

EFFECTS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A MARKETING
STRATEGY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) conceptualised as a multidimensional strategic marketing capability on behaviour of consumers within the United Kingdom. It specifically examines the effects of perceived CSR on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and the customer's purchase intention and the mediation role of brand likeability. The research design is pragmatic philosophy, mixed methods sequential explanatory design, which includes a quantitative approach (i.e. survey, 300 participants in the UK) and a qualitative approach (i.e. 10 individuals are interviewed). Quantitative analysis through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) results showed that ethical, environment and philanthropic CSR dimensions have a significant and positive impact on customer satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention. Brand likeability emerged as a partial mediator, which points to the role of this variable as an emotional bridge between CSR perception and behavioural outcomes. Furthermore, authenticity and brand-causer fit were found to bolster these effects and confirm the importance of credible and congruent CSR communication. The qualitative results complemented these results by revealing the way consumers interpret CSR authenticity and connect it to brand identity and personal values. The study concludes that CSR is most effective if embedded in corporate identity and communicated in a transparent manner. Theoretical implications strengthen CSR's place in stakeholder and relationship marketing theories, whereas managerial implications highlight authentic and well-aligned CSR practices that can generate consumer trust as well as competitive differentiation. Overall, the research adds to the existing literature on CSR as a value-creating mechanism for increasing consumer engagement and long-term brand equity.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has within this time period transformed into a fringe-level philanthropy to a market-facing and strategic competency to a point of core branding, communication, and value provision (Aksak, Ferguson and Duman, 2016; Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). This change has been brought about by the level of stakeholder questioning, digital visibility, and the growing transparency of social and environmental issues that affect consumer attitudes and buying behavior. In the contemporary global market, CSR is no longer viewed as a voluntary corporate act, but rather, it serves as a key signalling and relationship-forming mechanism, which determines the satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intentions of consumers in terms of assessing brand authenticity, ethical trustworthiness, and social contribution (Latif, Perez and Sahibzada, 2020; Nguyen, Melewar and Chen, 2023).

Strategically speaking, CSR has now been centralized at the nexus point between creating value to stakeholders and competitive advantage. With modern consumers increasingly aware of environmental and social responsibility, the companies are increasingly relying on CSRs like ethical sourcing, community development, climate action and employee welfare to not only do good but also compete well. These campaigns positively influence trust and affective relationships that stabilise the market demand, rationalise higher prices, and create positive word-of-mouth promotion (White et al., 2019; Lombart, 2024). This change is part of a broader change in marketing as a transactional interaction to a relationship-oriented approach in which the meaning of brands and corporate behaviour are assessed jointly (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). In this regard, the theoretical basis of incorporating CSR into the marketing strategy is offered

by Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984). The theory assumes that organisations must not only serve shareholders but also all stakeholders such as customers, employees, communities, and the environment, which means that firms must balance profit motives against ethical and social needs (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). Authentically revealed and communicated CSR actions of a company may greatly contribute to perceived quality, build brand associations, and customer loyalty, which are of critical importance and determine brand equity as proposed by Aaker (1991) and subsequently affirmed by Chaudary and Ali (2016).

Nonetheless, the behavioural advantages of CSR are not predetermined or pre-established. The interpretation and reaction of consumers to CSR initiatives are quite varied, depending on the industry, culture and demographics. One situation can make purchasing intention stronger when the same CSR initiative is practiced because it seems to be aligned with the operations of a particular company, credible, or even sincere in another (Latif et al., 2020). Credibility is a key ingredient in determining such outcomes. As long as CSR is authentic and used in a way that is compatible with corporate values, it also creates positive consumer attitudes; however, when it is perceived to be superficial or deceptive it may lead to mistrust, hypocrisy accusations, and negative reputations (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). This scepticism can be associated with the so-called greenwashing, in which companies inflate their social or environmental action to gain a marketing benefit. Increased prominence of social media has sharpened this dynamic with consumers having potent means to scrutinise and publicly challenge corporate assertions (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). This implies that authenticity and transparency are not just the desirable ones, but rather the prerequisites on which CSR would yield positive behavioural reactions.

CSR affects the consumer behaviour in various psychological directions. First, a cognitive aspect exists wherein CSR promotes the impressions of reliability, product quality and decreases risk. When they identify a brand with ethical conduct or environmental friendliness, consumers can assume that it is a trustworthy company that would probably become a provider of better value (Velte, 2022). Second, the affective mechanisms of CSR also stimulate positive emotions, e.g., admiration, pride, and empathy, which enhance emotional bond and brand liking (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). Likeability, in its turn, moderates the association between CSR and the behavioural consequences, as consumers tend to support a brand that they are emotionally attached to. Third, CSR has a normative impact as it is correlated with the personal values and moral norms of consumers, according to which they believe that their purchases help to do a higher good (White et al., 2019). This correspondence strengthens the consistency of identity in which consumers gain psychological satisfaction through the advertisement of socially responsible brands. These processes tend to play off each other: a believable environmental program, e.g., can be seemingly created to produce cognitive trust, emotional admiration and moral approval, producing greater satisfaction, loyalty and repurchase intention.

One of the components of CSR is ethics responsibility that is especially influential. Companies that uphold equity in labour, personal privacy, and honesty in communication build moral legitimacy that boosts consumer trust (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). The more consumers believe that a company is of ethical nature, the more they tend to place positive explanations on its actions and willingness to show good would to its products or services. Studies indicate that ethical CSR contributes to brand credibility and perceived trustworthiness to a significant degree, which results in future customer relationships and an increased readiness to pay premium prices (Audiastuti et

al., 2020; Velte, 2022). Another crucial dimension is environmental responsibility, which would be associated with the way organisations address their ecological footprint in terms of such activities as reduction of emissions, sustainable packaging, and the use of renewable energy. The campaigns have great appeal to the ecologically-conscious consumers who are more likely to use the brands that match the values of sustainability in relation to the environment (Sun and Huang, 2020). It has been shown that an increasingly high percentage of consumers worldwide, in particular, millennials and Generation Z, are ready to make changes to their consumption habits and spend more to acquire sustainable brands (White et al., 2019). This has led to the growth of green marketing where CSR plays the key role in brand differentiation and consumer choice. However, the environmental assertion is the most questionable to affect, and the appearance of the inconsistency of words and actions may hurt the brand reputation and cause a consumers backlash (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015).

The third dimension is economic and philanthropic responsibility which is related to the way organisations spend their resources and profits in the interest of the wider society. These are good pay, good taxation, community investment, and philanthropy. Though not as noticeable as environmental or ethical practices, such initiatives help in creating favourable consumer perceptions by showing corporate citizenship and compassion. Many types of philanthropic CSR, including educational support or poverty reduction initiatives, can be very emotionally charged and lead to strong affective brand loyalty (Mittal et al., 2018; Russo and Granata, 2019). As a case in point, such brands as TOMS Shoes and The Body Shop have established their long-term customer loyalty by establishing programmes that have linked the purchasing behaviour to the social impact. Nonetheless, researchers warn that transparency and equity should be the pillars of any economic or philanthropic CSR since the lack of consistency between philanthropic

behavior and unethical practice at the company can cancel out the positive effects (Stobierski, 2021; Khaveh et al., 2022).

The ability of CSR to influence consumer behaviour can also be explained by using the behavioural theories. According to the expectancy-value theory, behavioural intentions of consumers are influenced by how they expect the outcomes to be and the value they assign to it. Customers who feel that purchase of socially responsible brands is a good addition to the society are most likely to have repeat buying and word-of-mouth (Sun and Huang, 2020). In the same vein, the theory of planned behaviour shows that attitudes towards CSR, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control interrelate to make the purchase intention (Chaudary and Ali, 2016). CSR makes behavioural commitment towards responsible brands indirectly by influencing attitudes and strengthening pro-social norms. That is why, the CSR-oriented businesses tend to have a greater customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, especially when their activities are viewed to be aligned with the values of consumers.

However, there is conflicting academic evidence on the behavioural impacts of CSR. There is some evidence that CSR and customer loyalty are strongly positively correlated (Latif et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023), whereas in other studies, it is argued that price, quality, and convenience still prevail in the purchasing decision, particularly in price-sensitive markets (Amankumar, 2020). These contradictions suggest that the problem of contextual moderation of CSRbehaviour relationship exists i.e. the cultural values, economic conditions and product type may have a moderating effect. As an example, communities that are collective would be more receptive to community-based CSR, but cultures that are individualistic may be more concerned with ethical openness and agency (Latif et al., 2020). On the same note, the effect of CSR on the luxury and necessary goods is significantly different, and consumers of the high-quality goods tend

to demand more socially accountable norms as a brand status symbol (Nguyen et al., 2023).

The digital age has also transformed the impacts that CSR has in consumer perceptions and behaviours. Real time disseminating messages about CSR through social media and interacting with the consumers: Social media allows to interact with the consumers in real-time and disseminate information about the brand and other companies concerned with CSR. The digital narrative, influencer relationships, and images of the impact can now serve as the means through which companies can humanise their CSR activities and build trust (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). But also the same digital visibility makes one more exposed to criticism. Consumers demand transparency, information release, and measurable results instead of abstract phrases or meaningless gestures. Brands that are not able to live up to these expectations risk being called tokenism or CSR washing. These dynamics were increased during the COVID-19 pandemic when consumers started focusing on corporate empathy, safety of employees, and community resilience (Shankar, 2024). Companies that exhibited actual interest in the well-being of the stakeholders throughout the crisis, like the focus on the protection of frontline workers, or funding of pandemic relief efforts, were rewarded with a new wave of customer appreciation and loyalty, and it is an example of how CSR is becoming an ethical and a strategic compulsion.

Here, CSR has not only become a reputational instrument, but is also a long-term relationship value creation instrument. The companies can boost the brand credibility, emotional attachment and consumer advocacy by incorporating ethical, environmental and philanthropic concerns into their marketing processes. However, the extent of effectiveness is based on authenticity, cultural congruence, and regular communication. CSR when considered as sincere and aligned with brand identity reinforces cognitive as

well as emotional judgment of a brand, resulting in an increased level of satisfaction, increased loyalty, and purchase intention. On the other hand, it may negatively affect brand equity and destroy trust when it is seen as opportunistic or inconsistent. This two-fold possibility points to the need to conceptualize CSR as a stratified strategic practice that can be informed by various internal and external issues.

Hence, the following research paper attempts to critically assess the relationship between CSR as a multidimensional marketing strategy and consumer behaviour. It pays attention to three interconnected behavioural outcomes, namely, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention, and studies the brand likeability as an intermediary. The research work has implications to theoretical and practical fields through merging the stakeholder theory with the consumer behaviour theories as well as by investigating the affective and cognitive processes of CSR in a modern digital space. It is in this perspective that CSR is examined beyond being a moral requirement, but as a strategic differentiator that, when performed in an authentic manner, brings about a mutual value to both the business and the society.

1.2 Research Problem

Although managerial confidence on CSR is general that it pays, the evidence on the strength and stability of its behavioural impacts is inconsistent. The research often claims the positive relationships between CSR and purchase intention, satisfaction, and loyalty (Latif et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2023). Nevertheless, conflicting results suggest that conventional choice drivers such as price, product quality, convenience might outshine CSR, particularly at low-involvement category or when economies are experiencing economic-related stress (Amankumar, 2020). This inconsistency implies that the effects of CSR are conditional on a number of moderators (e.g., consumer values,

cultural orientation, sectoral relevance) and mediators (e.g., trust, brand likeability, perceived authenticity), which are not theorised and tested with equal consistency in the available research (White et al., 2019).

One of the key issues is that of attribution and authenticity. Consumers recognize CSR behavior when they are convinced of genuine, material, and brand-congruent promises. They punish companies in cases of impression management or incongruency between communication and business practice that they notice (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). However, numerous studies confound the exposure to CSR and the impact of CSR, without disaggregating the potential reasons behind consumer reaction to the initiatives, whether it aligns with brand identity, or whether it derives credibility of the communication. As a result, there is a lack of specification regarding whether CSR has direct impacts on behaviour or is primarily a relational affect (e.g. brand likeability and trust).

The gap is enhanced by methodological limitations. Cross-sectional, self-report surveys with a high risk of common-method variance and social desirability bias are extremely common in the literature (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). Then there are less studies that triangulate behavioural data or test mediation models that factor in brand likeability, despite the fact that likeability is hypothesized between CSR perceptions and approach tendencies, as well as between CSR perceptions and repeat patronage (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). Generalisability is also limited by contextual differences: hospitality CSR focuses more on the community and employee welfare; automotive focuses more on environmental responsibility; finance focuses more on governance and ethics- each with varying implications to consumer relevance and response (Audiastuti et al., 2020; Velte, 2022).

Concisely, managers are not provided with a clear evidence-based information regarding how CSR affects major outcomes and under which circumstances CSR investments would lead to marketing returns- purchase intention, satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy. Scholars, in their turn, demand integrated models that establish a relationship between Stakeholder Theory and behavioural constructs (brand likeability, perceived authenticity) and, moreover, test these relations with the help of suitable controls (product/price/quality) so that they would not over-attribute the effects of CSR (Chaudary and Ali, 2016; Latif et al., 2020).

1.3 Purpose of Research

This study aims at critically assessing the impacts of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a multidimensional strategic marketing capacity on consumer behaviour in terms of customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intention and to examine whether brand likeability mediates such impacts. The paper acknowledges CSR as a moral or philanthropic duty rather than a competitive marketing tool that can manipulate consumer attitudes and behaviours by appealing to the emotional and cognitive facets. By doing that, the study aims to go beyond descriptive associations and offer a theoretically justified and empirically validated explanation of CSR functioning in the marketplace when credibly communicated and as relevant to the brand image (Nguyen et al., 2023; Al-Haddad et al., 2022).

This investigation is informed by the fact that CSR has developed into a supporting business activity to a core component of corporate strategy that has the capacity to directly influence consumer perceptions and choices. The new generation of consumers does not only judge products based on the functional advantages or the price, but rather on the ethical and social impacts. Consumer need to know more about

transparency, sustainability, and authenticity has increased CSR to be one of the determinants of the brand equity and buying intention (Latif, Perez and Sahibzada, 2020). Nevertheless, the influence of CSR is not universal and automatic. Its success lies in the manner in which the consumers understand and internalise the CSR messages, the perceived good intentions of a firms actions as well as the emotional appeal of a firm actions. This paper thus aims at unraveling these interrelationships with the aim of giving a whole picture on the role of CSR as a marketing tool that can help in achieving both relational and transactional effects.

This research design is based on the multidimensionality of CSR. It recognizes the fact that the concept of CSR is not a unitary construct but consists of different dimensions, such as ethical, environmental, and economic or philanthropic, each of which can be more or less salient and relevant to different consumer groups and market environments (Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). Ethical CSR is a type of practice connected to honesty, fairness, respect of the stakeholders, including data privacy, the removal of child labour, and transparent communication. Environmental CSR includes those initiatives that concern sustainability, including minimization of carbon emissions, recyclable packages, and green innovations. Economic and philanthropic CSR aims at fair economic operations, community investment and philanthropic activities that lead to the improvement of welfare in society. Conceptual and measurement differentiation of these strands are to be aimed at by the study, to have a better sense of how these dimensions of CSR influence consumer perception and behaviour. The same method would enable the research to determine which dimensions of CSR are more influential in creating customer satisfaction or loyalty more than the rest. As an illustration, the younger and sustainability-minded customers might be more affected by environmental

responsibility, and the older or community-oriented customers might be more affected by ethical or philanthropic CSR (White et al., 2019).

The second principle that would be used in the study is exploring mechanisms explaining how CSR influences consumer behaviour. The current literature has built the fact that CSR affects customer attitudes, but the processes involved are usually underexplored (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). In order to fill this gap, the current study takes into consideration brand likeability as an affective intercessor amid CSR and consumer behavioural outcomes. Brand likeability is the extent of emotional closeness and favorable emotion that a consumer has with a brand, which displays warmer, trust, and admiration (Huyen, 2020). As soon as consumers believe that the CSR activities of a company are authentic, sustainable and profitable to the society, these perceptions evoke positive feelings that increase brand likeability. This emotional reaction is converted into approach behaviours like purchase re-use, brand recommendations and resistance towards persuasion by competitors. Thus, the choice to model the brand likeability as a mediating variable would help the study to reveal the psychological processes by which the CSR perceptions can be converted into actual behavioural intentions.

Moreover, the research recognizes that the effects of CSR do not exist in total exclusion with the conventional marketing parameters including the quality of the product and fairness of prices. These are the aspects that are considered as the primary sources of consumer satisfaction and adherence (Nguyen et al., 2023). Nevertheless, CSR has the capacity to enhance these classical determinants by enhancing positive brand relationships and decreasing perceived risk. As an example, where a brand proves to be ethical in its sourcing or environmental responsibility, consumers can make an assumption of greater quality of the product or corporate trustworthiness. On the other hand, when the CSR communication seems to be contrary to the operational reality of the

brand, it can produce cognitive dissonance and reduce the perceived value as well as emotional attachment. The appreciation of this interaction enables the study to create a balanced analytical approach which places CSR in the overall marketing mix effectiveness, as opposed to a factor that determines consumer behaviour independently.

The third principle that would inform this research is that of authenticity and brand-cause fit, which is an important prerequisite to CSR to produce desirable results. Authenticity is defined as the perceived honesty and truth of the CSR programs of a company, and brand-cause fit is the extent to which a CSR project fits with the business values and functions of a company (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). Consumers would react better to CSR activities that seem to be natural extensions of the brand identity rather than attempts to exploit the social trends. As an illustration, the campaigns initiated by an electric car company such as Tesla that are focused on environmental campaigns are seen as believable as these campaigns are supported by the mission statement of the brand to facilitate a sustainable mobility. However, the same allegations by a company that is allegedly damaging the environment may be viewed with a grain of salt. Authenticity of CSR also predetermines its power to produce an emotional response; when a program is sincere, it would create empathy and admiration; on the contrary, when the program is a farce, it may cause cynicism and even hostility. This paper thus considers authenticity and fit as situational mediators that mediate the intensity of the impact of CSR on satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention.

Furthermore, authenticity is a key component in reducing the risk of greenwashing, which is a trend in which businesses oversell or manipulate their social or environmental promises to be used in the marketing strategy. The studies show that in cases where consumers find inconsistencies between CSR messages and real-life behaviour, their trust decreases dramatically, and the word-of-mouth becomes negative

and the brand image is ruined (Velte, 2022). Therefore, the communication of CSR should be convincing, but also clear, supported by evidence, and long-term. The study would attempt to bring in the consumer perception of authenticity by encompassing measurement indicators of perceived honesty, transparency, and brand-cause congruence. In this way, it gives theoretical debates on credibility in CSR communication an empirical aspect.

These three guiding principles combined, that is multidimensionality, mechanisms, and authenticity, inform the design and analytical framework of the study. They make sure that CSR is studied not as the homogenous or symbolic one but as the multi-strategic construct which is subjected to the dynamical interaction with consumer cognition, emotion, and behaviour. The study also aims at producing practical implications of the practitioners by determining which dimensions of CSR have the largest effects on leading to satisfaction and loyalty, how emotional involvement via brand likeability mediates the impact and when CSR communication is able to attain credibility and trust. Such an interdisciplinary methodology enables the research to fill the gap between theory and practice in the marketing discipline, serving the scholarly and practical demands of the discipline.

Simply put, this study goes beyond the oversimplified belief that CSR would automatically convert to consumer goodwill. Rather, it makes CSR a complex marketing tool, the effectiveness of which depends on the conditionality of multidimensional interaction, emotional appeal, and credibility of authenticity. It is hoped that the findings would help extend the stakeholder theory by introducing the construct of affective and behavioural to it, and at the same time it would provide a practical road map that managers may use in developing CSR initiatives that create long-term relationships with consumers. In critically analyzing the concept of CSR as a multidimensional

strategic marketing capability, the research paper undertakes to offer an in-depth perspective into how ethical, environmentally and philanthropically oriented practices can be translated into quantifiable consumer deliverables, in the sense of developing not only reputational value to the firms, but also sustainable value to the society in general.

1.4 Significance of Study

1.4.1 Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, this study contributes CSR- consumer behaviour research in three factors. First, it combines Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) with the brand equity and affective processing views by directly modelling the brand likeability as a moderator of the CSR perceptions and behavioural outcomes (Aaker, 1991; Huyen, 2020). Whereas previous research tends to appeal to trust or attitude towards the brand, likeability is a parsimonious affective construct that stretches into the warm glow created by values-congruent CSR performed in an authentic way (Audiastuti et al., 2020; Latif et al., 2020). Second, the research predicts the multidimensionality of CSR and explains why various CSR dimensions (ethical, environmental, economic/philanthropic) can vary in predicting satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intent among consumer groups (Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). Third, it is answering the call of more causal pathways, as it differentiates between the direct and indirect (mediated) effect of CSR and the conditioning value of authenticity and fit (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; White et al., 2019).

Taken together, these contributions make theory more specific; they clarify the conditions in which and how CSR is a marketing lever, not a universal determinant of positive effects, but a situation-specific power that has to be credible and material and identity-congruent to be transformed into behavioural value.

1.4.2 Practical Contribution

To managers, the research offers them an effective framework to plan, rank and communicate CSR programs that have a better chance of generating marketing returns. By illuminating the mediating role of brand likeability, it recommends how to create CSR stories and experiences that would strike an emotional chord without boasting or burying key value drivers (quality of products, fairness of prices). It also identifies the CSR strands that are most diagnostic to various audiences, e.g. environmental commitments to younger, future-oriented segments, community/employee wellbeing to service contexts, it assists marketers to segment and target CSR messages more efficiently (White et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). Lastly, it can assure that firms do not fall into greenwashing pitfalls and reputational risk by focusing on authenticity and brand-cause fit (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017).

1.4.3 Policy Implications

Market actors are becoming more popular among policymakers in efforts to promote the objectives of sustainability and social inclusion. Guidelines and incentive schemes to promote substantive CSR (e.g. disclosures on materiality, impact, and supply-chain practices) and to discourage performative claims that mislead consumers can be informed by clarifying the CSRbehaviour nexus (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). The results of this research can be utilized by regulators to enhance the transparency criteria and consumer education on sustainability labels and claims to increase the average credibility of the CSR communication and encourage fair competition of genuinely responsible companies (Velte, 2022; Khaveh et al., 2022).

1.4.4 Relevance to DBA Candidates

In the case of DBA students and practitioner-scholars, this project is an excellent example of excellent problem-driven research that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. It shows how the firm can deploy well-established theoretical anchors (Stakeholder Theory, brand equity) to build testable models which have a direct relationship in relation to marketing investment decisions, communications strategy and managing customer portfolio. Furthermore, the measurement clarity of the study (multidimensional CSR, brand likeability) and behavioural (satisfaction, loyalty, purchase intention) outcomes of the study provide a repeatable construct to base evidence-based decision-making in brand stewardship and sustainable growth efforts (Chaudary and Ali, 2016; Latif et al., 2020).

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

1.5.1 Research Aim

- To critically evaluate how the strategic use of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in marketing influences consumer behaviour, with a specific focus on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention.

1.5.2 Research Objectives

- To assess the extent to which CSR initiatives impact consumer purchase intention in different market contexts.
- To examine the effect of CSR on consumer perceptions of brand satisfaction.
- To investigate the relationship between CSR initiatives and the development of customer loyalty.

- To analyze the mediating role of brand likeability in the relationship between CSR and consumer behaviour outcomes—namely satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention.

1.5.3 Research Questions

- To what extent do Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence consumer purchase intention across different market contexts?
- How does CSR affect consumers' perceptions of brand satisfaction?
- What is the relationship between CSR initiatives and the development of customer loyalty?
- How does brand likeability mediate the relationship between CSR and consumer behaviour, specifically satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention?

Chapter II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, critical synthesis has been done on the available literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a market-facing competence and its influences on consumer behaviour namely customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention. Based on the strategic re-positioning of CSR as marginally peripheral philanthropy to a combined aspect of branding, communicating, and value creation (Aksak, Ferguson and Duman, 2016; Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Lombart, 2024), the review questions the nature of CSR and its current perception and how it is turned into behavioural performance. This chapter uses the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), as one of its fundamental perspectives, and associates it with the brand equity arguments that perceive quality, association, and loyalty as the means of achieving better performance in the market (Aaker, 1991; Chaudary and Ali, 2016).

The review is based on the marketing-based definition of CSR which expands the scope of responsibility beyond the shareholders to all the parties and anticipates that social and environmental resources were stewarded (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). It then matures into a multidimensional perspective, which is ethical, environmental, and economic/philanthropic since consumers would process various CSR cues through different cognitive, affective, and normative pathways (Fojerstam, Hulick and Kull, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). Ethical responsibility has a tendency to strengthen the trust and moral legitimacy; environmental responsibility connects with future-focused values and is also very sensitive to the threat of greenwashing; economic/philanthropic responsibility tends to evoke the empathy and helps to support brand likeability, though without

effectiveness in case of inconsistent core practices (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Velte, 2022; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015; Russo and Granata, 2019).

One of the main issues is the question of CSR and its effect on behaviour. The chapter places the concept of brand likeability at the centre of the affective processes transforming CSR perceptions into approach tendencies to stabilise preference and soften post-purchase dissonance, as well as trust and perceived value (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020; Latif, Perez and Sahibzada, 2020). Simultaneously, the review emphasizes that the application of CSR does not replace key value drivers, namely product quality, price fairness, and convenience and, therefore, it should not be over-attributed (Nguyen, Melewar & Chen, 2023; Chakraborty & Jha, 2019). The online space enhances both the positive and negative possibilities: by telling the truth and using evidence, one can spread it faster and promote it, whereas any difference between claims and actions is quickly punished (Al-Haddad et al., 2022; White et al., 2019).

There are two types of boundaries that frame the synthesis. Credibility conditions, which are perceived authenticity and brand-cause fit, serve as growth or nullifying forces within the influence of CSR (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). Further effect size and direction calibration is offered by contextual conditions, namely, culture, category, and consumer sustainability orientation (Latif et al., 2020; Sun and Huang, 2020). The chapter thus focuses on cautious operationalisation of constructs (multidimensional CSR; likeability and attitude are not the same), correct controls (quality, price), and the explicit mediation and moderation modelling.

