



Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Brand Attitude on Purchase Intention

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Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), brand attitude, and purchase intention, aiming to understand how CSR initiatives shape consumer behavior and influence purchasing decisions. The research examines the impact of CSR activities on consumers' perceptions of a brand, focusing on how these perceptions contribute to forming brand attitudes. This study relied on primary data. A total of 61 millennial respondents were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires between June and July 2021. Statistical analysis was carried out using Smart PLS software with factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, reliability testing, and mean difference extraction. The findings reveal a positive relationship between millennial consumers' perceived social responsibilities, attitudes, and purchase intentions. It, therefore, uncovers the interaction of CSR with brand behavior and consumer preferences that could be crucial in informing and enhancing product strategy by businesses, policymakers, and experts. Further, it supports existing literature regarding the significance of customer awareness and participation in the strategy of CSR. **Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Brand Attitude, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

In the current business environment, CSR has widely emerged as an important strategy for firms to improve their brand image and relate closely with consumers. CSR includes everything that a company does to benefit society and the environment, like donations, strategies ensuring environmental protection, and many others (Huang et al., 2022). As the level of consumer awareness as to ethical standards rises and consumers begin to insist on ethical behavior by organizations, CSR becomes more essential for defining business image and managing its impact on consumers (Jung & Seock, 2016). Businesses are coming up with corporate responsibility strategies that address issues of sustainability and ethics in organizations. While organizations aim to distinguish themselves in a competitive world, knowledge of how CSR activities influence consumer decision processes, particularly in influencing a purchase decision, has become relevant (Wang et al., 2021). Purchase intention is: the number of the willingness of the consumer to patronize a particular brand in the future based on his perception of the brand, trusting his decision on the previous perceptions, beliefs, and attitude toward the brand (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023).

Brand attitude is a general evaluation of a brand that is developed based on consumers' experience and perceptions of the brand and its activities including the CSR (Carroll, 2017). Positive brand attitude is normally associated with brand loyalty and increased purchase intention. It raises more important questions concerning the effect that CSR has on brand attitude and how this might, in turn, affect purchase intention (Chen et al., 2015). Specifically, this research seeks to find out the moderating impact of CSR and brand attitude on purchase intention. It will be useful for marketing and consumer behavior theories by utilizing the understanding of CSR's role in the formation of brand attitude and the impact of brand attitude on buying decisions (Jung & Seock, 2016).

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Besides, it will present practical suggestions to enterprises that are interested in CSR as a tool for building corporate reputation and generating higher revenues. The main research question is to examine the effect of CSR on consumers' attitudes towards brands. This entails knowing the impact that CSR will have on the way consumers perceive a brand's ethics and social responsibility. Also, it will assess the role played by the attitudes developed through CSR on consumer behavior decisions. The purpose of such research is to examine the direct relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention with specific emphasis on the role of CSR activities in the formation of this attitude. Additionally, the research will also investigate whether brand attitude mediates the relationship between CSR and purchase intention, knowing that CSR activities could lead to higher purchase intention through effective communication of the brand. Then, it describes how different types of CSR activities, environmental, social, or ethical affect customers' buying decisions.

Correspondingly, the work seeks to establish how corporate social responsibility influences consumer perceptions of a brand. This question explores how different CSR activities embedded in a brand affect the perception that consumers have of the kind of company they are dealing with. How does brand attitude moderate the relationship between CSR and purchase intention? This question seeks to know if brand attitude intervenes in the process of turning CSR actions into intention to buy. In what way does consumers' purchase intention get affected by CSR activities? This question aims at finding the extent to which consumers' purchasing propensity is affected by CSR practices. CSR activities that affect consumers' willingness to purchase the brand most positively? This question establishes which CSR activities; environmental sustainability, ethical labor practice, or charity have the highest impact on consumer willingness to purchase a brand.

