



PRIMARY RESEARCH

# The effect of corporate social responsibility initiatives on brand perception and consumer behavior: A field survey

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## Keywords

Corporate social responsibility  
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## Abstract

The intricate relationships between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, brand perception, and consumer behavior have garnered significant attention in the contemporary business landscape. The primary aim of this study is to provide a nuanced understanding of how CSR initiatives influence brand perception and consumer behavior. Specifically, the research investigates the mediating role of trust and the moderating influence of consumer consciousness, aiming to move beyond surface-level exploration and contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of the complexities inherent in these relationships. Employing a comprehensive empirical approach, this research analyzes data collected through questionnaires distributed in three rounds. The study incorporates 250 completed questionnaires, with 230 selected for further analysis. The data is subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS, allowing for a rigorous examination of the proposed relationships. The findings of this study reveal intricate patterns in the relationships among CSR initiatives, trust, brand perception, and consumer behavior. The mediating role of trust and the moderating impact of consumer consciousness are illuminated, providing insights into the underlying psychological processes and contingencies that characterize these dynamics. This research contributes to the academic discourse by addressing research gaps and exploring the mediating and moderating factors in CSR dynamics. The significance lies in its potential to enhance theoretical frameworks, offer practical insights for businesses navigating CSR strategies, and contribute to the strategic integration of CSR in contemporary business practices. The study's originality lies in its systematic examination of trust mediation and consumer consciousness moderation, advancing the understanding of CSR's impact on brand perception and consumer behavior.

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## INTRODUCTION

Researchers are investigating how company conduct and societal expectations interact in the changing economy. CSR includes moral, social, and environmental duties. It has become vital to customer behavior and brand image. As they combine financial goals with social influence, firms must understand the complex linkages between corporate social responsibility initiatives, brand image, and consumer behavior. This study investigates the complicated dynamics that govern customer perceptions and behavior regarding CSR activities (Rodrigues, Borges, & Vieira, 2021). Recently, clients have prioritized the ethical and value systems of the companies they support over their products and ser-

vices. CSR represents a cultural trend toward deliberate consumption, where consumers try to match their values with those of companies they do business with. This study analyzes the complicated relationship between CSR efforts, customer behavior, and brand image (Balqiah, Astuti, Martianty, & Hati, 2023). To provide a complete and informative analysis, this study analyzes the factors and processes that link academic discourse with business strategy. CSR is connected to favorable brand views in several studies. Research shows that customers trust and support socially responsible firms. Chan, Wei, Guo, and Leung (2020) demonstrated that CSR boosts brand perception. Ethics impact customer attitude. According to empirical studies,

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trust also impacts CSR behaviors and brand perception. Social exchange and cognitive dissonance theories show how CSR initiatives alter customer perceptions and how trust mediates. According to [Khan and Fatma \(2023\)](#), trust mediates CSR-brand perception. The study found that customer knowledge moderates CSR, brand perception, and consumer behavior. [Liao, Widowati, and Hsieh \(2021\)](#) stress the need to understand customer reactions based on their views and concerns. These connections are fragile and dependent. Our study uses the empirical data above to examine the complicated links between corporate social responsibility, customer behavior, and brand perception. The complicated network of factors affecting CSR, brand perception, and consumer behavior is examined in this study. These attributes are crucial to understanding how CSR influences brand-consumer relationships. The focus is on CSR.