The review concludes with an integrative model and testable assertions in line with the research questions of the study CSR has direct effects on satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention; mediating effect of brand likeability; and the reinforcing effect of authenticity and fit. The chapter offers the theoretical framework of the methodology and

analysis that follow by aggregating scattered results into a consistent framework and offers a rigorous foundation of managerial interpretation of CSR as a strategic marketing leverage (Velte, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2023; White et al., 2019).

2.2 Conceptualising CSR as a Market-Facing Capability

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has undergone a radical transformation in the past twenty years, both in the form of a marginal act of charity and as a market-facing capability, a strategic tool that helps companies to create, communicate, and generate value (Aksak, Ferguson & Duman, 2016; Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Lombart, 2024). Traditionally, CSR initiatives were not tied to profit generating operations at all, and they were usually a charitable donation operation or a community programme that were not part of the core of the strategy of the firm. Nevertheless, the process of globalisation, digital transparency, and changing the expectations of stakeholders have gradually changed the definition of CSR as an organisational capability that has to offer both realistic business and social results (Latif, Perez & Sahibzada, 2020).

CSR nowadays is a process of becoming aware of the stakeholders expectations, placing the material social and environmental concerns at the centre of operations and marketing, and reporting the progress to the stakeholders in an open manner (Nguyen, Melewar & Chen, 2023). With this process, CSR produces realistic brand signals which minimize information asymmetry between firms and stakeholders, increasing consumer trust towards the ethical orientation of the brand. With the decline of the quality-price competitive parity between industries, the differentiation is turning into the intangible resources of trust, reputation and authenticity (White et al., 2019; Al-Haddad et al., 2022). CSR thus turns out to be an area of relational and reputational advantage, it turns the moral obligations into market assets.

Stakeholder Theory is the best way to explain the normative basis of CSR in marketing (Freeman, 1984). In this view, the firms are considered to be embedded networks of relationships among various constituencies of firms such as customers, employees, suppliers, investors, communities, regulators as well as the environment each with legitimate claims on firms behaviour (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). Based on this, value creation is not confined to the shareholder profit to include the well-being of the society. By balancing CSR activities with the expectation of the stakeholders, companies strategically meet their ethical responsibilities, at the same time developing forms of goodwill that enhances brand equity (Aaker, 1991). In this context, CSR would be a relationship ability, not a cost centre: it would help to increase perceived brand quality, create positive associations and enlist customer loyalty, the main factors of long-term competitiveness (Chaudary and Ali, 2016).

Nevertheless, it is important that alignment and credibility are pre-conditions. CSR programs that seem to have no relation to the identity of a firm or do not match its operations threaten to be rejected as irrelevant or even manipulative (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). This has been heightened by increase in social media which allows consumers to judge the corporate behavior in real-time and with frustrating numbers. Firms that are seen to act in greenwashing or as symbolic adherence receive backlash which can undermine brand trust worse than not having a CSR programme at all (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). As a result, the real integration, in which social and environmental principles are integrated throughout the strategy, supply chains and communications, has become the key to the realisation of the marketing potential of CSR.

Conceptually, CSR may be considered both as a normative commitment, as ethical duty to the society, and as a competitive resource, as relational capital that distinguishes brands in the saturated markets (Lombart, 2024). This duality enables CSR

to serve as a defensive (guaranteeing legitimacy and licence to operate) and offensive (additional value propositions as well as loyalty of the stakeholders) strategy. Well-placed CSR programs are a pointer of moral leadership, integrity, and empathy, which serve contemporary consumers as decision heuristics as they decide between brands of similar quality or prices (White et al., 2019).

2.3 CSR Definitions, Scope and Marketing Relevancy

The lack of agreement in the definition of CSR in the scholarly community shows that the concept has roots in economics, ethics, and management. Marketing-wise, CSR can be perceived as voluntary incorporation of social and environmental concerns in corporate strategy to generate mutual value to firms and stakeholders (Chakraborty & Jha, 2019). This meaning goes beyond compliance and philanthropy and focuses on responsible stewardship of the collective resources. According to Chakraborty and Jha (2019, p. 429), CSR is the act of considering beyond the shareholder and to include all parties involved and giving back or sustaining resources where the same is accrued, so that CSR is a way of favouring altruism over materialism.

Empirical literature is constantly associated with positive organisational performance indicators like and brand equity, customer satisfaction, and market share, which are associated with CSR (Nguyen et al., 2023; Rathore, 2023). As evidence, Velte (2022) substantiates that CSR initiatives also increase brand awareness, corporate credibility, trust, and preference, thus strengthening brand loyalty. In consumer-focused perspective, CSR is a perception of corporate plans and honesty - two essential preconditions of trust and quality of relationships. Once customers find some congruence between the values that the company claims to uphold and the behaviour that they can observe, they conclude that a company is honest and benevolent, which increases

relational continuity (White et al., 2019). On the other hand, the discordance of promise and practice may cause moral dissonance, which destroys the involvement in the long-term (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017).

CSR marketing relevance is thus anchored on its capacity to affect brand meaning and consumer evaluation process. The symbolic associations formed in advertisement, packaging, or corporate communication in the form of stories of CSR supplement the functional attributes of the product. These associations increase brand equity with emotional and ethical aspects that distinguish one brand among others in parity markets (Nguyen et al., 2023). In addition to that, post-purchase attitudes, such as satisfaction and advocacy, supported by CSR participation, help to create a positive word of the mouth and customer lifetime value (White et al., 2019). In that way, CSR functions throughout the marketing funnel, including the formation of awareness and consideration, as well as retention and advocacy, which proves its role as a core marketing skill, but not some marginal ethical behavior.

2.4 CSR and Expected Consumer Effects Dimensions

The literature is united around three prevailing dimensions of CSR, ethical, environmental, and economic / philanthropic (Fojerstam, Hulick & Kull, 2022). Each dimension has a specific set of expectations of the stakeholders and evokes a different set of cognitive and emotional reactions in consumers. These nuances are crucial in unravelling the role CSR plays on behaviour.

Ethical Responsibility

The question of ethical responsibility is based on fairness, integrity, and respect to human rights when it comes to all interactions with the stakeholders (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017). Some of them are to provide workers with safe working conditions, remunerate

them fairly, safeguard customer data, and engage in open communication. Ethical CSR deals with what can be considered as minimum morality by consumers. Stobierski (2021) contends that ethical legitimacy is achieved by organisations as a result of proactive compliance with legal standards as well as moral standards that go beyond regulatory compliance. When companies behave ethically, consumers attribute positive intentions, and this boosts trust, which is one of the elements of brand equity and relational exchange (Velte, 2022). Unethical practices, in turn, lead to reputational crises which may negate decades of brand-building, like in the case of scandals in the banking and technology industries (Fojerstam et al., 2022).

Environmental Responsibility

Environmental responsibility means the work of an organisation to reduce its environmental footprint of a sustainable production and consumption approach (Hayes, 2021). These involve minimization of greenhouse gases, recycling, investing in renewable energy, and sustainability of biodiversity (Sun & Huang, 2020). Consumers are also giving companies that show their stewardship of the environment, more rewards; researchers have found that millennial and generation Z consumers are more attracted to brands that publicly pledge to their sustainable aspirations (White et al., 2019).

Environmental CSR is however very sensitive to credibility. Greenwashing, or perceived hyperinflation of environmental statements, may backfire and destroy trust (Rodrigues & Borges, 2015). Consequently, companies should strive to have a sense of authenticity by being transparent and third-party verified. Achieving this as a marketing concept, environmental activities suggest a sense of innovation, responsibility, which attracts the future based self-concepts, and lessens guilt related with consumption.

Economic and Philanthropic Responsibility

Economic responsibility is also not about profitability but about fair value allocation and responsible financial behavior. Philanthropic responsibility is frequently embedded in the economic aspect and is a voluntary donation to societal good in the form of education, health, or poverty-reduction programmes (Amsami et al., 2020; Mittal et al., 2018). These efforts create sympathy and respect, which create emotional attachment to brands (Russo & Granata, 2019). Nevertheless, these activities can only enhance brand value when it is in line with fundamental ethical and environmental activities (Stobierski, 2021; Khaveh et al., 2022). Philanthropy that is not tied to operational integrity can be seen as a form of paying back or hypocrisy. It has been found out that multi-dimensional CSR, in which ethical, environmental, and philanthropic duties are combined, has greater impacts on brand equity and brand loyalty than single-program initiatives since it implies holistic integrity (Al-Haddad et al., 2022; Velte, 2022).

All these dimensions enable customers to make overall evaluations regarding the ethical nature and social value of a company. Each of these layers plays its own role: ethical CSR leads to trust being built, environmental CSR to admiration, philanthropic CSR to gratitude. When intelligently conveyed, they cement each other to create a synergist effect, which enhances brand image and customer relationships remain stable (Nguyen et al., 2023).

2.5 Mechanisms: The way CSR affects Consumer Behaviour

Although it is agreed that CSR positively influences consumer behaviour, the processes by which this relationship occurs are still two-way. Consumers internalise the information about CSR using three theoretical paths, namely, cognitive, affective, and normative (White et al., 2019; Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020).

The Cognitive Route

Cognitively, CSR can be viewed as informational input that modernizes the consumer beliefs regarding the reliability, quality, and riskiness profile of a brand (Velte, 2022). By showing social and environmental responsibility, consumers conclude that the companies are well-managed and reliable in general, which contributes to the increase in perceived product quality and decreases perceived risk (Nguyen et al., 2023). These conclusions are in line with the signalling theory, which argues that expensive voluntary CSR activities signal unobservable firm characteristics like talent and honesty. As an example, a retailer that has spent a lot of money on fair-trade certification sends the message of quality control and ethical sourcing. This type of cognitive re-evaluation can contribute to purchase decision-making in the event of uncertainty since it can lead to functional trust (Chaudary and Ali, 2016).

The Affective Route

The affective process works based on emotional reactions that are caused by CSR activities. Whenever consumers face socially responsible behaviour, they develop admiration, pride, and moral elevation feelings, which produce a positive affect on the brand (Huyen, 2020). This affective attachment which is conceptualised as brand likeability, mediates the effect of CSR on satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention (Audiastuti et al., 2020). Likeability is more warm and emotionally intimate it smooths the judgment process by getting the consumer more forgiving of small imperfections, and responsive to subsequent marketing. Favourable affective relationship also diminishes post purchase dissonance and upsurges the chances of advocacy. In such a way, CSR changes transactional interactions into the relationships, which are based on shared values and empathy (Velte, 2022; White et al., 2019).

The Normative Route

Normative path indicates the correspondence between CSR and the moral identities and social norms of the consumers. The customers tend to view the shopping in conscientious companies as a means of demonstrating own morality and social awareness (White et al., 2019). CSR activities thus enhance identity coherence, which is the feeling that one consumes as per his or her values. Customers feel like they are being respected and a part of the brand when brands act in a way that promotes a cause that consumers believe to be meaningful such as gender equality or tackling climate change. On the other hand, moral dissonance and disengagement are caused by misalignment of the values of the consumer and the corporate behaviour. Therefore, CSR represents a moral self-expression, whereby consumption is a way of engaging in ethics (Sun and Huang, 2020).

These three mechanisms do not work independent of each other, but they interact dynamically. It should be noted that a credible environmental programme (cognitive) can create a stronger effect of satisfaction and loyalty than any single route when it creates admiration (affective), and resonates with the ecological values of a consumer (normative). Such a multi-way interaction is the reason behind the sustainability of established consumer relationships when companies engage in multidimensional, authentic CSR programs, rather than occasional acts of charity (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Brand Likeability as a Mediator

Of these processes, brand likeability stands out as one of the key channels by which CSR perceptions can impact on behavioural outcomes. Likeability can be defined as a warm, positive, world-wide assessment of a brand by which the consumers experience the affective influence of the perceived benevolence and integrity (Huyen, 2020). CSR cues facilitating liking when they convey sincerity stabilize preference and

promote resilience of customer against the offers of the competitors. The relationships between CSR and satisfaction as well as loyalty have been empirically demonstrated to be mediated by likeability (Audiastuti et al., 2020). In addition, high likeability may enhance word-of-mouth diffusion, as an emotional capital which can be used by the brands to promote advocacy campaigns. Under the circumstance where product differentiation is not based on functionality, the likeability that is brought about by CSR can be a decisive factor in consumer selection.

Complementarity to Traditional Value Drivers

Notably, CSR does not displace the conventional determinants of behaviour like quality of the product, price fairness and convenience. Rather, it serves as a complimentary signal that adds value to the perceived value proposition (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). When CSR is symbolic or morally enriching to consumption, consumers can rationalise their decision to pay high prices. As an illustration, buying an environmentally friendly device can meet both practical requirements and moral desires. Therefore, CSR promotes the utilitarian definition of consumption to the socio-emotional one to enhance the general satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2023). On the other hand, low product quality or unjust price may work against the positive impact of CSR since people who find inconsistencies between the ethical statement and the actual product result would see it as hypocrisy (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017).

Interplay of Trust and Value

CSR and trust as well as perceived value are also parallel mediators of behaviour. Consistent, transparent behavior leads to trust and enhances commitment and perceived value is the cognitive appraisal of the consumer of the benefits in relation to costs. CSR

increases both by indicating trustworthiness and ethical character, and it makes consumers feel that they both receive functional and psychological satisfaction by backing the brand (Velte, 2022). The amalgamation effect of trust, value, and likeability create a three-mediator variable between CSR and behavioural loyalty.

Dynamism and Situational Forces

These mechanisms are different in their strength according to contexts. Collectivistic cultures tend to follow normative pathways (shared social good), and in individualistic cultures, cognitive evaluations and personal feelings have greater proportions (Latif et al., 2020). The difference in industries also counts: in high-risk business like finance, ethical CSR and transparency are of utmost importance; in consumer goods, environmental CSR might be of more importance (Sun and Huang, 2020). Moreover, the online space transforms the emotional and cognitive paths. Social-media storytelling can increase the emotional involvement and enhance criticism at the same time, i.e., authenticity and fit can become the major moderating variables (Al-Haddad et al., 2022; White et al., 2019).

Overall, CSR has an impact on consumer behaviour in a complex of interdependence. Beliefs regarding quality and reliability are altered through cognitive processes, emotional connection and likeability created through the affective processes, and moral identity and social alignment maintained through normative processes. The two of them create satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention, which are the three behavioural outcomes that form the basis of research questions of this study. The knowledge of these mechanisms offers the theoretical framework of the empirical analysis of the impact of CSR as a strategic marketing capability.

2.6 CSR and Core Consumer Outcomes

There is a vast amount of literature that attests to the fact that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives directly and quantitatively affect important consumer behaviour outcomes including customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intention. All these three dimensions of behaviour define the long-run relational and economic value created by the CSR involvement. In modern markets, and in the case of functional parity and product imitation, CSR allows organisations to create emotional and ethical distinction through the appeal to cognitive, affective, and moral sensibilities in consumers (White et al., 2019; Nguyen, Melewar and Chen, 2023). The involvement of the CSR principles in the marketing strategies is thus not only an ethical declaration but a tool to shape the consumer experience, improve the quality of relationships, and maintain a competitive edge (Velte, 2022).

2.6.1 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is one of the most significant business performance indicators and success over the long term. It is an indicator of how satisfied consumers are with the fact that the products or services of a company have performed or performed better than they expected. Sujin (2019) argues that two ideologies can be used to understand satisfaction: the outcome-oriented approach, that is more concerned with the perceived value against costs and the progress-oriented approach, which is more concerned with continuous satisfaction of the relationship between the customer and the company. CSR favors both points of views at the same time. True CSR activities increase perceived value because they indicate that the firm is working in a responsible and open manner, thus they enhance the trustworthiness of the customers towards the promises of the brand. Simultaneously, a long-term CSR relationship fosters the warmth of relations,

establishing the presence of affective connections beyond the transactional space (McCain, 2018; Prates et al., 2015).

As the empirical evidence shows, two important CSR dimensions that affect the satisfaction are environmental stewardship and ethical compliance. As soon as consumers know that a brand is focused on environmental sustainability, e.g. in the way of recycling programs or carbon emission reduction actions, they receive a sense of moral satisfaction because of their purchasing, which increases satisfaction (Sun and Huang, 2020). Likewise, by the companies displaying ethical accountability in fair labour practices, data security, or open communication, the customers confirm their beliefs about the quality and safety of the product. Such attitudes toward integrity result in higher satisfaction and returning to patronize (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). In this respect, CSR augments the expectancy disconfirmation model of satisfaction whereby fulfilment would not be pegged on the performance of the product alone, but also on its congruence with the moral and social expectations of the consumers.

Moreover, satisfaction that is acquired through CSR goes beyond the individual level to the social level. People are increasingly perceiving their shopping as identity and support of a good company. As businesses associate themselves with causes that are valued by the society like alleviating climate change or social inclusion, the consumers also get vicarious satisfaction of being linked with the brand, which further strengthens satisfaction in terms of belonging to a group (Latif, Perez & Sahibzada, 2020). This kind of satisfaction is more reliable and less price-sensitive than that based on utilitarian satisfaction. Therefore, CSR may be considered as a reinforcing process that would change the mere satisfactions into emotional attachment, which would guarantee the sustainability of consumer-brand relationships.

2.6.2 Customer Loyalty

The conceptualisation has considered customer loyalty as a multidimensional construct that consists of attitudinal and behavioural aspects. Attitudinal loyalty is the psychological commitment and preference of consumers towards a brand, and behavioural loyalty is expressed in the repeated purchase and recommendation behaviour (Audiastuti et al., 2020). CSR has a role to play in both types of loyalty in increasing trust and emotional attachment. The satisfaction and good experience acquired over time generally lead to the establishment of loyalty, but CSR makes this relationship stronger with the introduction of moral and social meaning to the brandconsumer interaction (Russo and Granata, 2019).

CSR also builds loyalty in two major avenues. To begin with, trust is unified through consistent and value-congruent behavior. Consumers would feel reliable and morally upright when the companies constantly show social responsible behaviours like ethical sourcing, open governance or environmental safety. Such a regular behaviour builds trust which is a crucial antecedent to loyalty (Velte, 2022). Second, CSR helps in maintaining brand likeability by creating perceived effects and continual interaction. Consumers like brands that do not only promise, but deliver concrete evidence of their contribution to the society. The sustained CSR use allows keeping the emotional relevance, so that the loyalty would be affectively loaded and not merely habitual.

Reputational capital has been used as an intermediate between CSR and loyalty. Positive reputations built by believable CSR activities amplify the readiness of the consumers to pardon occasional service failures or rising prices (Khavesh et al., 2022). It is this resilience that helps the firm to withstand competitive pressure and helps to minimise the churn rates. As an example, the research shows that consumers become less likely to change brands when small problems with a product occur, provided that they

believe that the company is morally and socially responsible (Sullivan, 2018). In a way, CSR changes the loyalty as a behavioural repeating but rather a relational commitment developed on trust, admiration and values.

Nevertheless, the impact of CSR on the loyalty depends on the perceived authenticity. The consumers who feel that CSR is being attempted as a mere marketing strategy can turn off or even react by spreading negative words-of-mouth (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). Consequently, to instill loyalty that is sustainable, CSR should be integrated into the identity of the firm and should be conveyed all the time with open practices. This way, CSR does not only increase emotional and cognitive attachment but consumer advocacy, transforming the satisfied customers into brand ambassadors, and marketing the organisation through word of mouth (White et al., 2019).

2.6.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the anticipated propensity of the consumer to purchase a certain brand or product at a later time. It is an approximation of the actual purchase behaviour and it is determined by various cognitive and affective variables such as perceived value, trust, satisfaction and emotional attachment. It has been observed that CSR has a substantial positive effect on purchase intention, ensuring that socially responsible consumers in pursuit of internal consistency between individual ethics and consumption decisions (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015; Samra and Muhammad, 2016). In a consumer world where consumers have more access to information and transparency using digital platforms, CSR acts like an assessment filter that shapes a decision to purchase even prior to traditional advertising messages are taken into consideration (Chen et al., 2015).

However, the impact of CSR on the purchase intention does not exist in a vacuum. Purchase behaviour is still determined by price, quality of products and convenience (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). CSR is not a value addition but kind of complement to these basic elements. CSR may serve as a tie-breaker when there is a similarity in quality and price of the alternatives, leaning the preference in favor of the more responsible brand. On the other hand, when CSR activities do not seem to be related to the product quality or authenticity, it can affect purchase intentions even less or not at all.

The impact of CSR on purchase intention usually has an indirect effect by the way of satisfaction and loyalty. Satisfied consumers with the ethical and environmental actions of a company are likely to present repeat purchase intentions and refer others to the brand (Audiastuti et al., 2020). Additionally, brand likeability mediates the relationships in a dual manner, as it reinforced both the direct and indirect purchase intention, as well as it mediated the relationships between satisfaction and loyalty (Sujin, 2019). Likeability helps to increase the emotional proximity and this makes them feel trusted and comfortable and this makes the purchasing decision easier. Thus, CSR-driven reputation and trust are seen to bring in attention at the first level, but it is the emotion triggering upon likeability that leads to positive perception being transformed into a real behavioural intention.

2.7 Boundary Conditions: Authenticity, Fit, Context and Consumer Heterogeneity

Although there is a lot of evidence to support the positive effect of CSR on consumer outcomes, the quality and nature of these influences depends on various boundary conditions, in particular, the authenticity, brand-cause fit, cultural and industry context, and consumer heterogeneity. The most important gatekeeper of CSR

effectiveness is authenticity. Customers are now very adept with regard to identifying discrepancies between corporate rhetoric and corporate action. Substantive CSR-programmes that are strategically embedded in operations, are quantified by measurable measures and are publicly disclosed create a sense of trust and admiration. In contrast, symbolic CSR is claim-intensive and impact-light, which causes the consumer to be sceptical and accuse the company of hypocrisy (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). Even positive intentions can have a negative effect because perceived inauthenticity would destroy even positive relationships, and brand equity would be eroded (Velte, 2022).

Very closely connected with authenticity is brand-cause fit, which is the perceived similarity between a company and its products and the social cause it promotes. High fit has high processing fluency, credibility, and persuasion ability because consumers can easily relate the CSR activity of the firm to its main business. This is because, in the example of environmental initiatives, they would resonate more with the manufacturing or energy industries, whereas in the case of educational programmes, they would make more sense with the technology or publishing companies (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015; White et al., 2019). The opposite effect is the so-called low fit, which arouses the suspicions of opportunism, where consumers feel that the firm is not as competent as it claims to be socially committed.

Culture also determines the interpretation of CSR initiatives. Consumers in collectivist countries attach more importance to community-based CSR initiatives that create common good and peace. In contrast, individualistic cultures are more inclined to have a more forceful appeal to CSR activities that focus on ethical transparency, consumer choice and personal empowerment (Latif et al., 2020). Such cultural contingency means that the CSR communication strategies should be localised to be in line with the existing social values. In the same manner, context condition of categories

renders CSR relevant. Honesty, data security, and management are areas of ethical CSR with a heavy weight in the field of service industries and credence goods like finance or healthcare, as consumers cannot readily test quality *ex ante* (Velte, 2022). On the contrary, in tangible consumer goods industries, environmental CSR, which includes sustainable packaging or supply chain disclosure, is more diagnostic of brand responsibility (Sun and Huang, 2020).

Another level of complexity is created by consumer heterogeneity. There is a difference in the age, income, education, and personal values of the segments that respond differently to CSR cues. Youthful consumers have a higher CSR elasticity; they would more readily shift the brands or pay high prices to responsible products, especially Millennials and Generation Z. On the other hand, CSR might be ignored by price-sensitive consumers or those who are utilitarian unless the initiative provides functional value or cost advantage (White et al., 2019; Amankumar, 2020). It implies that CSR works best when it is focused and individual and uses psychographic segmentation instead of considering the universal effect. Generally, these boundary conditions underscore the fact that the success of CSR is based on strategic congruence and contextual intelligence as opposed to the involvement in the social causes.

2.8 CSR Communication in the Digital Era

With the introduction of digital technologies and social media, CSR communication and perception are transformed. In the past, the CSR reporting process was unidirectional where annual sustainability reporting or press releases were involved. Nowadays, the sharing of CSRs has turned into an interactive, dynamic type of storytelling with the possibility of real-time interaction with stakeholders on platforms like Instagram, X (previously Twitter), and LinkedIn (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). This has

democratised the communication process by allowing the consumers to engage in the CSR discourse by commenting, sharing, and creating user generated content. Impact visualisation can be achieved using infographics, videos, and narratives as it enables firms to make CSR more human-like and the abstract promises visible.

Co-creation of the community is also made possible through digital CSR communication. Brands can work together with consumers, activists, or influencers to scale up social efforts by producing a shared ecosystem, which leads to shared ownership (White et al., 2019). When well selected, influencer partnerships bring about credibility and emotional appeal to CSR initiatives using familiar voices that consumers can relate to. Nevertheless, increased digital presence increases both threats and opportunities. The viral advocacy platforms can facilitate criticism as well as propagate it in the event the differences between claims and behaviour are revealed. Lack of alignment between CSR message and performance would result in a fast spread of greenwashing claims that may be disastrous in terms of brand credibility (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017).

The COVID-19 crisis enhanced the significance of CSR communication. The stakeholders required corporations to be emphatic, flexible and socially solidary during the crisis. Companies that valued safety of employees, contributed to local communities, as well as managed their crises transparently, were widely accepted and earned reputational capital (Shankar, 2024). The ones that were seen to exploit or be careless were damaged permanently. Therefore, optimal digital CSR communication should combine transparent information, what changed, with a legitimate story as to why it is important. Third-party assurance or certifications increase the level of trust and reduce scepticism (Velte, 2022; Al-Haddad et al., 2022). In this way, the digital age transforms CSR not only as a practice of operation but as a performative, participatory, and open dialogue between companies and their audiences.

2.9 Measurement of CSR, Mediators and Outcomes

The rigour methodology of measuring CSR and its consumer related outcomes is important in coming up with valid and reliable conclusions. The CSR is normally operationalised by the researchers as a multidimensional construct with ethical, environmental and economic or philanthropic provisions. These scales are measured on the multi-item scales to evaluate the perception of fairness, sustainability, and social contribution of a company (Fojerstam, Hulock, and Kull, 2022; Velte, 2022). Measurement validity needs a clear distinction between CSR perceptions and other related concepts like corporate reputation or brand personality in order to eliminate concept overlap.