The importance of this study is that it creates awareness in the business world about the scenario of CSR and how it influences consumer buying decisions. Consumer ethics' continues to rise, and any organization that does not know how to manage it currently faces the risk of losing an ever-increasing market of ethical consumers. This can be of immense value to businesses as they can be in a position to design their marketing strategies with branding more in tune with the target market, given the effects of CSR on brand image and hence purchase intention. In academia, this research is equally relevant as it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on consumer behavior, CSR analysis, and branding. The study shall be of great help to the research in theory and practice by making available helpful light to investigate vital CSR activities and their influence on the purchase intention offering a better understanding on the complex relationship between entrepreneurial responsibilities, consumer perception, and buying actions. Perhaps, the results could assist the policymakers in creating responsible business behavior and responsible business practices in establishing an ethical and sustainable consumption market environment. Therefore, consistent with the continuous shifting of the business environment, knowledge of the relationship between CSR, attitude, and belief shall determine their ability to promote good business practice. So, the main purpose of this research study is to identify patterns and connections between those factors for enhancing the overall efficiency of businesses in trying to accommodate actively customers' preferences.

2. Literature Review

CSR has grown over the recent years to become one of the strategic approaches firms use to manage themselves. It may be defined as a sustained active effort by a business to initiate or maintain substantial programs in good faith and with due diligence in the ethical, environmental, and social thematic categories (Suki et al., 2016). However, considering the recent criticisms regarding the business performance effects of CSR over time and the rising consumer awareness of the physical environment and other areas of concern, the emphasis in the recent literature has been placed on the role of CSR in shaping brand attitude. Brand attitude refers to the positive and negative stand or perception that consumers have towards a given brand. The present research also shows that the attitude towards a brand is one of the

variables that explain customer loyalty, satisfaction, and buying intentions. This paper will therefore aim to examine the research articles, which have been published from 2015 to 2024, on the interface of CSR and brand attitude. Brand attitude and purchase intention are two of the most vital concepts in consumer behavior and marketing investigation.

2.1 CSR and Brand Attitude

Over the last decades, hundreds of works have been devoted to the investigation of the connection between CSR and brand attitude. The findings establish that CSR and brand attitude are positively related although this relationship differs on quite specific aspects across CSR types, perceived authenticity, and shared consumer-brand values. Consumers express trust and build an emotional connection to the brand in exchange for CSR, (Louis & Lombart, 2024) concluded that CSR would succeed in achieving a major shift in brand attitude. People would also incline themselves to brands that show concern and are concerned about social and environmental matters. They found that consumers exercise the use of claims to social responsibility when making their views concerning the ethical stance of a brand and this impacts brand attitudes. But they also pointed out, that CSR had a heterogeneous impact on brand attitude; this means that it depends on the company's past and on its perceived health in respect of CSR activities. According to (Huo et al., 2022) consumer satisfaction was posited to partially mediate the relationship between CSR and brand attitude. Positive brand attitude is given because of the notion that CSR actions are closely connected with a firm's values, and undertake business. (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2022) in his work identified that consumer interest is inclined towards those CSR engagements that are associated with the protection of the environment and the ethical comportment of a business in those industries where these themes are regarded as critical.

More emphasis was on the positive business attitudes towards brands that supported environmentally friendly activities. (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023) examined the impact of CSR activities for the luxury brand and established that CSR activities concerned with sustainability and social issues had a related and positive effect on the perceived attitudes toward luxury products for the consumer group with a high level of elaboration. (Wang et al., 2021) also concluded that analysis showed CSR environmental activities were effective in improving brand attitudes; specifically where organizations are linked to the environment. While charitable donations and community development programs will always be useful, none of these will be as effective here unless they are highly relevant to the brand. As found by (Arachchi & Samarasinghe, 2023) CSR programs related to sustainability and social justice have become highly sensitive concerning consumer preferences, especially with the younger population. When these customers are aware that a particular brand is identifying important concerns encompassing climate change, or racial equity, among others, it is expected that positive brand attitude will develop.

***H1:** Corporate Social Responsibility has a positive effect on Brand Attitude.*

2.2 Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention

Brand attitude means the judgments that a consumer forms about a given brand. This is an organization's attitude that it has towards a consumer decision which is positively linked to a consumer's choice of purchase or otherwise. Further, the results demonstrated that positive brand attitude would result in higher brand loyalty, consumers' advocacy of the brand, as well as purchase intention. (Vu et al., 2022) noted that consumer attitudes are the determinants of brand equity that are central to consumer decision-making. In the case of purchase intention, (Gong et al., 2023) indicated that perceived attitudes toward the brand are a function of beliefs about the brand and the evaluations of these beliefs. The research has revealed the link between brand attitude and the purchase intention. For example, Park, Eisingerich, and Pol (2013) observed that consumers' positive affect towards brands increases their purchase intentions and repeat purchase, respectively. Further, (Quezado et al., 2022) underlined that brand image plays a critical role in brand perception, or attitudes which affect consumers' behavior. Overall, (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021) clarified that the connection between attitudes towards brands and purchase intention is very close in the