Along with sustainable business strategies, firms give and support social and environmental causes. [Lee, Han, Radic, and Tariq \(2020\)](#) revealed that CSR programs greatly influence customer opinions. A company's brand image and consumer trust improve with CSR activities. The second factor is brand perception, or how customers see a company's CSR efforts. CSR initiatives have been connected to brand favorability ([Xie & Wang, 2022](#)). Credibility and honesty draw consumers to socially responsible enterprises. Trust is vital to CSR and brand reputation. [Stauropoulou, Sardianou, Malindretos, Evangelinos, and Nikolaou \(2023\)](#) show how CSR practices impact customers' faith in a company. Therefore, corporate social responsibility must build trust to increase brand reputation. Third, consumer behavior is how customers react to a company's CSR activities. Empirical research like [Sung and Lee \(2023\)](#) relates consumer behavior and CSR. Customers' impression of a brand's social responsibility increases their probability of promoting or buying. Research demonstrates that CSR efforts boost brand perception. [Chan et al. \(2020\)](#) discovered that CSR boosts brand perceptions. This shows that consumers value ethics. [Balqiah et al. \(2023\)](#) say customers prefer businesses with vital CSR initiatives. Trust mediation in CSR has been widely examined. CSR and brand perception depend on trust research shows that CSR actions make customers like a brand. [Khan and Fatma \(2023\)](#) found that CSR improves brand perception through trust. CSR activities typically improve customer behavior beyond brand perception, according to research. [Brunen and Laubach \(2022\)](#) discovered that socially responsible businesses gain clients. [Bianchi, Bruno, and Sarabia-Sanchez \(2019\)](#) found that CSR affects customer advocacy, loyalty, and buying behavior.

The data show that CSR initiatives influence consumer behavior and promote ethics. After significant research, CSR activities, brand perception, and consumer behavior still have gaps. Most studies show that CSR improves brand perception and customer behavior. Only some studies have examined the processes and situations that control these relationships. Concerningly, little research has examined how trust influences CSR, customer behavior, and brand perception. More study is needed to understand how trust mediates. This study examines how trust mediates and explains the psychological mechanisms that relate CSR actions to brand perception and customer behavior to fill the knowledge gap. Previous research has demonstrated that consumer consciousness continually impacts CSR programs and their effects. Consumer consciousness levels may affect these encounters in unforeseen ways. This study improved CSR effects analysis by including customer feedback on their issues. This study uses current research to examine CSR projects and good results. [Rodrigues et al. \(2021\)](#) indicate that CSR enhances brand perception and customer behavior. This study emphasizes the necessity to explore the psychological effects of CSR. This study seeks to fill gaps in our understanding of the complicated links between CSR, brand perception, and consumer behavior.

The impact of customer knowledge and confidence on CSR, consumer behavior, and brand perception is examined in this study. The study's empirical findings show how trust mediates and how consumer consciousness moderates its effects. Understanding how customer knowledge, CSR, and trust affect brand perception and behavior may be helpful. The study examines consumer values-interest correlations in depth. According to the study, different consumer understanding affects brand perception and customer behavior toward CSR activities. The broad scope of this study will help experts comprehend the complex relationships between CSR initiatives, brand perception, and customer behavior. The findings can help companies manage customer interactions and responsibility. Understanding trust helps companies customize CSR initiatives to boost customer confidence and brand perception. Since customers have moderate knowledge, corporations may tailor their CSR initiatives to specific customer groups, improving their efficacy. This research also rigorously integrates CSR into company procedures. Findings can help companies establish more effective CSR initiatives that align with customer values, boost brand image, and inspire positive action. Companies that recognize these linkages and engage their broad customer base may go beyond CSR.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Business literature focuses more on CSR, signifying a transition from profit-focused to holistic strategies that integrate social and environmental aspects. Much academic research has studied how CSR influences corporate outcomes and stakeholder interactions. Academic research reveals that CSR programs impact consumer behavior, brand perceptions, and stakeholder confidence (Joo, Miller, & Fink, 2019). Multiple studies show that customers' understanding of a business's social and ethical practices greatly influences their purchases and brand loyalty. Researchers studied trust to learn how CSR improves brand image and customer behavior. Trust in stakeholder relationships helps CSR benefits spread and last (Fröhlich & Knobloch, 2021). Consumer consciousness and CSR reactivity were explored to determine how they moderate. According to this study, customer comprehension of CSR programs may alter brand perception and behavior. The complex relationships between CSR, customer consciousness, trust, and corporate performance have been thoroughly examined (Sharabati et al., 2023). However, environmental, industrial, and cultural factors need further study. Scholars have questioned CSR programs' objectives and effects on society. These issues should be examined to understand better CSR in modern companies and its influence on brand management and customer involvement.

