environmental stewardship.

Another aspect of CSR that influences buying behaviour is transparency. Today's consumers are more informed and have greater access to information than ever before. They seek out information about how companies source their materials, treat their workers, and manage their environmental impact. Companies that openly communicate their CSR policies and practices are perceived as more trustworthy, encouraging consumers to choose their products over those of less transparent competitors.

Fig 4.4: Hypothesis Testing Table-04

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Correlations			
		CSR	Buying_Decision
CSR	Pearson Correlation	1	.464**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	500	500
Buying_Decision	Pearson Correlation	.464**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	500	500

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Furthermore, CSR influences purchasing decisions across demographics but is particularly impactful among younger consumers, such as Millennials and Generation Z. These groups are more likely to consider a company's social and environmental commitments before making purchases. A study by Nielsen indicated that nearly 75% of Millennials are willing to pay extra for sustainable offerings, highlighting the importance of CSR in engaging this key consumer segment.

In conclusion, the relationship between CSR and purchasing decisions is robust and growing stronger as societal expectations evolve. Companies that recognize and act on this trend not only benefit from increased consumer trust and loyalty but also contribute to the sustainable development of the global economy. By integrating CSR

into their core business strategies, they not only drive consumer choice but also pave the way for long-term success in an increasingly conscious market.

V. Influence on buying behaviour

The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), brand reputation, and brand retention significantly influences consumer buying decisions. In today's market, a brand's commitment to CSR transcends mere regulatory compliance and emerges as a core component of its identity and value proposition, deeply affecting its reputation. Consumers increasingly scrutinize how companies address social, ethical, and environmental issues, aligning their purchasing choices with those that demonstrate responsibility and sustainability. This scrutiny is reflected in enhanced brand reputation for companies that actively engage in meaningful CSR activities. Such companies are perceived as trustworthy and ethical, qualities that attract and retain customers, thereby improving brand retention.

Fig 4.5: Model Summary Table

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.540 ^a	.292	.286	4.39390

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR, Brand_reputation, CSR_Communication, Brand_Retention

Source: Researchers computation for primary data

Moreover, a strong brand reputation built on solid CSR practices fosters customer loyalty and can lead to repeat purchases, as consumers often prefer to associate with brands whose values align with their own. This alignment not only boosts immediate sales but also contributes to sustained market presence by fostering a loyal customer base. Furthermore, in a hyper-connected world, positive experiences and perceptions related to a brand's CSR efforts are frequently shared and discussed across social media platforms, enhancing brand visibility and attracting new customers. Therefore, CSR becomes a strategic tool, not just for risk management or compliance, but as a pivotal element of brand strategy that drives purchasing decisions, builds reputation, and ensures customer retention. Companies that recognize and capitalize on this relationship are likely to experience more robust growth, proving that good ethics and good business are inextricably linked.

V. Conclusion

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a significant factor shaping brand reputation and influencing consumer behaviour in contemporary business landscapes. Throughout this comprehensive exploration, we have delved into the multifaceted relationship between CSR initiatives, brand perception, and consumer choices, elucidating the interconnectedness and the potential benefits that accrue to businesses that prioritize ethical and socially responsible practices.

Reaffirming Brand Reputation through CSR:

One of the key findings of this study is the pivotal role that CSR plays in reinforcing and enhancing brand reputation. By aligning business strategies with ethical principles, companies not only differentiate themselves in competitive markets but also build trust and credibility with stakeholders. Consumers today are increasingly discerning, seeking out brands that demonstrate a commitment to social and environmental causes. Through CSR initiatives, companies can cultivate a positive brand image, positioning themselves as responsible corporate citizens invested in the well-being of society.

Influencing Consumer Behaviour:

Moreover, our analysis underscores the profound impact of CSR on consumer behavior. Consumers are no longer solely driven by product features or price; they are also motivated by a company's values and its

contributions to society. Research indicates that consumers are more likely to support brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment to CSR, even if it means paying a premium for their products or services. CSR initiatives not only attract customers but also foster brand loyalty and advocacy, as consumers develop emotional connections with brands that share their values and aspirations.

The Virtuous Cycle of CSR:

Furthermore, our examination elucidates the virtuous cycle of CSR, wherein responsible business practices yield tangible benefits for both companies and society. By investing in community development, environmental sustainability, and ethical supply chains, companies not only fulfil their moral obligations but also create long-term value for shareholders. CSR initiatives drive innovation, enhance employee engagement, and mitigate risks, thereby contributing to financial performance and corporate resilience. Simultaneously, these efforts have a positive ripple effect on society, addressing social issues, promoting inclusive growth, and fostering sustainable development.

Future Directions and Implications:

Looking ahead, the implications of our research underscore the imperative for businesses to integrate CSR into their core strategies. As consumer expectations continue to evolve, companies must embrace CSR as a strategic imperative rather than a discretionary activity. This necessitates a holistic approach to CSR that goes beyond philanthropy or token gestures, encompassing ethical governance, responsible supply chain management, and stakeholder engagement. Moreover, as businesses navigate complex global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and technological disruption, CSR will serve as a guiding principle for sustainable business practices and ethical leadership.

In conclusion, our investigation reaffirms the transformative power of CSR in shaping brand reputation and influencing consumer behavior. By embracing CSR as a driver of value creation and societal impact, companies can not only enhance their competitive advantage but also contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive world. As businesses embrace the principles of responsible capitalism, they have the opportunity to forge enduring relationships with consumers, build resilient brands, and leave a positive legacy for future generations. Thus, the integration of CSR into corporate strategies represents not only a moral imperative but also a strategic imperative for businesses seeking long-term success in an increasingly interconnected and values-driven marketplace.

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