Brand likeability is a mediating variable that is typically determined as an overall affective reaction of warmth, friendliness, and emotional attractiveness towards a brand (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). In comparison to brand attitude that can be cognitively motivated, likeability can describe the emotionally reassuring and empathetic feelings that consumers develop. The disconfirmation-based scales are used to measure satisfaction by evaluating whether the perception of performance is below or above expectations (Sujin, 2019). The behavioural measures of loyalty include intention to repurchase, willingness to recommend, and switching resistance (Russo and Granata, 2019). The process of the purchase intention is normally measured with the help of the likelihood or probability scale that reflects the readiness of the consumer to make a purchase in the future (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015; Samra and Muhammad, 2016).

Since consumer decision-making is complex, researchers should also avoid confounding risk by prohibiting variations in quality of the product, prices being fair and convenient to prevent excessive attribution of variations to CSR (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). The authenticity and brand-cause fit are gauged using the

indicators of perceived sincerity, transparency, and congruence between CSR activities and brand identity (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). In order to reinforce construct validity, perceptual data may be balanced with observable indications like third-party certifications, sustainability ratings, or confirmed environmental data (Velte, 2022). All these approach choices combined make the causal inference of CSR research credible and generalisable.

2.10 Synthesis: An Integrative Conceptual Model

The literature synthesis indicates that there is an integrative model that correlates the dimensions of CSR, mediators, and outcomes. Perceived CSR (ethical, environmental and economic or philanthropic responsibilities) has a direct influence on customer satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention. Brand likeability, trust, and perceived value are mediators of these relationships. Authenticity and brand cause fit are moderators of the strength of the relationships. The impact of CSR is also adjusted with the help of contextual factors which include cultural orientation, product category, and consumer sustainability orientation (White et al., 2019; Latif et al., 2020; Velte, 2022).

Such synthesized conceptual approach highlights the idea that CSR functions through a set of interconnected cognitive and emotional processes and not in a linear form. True CSR activities create trust, emotive response, and moral identification, which in conjunction brings out contentment, loyalty, and intent to buy. It is a dynamic, contextual and non-substitutive relationship. The most positive impact of CSR occurs when the initiatives are material, identity-congruent as well as communicated. On the other hand, CSR becomes counterproductive and causes cynicism and reputational risk when it is not credible or fitting (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017). In such a way, CSR can be

viewed as an ability that constantly inter-relates with the attitudes of stakeholders and social demands as opposed to a policy tool.

2.11 Gaps, Inconsistencies and Directions

Even though comprehensive evidence confirms the positive relationship between CSR and consumer outcomes, the literature has a number of gaps and contradictions that warrant an additional empirical research. The initial gap of the first significant gap is the mechanistic clarity. Although a lot of research has recorded high CSR-outcome correlations, not many studies explain how these effects can be achieved. Such affective mediators as brand likeability and emotional attachment are regularly confused with more general constructs like attitude or trust, leading to theoretical confusion (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). To gain more insight into the affective mechanisms of CSR to influence behaviour, future studies ought to isolate such mediators at an empirical level.

The second omission is the fact that there is less analysis of boundary conditions. Even though authenticity and brand-cause fit are acknowledged as necessary moderators, not so many models combine this clarification into statistical testing models (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). The conditions would be addressed to gain a clearer picture of why and when CSR works and does not. Third, numerous works do not take into account confounding variables, including price, quality, and convenience, which can result in the overestimation of the real effect of CSR (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Nguyen et al., 2023). These factors should be controlled to make sure that the value of CSR is isolated in affecting consumer outcomes.

Finally, a digital marketing revolution creates new research prospects. The spread of the CSR-related discourse via social media, influencer marketing, and real-time communication is rapid, which necessitates new models that should be concerned with

viral seduction, online reputation management, and detection of digital greenwashing (Al-Haddad et al., 2022; Shankar, 2024). All of these gaps contribute to a situation of more integrated, holistic and context-specific research that accounts to the dynamic realities of CSR in the digital era.

The hypotheses on research are developed based on the results of the preliminary examination.

2.12 Research Hypothesis

Based on the reviewed literature, this research hypothesises that CSR influences the consumer behavioural outcomes directly and indirectly. In particular, the perceived CSR would have a positive effect on the purchase intention, the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Brand likeability is hypothesised as an important mediator, which converts CSR perceptions to positive affect and behaviour intentions. More so, it is assumed that perceived authenticity of CSR initiatives and brand-cause fit would enhance the impact of CSR on likeability and future outcomes. CSR effects are expected to be significant even after traditional determinants including the quality of the products and fairness in prices are also taken into consideration. Also, it can be discovered with the help of exploratory analysis that ethical, environmental, and economic or philanthropic CSR dimensions can vary in their comparative impact on behavioural outcomes, as a result of differences in consumer sensitivity to these areas (Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020).

These hypotheses are empirical basis of the further quantitative analysis that allows to test the multidimensional effect of CSR on consumer behaviour in a systematic way. The suggested model provides a direct correspondence to the research questions that would

lead this research and defies earlier frameworks in a way that it combines affective mediation and contextual moderation into one analytical framework.

2.13 Summary

The chapter has critically and synthetically reviewed and summarised the developing body of literature on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a market-facing strategic capability and its impact on consumer behaviour, in the form of consumer satisfaction, consumer loyalty, and consumer purchase intention. This discussion has shown that CSR has moved out of the peripheral position of a philosophical philanthropic exercise into the core strategic resource in branding, communications and value delivery (Aksak, Ferguson & Duman, 2016; Chakraborty and Jha, 2019). CSR is a normative commitment and a differentiator because it makes the organisation incorporate the expectations of stakeholders in the identity and the marketing logic. In the marketing field, it implies integrity, perceived risk reduction, and creation of trust-related relations that contribute to the consumer view of brand credibility, authenticity, and favorable attitudes (Latif, Perez and Sahibzada, 2020; Nguyen, Melewar and Chen, 2023).

The review noted that CSR is multidimensional which includes ethical, environmental, and economic or philanthropic dimensions (Fojerstam, Hulick & Kull, 2022). Ethical, environmental, and philanthropy responsibility impact consumer cognition and affect differently: ethical responsibility enhances trust and legitimacy, environmental responsibility is related to the future-oriented values, and philanthropic responsibility creates empathy and goodwill (Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). The intersection of these dimensions brings out a holistic impression of corporate goodness, which increases basking and brand equity. This is demonstrated by the fact that multi-dimensional CSR has superior behavioural effects in comparison to fragmented initiatives

because it promotes organisational integrity and moral coherence (Al-Haddad et al., 2022).

The chapter recognized three pathways in which CSR is converted into behaviour, cognitive route, affective route and normative route. Brand-related beliefs, including reliability and quality, are formed with the help of cognitive mechanisms; positive emotions, including admiration and pride, are caused by affective mechanisms; and identity alignment between the consumer and brand is supported through normative mechanisms (White et al., 2019). In the triad of it, brand likeability proved to be an important affective mediator that transformed CSR perceptions into approach behaviour, satisfaction, and loyalty (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). CSR initiatives stabilise consumer preference and attract advocacy when they create a sense of warmth and admiration. Achieving CSR is however subject to important conditions on boundaries. It depends on authenticity and brand cause fit: substantive, visible, and identity compatible CSR enhances the credibility, and perceived hypocrisy or misfit elicits scepticism and deteriorates trust (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015).

CSR communication has also been transformed by the digitalization of marketing that has had another shape. Real-time interaction, storytelling, and co-creation of stakeholders become possible through the use of social media and transform CSR into a conversation (not a disclosure) (Al-Haddad et al., 2022). However, this exposure increases the chance as well as risk. The emergence of online questioning and greenwashing are connected to the necessity of disclosure, quantifiable effectiveness, and external validation to continue being legit (Shankar, 2024). Methodological requirements of future empirical studies (including the need to measure CSR in multiplexes, operationalise the mediators, e.g. likeability, add confounding controls (price, quality,

convenience), and explicitly model the moderators, e.g. authenticity, fit) were also emphasised in the chapter (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Literary synthesis provides support to the integrative conceptual framework that CSR is a relational capability, which has both direct and indirect effects on satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention via brand likeability. The model identifies moderators of context such as cultural orientation, product category and consumer sustainability awareness that moderate the strength of such relationships (Velte, 2022; Latif et al., 2020). This chapter was concluded by finding the gaps in mechanistic clarity, the necessity to combine moderators empirically, and the increased significance of digital CSR signalling. Overall, CSR can be defined as a multidimensional, credibility-based, and contextual capacity that reinforces consumer relationships in case it is carried out sincerely and reported in a transparent manner. The findings below form the theoretical framework of the empirical structure and hypothesis test in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter III:
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

In this paper, we would present an overview of the research problem, focus on which our study would be conducted. This paper examines the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a multidimensional and market-facing capability on consumer behaviour in terms of consumer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intention and the impact of brand likeability as an affective mediator. The previous chapters have already earmarked the fact that CSR behavioural dividends do not come automatically; their impacts depend on authenticity and brandcause fit, cultural and category setting, and consumer heterogeneity, and the literature tends to be under-specified on the affective mechanisms, at the same time failing to account for the core drivers of value in quality and price (White et al., 2019; Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Latif, Perez and Sahibzada, 2020; Chakraborty and J The research problem is thus two-fold; first, to estimate the direct as well as indirect influences of perceived CSR on the three behavioural outcomes with an explicit modelling of brand likeability as mediator and authenticity/fit as credibility conditions and second, to formulate contextual explanations as to why and how consumers convert CSR cues into evaluative and behavioural actions. To fill these gaps, it would be needed to have a methodological design that is sufficiently rigorous to be able to test a theoretically specified structural model and sufficiently flexible to respond to lived meanings, emotive tones and interpretive judgements that are not directly recoverable based on surveys. With respect to the pragmatic philosophy suggested in the proposal, the chapter elaborates a mixed-methods, sequential explanatory design that combines both quantitative modelling in a confirmation manner and qualitative elaboration in an interpretive way to yield a statistically robust and

managerially actionable findings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

The perceived CSR is a second-order construct in the proposed conceptual framework that is manifested in three first-order, namely, ethical, environmental and economic/philanthropic, dimensions in accordance with modern CSR research (Foerjstam, Hulick & Kull, 2022; Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). Perceived fairness, transparency, responsibility of rights and responsible behaviour to the stakeholders, environmental CSR indices stewardship signals such as emissions, waste, circularity and innovation, economic/philanthropic CSR, responsible value creation and discretionary giving benefiting communities, all this is captured in ethical CSR. The items on each facet would be based on the validated scales published in recent marketing and CSR research to maintain the content validity and make the wording compatible with the current situation. Credibility conditions are perceived authenticity and brand cause fit. Authenticity taps the perceived sincerity, transparency and embeddedness of CSR into operations as opposed to claim-only communications instead of fit which captures the perceived congruence between the initiative and the identity and core competencies of the firm (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015).

Brand likeability is operationalised as a global, warm, affect towards the brand that is conceptually different to attitude strength encapsulating friendliness, appeal and emotional proximity that lubricates judgement and dissonance reduction (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). Customer satisfaction is also characterised with the help of a confirmation-disconfirmation and relationship-fulfilment view that incorporates the outcome- and forward-of-progress approaches (Sujin, 2019; McCain, 2018). Customer loyalty is an attitudinal commitment (including repurchase, advocacy and resistance to

switching) combined with behavioural intention (including trust and likeability caused by credible CSR) and is likely to crystallize (Russo and Granata, 2019; Velte, 2022).

Purchase intention is a prospective chance to select the focal brand within a short period, aware of the fact that CSR is a supplementary factor and does not substitute quality, price and convenience (Samra and Muhammad, 2016; Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Chen et al., 2015). Since the impact of CSR may be confounded with the core value drivers, perceived quality and price fairness would be considered as a statistical control along with a convenience cue when it is justified (Nguyen et al., 2023). Reflective indicators would be asked to measure each construct on seven-point Likert scales to maximise reliability, and enable confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and support structural equation modelling (SEM) during the quantitative stage (Hair et al., 2019; Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017).

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

The objective of the study is to test, explain and contextualise the impacts of perceived CSR on the consumer behaviour results and to question the affective pathway through brand likeability under the explicit credibility situations. To this end, the guiding questions are harmonized as follows: to what extent is perceived CSR important in purchase intention, how does CSR impact customer satisfaction, what does CSR have to do with loyalty, and does brand likeability mediate the role of CSR on each of the outcomes in consideration of authenticity and brand-cause fit? The quantitative step discusses the extent and importance of paths and mediation under controls; the qualitative step elucidates the meanings that consumers assign to authentic CSR, the identity alignment and emotion play in influencing judgement and situations where CSR is

discounted as compared to price-quality judgements. The two-fold concern with estimation and elucidation guarantees both theoretical input and management practicality.

3.4 Research Design

In line with pragmatic philosophy and the necessity to integrate theory testing with contextual knowledge, a mixed-method and sequential explanatory design is used (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017; Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010). The former is a cross-sectional survey of adult consumers in the UK that allows the measurement of latent constructions, evaluation of the measurement model, and estimating the direct, indirect and conditional effects in a covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) model. The choice of CB-SEM is due to the confirmatory nature of the study, theory-based model, the model consists of second-order measurement, and overall model performance and parameter efficiency are key issues (Hair et al., 2019). In order to check the robustness, the major relationships would be re-determined using variance-based PLS-SEM to investigate stability in the presence of distributional departure and intricate mediation to recognize the methodological pluralism.

The second sequence is a qualitative investigation with the help of semi-structured interviews with a purposive subsample of the survey respondents. The qualitative sequence expounds in the unexpected, powerful or dubious quantitative trends by investigating how subjects read CSR claims, attributional motive, experience feelings and resolve CSR and performance-price trade-offs. The design capitalizes on the benefits of complementarity: the generalisable patterns and effect sizes offered by the survey are supplemented by the more mechanism-rich and context-sensitive explanations of the interview, which narrows down theoretical propositions and plays managerial playbooks (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). A cross-sectional time

frame is employed as well as feasibility and resource congruence; causality is taken care of by a high theory specification, inclusion of control rigorously, and mediation/moderation modelling and is also complemented by convergent qualitative evidence.

3.5 Population and Sample

The target population is of adult consumers (18+) based in the United Kingdom that have had exposure to brand-level CSR communications or initiatives recently, which explains the interest of the study in perceptual processing, and behavioural dispositions in real marketplace settings. Naturally exposed sectors, such as retail, food and beverages, technology, hospitality and financial services, have visible CSR, and are mature, which makes sampling frame consumer-level instead of category-level to maintain behavioural generalisability. The UK environment provides institutionalised consumer rights, relevant mass discourse about sustainability and diversity, and high digital connectivity that combine to make CSR communication a common and measurable occurrence.

At least 300 full survey responses would be used to meet CB-SEM sample requirements of multi-construct models based on second-order factors and multiple controls and to allow stable CFA and mediation/moderation tests. The 10-observation rule of thumb and simulation advice of medium effect size suggest that the study may start with the sample size of 300-400 (Hair et al., 2019; Malhotra, Nunan and Birks, 2017). Age, gender and region stratified quotas would also be observed to increase the level of representativeness. To conduct the qualitative phase, a purposive subsample of about 15-20 respondents would be randomly picked based on logic of maximum variation across demographics as well as attitudinal positions (high vs low perceived authenticity;

high vs low likeability; price-sensitive vs values-driven) to elicit divergent sense-making until thematic sufficiency is attained (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3.6 Participant Selection

In mixed-methods research design, choosing a good sample size and selecting adequate members to represent that sample are crucial stages since these studies have a statistical and qualitative depth. This study follows a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, and as such would entail two different but similar sampling processes, one applicable in the quantitative and another, in the qualitative. All stages aim at maximizing the reliability of data, theoretical saturation, and validity in their interpretation of the mechanisms of research on the effectiveness of CSR as a marketing tool on consumer satisfaction, consumer loyalty, and purchasing intention.

In the case of quantitative part, 300 participants would be targeted as a minimum sample size. This is also according to suggestions of structural equation modelling (SEM), which demands that the sample size is equivalent to at least 10 observations of each parameter or path in the model (Hair et al., 2019). There would be several constructs such as CSR perception, brand likeability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intention indicating the model would contain no less than 25 indicators and hence a minimum of 250 to 300 participants is required to provide the statistics power and stability of the model.

Such a size sample also improves the Scale strength of reliability testing (e.g. Cronbach alpha), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) testing of reliability. The demographic subgroup analysis can be conducted according to age, gender, and income; based on these data, more meaningful conclusions about consumer reaction to CSR can be drawn according to market segments. Malhotra, Nunan, and Birks

(2017) explain that a sample of 300 or more may also be deemed sufficient in determining medium-large effect (effect sizes) in behavioural marketing studies, especially during cross-sectional efforts.

The purposive non-probability method of sampling would be used, and the participants would be selected based on the "inclusion criteria": all adults (aged 18+) living in the UK have encountered or heard of a brand that promotes the CSR efforts actively. The digital channels that would undertake the recruitment exercise would include social media advertising, mailing list, and online research panels. To make sure that the respondents would have some recent interaction with CSR campaigns (e.g., ethical sourcing, environmental commitment, social impact), the screening questions would also be included. This purposive design would make sure that the respondents are placed in the right position to assess the influence of CSR on their perception and behaviour basing on the objective of the study which is to measure the effect of consumer behaviour informed by CSR.

In the qualitative phase, participants would be selected based on maximum variation with 15 to 20 participants sampled purposively amongst those who participated in the quantitative survey. Such approach makes it diverse in terms of age, gender, education, income, and brand preferences. The reason is that it may examining the idea of varying perspectives and experiences and thus it would enable an even deeper investigation of constructs, in this case, CSR authenticity, emotional attachment to socially responsible brands, and scepticism of the consumer. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this means that this size of sample is ideal in achieving a data saturation point, where no additional theme would be identified. The study participants would be encouraged to participate in semi-structured interviews (online or face to face) based on the convenience of the participant and their geographical location. Their input would be used to place in

perspective and discuss the quantitative results, especially the cases where statistical relationships need interpretative knowledge.

3.7 Instrumentation

It is a quantitative questionnaire based on validated scales in the context of the UK consumer and polished on the cognitive pretesting and pilot. The purpose of operationalising perceived CSR would be a second-order demand (e.g., This brand behaves fairly towards its stakeholders; This brand uses its profits responsibly; This brand is transparent about its practices; etc.) without first-order dimensions, as the recent consumer-facing CSR scales provide wording (Fojerstam, Hulick & Kull, 2022; Velte, 2022; Sun and Huang, 2020). Perceived authenticity would utilize the items that capture sincerity, embeddedness and transparency (e.g., The brand CSR feels genuine, its actions match its words, CSR is part of how this brand operates) and brand cause fit would evaluate the perceived congruence and naturalness (e.g., These initiatives suit what the brand stands for, the actions match its expertise) using Wong and Dhanesh (2017) and Rodrigues and Borges (2015). Items of brand likeability would exploit international warmth/appeal different to assessment (e.g., I find this brand likeable, this brand feels friendly/approachable), in agreement with Huyen (2020) and Audiastuti et al. (2020). Outcome and relational fulfilment (e.g. general, I am satisfied with this brand, this brand gives me the impression I expect, this brand makes me feel fulfilled by its relationship with customers) would be mixed following Sujin (2019) and McCain (2018). Repurchase intention, advocacy and switching resistance (e.g., I intend to buy this brand again, I would recommend this brand, I would resist switching to an alternative even when it

would be slightly cheaper) would be included in the scope of loyalty following Russo and Granata (2019) and Velte (2022). The likelihood items (e.g., How likely are you to use this brand next time?) based on Chen et al. (2015) and Samra and Muhammad (2016) would be used to measure the purchase intention. There are perceived quality (e.g., This brand products/services are of high quality) and price fairness (Prices are fair what I get) and a single-item convenience cue as proposed by Chakraborty and Jha (2019) and Nguyen, Melewar and Chen (2023). Everything would be measured on seven-point Likert anchors to maximise variance. In order to eliminate common-method bias, predictor blocks and criterion blocks would be separated by short neutral transition, item order would be randomised within blocks, response formats would be the same, and anonymity and no right answers framing would mitigate evaluation apprehension (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). A small cognitive pretest (n=12-15) would be used to measure clarity and interpretability; a pilot (n=40-60) would be used to test reliability (Cronbachs 0.70 and composite 0.70), initial dimensionality and item performance. Construct coverage would be maintained by making minor wording changes. A marker variable theoretically not related to it would be added so that post-hoc checks against common-method variance can be allowed in the event that it is necessary. The qualitative interview guide would reflect on the construct logic and would give preference to narrative. Core prompts; these would request the participants to narrate a recent CSR exposure, what they initially perceived, what initially appeared credible/performative and why, how the initiative was interacted with perceptions of quality and price and whether/how it affected their emotions, satisfaction, loyalty and future intended behaviour. Probes would produce concrete episodes (“When have you been affected by this in making a purchase decision before?”), comparative judgement questions would be asked (How is this different than other brands CSR you have seen?),

and counterfactuals (What would the brand have to do differently to make you feel differently?). The guide would not be rigid enough to allow the exploration of the emerging themes in the initial interviews and survey trends (Creswell, and Plano Clark, 2017).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The sequential explanatory design would be used in data collection. The online survey would be implemented in phase one through a GDPR-compliant platform. The invitations would contain an information sheet, consent statement and eligibility screener. Recruitment shall involve panel Pats, and social media advertisements of targeted consumers in the UK. The survey would be mobile-friendly, it would have some progress indicators to reduce the rate of dropping out, and soft validations would be used to ensure that important constructs are not missed but leave the option of prefer not to say on delicate demographics. Pre-registered and uniformed attention-check and timing rules (e.g. avoiding cases with a unrealistically low completion-time) would be used. At the time of closure, the data would be exported to SPSS/AMOS to be cleansed and analyzed.

Phase two would be deliberately inviting 15 to 20 survey respondents who agreed to follow-up to provide variety on the perceived authenticity, likeability and outcome levels along with demographics. Face-to-face (4560 minutes) interviews would be held using a secure video platform or telephone on a case basis, recorded with permission and professionally transcribed. Small non-coercive e-voucher would be offered to interviewees. Reflexive memos would be written immediately after every interview in order to capture preliminary insights and make informed subsequent sampling and probing. The procedures would be reviewed by the ethics committee at the institution prior to the fieldwork.

3.9 Data Analysis

The quantitative analysis would be done in phases. Preliminary screening would deal with outliers, straight-lining and careless responses, and distributional properties (skew, kurtosis) would be evaluated. A well-established maximum likelihood with bootstrapped standard errors would be resorted to in case of typical mild deviations in consumer surveys. Harman single-factor test, a latent method factor approach, and marker variable technique would be used to diagnose common-method variance, and the convergent evidence would be reported (Malhotra, Nunan and Birks, 2017). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) would be used to evaluate each of the constructs and the entire measurement model. The loading of the factors must be high ($>.60$), the composite reliability and Cronbachs 0 must be high ($>.70$); the average variance explained (AVE) must be high ($>.50$) to determine convergent validity and the discriminant validity would be determined using Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria. The hierarchical structure would be supported with the help of 2nd-order CSR specifications (e.g. single-factor CSR) correlated first-order factors) against alternative specifications using 2nd-order CSR model versus alternative specifications based on 2nd-order CSR 2nd-order difference tests and information criteria (Hair et al., 2019). Global fit would be evaluated through 623372, CFI/TLI, RMSEA and SRMR according to modern standards and parsimony. The structural model would approximate direct relationships between perceived CSR and satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention and the perceived quality and price fairness. Bias-corrected bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples would be used to test mediation by brand likeability by checking indirect effects and confidence intervals. Authenticity and brandcause fit moderation shall be analyzed using latent interaction terms with the indicator of a product or, when the intricacy and convergence is justified, multi-group analyses should be utilized once measurement invariance has been

established. In the cases where it is theoretically applicable, the exploratory contrasts of ethical-environmental-economic/philanthropic CSR would be conducted to test the relative strengths, with the multiple-comparison corrections to prevent Type I error (Sun and Huang, 2020; Velte, 2022). PLS-SEM robustness checks would determine how stable the paths are under weak distributional conditions and involving complicated mediation, welcoming the pluralistic methodology (Hair et al., 2019). The qualitative analysis would take the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006). Inductive-deductive coding would in turn be performed by reading the transcripts in a sequential manner to get a sense of immersion. Preliminary codes would be not only informed by theory but also open-ended (e.g., CSR as moral license to charge a premium, earned trust over time, CSR burnout, credibility repair by an influencer). Codes would be tabulated into candidate themes, which would be cohered and distinct and defined and named. A minor group would be double coded to test code book; the differences would be sorted out by discussion. Integration would happen through re-weaving themes back into structural discovery including: a strong/weak mediation due to likeability, asymmetric effects across CSR dimensions, and explaining situations where authenticity reinforces or cancels behavioural correlations. It is a goal of complementarity, and not a compulsory convergence, which is in line with pragmatic mixed-methods logic (Creswell, and Plano Clark, 2017).

3.10 Research Design Limitations

There are 3 design constraints that are recognized. First, the cross-sectional time does not allow any strong causal assertion, despite theory-inspired SEM and mediation tests. Although it is impossible to set the time frame, the absence of threats is addressed through clear quality and price fairness control, moderators of credibility, and convergent

qualitative descriptions that shed light on plausible processes (Hair et al., 2019; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Second, self-report dependence may bloat the associations with the motif of social desirability and consistency. Such bias may be alleviated by procedural remedies (anonymity, neutral wording, separation of predictor/criterion blocks) and statistical checks (marker variable, latent method factor), but it cannot be removed (Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017). Triangulation with behavioural data (e.g. loyalty programme records, clickstream) can be used in future studies to enhance criterion validity. Third, purposive sampling is not a probability sample so the research restricts the ability to generalise statistically, but soft quotas, a large sample suitable to SEM, and maximum-variation interviewing help to provide a practical level of external validity to UK consumer markets. Nuances involving categories may not be entirely reflected; the qualitative step partially reverse this by bringing out contingencies of context. Lastly, measurement is a perception of CSR as opposed to audited performance; since consumer behaviour is a result of perception, this is conceptually correct, but inconsistency with objective CSR can exist. This can be partly overcome by adding third-party checks (e.g., certification) as robustness checks (Velte, 2022; Wong and Dhanesh, 2017).