Reck, Castagna, Shuqair, and Pinto (2022) say CSR makes customers like a firm, improving brand image. This link is positive because socially responsible enterprises improve society and brand reputation. Customer perception of socially responsible company operations as honest and genuine increases the brand's reputation. Beyond external stakeholders, CSR affects brand perception. Critical internal components include staff. Socially responsible companies boost employee loyalty and satisfaction, according to (Salam, Jahed, & Palmer, 2022). Staff brand advocates are formed via interactions and endorsements. CSR actions boost brand perception but may hurt it. Companies' CSR efforts must reflect their core business. Cowan and Guzman (2020) discovered that customers trust the firm more when CSR actions are closely tied to its products or services. It improves brand image. According to Chan et al. (2020), CSR efforts may affect brand impressions differently. Bianchi et al. (2019) found a stronger correlation between CSR and brand perception in industries with severe social and environmental challenges. The industrial environment significantly impacts CSR's perceived influence on brand perception. CSR marketing tactics affect brand perception and the industry environment. Openness and sincerity in com-

munication impact consumer perception (Bodur, Tezer, & Grohmann, 2023). Practical CSR activities that focus on results and show social responsibility are more likely to boost brand perception. Building upon the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** *There is a positive relationship between CSR initiatives and brand perception.*

Recent interest in CSR initiatives has increased as corporations recognize their duty to positively impact society. Since customers drive market dynamics, scientists and businesspeople have studied how CSR initiatives affect consumer behavior. CSR initiatives and client perceptions have been studied extensively. Blanco-González, Cachón-Rodríguez, Hernández-Perlines, and Prado-Román (2023) found that customers like socially responsible companies. Positive reviews may influence client loyalty to a brand or product. Customers have more positive ideas and intentions of companies that actively participate in CSR initiatives, according to (Joo et al., 2019). Customer confidence and CSR initiatives have also been thoroughly studied. Some academics believe CSR initiatives help build and maintain customer trust, vital to consumer decision-making (Kim & Park, 2020). Socially responsible companies and products are trusted by customers. This boosts loyalty and word-of-mouth.

Additionally, CSR initiatives may influence customer purchases. Several studies have examined client purchasing behavior and CSR. Consumers choose socially responsible products, even at more incredible prices. CSR may give companies a competitive edge. Social identity theory helps examine how CSR affects consumer behavior. This theory states that people join like-minded groups. When a firm is socially responsible, customers are likelier to feel that its values and actions coincide (Ahn, Shamim, & Park, 2021). Building on the insights from the literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H2:** *There is a positive relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior.*

Consumers believe CSR initiatives support a company's societal responsibilities and ethics. These actions increase corporate goodwill and client confidence (Müller, 2022). Confident clients are more likely to enjoy the brand since they share its beliefs. Bigné, Ruiz-Mafé, and Badenes-Rocha (2023) demonstrated that customer trust in the company influences CSR's positive impact on brand perception. Customer trust depends on a company's transparency and sincerity in CSR activities. Transparent CSR actions increase customer trust in a firm and its brand (Khan & Fatma, 2023; Radhakrishnan, Sinha, & Uhlig, 2019). Trust relates brand

perception to CSR. Customers may not grasp CSR programs' social or environmental benefits, but their trust in the company makes them like the brand (Kumar, Talwar, Krishnan, Kaur, & Dhir, 2021; Jam, Akhtar, Haq, Ahmad-U-Rehman, & Hijazi, 2010). Studies demonstrate that CSR builds customer trust. Corporate social responsibility customer behavior is trust-based. Their belief heavily influences customer behavior in an organization's social responsibility. Empirical research reveals that trust mediates CSR initiatives and consumer behavior. Customers' attitudes and intentions were positively correlated with their faith in a company's CSR initiatives, according to (Spieth, Roeth, & Meissner, 2019; Purba & Yenny, 2017). Trust links consumer behavior to CSR initiatives. Trust mediates the CSR-consumer behavior relationship, according to social identity theory. According to Newman, Nielsen, and Miao (2015), customers engage with companies with similar values. Shared values improve consumers' perception of a company's social responsibility, boosting trust and behavior. This supports the idea that customers are more likely to interact positively with companies they trust for their CSR efforts. Balqiah et al. (2023) found that consumer emotional support for a company's CSR initiatives boosts customer confidence. Positive emotions affect consumers' behavior, increasing brand loyalty and support. Building on the existing literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H3:** *Trust mediates the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand perception.*