classes of high involvement products which are called as high-involvement products and low involvement products. In other words higher order information processing take place for involving products and lead to stronger and more stable attitude responses towards these brands and buying intentions. Lack of sensitivity to price influences moderates the relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention. (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2022) came to know that when the price sensitivity of consumers is high, the impact of brand attitude on purchase intention is low. They might have adopted a positive attitude towards the brand yet they avoid purchasing it at this price since it is fairly expensive compared with other brands.

H2: *Brand Attitude has a positive effect on Purchase Intention.*

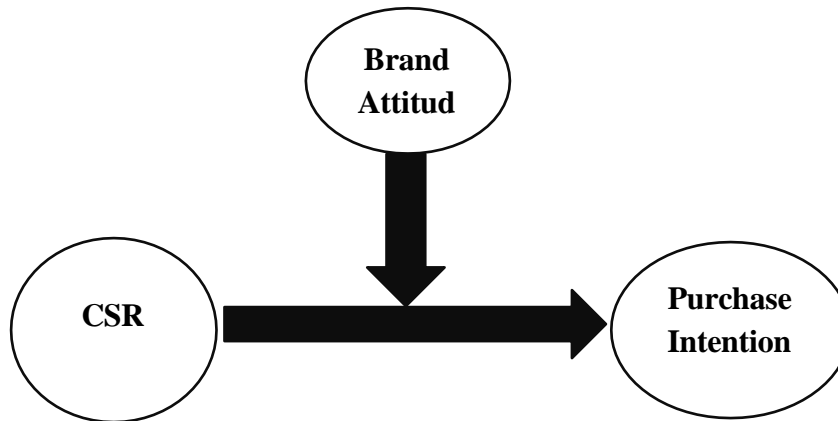
2.3 Brand Attitude as a Mediator between CSR and Purchase Intention

Brand attitude has been viewed as a moderator between CSR and purchase intention CSR is now being discussed in the following paper. Several studies have shown that CSR has a strong direct relationship with the perceived quality of the brand because when consumers make positive judgments about CSR activities, those judgments will impact their attitude toward the brand when purchasing its products. (Nguyen-Viet et al., 2024) agreed with this assertion, pointing out that CSR influences purchase intention through the mediating variable of brand attitude. Their research revealed that global social responsibility improves the consumer's perception of the brand hence likely to buy. The authors found that CSR activities enhance the favorable image of the brand and enhance consumer attitudes. Therefore, this kind of attitude enhances the quality of consumption that is focused on the company's social and ecological responsibilities among those individuals. Also, other research studies show that CSR influences category brand attitude in mediating purchase intention. For instance, (Amankona et al., 2024) concluded that CSR has a benefit of brand image and trust which has impact on consumer attitude.

According to their studies, they established that the perceived benefit of CSR leads to a positive consumer attitude, thereby creating a positive attitude to the brand's buying intentions. (Herrador-Alcaide et al., 2024) also revealed that there was a positive relationship between CSR and brand attitude while an indirect positive effect of CSR on purchase intentions passed through a positive way via brand image and consumer trust. In a study done jointly by (Quezado et al., 2022), the authors sought to establish a relationship between CSR and purchase intention, with the finding being that brand trust had the ability to mediate this relationship. Consequently, the studies of the authors demonstrated that CSR activities influence the customers' beliefs regarding the believable and credibility of the brand, which creates positive dispositions that facilitate purchase intentions. Among the influential studies, the (Hua et al., 2024) showed the influence that CSR has on brand attitude and the subsequent impact on the consumers buying decision. What they discovered was that; company CSR activities were perceived favorably in their eyes, hence they were in support of the brand and intended to purchase the products. Therefore, this work emphasized the role of brand attitude in explaining the CSR-buying behavior link. (Gong et al., 2023) focused on luxury goods only where they knew that CSR has a positive influence on brand image with a consequent influence on attitude towards brands and therefore purchase intention. According to their study, CSR has an association with the consumer's perception of a certain brand and perceptions are vital when it comes to consumer buying intentions.