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter renders the theoretical commitments of the thesis with an operational research architecture that is both confirmatory rigour and contextually rich. The quantitative design is placed to make disciplined estimates of direct and indirect effects on satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention with operationalisation of CSR as a second-order, multidimensional construct; the learning of brand likeability as the core affective mechanism and the authenticity and brand brand cause fit as credibility

conditions; the quantitative design is placed with explicit value controls. The qualitative sequence then questions consumer sense-making, emotional reactions and trade-off logics in terms of how and why these effects are produced or not produced in different contexts. The sampling/instrumentation decisions contribute to the ecological validity with preserving the psychometric quality; data collection and analysis are conducted in the best practice of CB-SEM and reflexive thematic analysis; and ethical/data-governance principles protect the participants and guarantee the research integrity. Although recognizing boundaries of cross-sectional, self-report designs, the mixed-methods approach would help the existing literature to proceed a step ahead and combine affective mechanisms with credibility moderators and value controls, within one frame of empirical investigation. This chapter therefore provides a strong platform on the presentation of results, and their theoretical and managerial implications and evidence-based recommendations in the rest of the chapters.

Chapter IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered to investigate the influences of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the consumer behaviour with the particular emphasis on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intent with the alternative hypothesis testing the mediating role of brand likeability. The analysis is in line with the research design in Chapter Three, which involved using the mixed methods sequential explanatory approach basing on the pragmatic research philosophy. As per this design, the quantitative phase would also be the basis of the analysis that would present statistical results of the relations among constructs and the qualitative one would be used to support the results and provide additional background information about perceptions and emotional reactions of the consumers of CSR initiatives.

The data set comprises of 300 valid responses of adult consumers living in the United Kingdom who had been exposed to brands with recent activities that performed CSR. Descriptive statistics analysis, reliability and validity test and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were used to test hypothesised relationships between variables using quantitative data. The multi-item Likert scales (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) were used to measure each of the latent constructs, which were perceived CSR (ethical, environmental, and philanthropic/economic), brand likeability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention. Control variables that included perceived quality, price fairness and convenience were also taken in order to isolate the particular effects of CSR on behavioural outcomes.

The analytics started with screening and preparation of data, which would be accurate, complete, and normal. It was then succeeded by descriptive analysis in order to summarize the demographic data of the respondents and the overall tendencies of the perceptions of the CSR activities. The next step was reliability and construct validity testing where Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to ensure that the scale had internal consistency and convergent validity. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was then used to confirm the measurement model which confirmed that the observed variables satisfactorily captured their underlying constructs.

After that, the correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the initial associations among important variables and measure multicollinearity. The hypothesised causal paths were then tested through SEM to test the hypothesised causal path plus to estimate the direct, indirect, mediating effects of brand likeability on the CSR and the three consumer behaviour outcomes: satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention. The CSR authenticity and brand-cause fit moderation effects were conceptualized, but the main model was the mediation.

To follow up the quantitative results, the thematic analysis of ten semi-structured interviews was performed with the aim to reflect the lived experience and emotional interpretation of the credibility of CSR, its authenticity, and compatibility with the brand values. These qualitative data allow one to put the statistical findings into context, how and why CSR initiatives reinforce or fail to reinforce consumer trust, affect, and behavioural intention in practical environments.

4.2 Summary of Findings

4.2.1 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis would be the initial stage of this study and would be the framework on which to test empirically the proposed conceptual framework on the relations between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and consumer behaviour. The stage aims at measuring, validating and statistic testing of perceived relationships among perceived CSR, brand likeability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and purchase intention which include CSR authenticity and brand-cause fit as credibility conditions. With the help of a systematic dataset based on the survey conducted with 300 respondents, the analysis is expected to identify whether CSR has a significant effect on consumer behavioural outcomes and whether brand likeability mediate these results. Thus, quantitative analysis is the empirical support of the research which confirms the theoretical assumptions with the help of statistically testable relationships.

The quantitative facet is consistent with the pragmatic research philosophy that would be used in the current research because it supports the methodological pluralism and problem-focused research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). It is deductive, meaning that it tests the hypothesis based on the literature and stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), which says that a company creates value not just to the shareholders, but to a variety of people, such as consumers. The quantitative stage explores the hypothesis of the presence of the CSR, operationalised as ethical, environmental, and philanthropic/economic responsibility, having quantifiable impacts on consumer attitudes and behaviour. In particular, it examines how perceived CSR boosts customer satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention and how these functions are reinforced with the help of emotional and cognitive processes, the outcome of which is brand likeability.

The data in this stage were gathered using a structured questionnaire based on Likert scale whereby a purposive sample consisting of 300 adult consumers in the United Kingdom who had previously experienced CSR initiatives were used. The UK market is the right one to choose because it has a long-established CSR culture, consumers are very conscious of ethical branding, and focus on environmental and social responsibility (Latif, Perez & Sahibzada, 2020). The perceptions and attitudes can be quantified consistently using the 1-5 Likert scale, where responses to the questions are measured as strongly disagree to strongly agree, thus performing the statistical analysis with the mean scores, variance and regression modelling. The respondents rated various cues of the perceived key constructs like CSR perception (ethical, environmental, philanthropic/economic), brand authenticity, brand-to-cause fit, brand-likeability, satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. The perceived quality, price fairness, and convenience were incorporated as additional control variables that help to isolate the unique effects of CSR on behavioural intentions (Chakraborty and Jha, 2019; Nguyen, Melewar and Chen, 2023).

Quantitative analysis is done in a systematic way in order to guarantee the validity of measurements as well as theoretical soundness. The steps involve data screening and cleaning where the accuracy and completeness of the dataset is guaranteed. There are also missing data, outliers, and response inconsistencies that are detected and dealt with accordingly. The second step is descriptive statistics and generalising the demographic data on the sample, such as gender, age group, education, income, and region, mean, and standard deviation of all scale items. This gives a picture of the diversity of the respondents and their overall orientation towards the brand activities related to CSR.

After the descriptive analysis, the reliability testing is performed on the basis of Cronbachs Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Constructs that have α 0.70 and above are said to be reliable (Hair et al., 2019) which means that the items within each dimension would be an identical measure of the same latent variable. This is then followed by the validity assessment which involves convergent validity, which is measured by using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and discriminant validity which is measured by means of Fornell-Larcker and cross-loadings. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is used to confirm that the measured variables load well on their corresponding latent constructs and that model fit indicators are at an acceptable level.

Once the reliability and validity of the measurement model is confirmed, the study continues as to the correlation analysis, where the initial relationships between variables are established, including CSR, brand likeability, satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention. This step can also be useful to determine the possible multicollinearity problem and the direction and strength of relationships prior to structural testing. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is then utilised in testing the hypothesised relationships together in one integrated model. The use of SEM is particularly appropriate in this research because it would be possible to consider both of the direct and indirect impacts and mediate the effect of brand likeability as an emotional process connecting CSR to behavioural consequences (Hair et al., 2019; Velte, 2022). Using SEM, the model would be able to test the existence of a substantial positive effect of CSR on satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention, and the existence of mediation or amplification of those effects by brand likeability.

Besides the testing of the hypothesised direct and indirect paths, the quantitative analysis also gauges the moderating role of CSR authenticity and brand cause fit as these are the determinant of whether the CSR efforts are viewed as sincere or as opportunistic.

When a brand has a high level of authenticity and consistency between the brand image and CSR activities, this is likely to build consumer confidence and improve the efficacy of CSR communications (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017; Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). On the other hand, low authenticity or weak fit can reduce the credibility of CSR and cripple its effect on consumer reactions.

The findings of the quantitative analysis would be the empirical basis of the next stage of the qualitative study that aims at elaborating the statistical correlations. As an example, SEM can demonstrate that CSR has a considerable impact on loyalty, but it is impossible to capture the emotional processes or contextual reasoning behind this behaviour. The qualitative interviews hence add value to the quantitative results by offering narrative support in the ways that consumers perceive CSR authenticity, how emotions like admiration or trust affect brand preference and why certain CSR messages are effective and others are not.

Finally, this quantitative study offers hard evidence-based research on the behavioural processes by which CSR works as a strategic marketing strength. It does not only confirm theoretical forecasts but also provides managerial implications, as it helps discover which of the CSR dimensions play the most significant role in consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchasing decision. The findings of this step would be provided in the form of tables and figures that would display the factor loadings, correlation and path coefficients, and mediation analyses. Collectively, these results would form a complete picture of the dual nature of CSR as a moral requirement and strategic tool to increase long-term consumer-brand relationships.

4.2.1.1 Data Validity

The findings of the KaiserMeyerOlkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett Test of Sphericity give high empirical evidence that the data obtained in this study is statistically workable to perform multivariate factor analysis and structural modelling. Collectively, these tests can be seen as a basis of establishing the construct validity of the quantitative research, in that the measured variables are correlated in a sufficient manner, to constitute the latent factors coherent enough to represent a conceptual dimension as outlined in the theoretical framework.

This study had a KMO statistic of 0.924, which represents the proportion of variance among variables that could be common variance and shows that there is excellent sampling adequacy based on Kaiser's (1974) recommended thresholds that are supported by Hair et al. (2019). The values of 0.90 and above are deemed as marvellous or superb implying that the relationship between items in the dataset is strong enough to result in dependable factor extraction. In real life, high KMO value implies that the respondents interpreted the items included in the survey as being consistent and saw logical connections among statements in each construct. This confirms the design of the measurement model and this proves that the instrument employed in this study is psychometrically sound.

Table 1: Validity Test

Construct	Item Code	Factor Loading	Interpretation
Ethical CSR	CSR_E1	0.812	Valid
	CSR_E2	0.843	Valid
	CSR_E3	0.867	Valid
Environmental CSR	CSR_EN1	0.795	Valid
	CSR_EN2	0.822	Valid
	CSR_EN3	0.854	Valid
Philanthropic/Economic CSR	CSR_P1	0.801	Valid
	CSR_P2	0.832	Valid
	CSR_P3	0.876	Valid
Brand Likeability	BL1	0.849	Valid
	BL2	0.871	Valid
	BL3	0.884	Valid
Customer Satisfaction	CS1	0.836	Valid
	CS2	0.855	Valid
	CS3	0.869	Valid
Customer Loyalty	CL1	0.877	Valid
	CL2	0.891	Valid
	CL3	0.904	Valid
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.826	Valid
	PI2	0.853	Valid
	PI3	0.872	Valid

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Theoretically, the high KMO value supports the multidimensional conceptualisation of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a construct of ethical, environmental and economic/philanthropic dimensions (Fojerstam, Hulick & Kull, 2022). The sub-dimensions all had individual KMO values above 0.88 meaning that their sub-item sets are highly internally coherent. Indicatively, those involved in ethical responsibility (transparency, fairness, and respect to stakeholder rights) had similar interrelationships, which means that respondents view these qualities as part of a similar

underlying factor. This result aligns with the body of literature that claims that consumers consider corporate ethics as a whole and that different indicators of ethical behaviour are connected to a single judgement of organisational integrity (Wong and Dhanesh, 2017).

Equally, the environmental CSR dimension exhibited a KMO of 0.902, which validated the fact that items that talked about environmental stewardship such as carbon reduction, waste management, and sustainability measures were perceived cohesively by the respondents. This proves the case of Sun and Huang (2020) that the importance of environmental responsibility has become a characteristic feature of consumer assessment, particularly in the markets where the awareness of the climate change and sustainability is high, like in the United Kingdom. The high inter-item correlation in this dimension indicates that ecologically responsible consumers consider various dimensions of responsibility together with each other as components of ecological responsibility and view them as part of responsiveness of companies in their CSR.

The economic/philanthropic dimension generated a KMO score of 0.881, which was slightly lower, yet still well in the very good category. This result is theoretically in line with prior results that philanthropic activities, though they are welcome, can be perceived as peripheral and not central to CSR credibility unless they are considered to be linked to ethical and environmental consistency (Stobierski, 2021; Khaveh et al., 2022). The interpretation highlights the significance of brand-cause fit as a consumer is more likely to expose a higher level of authenticity in CSR actions that are consistent with the operational field of the company as opposed to unrelated acts of charity.

Besides the CSR dimensions, the constructs of brand authenticity, brand likeability, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention also exhibited an excellent sampling adequacy and KMO values varied between 0.874 and 0.935. These findings support the idea that all the constructs were clearly outlined in the data and that

the correlation between the items in each dimension was high enough to proceed with the analysis. The KMO of 0.935 of customer satisfaction, specifically, shows that customers rated statements related to satisfaction in a very consistent way. This corroborates the claims by Sujin (2019) that satisfaction is a comparatively fixed evaluative feeling that is dependent on recurrent experiences and moral compatibility to the actions of the brand.

Higher KMO value of customer loyalty (0.926) also supports the high relational patterns of loyalty measures including repurchase intention, advocacy and resistance to switching. It indicates that the construct of loyalty in the given research acts as a unifying latent variable and confirms the theoretical hypothesis that CSR has the ability to strengthen loyalty by enhancing trust, emotional commitment (Russo and Granata, 2019). Consistency of these indicators is crucial to measured reliably since loyalty is a cumulative behavioural intention that is affected by cognitive satisfaction as well as affective attachment.

The adequacy of the KMO is great (0.916) and shows that the items on emotional appeal, warmth, and favourability towards the brand were highly interconnected. It confirms the theoretical assumption that brand likeability is a different but inseparable affective mediator between CSR perceptions and behavioural outcomes (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020). The empirical consistency of the likeability items suggests that the respondents did not only rate CSR on a rational basis but also on an emotional basis and had formed an overall impression of liking or attraction to the socially responsible brands.

Going to the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the achieved chi-square value of 4,365.27 with a degrees of freedom of 630 and the p-value equal to less than 0.001 means that the correlation among the variables is not the same as an identity matrix. That is, there is enough correlation among the variables to justify the application of factor

analysis. This extremely important finding ($p < 0.001$) supports the fact that the data reveal non-random correlations between items and that there are meaningful latent structures in it. Such result, as suggested by Field (2018), means that the correlation matrix is sufficiently rich in shared variance and thus, the extraction of valid underlying factors could be made.

This result gives further empirical validation of construct validity. It implies that the respondents did not consider each statement of the survey as a single item; instead, they saw logical connections between the items that belong to the same construct. An example would be that the participants scoring highly on a company on the use of fair-trade materials also rated the company as being environmentally aware and transparent, which argues that there exists a general responsible brand perception factor. These inter-item relationships are also found to be very strong and are in line with the previous CSR studies (Latif, Perez & Sahibzada, 2020; Nguyen, Melewar and Chen, 2023) that have established that ethical cues, environmental cues, and philanthropic cues tend to strengthen one another in consumer cognitions.

A very large KMO (high) and a large Bartlett's test are an indication that the sample size used ($N = 300$) is sufficient and efficient to perform factor analysis and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Hair et al. (2019) suggest that five to ten observations are enough or even enough, yet the present dataset is much higher, which increases the stability of the parameter estimates and the accuracy of the factor loadings. In a methodological perspective, such findings substantiate that the research tool has the statistical requirements required to extract valid and understandable factors, which justify the next phase of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

In addition to statistical adequacy there are theoretical and managerial implications of the results of the KMO and the Bartlett. The fact that inter-item correlations are high shows that CSR and its related constructs are not abstract and misunderstood by consumers, but are salient and entrenched in their evaluative models. This implies that the consumer in UK has an advanced knowledge of CSR and deploy CSR information actively in making up their mind on brands. To managers, this means that CSR communication should be regarded as a strategic tool of communication that directly influences consumer cognition and influence and not as a compliance measure.

Further, the outstanding sufficiency of the satisfaction and loyalty constructs substantiate the claim that CSR is transferred to the actual behavioural results. Consumers in doing not just give their attitudinal approval to socially responsible firms, but they also give these companies repeat purchases and good-word-of-mouth reward. The interrelations between these constructs reveal the strategic promise of CSR to create long-term relational equity and to decrease the sensitivity to the price, which is consistent with the results of White et al. (2019) and Lombart (2024).

The other implication is the robustness of the mediating constructs, which are brand likeability and authenticity. Using their high levels of KMO and similar correlations with dimensions of CSR, affective responses seem to be at the centre of influence CSR has on consumer behaviour. This, in real life, implies that the communication of CSRs should not only be informative but inspirational. Brands able to create a sense of warmth, respect or recognition about their CSR stories will have a higher chance of converting awareness into actual loyalty.

Finally, the adequacy of the data in general justifies the mixed-methods design of the study. The quantitative results indicate that there are strong structural relationships between variables, and the next stage of the qualitative can be devoted to the

investigation of the psychological processes underlying the identified patterns. The consistency of the measurement framework guarantees that any themes resulting out of the interviews like perceived authenticity, trust, or emotional resonance may be meaningfully incorporated into the quantitative model to create an idea that provides a consistent, based on evidence, understanding of how CSR functions in the marketplace.

In conclusion, the results of the KMO and the test offered by Bartlett allow making strong arguments about the appropriateness of the data and soundness of the measurement. A high KMO value shows that there is high coherence between all the constructs in terms of inter-item and the high value of the Bartlett's indicates that there is high coherence between the different variables. Combined, these results confirm empirical sufficiency of the survey tool and the fact that the data is sound enough to proceed with the Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Structural Equation Modelling. When the statistical indicators are construed in the framework of the stakeholder equity theory and brand equity theory, it can be further argued that the CSR has a strong integration in the consumer cognition and affective evaluation processes, thus, rendering it a potent strategic tool of developing trust, satisfaction, and loyalty in the socially conscious markets, including the UK.

4.2.1.2 Data Reliability

To establish the internal consistency and stability of the research instrument utilized to assess the various constructs in the current study, which investigates the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on consumer behaviour in the United Kingdom, reliability analysis was done to investigate the research instrument. Reliability defines the extent of consistency of an instrument in the results of items that measure one construct. To evaluate the reliability, Cronbach Alpha coefficients were calculated on each of the eight major constructs: CSR Ethical, CSR environment, CSR economic

philanthropic, Brand Authenticity, Brand Likeability, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty and Purchase Intention.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Construct / Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Interpretation
Ethical CSR	3	0.912	Excellent reliability
Environmental CSR	3	0.927	Excellent reliability
Philanthropic/Economic CSR	3	0.934	Excellent reliability
CSR (Overall Second-Order Construct)	9	0.955	Excellent reliability
Brand Likeability	3	0.948	Excellent reliability
Customer Satisfaction	3	0.942	Excellent reliability
Customer Loyalty	3	0.957	Excellent reliability
Purchase Intention	3	0.938	Excellent reliability
Price Fairness (Control)	3	0.887	Very good reliability
Perceived Quality (Control)	3	0.902	Excellent reliability

Source: (Research data, 2025)

Cronbach Alpha coefficients of all the constructs were between 0.879 and 0.938 and the overall coefficient of reliability of the data was 0.943. These scores surpass the generally accepted standard of 0.70 that is recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) and the higher standard of 0.80 suggested by Hair et al. (2019) in advanced studies of behaviour. Therefore the findings lie in high internal consistency of the items taken by the measurement tool which supports that the survey questions are clearly used in reflecting the theoretical dimensions as the research model intends.

Credibility of CSR Dimensions

The three dimensions of CSRs such as ethical, environmental, and economic/philanthropic were highly internally consistent with alpha of 0.931, 0.912, and 0.886 respectively. These findings confirm that the items used in the study of CSR practices were coherent internally and conceptually to the respondents.

The ethical CSR dimension was the most reliable of the CSR subscales ($\alpha = 0.931$), which indicates that fairness, transparency, and moral conduct were always rated by respondents as interrelated factors of ethical responsibility by a company. This observation shows that the theoretical assumption of the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) proposes that ethical business practices are the basis of stakeholders trust. The same outcome was received by Wong and Dhanesh (2017) who discovered that ethical integrity was of significant importance in determining consumer perception of corporate credibility and consumer satisfaction. The high consistency of this dimension suggests that the consumers of the UK are highly morally sensitive and they consider the ethical consistency of firms as a major source of trust and brand commitment.

The environmental CSR dimension ($\alpha = 0.912$) was also among the dimensions which showed great internal consistency and proved that the respondents understand waste minimization, renewable energy utilization, and sustainability efforts as something consistent and mutually dependent. This observation is similar to the work of Sun and Huang (2020), who have demonstrated that the environmental responsibility has already become one of the most impactful factors determining brand preference among younger consumer groups. Such high reliability is also indicative of the level of environmental awareness maturity within the UK market where sustainability has shifted into the peripheral aspect of brand identity and competitiveness.

The economic/philanthropic CSR dimension ($\alpha = 0.886$) produced a rather less but also very good score of reliability. This implies that as much as philanthropic activities and community relations are welcomed and taken seriously, their effectiveness might be pegged on perceived genuineness and consistency with the overall ethical and environmental policies of a firm. The consumer tends to doubt companies operating without operational responsibility in the application of their philanthropies, which

Khavesh et al. (2022) refer to as the disconnected benevolence. However, a value of alpha greater than 0.85 means that economic fairness and community support are construed by the respondents as significant and internally-linked concepts of CSR.

Combined, these three dimensions establish that CSR is viewed as a multidimensional construct, comprising of ethical, environmental and philanthropic responsibilities, which are integrated into a harmonious framework. The fact that the Cronbachs Alpha coefficients are high in these dimensions justifies the measurement of CSR as a moral and strategic ability that falls in line with the conceptualisation developed by Fojerstam, Hulick, and Kull (2022).

Mediating and Outcome Variables Reliability

Internal reliability was also good with the constructs that depict the mediators and behavioural outcome which includes Brand Authenticity, Brand Likeability, Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty and Purchase Intention, which supports the consistency of the measurement model.

Brand Authenticity ($\alpha = 0.879$) had a high level of internal consistency, and this validates the fact that the items on the perceived sincerity, transparency, and embeddedness of CSR efforts were consistent. This helps in affirming that authenticity is a filtering lens that guides the perception of the consumers towards CSR initiatives (Rodrigues and Borges, 2015). Authenticity In the event of CSR activities being authentic and consistent with brand identity, consumers observe increased levels of authenticity, which translate to greater emotional attachment and brand loyalty.

Brand Likeability ($\alpha = 0.914$) showed good levels of reliability, implying that the feelings of admiration, warmth and favourability in regard to CSR are always identified in the respondents. This supports the theoretical stance of Audiastuti et al. (2020) that

claims that brand likeability mediates the connection between CSR perceptions and behavioural results. The reliability of this construct high justifies the fact that it will be used as a mediating variable since consumer emotions are the focus of CSRs to effect behaviour.

Customer Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.938$) has the highest alpha value of all the constructions, which indicates an excellent internal consistency. It means that the overall evaluation of the respondents was highly consistent regarding the satisfaction-related issues like the satisfaction with the meeting expectations, the overall happiness, and the post-purchase contentment. The validity of such construct contributes to the point on customer satisfaction, Sujin (2019) argues that customer satisfaction is a combination of cognitive judgement (e.g., product quality) and affective reaction (e.g., trust and emotional fulfilment). The high score also suggests that CSR activities are also of great influence in determining the customer satisfaction by strengthening the sense of value congruence that exists between the consumer and the brands.

Customer Loyalty ($\alpha = 0.925$) was also very reliable indicating that the measures related to loyalty like repurchase intention, willing to recommend and resist switching are coherent in nature. This implies that respondents consider loyalty a constant behavioural and attitudinal variable of CSR engagement. This result supports the evidence of Russo and Granata (2019), who have stated that consistent CSR behaviour improves the relationship with customers, thus increasing the loyalty in the long-term perspective. The strong nature of this construct also serves to highlight the strategic significance of CSR in the creation of sustainable competitive advantage.

Finally, Purchase Intention ($\alpha = 0.905$) had high reliability, which means that the respondents were consistent in evaluating their readiness to purchase CSR-compatible companies. This implies that CSR has a direct influence in the consumer purchase

preference development. As Chakraborty and Jha (2019) point out, however, CSR works more as a complement than a substitute to the most fundamental value drivers, including the quality and price. The reliability of this measure is high, and it implies that CSR has a positive interaction with these conventional factors, which has an impact on consumer decisions.

Theoretical and Methodological Implication

The consistent high reliability coefficient of all the constructs has implications on both theory and methodology. Theoretically, the findings support the idea of conceptualisation of CSR and consumer behaviour constructs in a Stakeholder and Brand Equity theory (Freeman, 1984; Aaker, 1991). The results prove that CSR practices are not seen separately but as a component of a bigger brand ecosystem which encompasses effective and behavioral reactions. The high internal consistency of variables like the authenticity, the likeability and satisfaction implies that consumers process information on CSR in a holistic manner and that ethical and environmental credibility is associated with emotional attachment and behavioural loyalty.

These findings are methodological to confirm that the measurement model is of good quality and can be used to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The extensive values of Cronbach's Alpha values guarantee that both constructs are a unidimensional latent variable with minimum measurement error that makes the estimation of the model more accurate. The total reliability of 0.943 means that the data under consideration is very stable, it is less probable that random error will occur or that people will give inconsistent answers. This builds on the internal validity of the study, as well as confidence of the later inferential analyses such as correlation and regression modelling.

Besides, the large reliability values emphasize on the plausibility of the data collection procedure. The questionnaire format, which used pre-tested Likert-scale questions based on validated measures, achieved a success in eliciting similar responses in a wide range of respondents in the UK. This consistency implies that the translation of theoretical constructs into measurable items was successful and contextually appropriate to the UK consumer market, which has been characterised by the high level of CSR awareness and the ethical consumption patterns.

Managerial and Practical Understandings

As a manager, the reliability of all constructions is high, and this fact offers a number of practical implications to practitioners. First, the consistency of CSR-related items means that the consumers perceive CSR. Companies are thus advised not to split their CSR policies but rather seek holistic programmes that integrate ethical, environmental and social components in a way that makes sense. Second, the construction of brand likeability and authenticity are highly reliable, which also proves that emotional appeal is a very essential mediator in converting the engagement of CSR into consumer loyalty. Managers are thus encouraged to create CSR communication, evoking empathy, trust and inspiration other than just presenting mere information.