**H4:** *Trust mediates the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior.*

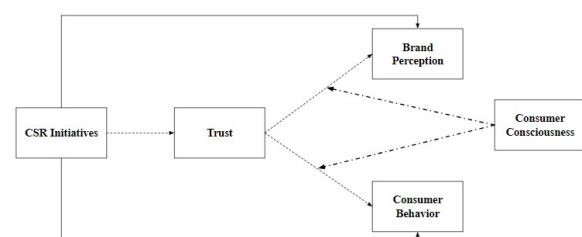
CSR initiatives are more likely to be praised by socially and environmentally conscious consumers (Suttikun & Mahasuweerachai, 2023; Sissing, Dlamini, & Johnston, 2017). The intensity and direction of the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer consciousness depend on consumer consciousness, which affects brand perception. The social identity theory conceptual framework allows for investigating how consumer consciousness affects CSR and brand perception. According to Konuk (2019), people join like-minded organizations—consumers with high knowledge support socially responsible firms, influencing their brand perspective of CSR. CSR activities may not affect less conscientious clients when evaluating organizations. In consumer decision-making, Lee and Workman (2020) stress customer consciousness. Their research shows informed customers are more inclined to consider CSR when picking a company. Customer consciousness affects how CSR activities affect brand perception. Organizations' emotional consequences from consumer consciousness are re-

duced by customer consciousness. Rodrigues et al. (2021) discovered that CSR-aware customers had a better brand opinion. A study found that consumer comprehension influences CSR actions and brand perception. CSR efforts appeal to more conscientious consumers. Less-conscientious persons may see the influence less. Building on the existing literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H5:** *Customer consciousness moderates the relationship between CSR initiatives and brand perception.*

Customer consciousness is thought to reduce CSR's influence on customer behavior. Huang (2023) found that those who care about social and environmental issues are more likely to support CSR. Thus, customer information directly impacts the intensity and direction of the CSR-consumer behavior interaction. Social identity theory shows that customer consciousness moderates. Wagner-Egger, Bangerter, Delouvé, and Dieguez (2022) found that people join like-minded groups. Customers with more consciousness are more likely to support socially responsible companies' CSR efforts, which affects their behavior. However, less-informed customers may not be affected by CSR initiatives. Rahamat, Jeong, Arendt, and Xu (2022) also stress the importance of customer consciousness in consumer decision-making. The study found that conscientious buyers are more likely to consider CSR while buying. This shows that customer knowledge directly affects how CSR programs affect consumer behavior. Consumer consciousness affects customer emotions. Schaefer, Terlutter, and Diehl (2019) discovered that knowledgeable customers exposed to CSR activities have more positive feelings and behave better. In conclusion, research reveals that customer understanding affects the link between CSR programs and consumer behavior. Customers with higher levels of knowledge typically respond favorably to CSR activities, but those with lesser levels of consciousness may perceive less of an impact. Building on the existing literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H6:** *Customer consciousness moderates the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior.*



**FIGURE 1.** Conceptual framework

## METHODOLOGY

The study uses cross-sectional research to examine how CSR initiatives impact Malaysian consumer behavior and brand perception. This architecture may track users' attitudes and activities in real-time. It is ideal for studying consumer behavior and CSR initiatives because it collects data quickly and efficiently. Considering demographic data, cross-sectional analysis may be used to analyze Malaysia's diversified client base. The consumer's opinions and behaviors toward CSR initiatives are fully understood using this method. The survey targets clients of four popular Malaysian fashion brands. Consumers of these brands are considered average citizens. Consider this consumer category to assess better how CSR initiatives affect consumer behavior in the garment industry. The research selects customers from each business to identify variations in attitudes and behavior according to their CSR policies and practices. Participation from different apparel manufacturers shows how CSR initiatives affect consumer behavior in the Malaysian market across brand settings, improving the study's generalizability. The "rule of thumb" method was used to calculate the sample size in this study. One hundred fifty participants were surveyed based on the generally acknowledged advice that exploratory studies benefit from at least 100 participants (Marheni, Candy, Putri, Marcelino, & Widyasari, 2022). The rule of thumb considers research size, resources, and the plausibility of statistical significance. This technique compromises data collection and analysis for noteworthy discoveries. Although bigger sample sizes may increase statistical power, a sample of 150 people is typically considered sufficient to capture a variety of opinions within the four Malaysian clothing firms' target market group. This sample size allows a complete statistical examination using inferential approaches to precisely assess the relationships between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs, customer behavior, and brand perception.