H3: *From the current findings, it can be concluded that brand attitude plays the mediating role on the relationship between CSR and purchase intention.*

2.4 Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

The following sub-section presents the step-by-step process of the research work carried out in this research paper. On its conduct, it spells out the relevance of the study's geographical context, research information sources, explicit and implicit data to be gathered, sampling methodology, and approaches to data gathering and analysis used in the study. As a result, a deductive approach to survey and statistical analysis was used to assess the levels of CSR, and brand behavior concerning the electronic cigarette purchase intention. The target population will be chosen through random sampling to make sure that the participant is a true representation of the population in terms of age, gender, income level, and geographical location. To analyze this data questionnaires were administered to the selected candidates. It sought information about the perceptions of participants regarding CSR activities, their sentiments towards brands, and purchase behavior. This encompassed both closed-ended questions based on the Likert-scale, additional answers, and demographic parts. Besides survey research, experimental methods were employed to control factors associated with CSR and brand behavior. These were used to present to the participants different CSR communications scenarios/stimuli in which brands engage at different levels. This sort of approach enabled control of these variables and observation of the impact made on participants' perceptions of the brands and their purchasing decisions.

The data that will be gathered from the survey will be tested for relationships between the exposures and responses by users of statistical methods including but not limited to regression analysis or structural equation modeling (SEM). The impact of CSR initiatives on brand attitude will be measured with regression analysis; the influence of mediating and moderating variables in the relation between CSR, brand attitude, and purchase intention will be examined with structural equation modeling. It is also important to note that ethical issues will always be observed while conducting the study. All participants will be informed about the study and their right to anonymity and confidentiality will be observed fully. Moreover, any a priori and ex-ante interests will be declared and shall not taint the research results. This also includes its limitations like sample size, self-reporting, and the physical possibility of the results as more research is done. These matters will be dealt with in particular with concerns to sampling techniques, data analysis, and reporting our findings about these complexities.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 Respondent demographics

Items		
Age	Frequency	Percentage

18-24	30	49.0
25-34	18	29.0
35-44	10	16.4
45-54	2	3.3
55 and above	1	1.6
Gender		
Male	24	47.5
Female	32	52.5
Education		
Primary	0	0
High school	4	6.6
College	18	29.5
University		
Postgraduate	30	49.2
PhD	5	8.2
Employment		
Employed	25	41.0
Unemployed	6	9.8
Student	7	11.5
Retired	13	21.3
Other	16	16.4
Income		
Less than 50k	22	36.1
Less than 100k	10	16.4
Less than 150k	21	34.4
Less than 200k	2	3.3
Less than 250k	6	9.8

The study involved subject from all age bracket of people. The biggest share, accounted for 49.0% of the sample, were in the age group of 18 to 24. In the second place, the respondents of 25-34 years' age group made 29.0%, the respondents of the 35-44 age group – 16.4%. Other ages were; 45-54 years, 3.3%; 55+ years, 1.6%. Participants included slightly more female individuals; among the respondents, 52.5% were females while 47.5% of the participants were males.

Respondents appeared to have diverse education levels though most had attained higher education levels. In more detail, 29.5% of participants had college or university education and half of the sample (49.2%) had postgraduate education. A further 8.2% had got a PhD and 6.6% stated they had done high school. In addition, none of the participants reported having a primary level of education. Consequently, the sample included participants who

were affiliated with different employment statuses. Of the total respondents, 41.0% said they had a job, a further 9.8% were jobless; 11.5% said they were a student. Members of the retired age group were 21.3 % of the sample while another 16.4 % fell in the ‘other’ employment category which could mean various employment statuses of the participants. 50(36.1%) reported an annual household income of \$50,000 or less; 16.4% reported an income ranging from \$51, 000 to \$100, 000; 34.4% reported an income of \$101, 000-\$150, 000. A relatively lower number responded to higher income; 3.3% within the range of 151k-200k and 9.8% with an income above 200k.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Error	Kurtosis	Error
AIV	61	1.00	5.00	3.4754	0.89529	-0.428	0.306	0.315	0.604
AIV2	61	1.00	5.00	3.5705	0.86088	-0.480	0.306	1.297	0.604
ADV	61	1.00	5.00	3.4918	0.91037	-0.189	0.306	0.364	0.604