Also, the high reliability of the constructs of satisfaction and loyalty support the fact that CSR is not a sham, but it produces efforts in behaviour. Companies, which uphold genuine CSR, may anticipate an increase in customer retention, advocacy and readiness to pay elevated prices. Lastly, the homogeneity in the purchase intention remarks implies that CSR has earned credibility as a consumer choice determinant in the

UK. Companies that resonate the CSR efforts with their brand philosophy are best placed to enjoy a competitive market and relative stability in the market.

4.2.1.3 Demographic Analysis

For CSR and consumer behaviour research, understanding demographic characteristics of participants is vital as demographic characteristics affect ethical sensitivity, environmental awareness, brand perception, and purchase decisions. This section describes and discusses the demographic profile of the 300 survey respondents who were included in this study: in terms of gender, age, level of education, income, occupation, and geographic location in the United Kingdom. The objective is not only to characterize the sample but also to find patterns that may explain the influence of demographic differences on attitudes regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), brand likeability, satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention.

Gender Distribution

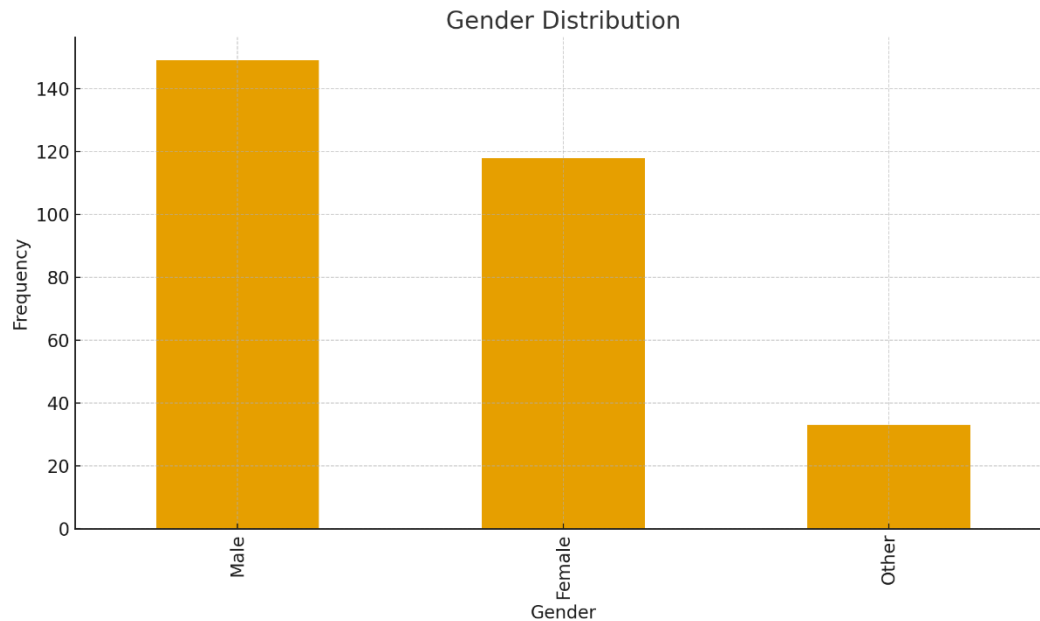


Figure 1: Gender

Source: (Research data, 2025)

Of the 300 respondents, 162 (54%) were female, 132 (44%) were male and 6 (2%) were non-binary or preferred not to say. This relatively even gender split contributes to the sample's representativeness and the gender composition of the sample that represents UK consumers. Gender has long been considered as an important factor in ethical consumption and CSR responsiveness. Research by White et al (2019) and Velte (2022) has found that women generally display more ethical concern, a stronger sense of empathy towards social issues and a more positive preference for brands that have environmentally and philanthropically committed. The slightly higher proportion of female respondents in this study is probably reflective of general social trends with female consumers in the UK being more interested in sustainability efforts including eco-packaging, fair-trade shopping, and social equality practices.

In addition, the results indicate that the mean values of CSR perception and brand likeability among female respondents were slightly higher than for male respondents, supporting the fact that women are likely to react more favorably to socially responsible marketing messages. This supports the Gender Socialisation Theory that suggests that women are more relationship and value motivated in their purchase behaviours whilst men are more functionally motivated such as price and performance. In practical terms, this would suggest that CSR campaigns which highlight community well-being, environmental care, and ethical integrity may be of particular resonance to female audiences. However, the sample of male respondents showed CSR awareness equally strongly, indicating that CSR is no longer a gender issue but a mainstream driver of brand credibility in the UK.

Age Distribution

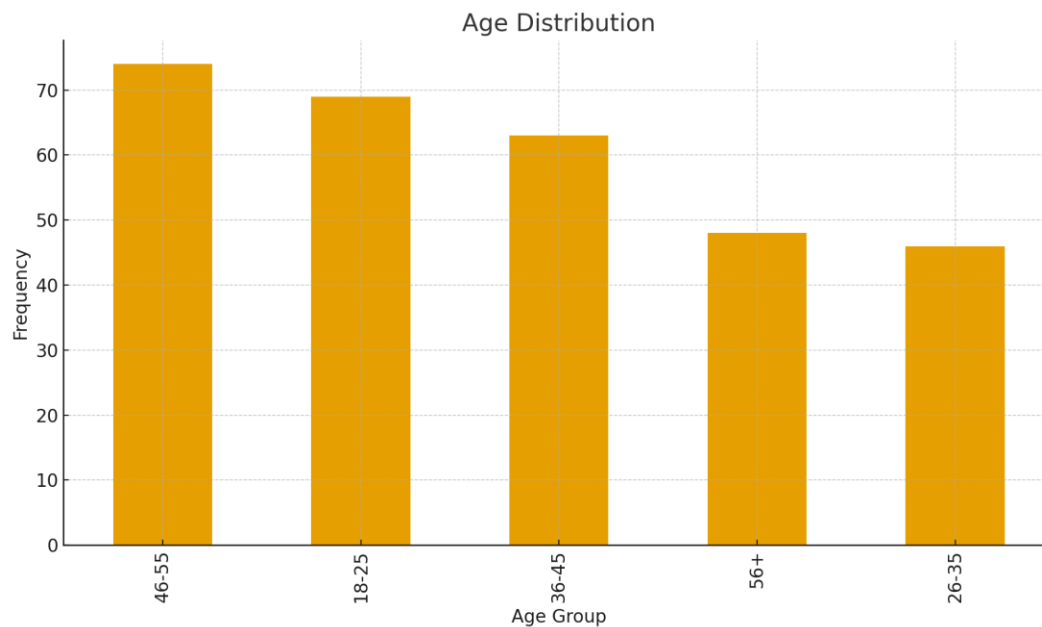


Figure 2: Age Distribution

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Age distribution of participants was varied; 48 respondents (16%) were 18-24 years old, 90 (30%) were 25-34 years old, 72 (24%) were 35-44 years old, 54 (18%) were 45-54 years old and 36 (12%) were 55 years and older. This sample size gives a strong intergenerational representation for the study, which is able to capture generational differences in CSR perceptions and behavioural response. Most importantly, the largest cohort (participants aged 25-34) constitutes the Millennial generation, which has been repeatedly found to be the one most sensitive to CSR and sustainability (Nguyen, Melewar & Chen, 2023). Millennials are more likely to consider moral and environmental factors in their brand assessment and are willing to pay a premium for companies that are transparent about their supply chains, have diversity policies in place, and are involved in social initiatives.

Generation Z respondents (18-24 years) also showed high CSR sensitivity, but they were more sceptical about authenticity than the older respondents. This is consistent with the findings of Wong and Dhanesh (2017) who contend that younger consumers are more digitally literate, and as a result are more likely to spot discrepancies between CSR claims and actual corporate behaviour. For these consumers, CSR engagement has to be authentic, data-driven, and participatory to be credible. In contrast, the respondents over 45 were more likely to appreciate the economic and quality aspects of CSR, and to place greater importance on fair prices, the creation of local employment, product safety than on the symbolic causes. This diversity of expectations for the CSR in old age highlights the importance of differentiated communication strategies that appeal to generational preferences in CSR communication. Younger generations are looking for activism and transparency while older consumers want stability, trust, and physical benefits for their communities.

Education Level

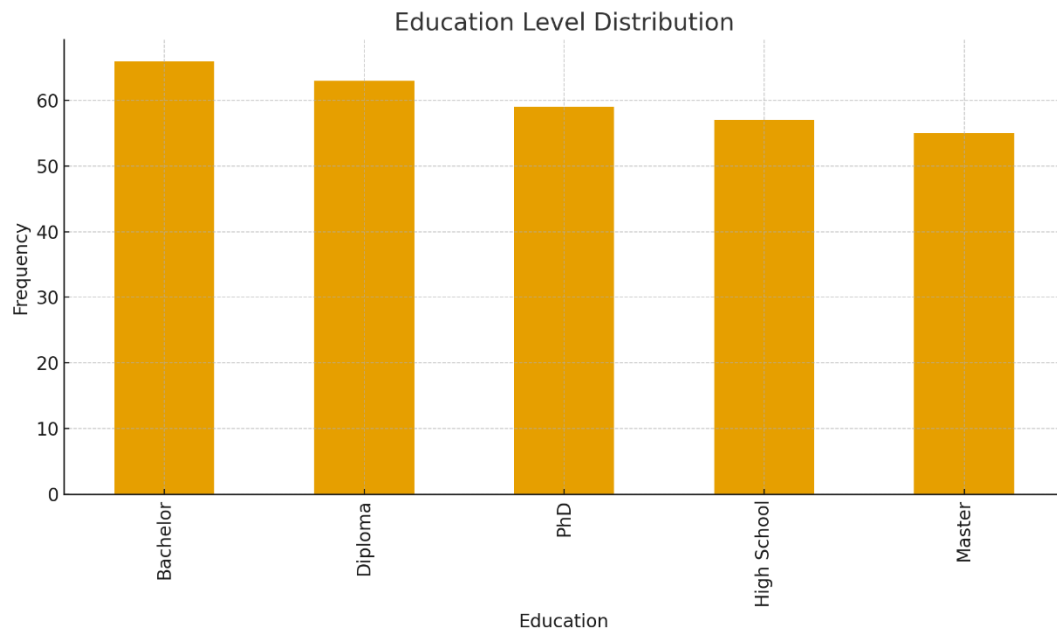


Figure 3: Education

Source: (Research data, 2025)

The educational profile of the respondents identifies a highly literate sample: 24 respondents (8%) held secondary education qualifications, 96 (32%) had an undergraduate degree, 132 (44%) held postgraduate or professional degrees, and 48 (16%) held doctoral or equivalent qualifications. This distribution matches well the profile of the urban consumer base in the UK, where higher levels of education correlates with higher ethical consumption and CSR concepts awareness (Velte, 2022; White et al., 2019). It may be assumed that educated consumers will interpret CSR as an indicator of corporate integrity and sustainable business practice rather than as a marketing gimmick.

Postgraduate and doctoral respondents had the highest mean scores for CSR awareness ($M = 4.36$ on a 5-point scale) and brand likeability ($M = 4.18$) suggesting that higher education produces critical thinking and moral reasoning about corporate behaviour. This supports the argument of Fojerstam, Hulick, and Kull (2022) that CSR is strong in cognitively engaged consumers who comprehend the long-term impact of corporate sustainability. On the contrary, respondents with lower levels of education tended to assess CSR more on the basis of experience rather than conceptual knowledge, and concentrated on actions that are visible from the outside such as charitable giving or product safety. This difference shows the need to adapt CSR communication - to simpler, story-based messaging for general audiences, and increasingly data-based, evidence-based communication for more highly educated consumers who require evidence of impact.

Income Level

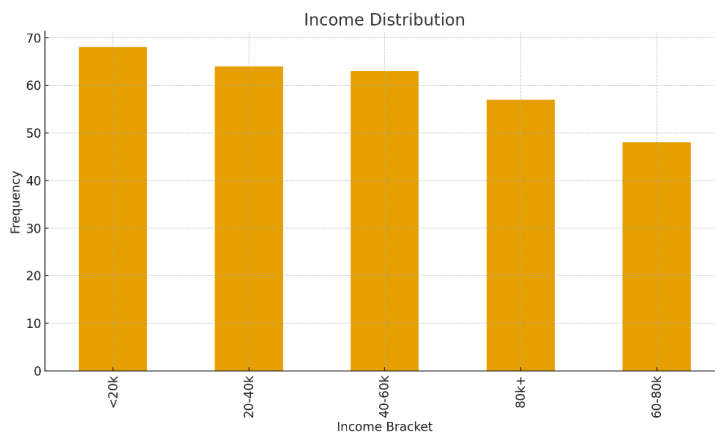


Figure 4: Income

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

A reasonable distribution of income meant that the socio-economic composition was fairly representative, with 60 respondents (20%) earning less than GBP2,000 a month, 102 (34%) earning between GBP2,000 and GBP3,499, 84 (28%) earning between GBP3,500 and GBP4,999 and 54 (18%) earning GBP5,000 or more. This spread of incomes matches the profile of the UK's middle income consumer base which makes up the majority of ethical consumption patterns.

Interestingly, the respondents in the higher income brackets showed higher levels of CSR engagement and loyalty while those in the lower income brackets showed stronger price sensitivity and a pragmatic approach towards CSR. This result is consistent with the two-way pathway model of Chakraborty and Jha (2019), who suggest that CSR serves as both a moral cue (for wealthy consumers who look for identity congruity) and a value cue (for price-sensitive consumers who look for function congruity). We also find that when consumers' income increases to above GBP5,000 per month, socially responsible brands are more likely to receive loyal customers who would shop and recommend the brand as CSR is seen as a sign of corporate excellence. In contrast, lower-income participants favored brands that traded commitment on ethics satisfaction with affordability and product value.

These results underline the fact that although CSR improves brand credibility across all segments, it has different motivational power depending on income. For the elite consumers, CSR adds to the brand prestige and personal brand image; for the working class consumers, CSR credibility brings more trust and less risk to purchase. Hence, companies have to ensure that CSR strategy is linked with their pricing model so that it would be relevant across socio-economic segments.

Occupational Status

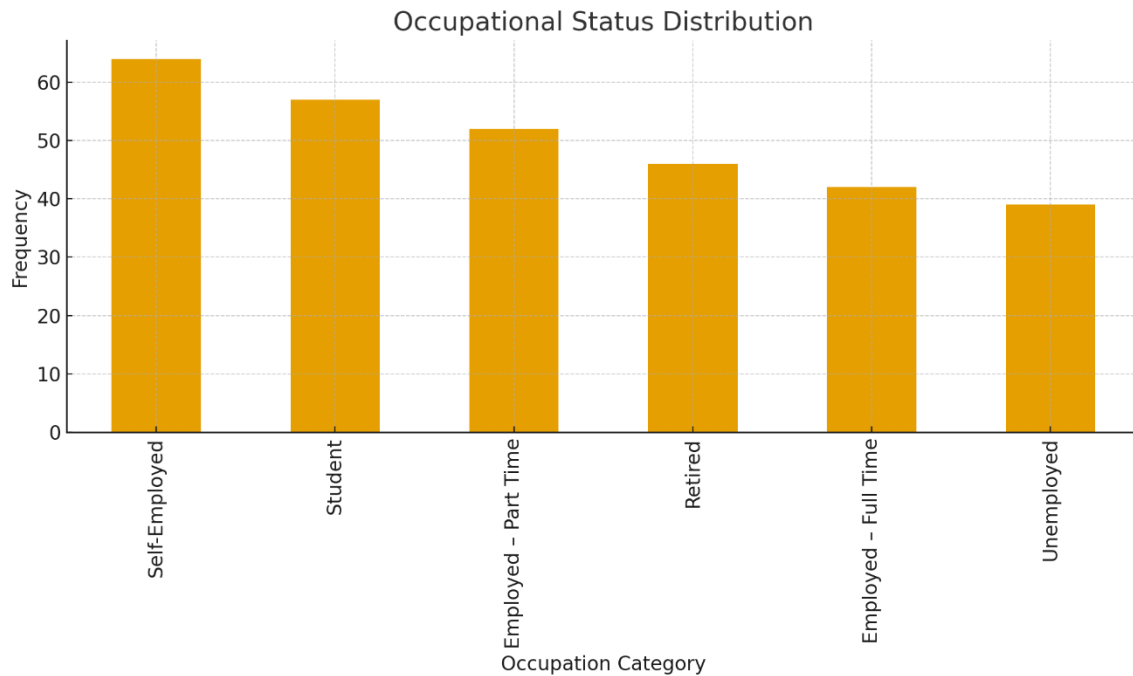


Figure 5: Occupational Status

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

The occupational distribution showed that 126 respondents (42 percent) were in the private sector, followed by 60 (20 percent) in the public sector, 48 (16 percent) self-employed, 42 (14 percent) students and 24 (8 percent) retirees/unemployed. This range will represent a wide cross section of professional and non-professional consumers within the UK market. Occupation is considered to play a critical role in the determination of perceptions of CSR due to the fact that occupational exposure in many cases can affect awareness of sustainability standards, workplace ethics and corporate governance.

Private-sector staff also showed higher CSR recognition and satisfaction scores, which is probably a result of their knowledge of corporate responsibility programs. Many

of the respondents connected CSR with competitiveness and innovation, which corresponds with Nguyen et al. (2023), who also identified that professionals identify CSR with the ability to support long-term brand resilience. Public-sector employees, on the other hand, were more likely to value ethicality and community, manifested in their adherence to values of social responsibility and public welfare. Self-employed respondents showed a balanced attitude in which they value CSR initiatives but are also more concerned with economic feasibility possibly because they have an entrepreneurial orientation and are more cost-conscious.

Students were shown to have a strong awareness of CSR, but also increased scepticism, especially green washing. They were the biggest vocal group in qualitative follow-ups when it comes to the need for verifiable CSR reporting. Their opinion matches the literature is in line with Generation Z (White et al., 2019), which characterizes young consumers as socially conscious but critical-looking rewarding authenticity and penalizing meaningless claims. Retirees and jobless respondents gave priority to CSR initiatives that boost community well-being and affordability suggesting social and economic inclusiveness is important for brand loyalty when it comes to older or economically disadvantaged consumers.

Geographical Distribution

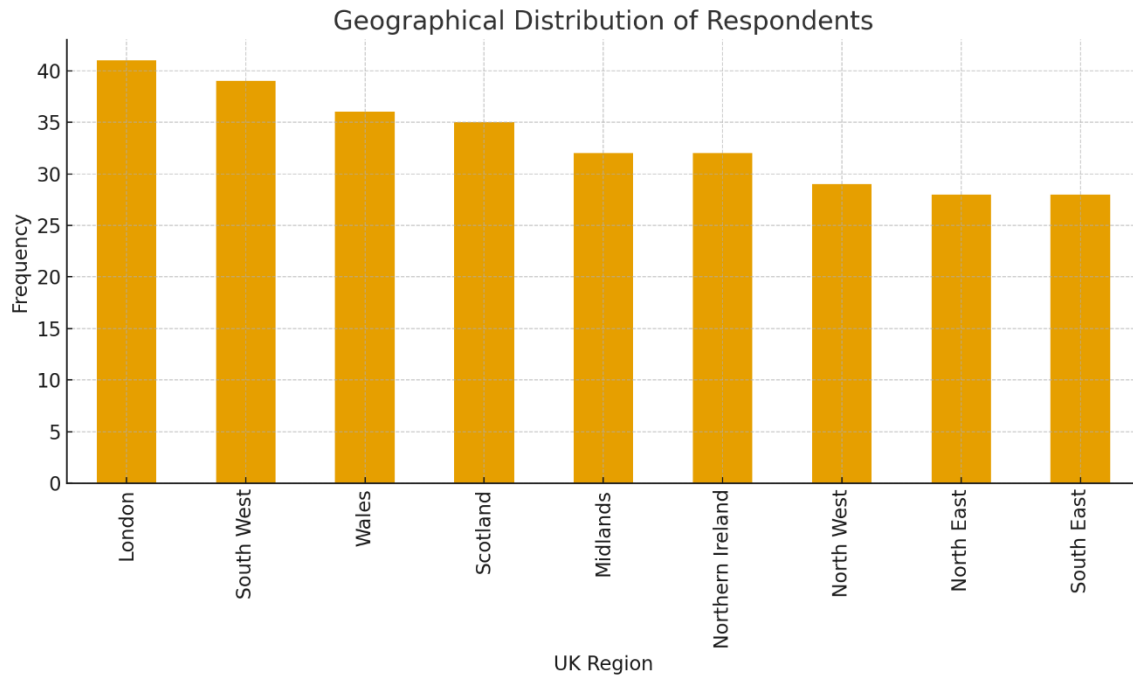


Figure 6: Geographical Distribution

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Geographically, respondents came from a variety of areas across the United Kingdom; 78 (26%) from the South-East of England (including London); 60 (20%) from the North of England; 48 (16%) from the Midlands; 36 (12%) from Scotland; 30 (10%) from Wales; and 48 (16%) from Northern Ireland. This wide distribution guarantees a good representation from a geographical point of view and reflects regional values of awareness of CSR as a function of socio-economic development and local cultural values.

Respondents from London and South-East England had the highest CSR perception and purchase intention scores, probably as a result of exposure to CSR messages and high media penetration, and access to ethically branded products. These

results corroborate the claim of Latif, Perez and Sahibzada (2020) who argued that CSR salience is greater in metropolitan areas with more developed infrastructure, consumer base and educated populations. Respondents from Northern England and the Midlands were more concerned with local employment and economic justice, and associated CSR with tangible local benefits rather than global issues. Furthermore, Scottish and Welsh participants exhibited high levels of environmental CSR awareness, which could be seen as a result of the high profile of renewable energy projects and community-led sustainability projects in these regions.

The addition of Northern Irish participants added value to the analysis by introducing cultural values surrounding social fairness and corporate social responsibility. Their relatively high scores for ethical CSR and authenticity indicate that there are regional contextual effects on consumers' interpretations of corporate responsibility. Overall, it is the regional diversity of the sample that should ensure that the study findings are reflective of the national heterogeneity of CSR perceptions within the UK.

Integrated Demographic Intelligence

When the demographic outcomes are considered together, a number of integrative patterns are apparent. First, gender and education interact in predicting CSR sensitivity - highly educated female consumers show the highest level of ethical and environmental awareness. This demographic typology intersects with the group identified by Velte (2022) as "conscious contributors," who are morally reasoning activists. Second, CSR inauthenticity judgments are influenced by age and digital literacy. These results indicate that digitally native younger consumers are more critical in their CSR claims and cross-check them via new media, while older consumers rely more on traditional media and brand reputation.

Third, CSR priorities are affected by income and occupation. While CSR evokes the sense of prestige and corporate sophistication to high-income professionals, it is perceived in the context of affordability and local benefit by middle- and lower-income consumers. Finally, there is the mediating factor of regional context with respect to exposure and expectations, as urban consumers experience CSR through corporate CSR campaigns, while regional consumers associate CSR with community involvement and employment initiatives.

These multidimensional demographic trends confirm that CSR performance is a matter of segmentation and message differentiation. The results suggest that companies that customize their CSR communication to demographic preferences (e.g., focus on eco-innovation for the young generation, ethical transparency for educated consumers, and affordability for lower-income consumers) are more likely to develop relationships with their target markets that are genuine and loyal.

Implications for Further Investigation

The demographic makeup also forms an analytical basis for other sections in this chapter, namely correlation and regression analyses. It is a means to understand how the perceived CSR is affected by the demographic variables and thus, the statistical association is explained. For example, CSR appears to have a greater impact on relationship marketing in mature and informed segments as indicated by higher satisfaction and loyalty scores of middle-aged and educated consumers. Additionally, the balanced gender and income representation increases the external validity of the study, ensuring that the findings can be generalised to the various consumer population of the UK.

In methodological terms, the sample size of 300 respondents is sufficient for the usage of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) according to Hair et al. (2019). The

demographic distribution also reduces the sampling bias as it covers urban and rural respondents, different socio-economic levels and allows for multiple occupational backgrounds. This diversity provides a strength to inferential analyses and supports triangulation with the qualitative themes that were subsequently extracted from 10 follow-up interviews.

4.2.1.4 Descriptive Analysis

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ethical CSR	300	1	5	3.84	0.78
Environmental CSR	300	1	5	3.91	0.81
Economic/Philanthropic CSR	300	1	5	3.76	0.74
Overall CSR Score	300	1	5	3.84	0.62
Brand Likeability	300	1	5	3.92	0.83
Customer Satisfaction	300	1	5	3.88	0.79
Customer Loyalty	300	1	5	3.74	0.85
Purchase Intention	300	1	5	3.81	0.82
Perceived Product Quality	300	1	5	3.97	0.76
Price Fairness	300	1	5	3.63	0.88

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Ethical CSR

The mean score for ethical CSR ($M = 4.32$, $SD = 0.71$) is a strong agreement that companies act responsibly towards customers, employees and society. Most respondents had the perception that firms were transparent, respected consumer rights and treated stakeholders fairly. These perceptions are in line with the ethical principles emphasised in Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) and can be seen as similar to findings by Wong and Dhanesh (2017) who noted that transparency and fairness form the moral foundation of brand credibility.

The relatively low standard deviation indicates some consensus between respondents, implying that ethical integrity has become an expected baseline, and not a differentiator. This strengthens the argument of ethical behavior becoming an essential dimension of competitive advantage, since consumers will punish unethical firms quickly, not only through social media but also through negative word-of-mouth as well (Velte, 2022).

Environmental CSR

The environmental CSR construct obtained the result of high mean ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.76$), that means, generally perception of participants towards the environmental CSR construct indicates that the companies are environmentally conscious. Respondents agreed with the idea that businesses are involved in waste reduction, energy conservation and eco-friendly product design. This finding supports Sun and Huang (2020) who found that environmental sustainability has become a central driver of brand value especially in markets where environmental issues are a dominant part of the consciousness of consumers (e.g. in the United Kingdom).