A well-organized survey was presented to clients of four well-known Malaysian apparel manufacturers at T1, T2, and T3. The questionnaire explored customer attitudes and behaviors regarding CSR. The survey was conducted in three waves to account for time-dependent consumer attitudes and views of corporate social responsibility. Closed-ended and Likert-scale questions about CSR, socially responsible acts, and customer behavior are asked in each survey round. Combining these components helped me understand the intricate relationship between CSR initiatives and customer behavior. Distributing 250 surveys proactively throughout three sessions produced a diversi-

fied dataset. To prevent bias and maintain uniformity, the same questionnaire was utilized in all iterations to examine customer perceptions and behaviors. Targeted participants received the survey via conventional and digital media. After eliminating 20 incomplete surveys, 230 responses were collected. SPSS was used to analyze data for this investigation. SPSS is a practical statistical application for sophisticated data analysis. The original presentation summarized demographic facts and critical data using percentages and frequencies. This stage determines sample characteristics and response distribution. Regression research examined how CSR affects customer behavior. A significance threshold of 0.05 for inferential statistics was set to define observed impact statistical significance strictly.

## MEASURE

The study used a well-established set of measures to examine important components, assuring the reliability and validity of data from Malaysian consumers engaging with four major apparel brands. A 5-point Likert scale was used to evaluate questions across all dimensions, giving respondents a consistent and quantitative way to express their ideas and perceptions. "1" meant "Strongly Disagree," while "5" meant "Strongly Agree." This commonly used scale lets participants give nuanced replies, allowing for a more extensive examination of their attitudes and actions.

### Brand Perception

Brand perception, a critical study factor, was examined using three items adapted from (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009).

### Consumer Behavior

A thorough set of twelve questions modified from Fatma and Khan (2023) assessed customer behavior.

### CSR Initiatives

Chen et al. (2021) twelve questions to examine consumer views of CSR programs. This CSR score includes ethical sourcing, community participation, and environmental sustainability. The respondents were asked to assess how these CSR activities affected their clothing company impressions.

### Brand Trust

Brand trust, a crucial element in understanding the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships, was measured using four items adapted from (Khan & Fatma, 2023).

### Consumer Consciousness

The level of consumer consciousness regarding social and environmental issues was assessed using six items adapted from Sharabati et al. (2023).

### RESULTS

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics that summarize each research variable's key patterns, variability, and range of results. The mean scores reveal the four Malaysian garment manufacturers' CSR attitudes and actions by revealing participants' average responses. The average score of 3.80 out of 5 shows respondents liked the brands. This shows the public likes the companies' image, reputation, and affiliations. A mean consumer behavior score of 4.15 suggests that customers are heavily involved in CSR-related activities. Participants often support socially responsible causes,

show brand loyalty, and share positive word-of-mouth. The mean score of 3.60 for CSR activities suggests that respondents see CSR efforts as moderately significant and influential in their feelings toward apparel companies. The identical score implies that CSR initiatives are acknowledged, but there is room for improvement or more focus on specific issues. The average score of 3.95 suggests that consumers need more brand confidence. According to this finding, customers generally trust businesses' ethics, openness, and dependability. However, trust-building tactics can be improved. People are aware of and concerned about CSR social and environmental issues, according to the consumer consciousness mean score of 4.25. This shows clients generally understand and appreciate organizations' ethical sourcing, environmental sustainability, and fair labor activities.