Table 3 Factor Loadings

Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Perceived CSR		0.873	0.032	0.89529
IV11	0.333			
IV12	0.672			
IV13	0.656			
IV14	0.616			

IV15	0.509			
Brand attitude		0.877	0.227	0.86088
IV21	0.536			
IV22	0.650			
IV23	0.520			
IV24	0.600			
IV25	0.707			
Purchase intention		0.909	0.534	0.91037
DV1	0.699			
DV2	0.655			
DV3	0.650			
DV4	0.594			
DV5	0.776			

The research was carried out to establish the relationship between CSR and brand attitude with purchase intention, with a view of providing a clear understanding of the complex system existing in the current business world. The findings help to understand obligations, perceptions, and attitudes to a brand or specific products or services' purchase.

Fig 2 Factor loadings, path coefficient and R-square results (PLS-algorithm)

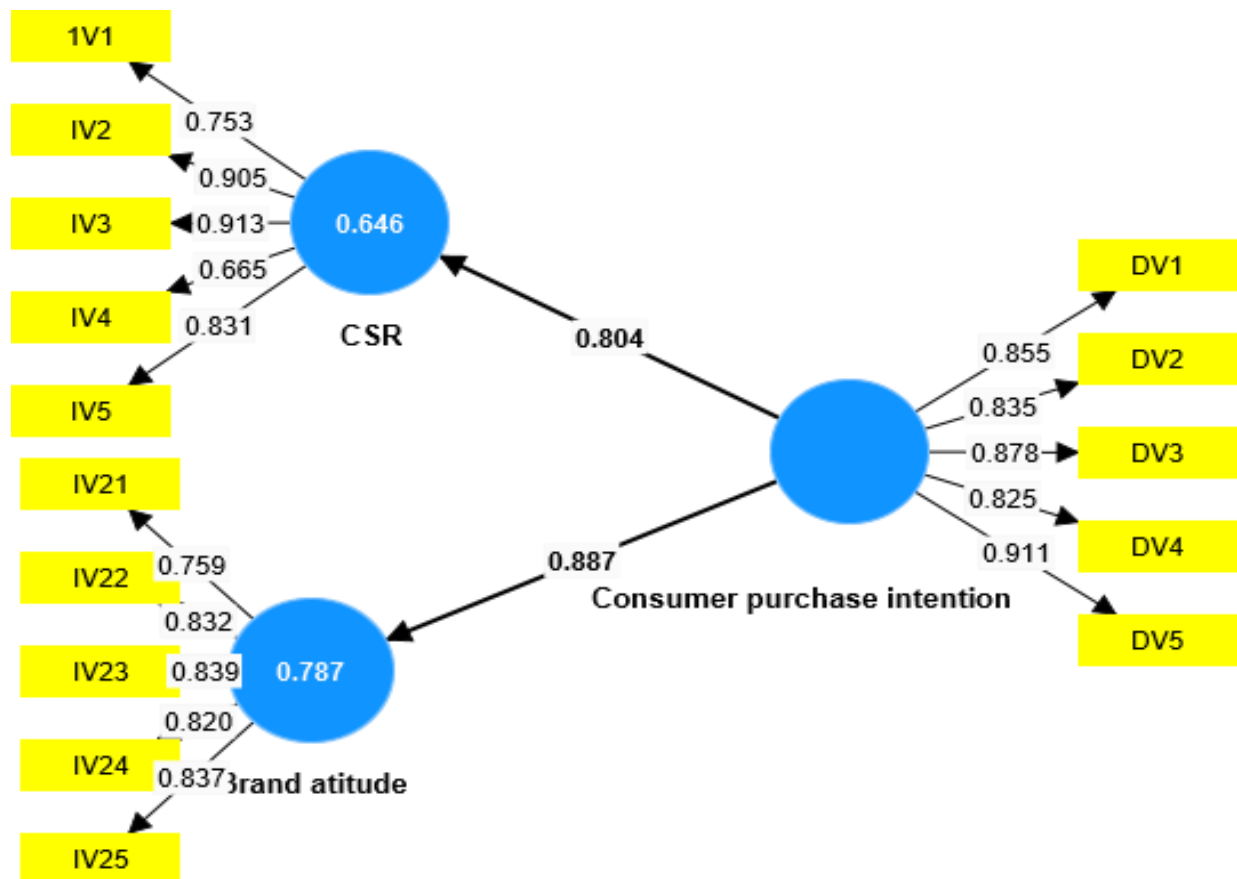


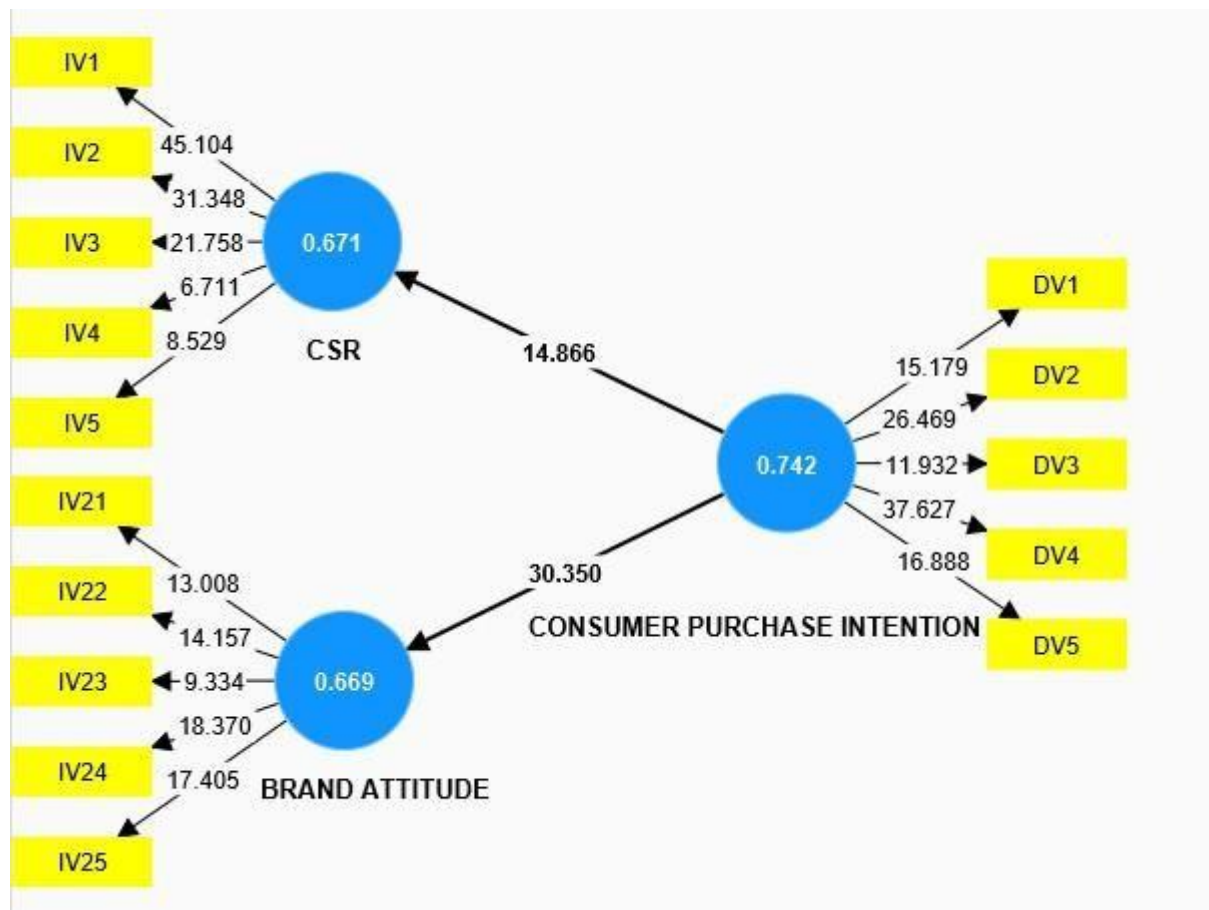
Table 4 Discriminant validity (HTMT)

Constructs	IV1	IV2	DV
CSR	0.893		
BA			
CPI	0.988		0.8887

Table 5 Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Beta	T	Sig.
CPI>BA	0.264	7.201	0.000
CPI>CSR	0.264	2.823	0.007