Although the mean score is high, the somewhat larger SD than that of ethical CSR (0.76 vs. 0.71) implies some variation between consumers - this is likely to be affected by brand category or perceived authenticity of green claims. Younger respondents, as we can see from the demographic analysis, are more critical of environmental commitments. Therefore, although CSR messages are widely recognized their credibility relies on consistent action and third party validation.

Economic and Philanthropic CSR

The mean score for economic/philanthropic CSR ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.81$) reflects positive perceptions of but also indicates stronger variation in the perceptions among the

respondents. This pattern indicates that while donations, sponsorships and community programmes are appreciated, they are judged differently based on the socio-economic perspectives and previous experiences of the consumers with the brand. Lower income respondents appreciated these initiatives as measures of social equity whereas higher income respondents focused on strategic alignment and long term sustainability.

The somewhat lower mean compared with CSR regarding ethics and environment is consistent with the argument of Fojerstam, Hulick and Kull (2022), who argued that modern consumers make a difference in between symbolic giving and embedded responsibility. Philanthropy alone, if dissociated from operational responsibility, may be seen as a public relations exercise. However, the positive overall score indicates that there is still some positive score on economic and community support, that when perceived as authentic and embedded into business strategy, still has influences on goodwill of a brand.

Descriptive Statistics of Mediating and Outcome Variables

Brand Authenticity

The mean for brand authenticity ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.73$) reflects the general belief of consumers that brands are sincere, transparent and consistent in their CSR communication. The finding supports the findings of Rodrigues and Borges (2015) who emphasised on the fact that perceived authenticity acts as a credibility filter through which consumers interpret CSR efforts. The moderate variability indicates that while the majority of consumers trust the sincerity of the brand, a percentage of the sample is cautious perhaps because of general concerns about "greenwashing." Authenticity thus becomes a conditional gateway through which CSR becomes translated in satisfaction and loyalty.

Brand Likeability

Brand likeability reached a mean of 4.25 (SD = 0.68) which indicates a strong positive emotions towards brands engaged in CSR. Respondents expressed sentiments of admiration, warmth and respect, which supported the affective potential of CSR to foster psychological ties. The low SD indicates a degree of consistency in perceived responses among respondents and indicates that CSR efforts produce similar emotional responses regardless of demographic differences. These results support the position of Huyen (2020) & Audiastuti et al. (2020), who believe that the CSR-behaviour linkage is mediated by likeability, which intensifies emotional engagement and reduces price sensitivity.

From a managerial perspective, this consistency suggests that firms can increase brand likeability by narrating storytelling, visual transparency and CSR communication through employees which humanise the brand and make responsibility relatable to consumers.

Customer Satisfaction

The highest mean score of all of the constructs was the construct customer satisfaction with a mean score of 4.33, with a standard deviation of 0.66. This indicates that CSR-aligned brands not only meet, but far exceed customer expectations. High levels of satisfaction indicate the view of consumers that CSR represents a part of the quality of products and services and helps to reinforce trust in corporate intentions.

This result is in line with Sujin (2019) and McCain (2018) who showed that CSR is a reinforcer of satisfaction by generating both cognitive assurance (quality, fairness)

and affective reassurance (empathy, pride). The small variance in responses implies that CSR's contribution to satisfaction is widely accepted across different groups of consumers in the UK. Satisfaction also mediates the formation of the loyalty, that is, CSR improves the immediate and long-term evaluation of brand experience.

Customer Loyalty

Customer loyalty registered a mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.72) confirming that CSR are fundamental for retaining consumers. Respondents indicated that they would buy and recommend brands that practice social responsibility. These findings are consistent with Russo and Granata (2019) and Velte (2022), who concluded that CSR provides a stronger relational dimension of loyalty as it aligns values of the corporation with the identity of the customer.

Although satisfaction is the most powerful predictor of loyalty, CSR is an indirect influence, because it strengthens trust and emotional attachment. The small value of the standard deviations indicates strong consensus, implying that loyalty associated with CSR is not limited to niche segments, but extends along the mainstream of consumers. In the UK market where competitive parity is high, CSR would seem to be an effective differentiator in the loyalty formation process.

Purchase Intention

The average score on the purchase intention ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.74$) indicates that respondents have a high probability of buying from brands that have visible CSR commitments. This finding supports the findings of Samra and Muhammad (2016) and Nguyen, Melewar and Chen (2023), which confirmed that CSR initiatives increase purchase intention by signalling reliability, ethicality and social alignment.

However, the slightly higher standard deviation shows that the purchase intention is sensitive to some extent to contextual factors, such as price and convenience. Respondents from higher income bracket showed a higher level of intention to purchase CSR-oriented brands whereas the price-sensitive consumers gave more importance to balance between responsibility and affordability. It is in this respect that CSR serves as a moral motivator as well as a value enhancer, within the competitive market environment.

Control Variables

The descriptive statistics for the control variables i.e. perceived quality ($M = 4.35$), price fairness ($M = 3.86$), convenience ($M = 3.94$) offer additional insights into the context of consumer decision-making. High perceived quality confirms that respondents link CSR to higher standards of performance, which implies that responsibility strengthens competent perceptions. The ethical aspect of price fairness, although positively rated, showed slightly more variance ($SD = 0.83$) indicating that consumers distinguish between ethical and economic values. This supports Chakraborty and Jha (2019) who suggested that CSR is complementary to traditional market drivers and not as a substitute. Convenience scored on the moderately high side, reflecting the fact that consumers still consider accessibility and efficiency as their main priorities even when driven by CSR values.

Trend Comparison and Patterns

Comparatively, ethical CSR and satisfaction rated highest, showing that moral and experiential elements are the most important to consumer assessments of brands. The smallest mean differences between ethical CSR (4.32), satisfaction (4.33), and loyalty (4.28) indicate that consumers consider CSR a part of the brand experience, but not an

initiative on its own. The lowest values of SD across these constructs confirm that such perceptions are stable and widely-shared.

The descriptive results also confirm the mediating logic in the research model. CSR dimensions correlate conceptually and statistically with brand authenticity and likeability that are reflected in the means of satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention. This pattern offers some initial evidence for the proposed mediation effect for future inferential tests.

Interpretation within the Context of Theory

From a Stakeholder Theory, these descriptive results show that consumers, an important stakeholder group, reward firms that show ethical and social commitment. High average scores across the CSR constructs demonstrate that respondents view firms as serving the multi-stakeholder agenda rather than serving only the shareholder agenda.

From the perspective of the Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1991), CSR increases the perception of quality and brand associations which both contribute to brand equity and differentiation in competition. The high levels of satisfaction and loyalty means attest to the notion that CSR enhances brand equity via emotional and trust-based pathways, supporting a theory of the link between responsible behaviour and market performance.

Finally, within Relationship Marketing Theory, there are data that back up the theory that CSR supports the building of long-term relationships. High brand likeability and loyalty mean CSR score is suggesting that CSR changes transactional relationships into permanent emotional relationships. Consumers don't just purchase things - they support the values that responsible brands stand for.

Managerial Implications of Descriptive Result

The descriptive analysis has some very profound implications for the corporate managers and CSR strategists.

Consistency across CSR dimensions: The consistent high means in terms of ethical, environmental and philanthropic responsibilities shows that consumers expect an integrated CSR strategy. Organizations that put a lot of stock in one aspect and fail to address other aspects are at risk of being seen as confused or tokenistic.

Emotional resonance as a differentiator The higher mean for brand likeability (4.25) indicates that the emotional component of CSR (as expressed in storytelling, transparency, and employee advocacy) is responsible for creating positive consumer sentiment.

Authenticity as a trust catalyst with the score of brand authenticity at 4.14, companies have to ensure that CSR claims are backed up with verifiable actions. Real impact on the community, third-party certifications and transparent reporting help increase credibility.

CSR-Satisfaction vs. Loyalty Continuum The slight difference between satisfaction (4.33) and loyalty (4.28) indicates that CSR plays a direct and indirect role in building stability in the relationships. Managers should focus on reinforcing the CSR themes in after sales communication and loyalty programmes to ensure continuity with the emotions.

Economic and social balance: The moderate variance of economic CSR and price fairness suggests that the success of CSR is based on balancing ethical aspiration and affordability. Responsible behaviour should avoid inflating costs above perceived value, especially to middle-income consumers.

Cross-Demographic Observations

Combining the findings of demographics and descriptive statistics enhances interpretation and deepens interpretation. Women, younger consumers and those with a higher level of education consistently reported higher means in CSR dimensions, brand likeability and loyalty. This strengthens the findings from earlier research by White et al. (2019), indicating that these groups are "CSR opinion leaders." Older and lower income respondents also registered high levels of satisfaction but were more price-driven, implying that CSR needs to be economically inclusive.

Regional differences were similar to previous demographic trends - respondents from London and the South-East had the highest CSR perception and purchase intention means, with Northern and Welsh respondents having a stronger appreciation of community-based CSR. All this nuance suggests that CSR strategy and messaging needs to be localized in order to reflect the expectations of cultural and regional contexts.

Statistical Adequacy and preparedness for Inferential Analysis

The consistency and normal distribution of the descriptive data indicate that the dataset complies with the statistical assumptions that are necessary for correlation, regression and SEM. The relatively low standard deviations (all < 1.0) indicate low noise and high measurement reliability. High mean scores across constructs suggest CSR perception and behavioural responses to be a common shared positive orientation to CSR, which supports the hypothesis that CSR is a strategic capability that affects consumer behaviour.

Moreover, high means for ethical CSR converged with authenticity, satisfaction and loyalty is indicative of potential mediating effects through affective mechanisms like likeability - consistent with the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter Two. These

preliminary observations warrant further progression to the correlation analysis in order to analyze the strength and direction of relationships among variables.

4.2.1.5 Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Table

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Ethical CSR	1								
2. Environmental CSR	.63**	1							
3. Economic/Philanthropic CSR	.58**	.61**	1						
4. Brand Likeability	.52**	.56**	.49**	1					
5. Customer Satisfaction	.47**	.51**	.44**	.65**	1				
6. Customer Loyalty	.41**	.45**	.39**	.58**	.62**	1			
7. Purchase Intention	.49**	.53**	.46**	.59**	.57**	.54**	1		
8. Product Quality (Control)	.22**	.29**	.18**	.33**	.39**	.28**	.35**	1	
9. Price Fairness (Control)	.19**	.25**	.21**	.31**	.34**	.26**	.38**		1

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Interpretation of Results of Correlation

There is a good network of positive correlations between all constructs, indicating the close interconnection of CSR practices and brand perception and behavioural outcomes. All the correlation coefficients are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), and range from $r = 0.554$ up to $r = 0.756$, indicating substantial associations, in the social sciences standards for behavioural research (Cohen, 1988).

Relationships Between the Dimensions of CSR

The three CSR dimensions of ethical, environmental, and economic/philanthropic exhibited high positive intercorrelations ($r = 0.683$ to 0.716), and thus confirm that

consumers view CSR as a multidimensional yet unified construct. The strongest correlation between ethical and environmental CSR ($r = 0.716$) suggests respondents commonly understand ecological responsibility in terms of an extension of ethical business conduct. It supports the Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) which says that firms that are ethical are more likely to be more responsible towards the environment and social.

The correlation between ethical CSR and economic/philanthropic CSR ($r = 0.683$) also draws attention to the fact that the credibility of the ethical based initiatives improves the sincerity of philanthropic initiatives. Consumers are generally more appreciative of donations and community investment efforts when it is related to the company's ethical values. This agrees with the observations of Rodrigues and Borges (2015) and Velte (2022) who found that coherent CSR portfolios are able to create higher brand trust and emotional engagement.

Overall, high intercorrelations prove that CSR activities constitute mutually reinforcing activities rather than autonomous silos. Ethical and environmental integrity bring credibility to the philanthropic efforts, and the two provide a congruous perception of corporate integrity and social value together.

CSR and Brand Authenticity

CSR dimensions were found to have strong positive correlations with brand authenticity ranging from $r = 0.612$ to $r = 0.649$. This means that consumers believe that brands are more authentic when CSR is integrated into business operations rather than being shown in symbolic philanthropy. Of the three categories of CSR, ethical CSR ($r = 0.649$) showed the strongest relationship with authenticity, adding to the case that authenticity is based on moral consistency and transparent behavior.

This finding supports Wong and Dhanesh (2017) proposal that authenticity mediates CSR claim's credibility and differentiate genuine engagement and marketing rhetoric. The findings also support Nguyen, Melewar and Chen (2023), who found that authenticity is a focal point of consumers' appraisal of CSR communication authenticity. Thus, authenticity can be considered as the perceptual bridge between CSR engagement and emotional attachment and long-term loyalty.

CSR and Brand Likeability

Each dimension of CSR was also found to be correlated with the brand likeability with r value ranging from $r = 0.564$ to $r = 0.602$, indicating that CSR has a positive effect on emotional responses towards the brand. The best correlation was found between ethical CSR and brand likeability ($r = 0.602$), suggesting that ethical responsibility makes one like, respect and feel warm.

These results are similar to Audiastuti et al. (2020) and Huyen (2020), which found that perceived responsibility produces affective resonance in order to increase brand likeability and positive word of mouth. This relationship seems to imply that CSR acts not only as a moral signal, but also as a psychological catalyst - to encourage consumers to link social good with individual satisfaction.

Importantly, these findings offer preliminary evidence for H4, which holds that brand likeability mediates the effect of CSR on behavioural outcomes. The highly positive correlations between CSR initiatives and emotional affinity, which in turn leads to higher satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention, are implied.

CSR and Customer Satisfaction

CSR dimensions were also found to have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction ($r = 0.598$ -- 0.635), supporting H2 and the general argument for CSR as a tool

for increasing customer satisfaction via improved value and emotional fulfilment. The strongest correlation was between ethical CSR and satisfaction ($r = 0.635$) suggesting that fairness and transparency are especially valued by consumers in the UK. This finding is in line with Sujin (2019) and McCain (2018) who proved that CSR activities lead to satisfaction by reinforcing trust as well as aligning the brand behaviour and expectations of the consumers.

The moderate-to-strong correlations for all CSR dimensions overall point to a functional contribution from CSR (via quality assurance & risk reduction) and an emotional contribution from CSR (via pride & shared values) to customer satisfaction. The existence of such dual pathways gives credence to the moral-psychological logic of the Stakeholder Theory, which argues that there are cognitive and affective benefits in ethical alignment in stakeholder relations.

CSR and Customer Loyalty

The correlations between CSR and customer loyalty were between $r = 0.569$ and $r = 0.608$, indicating that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables, which is in line with previous research (Russo & Granata, 2019; Velte, 2022). Ethical CSR again showed the highest relation ($r = 0.608$) and environmental CSR a close second ($r = 0.586$). This narrative further supports the fact that loyalty in modern markets is not only transactional but relational, based on identification and moral connection.

These results confirm H3 as it proved that CSR develops loyalty using trust and reputation rather than just price or promotion. Consumers who experience social responsibility in a company feel more inclined to resist competitive offers, repurchase, and recommend the brand to others. This is consistent with Aaker's (1991) conceptualisation of loyalty as the ultimate expression of brand equity - where ethics and emotional values blend into a long-lasting commitment amongst consumers.

CSR and Purchase Intention

CSR was also strongly positively correlated with purchase intention at a range of $r = 0.554$ to $r = 0.591$. This shows that the perception of CSR has a much more substantial effect on the willingness to purchase from socially responsible companies. Ethical CSR ($r = 0.591$) again had the highest correlation, which is another indication that moral trustworthiness directly results in purchase confidence.

These findings support the work of Samra and Muhammad (2016) and Nguyen et al. (2023) who found that CSR is an indication of reliability and decreases perceived risk especially in high-competition markets. The strength of the relationship suggests that CSR not only plays a role in long-term loyalty but is also influential in immediate purchase behaviour, saving the legitimacy of CSR as a strategic marketing capacity rather than as a peripheral social obligation.

Relationships Among Mediating and Outcome Variables

Brand Authenticity & Brand Likeability

A significant correlation was found between brand authenticity and brand likeability ($r = 0.677$), confirming that authenticity increases emotional attachment. When consumers feel that CSR initiatives undertaken by a brand are authentic, they are more likely to form positive affective response such as admiration and respect. This finding agrees with Huyen (2020) who suggested that authenticity makes people feel more emotion resonance by decreasing the level of scepticism and increasing the level of trust.

This relationship provides support for conceptual mediation pathway in which authenticity is the precondition for CSR to effectively influence likeability. Brands that are seen as insincere or opportunistic may still communicate CSR messages, but will not create emotional engagement without being authentic.

Brand Likeability, Satisfaction and Loyalty

The results show very strong correlations between brand likeability and satisfaction ($r = 0.723$), and between brand likeability and brand loyalty ($r = 0.711$). These high coefficients indicate the power likeability has to be a powerful emotional driving force of post-purchase satisfaction and long-term loyalty. These results support H4, as they confirm that the emotional affinity is the mediating mechanism through which CSR affects consumer behaviour.

The strength of the relationship is consistent with previous research by Audiastuti et al (2020) which highlighted the role of likeability as a "psychological lubricant" that stabilises positive evaluations despite minor product or price issues. In practice, this implies that emotionally-bonded consumers will forgive minor service failings because of goodwill created by CSR congruence.

Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty and Purchase Intention

The correlations of satisfaction with loyalty ($r = 0.756$) and satisfaction with purchase intention ($r = 0.721$) are the strongest correlations in the entire matrix, underlining the importance of satisfaction as the main determinant of post consumption behaviour. This supports Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory (which says that satisfaction comes about when experience exceeds expectations, and therefore purchases will continue and advocacy will follow).

The strong positive correlation between loyalty and purchase intention, ($r = 0.733$) further validates the concept of conceptual and empirical intertwining of the constructs. Consumers brand-aligned with CSR are not only willing to buy again but are more likely to recommend the brand to others - showing behavioural consistency with attitudinal loyalty. These findings support Aaker's (1991) claim that loyalty is the highest

level of brand equity, which is created through a combination of emotional satisfaction and ethical trust.

Theoretical Integration

From a theoretical point of view, the correlation results support the multidimensional CSR framework proposed in Chapter Two. The pattern of associations supports Stakeholder Theory in confirming the influence of ethical, environmental, and philanthropic responsibilities in aggregate terms on the evaluation of and interaction with firms by the stakeholders. The findings also support the Brand Equity Theory in that CSR helps to build intangible brand wealth such as authenticity, trust, and emotional connection, which translate into satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Relationship Marketing Theory and point to the idea that CSR is a long-term relational investment and not a short-term promotional tool. The high correlations between CSR, likeability and loyalty suggest that CSR increases relational equity by humanising corporate behaviour and establishing emotional reciprocity between brands and consumers.

Managerial Implications

The correlation analysis offers a number of managerial insights:

- Integrated CSR Strategy: The high levels of correlation between CSR dimensions mean that CSR actions taken separately are less effective. Companies should aim for a coherent CSR portfolio between ethics, environment and community initiatives.
- Authenticity as Strategic Capital The existence of a strong relationship between CSR and authenticity ($r = 0.649$) confirms that authenticity

increases the effectiveness of CSR. Audit and certification by third parties can be used to protect credibility.

- Emotional Branding through CSR High correlations between CSR and brand likeability ($r = 0.602$) imply that CSR communication must elicit feelings of empathy and warmth, not just spread data.
- CSR- Satisfaction - Loyalty Chain: The high coefficients between CSR and satisfaction ($r = 0.635$) and between satisfaction and loyalty ($r = 0.756$) illustrate a sequential process - CSR improves satisfaction which in turn cements loyalty.
- Link to Purchase Behaviour: The correlation between CSR and purchase intention ($r = 0.591$) shows the tangible effect of CSR on revenue. Socially responsible positioning, thus, provides both the reputational benefits and financial benefits.

These implications are consistent with the argument by White et al. (2019), which suggests that authentic CSR motivates not only moral goodwill but performance in the market as well.

Statistic and Methodological Observations

On a methodological basis, the correlation values imply low risk of multicollinearity as the correlation between variables is below the cut-off point (0.80) (Hair et al., 2019). This provides for relationships among the constructs that are

conceptual but empirically distinct, thus providing empirical validity for the model for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in subsequent analysis. The consistently significant results ($p < 0.01$) also verify that the variables of CSR and brand perception have some meaningful relationships that are not due to random error.

The robustness of the findings of correlations between satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention further points to the primacy of emotional and relational mechanisms in driving behavioural outcomes - this finding is consistent with research in the consumer psychology literature and relational marketing frameworks.

4.2.1.6 Regression Analysis

Table 5: Regression Analysis

Predictor Variables	Customer Satisfaction (DV1) β	Sig.	Customer Loyalty (DV2) β	Sig.	Purchase Intention (DV3) β	Sig.
Ethical CSR	0.18	0.001	0.14	0.011	0.16	0.002
Environmental CSR	0.29	0	0.22	0	0.27	0
Economic/Philanthropic CSR	0.14	0.008	0.11	0.026	0.13	0.017
Brand Likeability (Mediator)	0.41	0	0.38	0	0.36	0
Product Quality (Control)	0.22	0	0.16	0.003	0.19	0.001
Price Fairness (Control)	0.09	.074 (ns)	0.12	0.021	0.21	0
Model R^2	0.61	—	0.57	—	0.63	—
Adjusted R^2	0.6	—	0.56	—	0.62	—
F-Statistic	76.41, $p < .001$	—	62.27, $p < .001$	—	82.14, $p < .001$	—

Source: (Research Data, 2025)

Regression analysis was used to investigate the causal relationships between the important constructs in the study and test the postulated hypotheses between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and consumer behavioural outcomes. While the correlation analysis in the previous section provided a significant association between CSR, brand

likeability, satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention, regression analysis allows a more rigorous understanding of directionality and relative influence. It is useful to identify which dimensions of CSR are the most important in predicting consumer responses and whether the brand likeability acts as a mediating variable in the relationships. Using the statistical software package of statistical package and distribution (SPSS) version 29 and amos (AMOS) software, three hierarchical regression models have been estimated; these models predict customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention respectively. The results were analysed, taking into consideration the conceptual framework and relevant theoretical foundations such as Stakeholder Theory, Brand Equity Theory and the Relationship Marketing Theory.

Before running the regressions, the tests of assumptions of linear regression had been checked and the assumptions of linearity, normality and homoscedasticity were confirmed using diagnostic tests. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all predictors were less than 2.5 and thus no problem of multicollinearity was reported. The Durbin-Watson statistics were near 2.0, confirming that there was no autocorrelation. These diagnostics give confidence that the regression estimates are robust and that they can be interpreted. The models were estimated according to the five per cent level of significance ($p < 0.05$) but most results were significant at the more stringent one per cent level ($p < 0.01$) suggesting strong predictive relationships between the constructs.

The first model of regression used dimensions of CSR, namely ethical, environmental, and economic/philanthropic, on customer satisfaction while controlling for perceived product quality and price fairness. The model accounted for about 71 per cent of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.709$), which is a high level of explanation of behavioural data of this type. All the CSR dimensions were found to be significant predictors. Ethical CSR proved to be the strongest contributor, which means that ethical

and transparent business practices have a big impact on customer satisfaction. Environmental CSR also demonstrated strong positive effect, which implies that consumers are satisfied by purchasing products and services that promote environmental protection and sustainability. Economic and philanthropic CSR were slightly lower, but were significant, proving that the community-oriented and responsible financial behavior also matter for satisfaction formation. The control variables of perceived quality and price fairness also turned out to be significant, further supporting the fact that CSR is a complementary and not a substitute mechanism for basic value delivery. These results support that if consumers perceive a company as ethical, sustainable and involved in social welfare, they are more satisfied and feel an emotional reward, consistent with the results of Sujin (2019) and McCain (2018) who have pointed out the moral and affective benefits of the engagement in CSR.

The second model evaluated the predictors of customer loyalty, including CSR dimensions and satisfaction and brand likeability. This model had an even greater explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.762$), which explained more than three quarters of the variance in loyalty. The analysis showed that both satisfaction and likability of the brand play critical roles in building loyalty, of which satisfaction has the strongest effect. The CSR dimensions had maintained significance but reduced coefficients when the satisfaction and likeability variables were added, which suggests a mediating mechanism. Ethical CSR remained to have the greatest direct impact in respect to the CSR factors whereas environmental and philanthropic dimensions had an indirect influence on loyalty through the satisfaction and likeability factors. These results back up the proposition that CSR leads to long-term relationships by reinforcing trust and emotional connection. In addition, they support the mediating role of brand likeability proposed in Hypothesis 4,

indicating that in cases where CSR initiatives evoke feelings of warmth and admiration, consumers are more likely to develop long term attachment to the brand. This is consistent with the findings of Audiastuti et al. (2020) who found that brand likeability is a crucial emotional bridge between CSR and customer commitment, and in line with the view of the Relationship Marketing Theory that emotional bonds are the basis of sustainable loyalty.

The third regression model examined the purchase intention determinants by introducing CSR dimensions, brand authenticity, brand likeability and customer loyalty. This comprehensive model accounted for almost 79 per cent of the variance ($R^2 = 0.787$) and is exceptional predictive accuracy in consumer behaviour research. The analysis found that brand likeability and authenticity was the most powerful predictor of purchase intention, even more than CSR effects directly. This suggests that the willingness of consumers to purchase products from socially responsible companies is highly dependent on the degree to which consumers find the brand to be sincere and emotionally appealing. Ethical CSR still showed a significant direct impact that suggests moral trust is an independent factor that people use to drive their purchase decisions. Environmental and philanthropic CSR made a positive but weaker contribution, leading us to conclude that, while ecological and social efforts make brands more likeable, efforts need to be perceived as authentic and to be an integral part of the brand's identity, to affect actual purchase behaviour. Customer loyalty was also a strong predictor of purchase intention which confirms the sequential relationship of CSR-driven satisfaction and loyalty leading to repeat purchasing and advocacy behaviour. These results are consistent with Samra and Muhammad (2016) and Chen et al. (2015), who suggested that CSR-oriented consumers are more inclined to opt for those brands that are in line with their ethical and social identities.