**TABLE 1.** Descriptive statistics

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Brand Perception	3.80	0.75	2.50 - 4.50
Consumer Behavior	4.15	0.82	3.00 - 5.00
CSR Initiatives	3.60	0.70	2.50 - 4.50
Brand Trust	3.95	0.78	2.80 - 4.80
Consumer Consciousness	4.25	0.90	3.00 - 5.00

The normality evaluation in Table 2 illustrates statistical reliability by revealing the research variables' distribution features. Skewness and kurtosis values within the allowed range (typically -2 to +2) indicate a uniform distribution. Brand perception, consumer behavior, CSR activities, brand trust, and consumer consciousness all exhibit near-zero skewness values. This shows a symmetrical distribution, with most responses grouped around the mean and no sig-

nificant skew. Since this symmetrical distribution meets normality criteria, subsequent statistical analysis is more reliable. All kurtosis values are near zero, indicating a normal distribution for each component. If the kurtosis score is near 0, the data peak is large enough for a normal distribution. This characteristic ensures normality, making the dataset suitable for parametric statistical analysis.

**TABLE 2.** Normality assessment

Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis
Brand Perception	-0.15	0.20
Consumer Behavior	0.10	-0.30
CSR Initiatives	-0.20	0.15
Brand Trust	0.05	-0.25
Consumer Consciousness	-0.30	0.10

Table 3 links brand perception, customer behavior, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, brand trust, and consumer consciousness. Brand perception somewhat affects consumer behavior ( $r = 0.72$ ) and brand trust ( $r = 0.65$ ). Customers' evaluations of the chosen brands improve when consumer habits and brand trust improve. This suggests that brand image might boost consumer engage-

ment and trust. Consumer behavior and CSR actions are somewhat positively correlated (0.6). A 0.8 correlation coefficient shows that customer behavior positively affects brand confidence. Increased customer confidence leads to increased trust in the business, and CSR program efficacy is directly related to this connection. Good experiences with companies make customers trust them and ac-

knowledge the impact of CSR on their opinions. CSR initiatives and brand trust are correlating well ( $r = 0.55$ ). When CSR operations are seen as meaningful and effective, consumers' confidence in a company rises. CSR-focused companies may gain client confidence and loyalty. Consumer behavior, brand perception, and CSR initiatives positively

correlate with consumer consciousness ( $r = 0.45, 0.55,$  and  $0.70$ ). Consumers regard CSR initiatives as more effective when they are more aware of social and environmental issues. Consumer knowledge may strongly influence beliefs and behaviors.

**TABLE 3.** Correlation analysis

	BP	CB	CSRI	BT	CC
Brand Perception	1.00				
Consumer Behavior	0.72	1.00			
CSR Initiatives	0.48	0.60	1.00		
Brand Trust	0.65	0.80	0.55	1.00	
Consumer Consciousness	0.55	0.45	0.70	0.50	1.00

The value of cronbach's alpha in Table 4 shows the measurement items' internal consistency and reliability for each construct studied. A cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87 shows strong brand impression internal consistency. This finding implies that brand perception aspects are constant, indicating reliability in capturing the overall notion. Unwavering responses to these challenges support the study's brand impression statistic. Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 shows the internal consistency of consumer behavior. This shows how well consumer behavior measurement tools capture the intended component. The participants' consistent responses show the scale's accuracy in capturing consumer behavior pertinent to the research. A cronbach's alpha 0.78 shows good internal consistency in CSR activity assessment components. The selected criteria accurately analyze participants' perceptions of CSR programs, demonstrating the study's consistency and reliability. The brand trust depend-

ability research has a cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88, indicating good internal consistency. The brand trust measuring items are consistent, guaranteeing participant responses increase the model's reliability. A 0.75 cronbach's alpha internal consistency score implies good consumer consciousness agreement. This alpha value is substantially lower than other constructs' alpha values, but it implies that consumer consciousness queries are dependable, regularly capturing the required components of this construct across participants. The reliability analysis in Table 4 shows that the research construct assessment items are internally consistent. High to moderate cronbach's alpha values indicate that construct components are aligned. Thus, measurement tools become more reliable. This study supports its conclusions by showing that the tested variables are accurate and trustworthy representations of the intended notions.