Fig. 3 Bootstrapping results with inner model *t*-values



Overall, the analysis presented in the study supports the hypothesis that CSR has a highly significant relationship with purchase intentions. As consumers become more conscious socially they prefer the products of the companies that do business in a socially responsible way. Firms that engage in CSR activities, for instance, environmental and charities are perceived more positively by patients, hence, patients are willing to buy the products. This increases the importance of the inclusion of CSR into the business models to strengthen the brand image and consumers' market pull. Besides, the study focuses on how brand attitude can create a bridge between CSR and purchase intention. Consumer's perception of a brand and their emotional attitude toward it are key determinants of their buying decision. Perceived brand quality, trustworthiness, and ethical behavior have a direct impact on overall consumers' buying disposition. Centrally, consuming from socially responsible brands not only creates deeper and longer-lasting relationships with consumers through heightened emotional appeal, but they also confer lasting purchase intentions. Furthermore, the research examines the interaction of CSR and brand attitude on consumer's purchase decisions. These findings signal that CSR communication and actions that reflect and align with consumer values when engaging with brands will be mutually reinforcing with brand attitude which in turn will enhance purchase intentions. When brands communicate their CSR activities and appear sensitive to the needs of society and the environment, then consumers are likely to develop a closer relationship and make a purchase.

5. Conclusions

To answer the research questions and provide a detailed analysis of CSR and customer attitudes, this paper presents a mixed-method approach. The findings will add to the existing scholarship on consumer behavior and CSR and provide actionable recommendations for firms that are interested in improving their reputation in the market. It particularly focuses on exploring the issues of CSR communication, brand image, and purchase behavior intention of the millennial consumers in the Sri Lankan FMCG industry. Results show that CSR activities have a positive impact on consumer behavior and drawn from this study it is

apparent that social responsibility and environmental protection must form part of organizational strategies. Also, the interaction of brand facets requires that positive affective states be created among consumers, although major issues that affect their knowledge must be considered concerning minor problems that influence their responses to CSR initiatives. In conclusion, this research offers recommendations for managers, policymakers, and researchers, and offers a framework for enhancing reputation, customer relations, and business endurance in the corporate environment today.

5.1 Implications

The implications of these findings are quite profound for business strategy. The establishments that tend to take corporate social responsibility and try to develop their brand reputation are likely to gain a competitive advantage within the market. The conduct of business within the notion of social responsibility and environmental management creates customer markets of conscious consumers and customers as well as brand advocates in the long run. Introducing long-term and short-term global and local CSR programs combined with enhancing brand equity and customer outreach efforts can result in real positive changes including increased sales, market share, and company success. The findings accruing from this study are therefore informative to multiple stakeholders. First of all, companies can benefit from the implementation of CSR measures. It not only strengthens the firm image but also increases consumers' appeal towards even the social responsiveness aspect to give a competitive edge. Therefore, there is a need to appreciate how CSR and brand perception intervene in the buying processes to foster deep consumer relationships. In this way, the opportunities for adaptation to consumers' values by changing the message content and products will foster brand and business-superabundant bonds for the long term. Furthermore, the illumination of CSR activities plays a critical role in being a competitive advantage since brands in similar product categories get to attract customers who have consideration for CSR practices. Organization strategic investments in CSR are crucial in improving the perceived brand image, and consumer purchase decisions. Organizations that embarked on social responsibility, may derive benefits in terms of improved sales and market share. The study also underscores a need for cross-cultural consumer characteristics in the implementation of differentiated CSR strategies appealing to global customers. These findings can be useful to form an efficient system of regulation that will promote the desired changes, so that, industrious and responsible behavior will be beneficial for business and society. Thus, CSR should be managed as a strategic business issue and the improvement of favorable brand associations would result in positive impacts to both the society and organization shareholders in the long-term, thus creating the much-needed sustainable future. Some of the key implications of this study for businesses, consumers, and policymakers arising from this study include the following:

Future Research Directions:

This research provides valuable insight into the ways CSR and brand attitude have an impact on purchase intention, among other directions one could take for future research. Longitudinal studies could look into how CSR initiatives foster consumer behavior and purchase intention over time. In addition, cross-cultural studies might investigate differences in consumer perceptions of CSR and the effects on purchase intention, depending on varying cultural contexts. Moreover, experiments could be used to delineate the mechanisms linking CSR, brand attitude, and purchase intention, thus yielding an understanding of consumer decision-making processes. In general, these findings highlight the necessity to incorporate CSR into business strategies and create favorable attitudes regarding a brand to promote purchase intentions and sustain business growth in an increasingly socially conscious marketplace.

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