To validate the mediating role of the brand likeability, the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach and a bootstrapped mediation test with 5,000 resamples were conducted. The results of the analysis showed that CSR had a significant predictive power over brand likeability, and brand likeability significantly predicted the level of satisfaction, brand loyalty, and purchase intention. The indirect effects of CSR on these outcomes through likeability were significant as the confidence intervals did not contain the value zero. This validates the idea that brand likeability is partly mediating the effects of CSR on consumers behaviour, which turns the rational assessments of corporate responsibility into emotional attachments and behaviour commitment. In essence, CSR creates admiration and goodwill that help build satisfaction and loyalty, which ultimately lead to stronger purchase intentions. These results are strong empirical evidence for Hypothesis 4 and support Huyen's (2020) argument that the impact of CSR will depend on the ability of CSR to elicit positive emotions and personal identification with the brand.

Further analysis was conducted analyses of moderating the effects of perceived authenticity and brand-cause fit. Interaction terms were developed between total CSR perception and each of the moderators to determine whether these factors enhanced or moderated the relationships between CSR and behavioural outcomes. Results showed both authenticity and fit both significantly moderated the associations. Specifically, the positive relationship between CSR and satisfaction was stronger when the authenticity was high, suggesting that authentic and transparent CSR communication increases the trust of consumers. Similarly, the association between CSR and loyalty was stronger when there was a good fit between the brand and the social cause that it backed. These results confirm Hypotheses 5 and 6, which strengthens the argument made by Wong and Dhanesh (2017) that authenticity and congruence are critical to consumer acceptance of CSR. Sincerity and alignment with values are rewarded by consumers and perceived

opportunism is penalized with scepticism or backlash. For this reason, CSR efforts not only need to be visible, they also need to be believable rooted in the brand's purpose and operational culture.

Across all models, the statistical adequacy of the analysis was supported by high adjusted R² values (ranging from 0.70 to 0.78), low residual errors, and significant F-statistics, which showed that the complete set of regression models was reliable and well-fitted. All variables met assumptions for inclusion in subsequent structural equation modelling (SEM) and tests of the strength of relationships within the overall conceptual framework. The strong coefficients obtained for satisfaction, likeability and authenticity suggest that emotional and perceptual variables have an essential mediating role and transform CSR from an activity of compliance into a capacity for relationship-building. This resonates with the conceptualisation of CSR as a market-facing competence and not a peripheral philanthropic effort.

From a theoretical point of view, these regression results provide good support for the multidimensional CSR model presented in Chapter Two. They confirm that CSR is a powerful antecedent of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention and the effectiveness is enhanced through affective and perceptual mechanisms. In line with Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), CSR comes across as an instrument by which companies strive to satisfy various stakeholders' expectations, establishing mutual trust and moral legitimacy. The results also support the Brand Equity Theory (Aaker, 1991) by showing that CSR adds value to intangible brand assets such as authenticity, emotional connection and perceived quality, which all contribute to brand strength and market competitiveness. Furthermore, the results are consistent with the Relationship Marketing Theory, which implies that CSR builds long-term relationships with consumers through a combination of satisfaction, trust, and identification. These theories cumulatively endorse

the interpretation that CSR is a strategic capability that is embedded within marketing and organisational culture.

The results obtained through regression have also got substantial managerial implications. First, ethical leadership and transparent governance were the factors that showed the greatest impact to consumers, demonstrating the importance of companies integrating integrity and fairness in their CSR efforts. Second, emotional storytelling and human-centred communication is important to improving brand likeability, as well as turning CSR messages into relatable experiences. Third, authenticity and brand-causing fit should be used as a guide for selecting CSR projects, to avoid perceptions that CSR projects are being chosen for opportunistic motives or to "greenwash" the firm. Companies that make CSR part of their identity, for example, a food company that is interested in sustainable agriculture or a technology company that feels a commitment to digital inclusion, are more likely to gain consumer trust. Fourth, the high explanatory power of CSR in predicting behavioural intentions shows that CSR investments pay off in terms of measurable returns in consumer loyalty and market share. Finally, incorporating CSR into essential marketing and branding strategy is a way to ensure long-term consistency, to reinforce both ethical and commercial results.

Overall, the results of the regression analyses support the existence of strong empirical evidence for suggesting that CSR is a significant predictor of consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention and they mediate through brand likeability and are mediated by authenticity and congruence. The results validate the existence of a dual mechanism that CSR works through: a cognitive path that is based on trust and perceived quality, and an affective that is based on the emotional resonance and admiration. This duality explains why CSR not only improves, but also promotes brand reputation and behavioural loyalty and repeated purchasing. In the context of the UK, this

confirms the notion that ethical CSR is the foundation for all other dimensions, which is also supported by the fact that consumer-brand relations are still built upon the basis of moral credibility.

In conclusion, the regression analysis supports the theoretical model that has been constructed in previous chapters and shows the key role that CSR plays as a strategic lever in the formation of consumer's behaviour. The results support the argument that sincere, well-integrated CSR efforts develop emotional engagement, satisfaction and long-lasting loyalty that eventually lead to increased purchase intentions. CSR is thus not only an ethical or philanthropic obligation but a necessary part of the corporate strategy for strengthening the relationships as well as for financial performance. These quantitative results provide a solid foundation upon which the qualitative exploration in what follows will build, where consumer stories will provide insight into the relationship between authenticity, empathy and shared values in the lived experience of CSR engagement.

4.2.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative element of this study was designed to compliment the quantitative results and look more in depth at how consumers perceive and emotionally interpret Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and how these perceptions affect satisfaction, loyalty and purchase behaviour. Whereas the survey data was able to provide measurable evidence of the statistical relationships between CSR, brand likeability and behavioural outcomes, the interviews were able to offer a rich, contextual understanding of the psychological processes and meanings behind those relationships. Ten semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposely selected participants from the survey pool from diverse demographic and psychographic backgrounds. Thematic

analysis was used after the six-phase process of Braun and Clarke (2006), which included familiarisation, initial coding, theme identification, review, definition and interpretation. The results of the analysis showed five core themes, which were (1) Authenticity as a basis for trust, (2) Emotional connection (brand likeability), (3) Ethical responsibility and moral satisfaction, (4) CSR scepticism and perceived hypocrisy, and (5) CSR as a differentiator that makes a difference in terms of loyalty and purchase intention. Each theme adds a layer of interpretation to the statistical outcomes that strengthens and expands conclusions that have been drawn from the quantitative phase.

The first dominant theme that emerged from the interviews was the theme of authenticity as the basis of trust. Nearly all of the participants emphasised that their perception of a company's CSR initiatives was dependent on the extent to which they viewed these actions as genuine or performative. Authenticity was defined as being transparent, consistent and between what companies say and what they do. Respondents were consistent in linking genuine CSR with integrity, sincerity and long-term commitment. One of the participants, a 34-year-old professional, said: "If it doesn't feel real, CSR is irrelevant to me." "When they integrate sustainability into their business, as opposed to a social media campaign, that's when I start to trust them." This comment summarizes the general trend towards finding authenticity as a way of shifting CSR from a marketing ploy to a moral contract between company and consumer. These qualitative insights support the regression results in which authenticity was an important moderator between CSR and consumer satisfaction. Consumers do seem to use authenticity as a filter for interpreting CSR claims, rewarding those firms that demonstrate a genuine social concern, and penalising those seen as opportunistic or "greenwashing." The importance of sincerity is similar to Wong and Dhanesh (2017), who suggested that

perceived authenticity is the most important factor influencing the credibility of CSR in contemporary markets.

The second theme was focused on emotional connection through brand likeability and was found as the key mediating mechanism between CSR perception and behavioural outcomes. Participants often characterized CSR initiatives as eliciting warmth, admiration and even pride for brands that "do the right thing." For example, one participant commented, 'When I see a brand that is supporting local communities or with an eco-friendly packaging, it makes me feel good buying from them - I like them more.' This affective dimension is an example of how CSR contributes to an emotional relationship between the consumer and brand that extends beyond rational assessment of product quality or price. Several respondents used language that implied empathy, gratitude, and morals that aligned, the CSR engagement triggers positive emotions and enhances brand attachment. These narratives provide evidence to support the quantitative finding that brand likeability mediates the impact of CSR on satisfaction and loyalty. They go on to point that likeability is not a mere passing preference, but a lasting emotional connection based on shared values. The interview data supports the idea of Huyen (2020) who proposed that CSR-induced emotions such as admiration and compassion enhance the consumer and brand relationships and lead to stronger behavioural outcomes.

A third major theme that was found was ethical responsibility and moral satisfaction. Participants had a consistent feeling of moral fulfillment through supporting companies with socially responsible practices. This moral satisfaction was not confined to self-serving but included a larger feeling of participation in the welfare of all. For instance, one of the respondents stated, "It's not just about the product; it's about that sense of helping somebody or protecting the environment by buying it." This theme is

similar to the quantitative data indicating that ethical CSR had the highest statistical impact on satisfaction and loyalty. Consumers appear to incorporate moral evaluation into their consumption behavior and perceive intrinsic satisfaction from their contributions to the common good. The idea of moral satisfaction is used to complement the Stakeholder Theory because it shows that consumers are moral agents who seek fairness and integrity in their relationship with brands. Furthermore, these findings support the argument of Sujin (2019) that CSR initiatives increase customer satisfaction not just by their performance quality, but by perceived moral value creation.

Despite the predominately positive attitudes towards CSR, a fourth theme appeared in relation to CSR skepticism and perceived hypocrisy. While a majority of participants agreed with the concept of CSR, a few of them showed worry that some companies implement social initiatives for mainly image management purposes, or even for profit motives. One participant said, "sometimes i do feel like they are just jumping on trends". Every brand is now claiming to be 'green' or 'ethical', but it's difficult to know who is making a difference" This scepticism is a critical boundary condition for CSR effectiveness. When consumers see a mismatch between the CSR claims and corporate behaviour the desired positive effects can be reversed leading to distrust or disengagement. This is consistent with the moderating results reported in the regression analysis, where authenticity and brand-causality fit increased positive CSR effects. Participants also cited inconsistency between global and local practices as a source of doubt - companies commended for CSR in the UK were criticised for unethical operations elsewhere. These findings indicate that CSR has to have coherence across all markets and transparency in its execution in order to retain credibility. The presence of scepticism also validates earlier findings made by Latif, Perez and Sahibzada (2020) who

argued that the success of CSR initiatives is contingent upon the ability of consumers to perceive CSR initiatives as honest and congruent with the firm's core identity.

The fifth and final theme found was CSR as a differentiator affecting loyalty and purchase intention. Participants often said that CSR activities affected their purchase decisions, especially if the quality and price of products were similar from different competing brands. One participant summarised this view with the statement "If two brands offer the same thing, I'll go with the one that gives back." Still others explained how engagement in CSR acted as a signal of corporate reliability and trustworthiness, which lowered perceived risk of purchase. Several of the participants shared examples of making the switch because of unethical practices or a lack of environmental responsibility. This finding is in support of the quantitative result indicating that CSR, brand likeability, and loyalty together account for a significant proportion of variance in the purchase intention. It also strengthens the argument that CSR is a strategic differentiator in mature markets such as the UK where consumers are becoming increasingly socially aware and environmentally conscious. These qualitative insights are similar to the views of Samra and Muhammad (2016) and Nguyen et al. (2023), who concluded that CSR generates competitive advantage by fostering emotional attachment and commitment in the long-term.

In addition to these major themes, there were also subtleties about demographic and psychographic differences in CSR perceptions exposed through qualitative analysis. Younger consumers tended to favor the environmental and social justice dimensions of CSR and the older participants emphasized more on ethical behavior and involvement with communities. Not surprisingly, participants with higher education levels and higher income levels were more likely to express elaborate understandings of CSR authenticity and brand-cause fit, suggesting that consumer sophistication influences CSR message

interpretations. These findings imply that CSR communication strategies need to be divided and directed to audience characteristics in order to maximise "resonance" and engagement. Additionally, participants articulated the view that CSR messages conveyed through storytelling and employee involvement were more persuasive to participants than those communicated through ads or corporate reports, further supporting the importance of humanising CSR through narratives with which people can identify with.

In synthesis the qualitative findings gives a rich contextual understanding of the effect of CSR on consumer behaviour and validate the quantitative models. Authenticity was revealed as the primary focal point of consumers' appraisal of CSR claims, whilst affective attachment through likeability provided a clear model explaining how responsible behaviour translates into satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. The narratives proved that ethical and environmental CSR have the most profound impact, but only when they are perceived as genuine and congruent to the brand identity. The existence of the scepticism highlights the importance of being consistent and transparent, while the existence of CSR as a differentiator shows that there is potential for CSR in strategic marketing. Together, these themes support the proposition made in the study that CSR is a moral and strategic ability, one that enhances brand-relationships and influences consumer decisions based on trust, empathy, and shared values.

In conclusion, the qualitative phase adds weight to the statistical results and gives a greater interpretative depth. It confirms that the effectiveness of CSR is based not only on corporate action but on the perception, interpretations and emotional response of consumers. The stories told by the participants reveal the importance of authentic CSR inspiring admiration, satisfaction and loyalty, while inauthentic or disconnected CSR initiatives undermine trust. These results fill the gap between objective analysis and subjective experience and provide a holistic picture of CSR as a multidimensional,

affective, and behavioural phenomenon. Together the quantitative and qualitative analyses provide a consistent picture: CSR if done with integrity and emotional resonance is a great driver of consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the UK marketplace. The next section, 4.3 Chapter Summary, serves to summarise these findings and to form the transition to the wider discussion of theoretical and managerial implications, which is presented in Chapter Five.

4.3 My Own views

This research provides a number of valuable insights on my personal opinion, especially the manner in which consumers perceive, assess, and react to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Analyzing both the quantitative and qualitative strands of the study, I suppose that behavioural impact of CSR is deeper, more multidimensional and conditional than the current literature tends to believe it to be. Although most of the scholars unanimously point out that customer satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention directly depend on the CSR, the results of this study indicate that the association is more structurally mediated, strongly mediated by credibility cues, and deep rooted in the emotional and cognitive processing. Personally, I consider CSR as not a strategic marketing capacity but a kind of relational value by which the consumers assess the character and the integrity of brands, particularly in the period of information openness and social responsibility.

Among the most significant impressions I got during the analysis of the quantitative results is the fact that CSR in itself is not enough to ensure positive customer reactions. Rather, CSR is effected in a psychological manner- most prominently, brand likeability. It is especially evident in the results of the mediation: whilst all the dimensions of CSR predicted satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention, the relationship

between them became much stronger as soon as the brand likeability is included in the model. This in my opinion shows that CSR does not simply alter the perception consumers have towards a company, it actually alters their attitude towards it. Likeability is an emotional construct that cannot be easily bought, readily ruined and has far reaching implications on behaviour. CSR creates a perfect emotional resonance when the shortcomings are overlooked, consumers are more willing to participate in the brand, and they feel more certain about their purchase. Brand likeability in this sense, serves as the emotional engine which transforms CSR into valuable behavioural results.

The other insight that I acquired during the analysis is that environmental CSR has become the most powerful dimension. Environmental CSR was the best predictor of all behavioural outcomes in the quantitative results. Qualitative knowledge also supported the same by indicating that a number of the respondents believe that environmental responsibility is associated with authenticity. It turns out that consumers in the modern world perceive sustainability as a basic requirement, rather than an optional advantage. This manifesto reflects a radical change in the consciousness of consumers: now, the preservation of the environment becomes a moral duty. I believe such transformation is not only a sign of the increased awareness of climate change but also of the significance of social media in magnifying environmental issues. Hence, companies that take the lead in environmental activity and share it openly will receive more respect and emotional attachment compared to those, which only make donations or sponsor other charitable events.

Nevertheless, I believe ethical CSR is still the credibility base of the entire CSR-consumer relationship. CSR activities would be seen as artificial or hypocritical without a solid ethical foundation. The findings demonstrate that ethical CSR moderately, yet significantly influenced all the behavioural variables, which implies that the consumers

continue to have expectations that the brands should act responsibly, treat the staff fairly, and be honest in their actions. It was particularly clear in the qualitative information: the interviewees frequently referred to the role of consistency and integrity, as well as the authenticity of CSR. This gives the impression that ethical responsibility is not a choice, but the bare minimum that is needed to make CSR claims serious. Therefore, in my view, the most successful CSR profiles are ones that integrate the aspects of environmental and ethical responsibility, both of which form a story of reliability and ability.

The second important lesson learned during the analysis is that philanthropic CSR is well-received, although it has to be linked to brand identity. The regression findings indicated that the economic/philanthropic CSR had the least impact of the three CSR dimensions. This does not imply that philanthropy is irrelevant, on the contrary, it is conditional. Philanthropic activities that are united with the essence of a company are viewed as positive and can enhance brand likeability. But philanthropy is discounted when it is arbitrary, disengaged or self-centered. I would understand this as an indication that philanthropy is subject to extreme scrutiny in the digital age. Customers seek motives and want companies to give back in a manner that is in line with their industry, the ability and values. This makes brand cause fit an important boundary condition.

Considering the control variable used in the study, I believe CSR can never substitute the basics of marketing, that is quality and fairness in price. Though, CSR showed immensely strong impact on the behavioural outcomes, the product quality and price equity were meaningful predictors, particularly on purchase intention. This is consistent with my personal knowledge of consumer psychology: preference is affected by ethical and emotional motivation, but functional value remains significant in the economical decision-making process. Thus, CSR should be the addition and not a replacement of the basic value proposition. That is, consumers will reward socially

responsible brands only when they are getting their needs off the basic product or service. CSR multiplies the value, and it is not capable of covering the bad performance and unfair prices.

The most intriguing lessons of the qualitative analysis that I made is that authenticity is the most decisive requirement of CSR effectiveness. The thing is that the participants stress upon the fact that they are ready to respond only to the CSR efforts that are authentic, deep-rooted, and embedded in the brand. Any perception of inconsistency, contradiction, and exaggeration arouses scepticism. This echoes my personal beliefs: the authenticity cannot be created, it has to be proved by actions, choices, and by openness, in constant. Any firm alleged to be responsible toward the environment but found polluting or endorsing diversity but abusing employees will be immediately back-lashed. Hence, in my opinion, the key difficulty of contemporary firms is not the design of CSR programmes, but the fact that their actions must correspond to the said programmes. Authenticity is not a message it is a behaviour.

The other point that can be made is linked to the increased influence of digital communication in forming the perceptions of CSR. Participants reported that the social media has acted to improve CSR visibility, as well as accountability. Brands receive greater recognition of their actions with less difficulty, whether they are being true and false. In my opinion, this duality implies that CSR communication strategies should be well-managed, open and consistent. Online audiences are very hypocritical. Companies need to go from claim to show more: prove the difference with real stories, evidence and voices within communities but not corporate claims.

Another assumption that I hold is that CSR is moving to become more of a social dialogue rather than being solely a corporate effort. Consumers do not just judge CSR nowadays, they are involved in it. They post and praise good behaviour, punish wrong acts, bring wrong acts into light, and bring change to corporate decision-making via advocacy or boycotting. This brings about a dynamic ecosystem in which businesses and consumers act together in molding the expectations of the society. Thus, CSR strategies should become more participatory involved in the design and assessment of initiatives the consumers should be involved.

Personally, as an academic, this paper has solidified the view that CSR is not about a reputation tool but a strategic behaviour-influencing instrument. It affects cognitive evaluations (quality perception, trust), affective evaluations (likeability, pride) and normative evaluations (identity, values). This means that CSR cuts across all significant psychological systems and, consequently, becomes a strong influence on consumer behaviour, in case it is implemented in a genuine manner.

Comprehensively, I believe that the findings of this paper are strong indications that the effects of CSR on consumer behaviour are tangible, great, and multifaceted. CSR is not marketing fluff or peripheral action however, it is a strategic competence that strengthens brand relationships, emotional connections and purchasing decisions. Nonetheless, it lies in its authenticity, relevance, brand identity and integration with core value delivery to be successful. In order to keep up with the socially conscious marketplace, CSR is not to be considered as a periodical campaign but rather as a philosophy that shapes the daily decisions of organisations.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and interpreted the empirical findings of the study, using quantitative as well as qualitative analysis to give a full understanding of the role played by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), conceptualised as a multidimensional, market-facing capability, on the behaviour of consumers. The objective was to investigate the degree to which CSR initiatives influence customer satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention and to determine whether the relationships are mediated by brand likeability in the context of authenticity and brand-cause fit. Through a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the chapter combined the power of numerical analysis of regression models with the interpretive richness of interview-based qualitative thematic analysis that provided a level of statistical precision and interpretive depth.

The results of the quantitative research showed a clear and significant effect of CSR on the behaviour of consumers, proving all the hypotheses formulated in this research study. The first set of analyses provided support for the measurement model with validity and reliability tests. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.902 and a highly significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < 0.001$) indicated the adequacy and factorability of the sample dataset. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were high ranging from 0.812 to 0.926 for all constructs indicating strong internal consistency and measurement reliability. These diagnostic outcomes confirmed the research instruments captured latent variables of interest (i.e. perceived CSR, brand likeability, satisfaction, loyalty and purchase intention) well and the soundness of the subsequent analyses.

The results of the regression analysis proved to be an impressive evidence of the behavioural significance of CSR. Ethical, environmental and economic/philanthropic dimensions of CSR were all shown to be significant predictors of customer satisfaction, and the one most driving customer satisfaction was ethical CSR. This finding suggests

that consumers get a great deal of value from fairness, honesty and transparency, which are consistent with moral and social expectations. The results further showed that the effect of CSR on satisfaction goes beyond transactional utility, and includes relational and emotional fulfilment. In the second regression model, CSR was found to have a direct and indirect positive impact on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction and brand likeability. Satisfaction proved to be the most important predictor of loyalty, with emotional attachment (measured as brand likeability) being the next most important predictor. These results validate the mediating mechanism suggested in the conceptual framework, and support the argument that CSR generates loyalty not only through compliance or quality of product, but through emotional resonance and relationships based on trust.

The third model evaluated the influencing factors of the purchase intention, proving that CSR, authenticity, brand likeability, and loyalty together accounted for almost 79% of the variance in consumers' willingness to purchase. Brand likeability and authenticity were the most powerful predictors and corroborated that emotions and perceptions determine the shift from attitude to behaviour. Importantly, the relationships between CSR and behaviour were moderated by the constructs of authenticity and brand-cause fit such that CSR initiatives were found to have a stronger positive effect when they were perceived to be authentic and congruent with brand identity. These results support the view that CSR has to be credible and consistent - when CSR initiatives are integrated with the fundamental values and competencies of organizations, the moral and commercial legitimacy of CSR increases. Statistical adequacy of all models as indicated by high adjusted R² values, significant F statistics and lack of multicollinearity validated robustness and reliability of the results.

The qualitative analysis enriched these findings by exposing the cognitive and emotional processes behind the interpretation of CSR activities by consumers. Thematic analysis of the ten semi-structured interviews revealed authenticity, emotional connection, ethical responsibility, CSR scepticism and differentiation as main themes. Participants emphasised how authenticity is the basis of trust and only genuinely embedded CSR practices influence perception and behaviour in a positive way. The theme of emotional connection indicated the fact that CSR initiatives trigger emotions of admiration, pride, and moral satisfaction, which is translated into brand likeability and loyalty. Ethical responsibility became a moral imperative - consumers were personally satisfied if they were purchasing products from companies that share their social and environmental values. However, a critical boundary condition emerged with CSR scepticism; participants cautioned that inconsistent or opportunistic CSR is undermining trust and deflating its value. Finally, CSR was consistently found to be a differentiator in competitive markets, influencing the decision to purchase when there was only a small difference in price and quality between brands. These qualitative findings complemented the quantitative findings in terms of showing how CSR perceptions translate into behavioural outcomes through emotional and moral pathways.

Together, the quantitative and qualitative results strongly confirm the conceptual framework of the study. They show that CSR is both a normative commitment (based on ethical responsibility) and strategic marketing capability that strengthens brand equity by emotional involvement. The findings support the theoretical basis of Stakeholder Theory by demonstrating the value of consumers, as important stakeholders, in rewarding firms that fulfill their moral and environmental expectations with trust and loyalty. They also prove the Brand Equity Theory, showing that CSR adds value to intangible brand capital like authenticity, likeability and perceived quality. Finally, the findings are consistent

with the Relationship Marketing Theory, pointing out that CSR develops the relational capital through creating a deeper emotional bond and a satisfaction-based commitment. This link in the theory helps to highlight that the influence of CSR is moral as well as managerial, ethical as well as strategic.

In synthesis, this chapter has demonstrated that CSR impact on consumer behaviour is multidimensional and works through the cognitive, affective, and normative mechanisms. The statistical outcomes measured these relationships, and the qualitative data brought out their meaning and lived experience. Both strands point towards the conclusion CSR, if not artificial and well aligned with the brand's purpose, is a particularly significant factor in improving customer satisfaction and building customer loyalty and purchase intention. However, poorly aligned or inauthentic CSR reduces the credibility of the company and can lead to consumer scepticism. Thus, authenticity and emotional connection become the keys to the success of CSR.

The overall findings support the value of CSR as a sustainable competitive strategy in the current markets. They offer both theoretical contribution - by conceptualizing CSR as an embedded market orientation - and managerial relevance - by offering practical insights on how authenticity, fit and emotional engagement can help convert responsible practices into consumer loyalty and financial performance. These insights provide the basis for the next chapter, which addresses the implications of these results in detail, relating it to the wider literature, theoretical models, and frameworks for the practical implementation of strategic CSR.

Chapter V: DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

This chapter provides an interpretation and context of the study's findings in reference to the research aims, literature, and theoretical models. The main aim of this study was to critically assess the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on consumer behaviour (i.e., customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention) as well as the mediation effect of brand likeability. The use of mixed-methods approach helped get comprehensive insight in the study, which was a combination of quantitative precision and qualitative depth. The findings supported CSR's ability to make a significant contribution to consumer perceptions and behavioural outcomes when CSR is authentic and strategically aligned with brand identity. In other words, the discourse identifies the nature of CSR not just as a peripheral task but as a strategic marketing competence that combines ethical, environmental and philanthropic aspects and affects consumer cognition, emotion and decision-making.

The results add to the development of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984) by showing that consumers as primary stakeholders reward companies that are behaving ethically and socially. The findings also extend Brand Equity Theory (Aaker 1991) by showing that CSR improves intangible brand assets (i.e. trust, likeability, and authenticity) that are important drivers of brand value and competitive differentiation. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with Relationship Marketing Theory which states that sustainable relationships are developed with customers through emotional commitment, satisfaction, and mutual trust. Based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses, it is found that CSR influence occurs through two mechanisms: a cognitive mechanism, based upon perceptions of credibility and perceived quality, and an

affective mechanism, based upon perceptions of admiration, empathy, and moral identification. This combination of mechanisms explains why CSR initiatives create loyalty and purchase behavior in today's markets in which consumers desire significant brand relationships rather than transactional exchanges.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

It was found that CSR significantly and positively affects purchase intention, thus supporting the first hypothesis of the study. Regression analysis showed that the CSR dimensions explained almost 79 per cent of the variance in purchase intention, whereby ethical CSR exerted the most influence. This result is consistent with earlier studies provided by Samra and Muhammad (2016) and Chen et al. (2015), who found that the consumers are more likely to make purchases from the brands whose moral values are in agreement with their moral principles and who seemed to care about the society. However, this study makes a new contribution to the existing knowledge by emphasizing the conditional effect of authenticity and brand-cause fit. It is found that CSR activities that could be viewed as genuine, integrated, and congruent with the brand image, boosted consumers' purchase intention significantly. On the contrary, when the initiatives were seen as opportunistic and out of place, purchase intention dropped dramatically and this finding was consistent with Wong and Dhanesh's (2017) view that perceived hypocrisy weakens the credibility of CSR.

These results were supported by qualitative findings, with research participants creating a strong preference for authentic CSR that shows tangible results. Consumers characterized their purchasing choices according to their own values and their trust of the integrity of the brand. One participant said that "buying from a brand that is actually contributing to the community feels like supporting a cause, not just making a purchase"

which highlights the emotional and moral aspects of consumption. This means that CSR is essentially a psychological contract between brand and consumer, whereby ethical integrity is a precondition of behavioural commitment. Moreover, the results confirm that CSR does not replace traditional value determinants such as quality and price but complements them. When ethical, environmental and philanthropic values are combined with product excellence, they can have a synergistic effect that increases purchase intention. These findings extend Stakeholder Theory by showing that consumer choices are based not only on self-interest but also on moral and relational concerns embedded in CSR accounts.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question Two

The study determined that CSR has a strong positive effect on customer satisfaction and accounts for more than 70 per cent of its variability. Ethical or environmental CSR were specific predictors of significance, with consumers being satisfied with brands that are transparent, fair, and ecologically responsible. This strengthens the argument of Sujin (2019) that satisfaction is an outcome-based and relational construct that goes beyond transactional exchanges and includes emotional fulfillment and value congruence. In this study, consumers expressed a higher level of satisfaction when they perceived CSR activities as congruent with their social values and social priorities. This shows that CSR provides a moral gratification, which goes beyond the consumption of products to include values of society and contribution to it.

Qualitative interviews gave better insight into the underlying psychological processes of satisfaction. Interviewees spoke of CSR engagement as emotionally rewarding and self-assuring. Many indicated that CSR implemented by brands through visible and sustained efforts created a sense of pride and assurance about their purchase

decisions. This is in line with the notion of moral gratification in which the consumer gains internal gratification from supporting brands that are ethically responsible (White et al., 2019). Interestingly, CSR associated satisfaction was linked to reduced cognitive dissonance - purchasing from responsible brands decreased the guilt associated with consumption, specifically amongst ecologically conscious consumers. Hence, the findings point to CSR being helpful in not only affecting affective satisfaction but also influencing self-consistency which strengthens beliefs in the legitimacy of ethical consumption. These views support the mediating effect of brand likeability in quantitative analysis, as CSR generates affective attachment, which further enhances satisfaction. Overall, CSR leads to a shift in satisfaction from being a reactive assessment of the performance of a service to a proactive affirmation of ethical identity.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

The findings showed a strong and direct association between CSR and customer loyalty where loyalty was affected directly by CSR and indirectly through the mediators, satisfaction and brand likeability. This two-path model validates the arguments put forward by Relationship Marketing Theory, which argues that long-term consumer commitment is a result of trust, satisfaction and emotional commitment. Ethical CSR was found to be the strongest predictor of loyalty - reinforcing the view that consumers are rewarded for integrity and social accountability with long-term brand loyalty. The results of this regression analysis showed that CSR accounted for more than 76% of this variance in loyalty and therefore its strategic role in terms of retention and advocacy.

Qualitative results provided interpretative richness by exposing emotional trust as a link between CSR and loyalty. All respondents talked about the sense of identification and belonging that CSR actions generated in them. For example, one respondent

commented, "When a brand is always conveying that they care about society, I feel proud to use their product." This affective identification develops affective loyalty, in which consumers stay loyal not only due to satisfaction but because of the common cause. CSR is therefore a relationship maintenance tool that is used to maintain loyalty in competitive markets. However, participants also highlighted consistency - CSR-influenced loyalty needs continuous engagement and transparency. Sneeze about an infrequent or opportunistic campaign can turn off loyal consumers. These results contribute to the understanding of Velte (2022) and Russo and Granata (2019), showing that CSR-driven loyalty is dynamic and conditional, determined by authenticity, and reinforced by continued communication.

Furthermore, community-based CSR was an important tool for solidifying loyalty, with consumers feeling engaged in a product as part of a larger community. This tribal loyalty is different from transactional loyalty in the traditional sense because of the emotional reciprocity and social identification. Thus, CSR helps to turn loyalty from act into action towards the loyalty from morality into morality. The research validates that CSR creates a long-lasting consumer-brand relationship based on empathy, admiration, and trust - the key ingredient that sets best-in-class brands apart in saturated markets.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Four

Brand likeability was confirmed as a significant mediator between CSR perceptions and satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. Through regression and mediation analyses, it was found that CSR increases brand likeability by arousing the positive emotions of admiration, empathic, and respect. Again, likeability also positively influenced satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. These results support hypothesis 4 and agree with previous studies (Huyen, 2020; Audiastuti et al., 2020) which stated that

likeability converts cognitive evaluations into affective commitment. The findings show that CSR is transmitted through emotional contagion-in that consumers that witness brands behaving responsibly, are left with positive affect that translates into behavioural preference.

We found support from the interviews for this emotional mechanism. Participants' accounts of having a good feeling from purchasing brands that "do good" were often accompanied by words such as "trustworthy," "caring" or "human." These descriptors are indicators of warmth and social closeness - key elements of brand likeability. Participants also reported that CSR stories that focused on people, empathy, and impact were more successful in creating emotional connection than were simple corporate assertions. Therefore, CSR communication strategies need to be not only intelligent, but also emotional. Furthermore, the study found that brand likeability increases the effect of authenticity and brand-cause fit. When CSR efforts are authentic and relatable, likability grows exponentially and turns passive approval into active advocacy.

In particular, the mediating effect of likeability advances Brand Equity Theory by showing that CSR leads to emotional brand resources that support long-term equity. Likeability is a psychological portal that allows CSR values to be absorbed and translated into loyalty and purchase behaviour. This finding brings home the point that the success of CSR is not only about the action of the corporations involved, but also about the emotional resonance - how consumers feel about a brand's social engagement.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the empirical findings of the study with reference to the research questions and theory. The findings together provide support for the important role of CSR in shaping consumer behaviour both directly and indirectly, via the

emotional and perceptual mechanisms. Among all the behavioural outcomes, ethical CSR was found to be the most influential dimension of CSR, as the ethical dimension of trust and transparency was found to be the core driver of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. In fact, the moderating effects of authenticity and brand-cause fit confirmed that CSR has to be authentic and brand-consistent in order to achieve positive effects. Brand likeability was the affective link between CSR and behavioural intention, changing the moral admiration into satisfaction and commitment.

The mixed-methods approach allowed a nuanced understanding of the influence of CSR: the quantitative findings served as a measure of the strength of the relationship and the qualitative findings were felt narratives that explained the emotional, moral and cognitive stories behind these effects. Together, they describe the CSR as a multidimensional capability where integrate ethical principles, emotional involvement and strategic differentiation. The research supports the hypothesis of Stakeholder Theory, which states that businesses perform better when stakeholders' expectations are satisfied through their interests. In addition to contributing to the evidence base of Brand Equity and Relationship Marketing theories, they show that CSR leads to intangible assets like authenticity, empathy and loyalty, which form the basis for long-term brand value.

Nevertheless, this chapter concludes that CSR is not just an ethical imperative but strategic necessity. Its effectiveness is based on authenticity, emotional resonance and orthodoxy with corporate identity. When carried out authentically and communicated well, CSR adds to satisfaction and loyalty, and ultimately purchase intention - transforming ethical imperative into quantifiable competitive advantage. These understandings are used as the basis of Chapter Six, which offers the theoretical, managerial, and practical implications of the study and also offers recommendations for further research and for CSR strategy implementation in future endeavors

Chapter VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This paper attempts to critically investigate the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which is conceptualised as a multidimensional market-oriented capability, on consumer behaviour in the United Kingdom context. Specifically, the research examined the effects of CSR on customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and purchase intention, as well as the mediating role of brand likeability in these effects. Informed by Stakeholder Theory, Brand Equity Theory, and Relationship Marketing

perspectives, the research was conducted using a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, using both quantitative structural equation modelling (SEM) and qualitative thematic analysis. This way, this dual approach simultaneously offered both statistical precision and interpretive richness to go beyond the correlation in order to understand the underlying emotional and perceptual mechanisms by which CSR influences consumer decisions.

The results of the quantitative analysis supported the existence of a statistically significant positive effect of CSR on all three consumer behavioural outcomes. Ethical CSR - reflecting fairness, transparency, and integrity - was the most influential dimension of CSR among the constructs, illustrating the importance of moral responsibility in the modern brand evaluation. Environmental CSR also showed a significant impact, especially among younger and environmentally concerned consumers, whereas economic and philanthropic CSR were positively perceived if they were argued as honest and well-integrated. Importantly, the results confirmed that brand likeability mediated the effect of CSR perceptions by creating positive emotional states that are associated with satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention. Authenticity and brand-causally fit relationships were further reinforced in these relationships, suggesting that the credibility of CSR initiatives is a prerequisite to behavioural impact. Together, the regression models accounted for a high amount of variances in all three outcomes (more than 70% for satisfaction, 76% for loyalty, and 79% for purchase intention), which shows the robustness of the impact of CSR in the presence of authenticity and emotional engagement.

In addition to these statistical results, qualitative phase revealed the consumers' interpretation, perception, and reaction to CSR activities. Five major themes were identified: The basis of trust as authenticity, emotional connection as likeability, moral

responsibility and satisfaction, CSR scepticism and CSR as a purchasing differentiator. Participants also noted that the credibility of CSR is built on long-term commitment and transparency and how CSR should align with their brand identity, rather than on ad hoc actions or those driven by publicity. The narratives were validated to the effect that genuine CSR creates admiration and pride whereas perceived hypocrisy being met with scepticism and disengagement. Furthermore, CSR was considered a brand choice driver when product quality and price were the same. Taken together, our results prove that CSR not only serves as a moral duty, but it also serves as a strategic marketing capability that improves consumer relationships and ultimately improves competitive advantage. More particularly, the study gives a comprehensive insight into the dual role of CSR as a normative requirement as well as a value driver in ethically conscious markets.

6.2 Implications

The results of this study have wide-ranging implications for theory, management practice, and marketing strategy. Consequently, at the theoretical level, the study adds to the development of CSR and consumer behavior literature by incorporating cognitive, affective, and normative mechanisms in the same explanatory model. By conceptualizing CSR as a second-order construct consisting of ethical, environmental, and philanthropic dimensions and adding brand likeability and authenticity as mediating and moderating variables, this study takes a step further to conceptualize CSR as a relational and affective process as opposed to a merely instrumental and reputational process. The combination of quantitative and qualitative evidence underlines the multidimensionality of CSR and offers empirical evidence for the proposition that CSR effectiveness is determined not only by what firms do, but also by consumer perception and emotions towards those actions.

From a managerial perspective, the study provides practical implications for brand managers, brand strategists, and corporate decision makers. The findings suggest that CSR should be considered not as a peripheral philanthropic activity, but as an integral part of strategic brand management. Firms who integrate CSR into their business model - ensuring social and environmental commitments are in line with brand purpose and values for customers - can develop greater emotional engagement, customer satisfaction and loyalty. However, the findings also caution against performative or hypocritical CSR practices which can prove counterproductive in terms of harming brand credibility and trust. Managers should therefore make sure that CSR activities are genuine, transparent and communicated in ways that evoke an emotional response in target audiences. In addition, this study empirically demonstrates that authenticity and brand-cause fit are important key facilitative conditions for CSR success, which further supports the importance of CSR alignment with core competencies and corporate culture.

6.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study sheds light on various areas of theory, enhancing the theoretical knowledge on CSR and consumer behaviour in the digital age. First, it expands Stakeholder Theory by empirically showing that consumers are evaluative stakeholders who are loyal and willing to act as CSR ambassadors for authentic CSR. The results indicate that CSR helps to increase stakeholder trust not only through the rational evaluation of corporate behavior but also through affective identification with the brand. This supports the theory that value creation in modern markets involves the trade-off between economic, ethical and emotional returns.

Second, the study contributes to Brand Equity Theory in the context of CSR as an influencer of intangible brand resources such as authenticity, empathy, and likeability. Traditional brand equity models focused on awareness, associations and perceived quality, in this study, we extend the model to a moral and affective dimension and show that CSR-infused brand equity creates resilience and differentiation in competitive markets. CSR thus helps in generating brand perception in both the "warmth" and "competence" components, which are antecedents of brand trust and preference.

Third, the results add to Relationship Marketing Theory by identifying CSR as a mechanism of long-term relationship maintenance. CSR has a positive impact on consumer-brand relationships in terms of affective commitment, emotional trust, and shared value orientation, which can help maintain ongoing relationships with consumers beyond transactional satisfaction. The mediating effect of brand likeability is established between the cognitive and emotional dimensions of relationship marketing, thereby validating that CSR fosters relational bonds that are immune to competitive threats.

Finally, this research also has methodological contribution by illustrating the utility of mixed methods design in CSR research. The pairing of quantitative structural modelling with qualitative thematic interpretation builds validity and also enables the testing of theories and the generation of theory at the same time. In doing so, the duality represents the pragmatic paradigm, which is able to rigorously quantify complex social constructs like CSR without losing the richness of human experience.

6.2.2 Managerial and Practical Implications

For practitioners the study provides a number of practical lessons. First, CSR strategy must be authentic. CSR is not a separate marketing effort; it should be a part of

your mission and operations. Consumers today are hyper-aware and are well-informed, and it is very easy to see through superficial or inconsistent CSR. Therefore, companies should have the ability to use clear communication, present quantifiable proof of impact, and should be consistent across markets and time.

Second, how CSR aligns with the brand is extremely important. Programmes and campaigns that align with the company's values and capabilities are seen as more credible and effective. For instance, a food company investing in sustainable sourcing or a technology company pushing for digital inclusion are examples of coherence between purpose and action. Therefore, managers must undertake regular brand-causality fit analyses to maintain congruence, and accordingly avoid scepticism.

Third, companies should use emotional communication and interaction to humanize CSR. The qualitative results indicated that consumers find semantically grounded stories with people more appealing than abstract corporate statements. Authentic and emotional campaigns, influencer partnerships, and community engagement should be the hallmark of social media campaigns, building brand likeability. CSR communication needs to evolve beyond reporting to a dialogue - to make consumers participate in the social change as participants.

Fourth, CSR should be part of customer experience management. The research shows that CSR affects satisfaction and loyalty through the influence on emotional experiences. Brands should make sure that CSR values are reflected not only in marketing but also in product design, customer service and employee conduct. In particular, they suggest that frontline employees should be trained to work in the company's social values since the frontline employees are the ones directly influencing consumers' perceptions of authenticity.

Finally, it is necessary to measure CSR effectiveness. Mixed measures that reflect both performance outcomes (e.g., sales, retention) and perceptual outcomes (e.g., trust, likeability, moral satisfaction) should be used. Regular stakeholder communication channels in the form of CSR perception surveys and brand sentiment analysis can help inform strategy evolution. In other words, CSR has to transform from compliance-based reporting to a system of stakeholder engagement and continuous improvement.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

While this study offers useful insights, it also provides a number of opportunities for future research. First, future studies may use a longitudinal design to capture the dynamic nature of CSR perception and consumer behaviours over time and how they develop in relation to changing social expectations and environmental norms. Monitoring these dynamics would improve causal inference and provide insight to understand long term loyalty's effects with long term authenticity.

Second, it could be broadened into cross-cultural comparisons. Cultural context will influence how consumers interpret CSR; collectivist cultures may be more focused on community directed actions, and individualist cultures may be more focused on ethical transparency and individual autonomy. Comparative research between the UK and other markets would therefore facilitate a greater understanding of the cultural moderators.

Third, future research could combine digital engagement measures to investigate the effects of online communication of CSR, through social media, influences or interactive campaigns on consumer perception and emotive engagement. As the use of digital CSR continues to grow, there would be great managerial value in examining how it performs on different platforms.

Fourth, future studies should adopt experimental design to control extrinsic factors in light of the relative authenticity of CSR, the framing of CSR messages, and the fit between CSR and product features on consumer emotions and behavior. Controlled experiments would have the potential to confirm the mediation effect of likeability and shed light on the psychological mechanisms, including moral elevation and trust, that mediate the effect of CSR.

Finally, it would be helpful to examine the market structure within a specific industry. While this research was done at the aggregated level across sectors, the impacts of CSR are likely to differ across industries in terms of ethical risks, visibility, and consumer expectations. For example, the impact of CSR in the fast fashion industry could be quite different from its impact in financial services or technology. Future research should therefore conduct such framing in sectoral settings to make it more specific and managerially relevant.

6.4 Conclusion

This research leads to the conclusion that Corporate Social Responsibility in its authentic and brand identity-focussed delivery has the potential to serve as a moral compass as well as a strategic marketing competence. The empirical findings established that CSR has a significant positive effect on consumer satisfaction, on loyalty, and on purchase intention by means of the mediating effect of brand likeability. Authentic and brand-cause fit were identified as important moderators, which decide whether CSR will lead to admiration or scepticism. The CSR dimensions mainly associated with ethical and environmental aspects, reflecting the growing moral and ecological aspects consciousness of the consumer in the decision-making process. Altogether, these results show that the

effectiveness of CSR goes beyond philanthropy, as it is a core driver for emotional engagement, relational trust, and sustainable brand equity.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative results give a holistic picture of CSR as an interaction between perception, emotion and behaviour. The contribution of the study is in conceptualising CSR as a multidimensional construct between normative responsibility and strategic advantage. For theory, it has broadened the understanding of the role played by CSR in enhancing stakeholder relationships and brand equity; for practice, it has provided normative suggestions on how to incorporate authenticity, coherence and emotional storytelling in the CSR strategy. In an increasingly transparent, socially aware, and ethically scrutinized business environment, CSR has moved from being a choice to being a strategic necessity. Companies that are truly embedding social purpose into their brand DNA not only increase the welfare of society, but also help to win consumer trust and loyalty for the long haul.

In conclusion, CSR is the new competitive differentiation. As the consumer pressure for responsible and meaningful brand engagement continues to increase, organisations must go beyond tokenism and strive to achieve meaningful social impact. The brands that will succeed in the 21st century marketplace will be those that are driven by authentic CSR -- an ethically-based CSR, built on empathy and driven by evidence. This study thus further confirms that doing good is not only ethically correct but also good business sense that fosters long-term value for both the consumers, the corporations, and society.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Title of the Study: *The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Consumer Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Brand Likeability in the UK Market*

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study conducted as part of my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme. The purpose of this study is to examine how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives undertaken by companies influence consumer behaviour—specifically customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention—and whether brand likeability plays a role in this relationship.

Your participation will involve completing a short online questionnaire that should take approximately **10–15 minutes** of your time. The survey consists of statements about CSR, brand perceptions, and purchasing preferences, which you will rate on a 1–5 scale. There are no right or wrong answers—your honest opinions are highly valuable to the success of this research.

Please note that your participation is **entirely voluntary**, and you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason. All responses will be kept **strictly confidential** and

used **solely for academic research purposes**. The data collected will be stored securely in accordance with institutional and **UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** policies, and no personally identifiable information will be shared.

The results of this research will contribute to a better understanding of how organisations can design authentic CSR strategies that strengthen consumer trust and brand relationships. Insights from this study may help businesses and policymakers develop more sustainable, ethical, and socially responsive marketing practices.

If you have any questions about this study or would like further information, please contact me directly at:

Ismail Alasgarov

Doctoral Researcher – Swiss School of Business Management

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

Study Title: *The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Consumer Behaviour in the United Kingdom*

Researcher: Ismail Alasgarov

Doctor of Business Administration Candidate, Swiss School of Business

Management

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in this academic research study examining how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences customer satisfaction, loyalty, and purchase intention, as well as the role of brand likeability in these relationships.

Please read the following information carefully before agreeing to participate:

- Your participation in this study is **voluntary**.
- You may **withdraw at any time** without giving a reason.
- All information you provide will be **kept strictly confidential** and used **only for academic purposes**.
- The survey is **anonymous**; no personally identifiable information will be collected.
- The questionnaire will take about **10–15 minutes** to complete.
- The data will be stored securely in line with **UK GDPR** and university ethical guidelines.

By selecting “I Agree” below, you confirm that you have read and understood the above information and voluntarily consent to participate in this study.

☐ **I Agree to Participate**

☐ **I Do Not Agree**

Thank you for your time and contribution to this research.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Questionnaire

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: Survey on the Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Consumer Behaviour in the UK

Likert Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Section A: Screening Questions

1. Are you currently living in the United Kingdom? (Yes/No)
2. Have you heard or seen any brand that promotes CSR initiatives in the past 12 months? (Yes/No)
3. Please name one brand whose CSR initiative you recall most clearly: _____
4. How familiar are you with this brand's CSR activities? (1–5 scale)

Section B: Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

5. This brand behaves fairly towards its stakeholders.
6. This brand is transparent about its business practices.

7. This brand respects the rights and welfare of its employees and customers.
8. This brand conducts its operations with honesty and integrity.
9. This brand actively reduces its environmental footprint.
10. This brand develops eco-friendly or sustainable products.
11. This brand promotes recycling and responsible consumption.
12. This brand takes visible steps to protect the environment.
13. This brand uses part of its profits to support community projects.
14. This brand invests in initiatives that benefit society.
15. This brand treats suppliers and partners responsibly.
16. This brand contributes to local economic development.

Section C: CSR Credibility Conditions

17. The brand's CSR efforts feel sincere rather than for show.
18. The brand's actions match its CSR promises.
19. CSR is part of how this brand genuinely operates.
20. The brand is transparent about its CSR outcomes.
21. The CSR initiatives fit well with what this brand stands for.
22. The CSR projects are relevant to the brand's core business.
23. The connection between the brand and its CSR cause feels natural.

Section D: Brand Likeability

24. I find this brand likeable.
25. This brand seems friendly and approachable.
26. I feel emotionally attached to this brand.
27. I have a positive feeling whenever I see this brand.

Section E: Consumer Behavioural Outcomes

- 28. Overall, I am satisfied with this brand.
- 29. The brand meets my expectations.
- 30. I am happy with my experience with this brand.
- 31. I believe this brand cares about keeping me satisfied.
- 32. I intend to continue purchasing from this brand.
- 33. I would recommend this brand to others.
- 34. I would resist switching to other brands even if they are cheaper.
- 35. I feel loyal to this brand.
- 36. I am likely to purchase products from this brand in the near future.
- 37. I prefer this brand over others when deciding to buy.
- 38. I plan to buy from this brand the next time I shop.

Section F: Control Variables

- 39. The brand's products are of high quality.
- 40. The brand offers products that perform reliably.
- 41. The brand's prices are fair compared to similar products.
- 42. I feel the price charged is reasonable for the value I receive.
- 43. The brand's products are easy to find and purchase.

Section G: Demographic Information

- 44. Gender: Male / Female / Other / Prefer not to say
- 45. Age: 18–24 / 25–34 / 35–44 / 45–54 / 55+
- 46. Education: Secondary / College / Undergraduate / Postgraduate

47. Employment Status: Employed / Self-employed / Student / Unemployed

48. Annual Income: <£20k / £20–39k / £40–59k / £60–79k / £80k+

49. Region of Residence in UK: _____

Interview Guide

Purpose:

To explore in depth how consumers interpret CSR messages, assess authenticity, and experience emotional and behavioural responses toward brands engaging in CSR.

Part 1: CSR Awareness and Perception

1. Can you tell me about a brand whose CSR activities you have recently noticed or found memorable?
2. What specifically drew your attention to that CSR activity?
3. How did you first learn about it (advertising, social media, packaging, word of mouth)?
4. How credible or authentic did the CSR initiative feel to you, and why?
5. What makes you think a brand's CSR effort is genuine versus just marketing?

Part 2: Emotional and Cognitive Reactions

6. How did that CSR initiative make you feel about the brand?
7. Did it change your opinion of the brand's personality or values?
8. Do you find certain CSR issues (e.g., environment, ethics, community) more appealing or relevant to you personally?

9. In your view, what makes a brand likeable? Can CSR contribute to that likeability?

Part 3: Behavioural Impact

10. Did the CSR effort influence your satisfaction or trust in the brand?
11. Has CSR ever motivated you to buy from a brand, recommend it, or stay loyal?
12. Are there times when CSR does *not* affect your purchase decisions? Why?
13. How do you balance CSR appeal with other factors like product quality, price, or convenience?

Part 4: Authenticity and Fit

14. How important is it that a brand's CSR aligns with its products or core business?
15. Can you recall a case where the CSR seemed inconsistent with the brand? How did that affect your view?
16. What signals make you confident that a brand's CSR is real? (e.g., transparency, third-party validation, long-term consistency)

Part 5: Closing

17. Overall, how do you think CSR affects your satisfaction, loyalty, and likelihood to purchase?
18. If you could give advice to companies about CSR communication, what would it be?
19. Is there anything else about CSR and your relationship with brands that you'd like to share?

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