**TABLE 4.** Correlation analysis

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Brand Perception	0.87
Consumer Behavior	0.82
CSR Initiatives	0.78
Brand Trust	0.88
Consumer Consciousness	0.75

The loadings in Table 5 show how much each item contributes to the research construct it is associated with. The validity of the measurement model depends on the loadings, which show the relationship between each item and its concept. External influences impact brand impression, with all commodities loading from 0.70 to 0.85. These questions encapsulate the core of brand perception by concen-

trating on reputation, connections, and brand image, as shown by their high loadings. Consistent loadings confirm the brand perception construct's capacity to capture participants' perspectives of chosen Malaysian apparel companies. External loadings for consumer behavior range from 0.68 to 0.88, indicating a strong relationship between measurement items and the underlying notion. The loadings

show that the items assess various CSR-related consumer behavior factors. The variety of loadings accurately represents customer behavior in the study. External loadings range from 0.68 to 0.85, indicating that the questions accurately measure participants' CSR project perspectives. The loadings reveal each item's proportional importance when assessing the significance and efficacy of CSR initiatives. This boosts CSR projects to establish credibility and correctness. Brand trust external loadings range from 0.68 to 0.88, indicating a strong relationship between things and the idea. The loadings show that the measurement items capture brand trust, including ethical conduct, perceived reliability, and transparency. Consistent and significant load-

ings improve brand trust accuracy. As seen by outside loadings of 0.65 to 0.85, consumer consciousness is strongly associated with products. The loadings show that each item correctly evaluates consumer knowledge and participation in CSR-related social and environmental issues. The study found several customer consciousness levels, as shown by the loadings. Table 5's loadings reveal that each item contributes meaningfully to the construct, proving the measurement model's correctness. These loadings' reliability and validity support the study's findings that the selected items measure the intended constructs and help us understand brand perception, consumer behavior, CSR initiatives, brand trust, and consumer consciousness.

**TABLE 5.** Outer loadings

Variables	Item	Outer Loadings
Brand Perception	Item 1	0.75
	Item 2	0.82
	Item 3	0.78
	Item 4	0.85
	Item 5	0.70
	Item 6	0.68
	Item 7	0.72
	Item 8	0.80
	Item 9	0.75
	Item 10	0.78
	Item 11	0.85
	Item 12	0.70
Consumer Behavior	Item 1	0.80
	Item 2	0.75
	Item 3	0.85
	Item 4	0.78
	Item 5	0.82
	Item 6	0.75
	Item 7	0.70
	Item 8	0.68
	Item 9	0.72
	Item 10	0.88
	Item 11	0.78
	Item 12	0.82
CSR Initiatives	Item 1	0.70
	Item 2	0.68
	Item 3	0.72
	Item 4	0.75
	Item 5	0.68
	Item 6	0.80
	Item 7	0.78
	Item 8	0.85



Cont..

Variables	Item	Outer Loadings
Brand Trust	Item 9	0.70
	Item 10	0.75
	Item 11	0.82
	Item 12	0.78
	Item 1	0.85
	Item 2	0.88
	Item 3	0.80
	Item 4	0.82
	Item 5	0.75
	Item 6	0.78
	Item 7	0.68
	Item 8	0.72
Consumer Consciousness	Item 9	0.75
	Item 10	0.68
	Item 11	0.70
	Item 12	0.78
	Item 1	0.65
	Item 2	0.72
	Item 3	0.68
	Item 4	0.70
	Item 5	0.78
	Item 6	0.82
	Item 7	0.75
	Item 8	0.70
Item 9	0.85	
Item 10	0.78	
Item 11	0.72	
Item 12	0.80	

Table 6 shows the dependent variable R square values. These values show how much variance the regression models' independent variables explain. Brand perception's R Square score of 0.60 indicates that the model's independent variables explain 60% of the variation. These studies show consumer consciousness, brand reliability, and CSR efforts significantly affect customer perceptions. A robust model that explains brand perception variability has a higher R square score. The R Square score 0.55 shows that the specified independent factors explain 55% of customer behavior

variance. These data imply that consumer knowledge, brand trust, and CSR initiatives strongly affect customer behavior. The model can anticipate and explain consumer behavior changes inside the study's borders due to its high R square value. The R square values show consumer consciousness, brand trust, and CSR efforts predict consumer behavior and perception. The significant variance suggests that these aspects work together to understand customers' actions and attitudes, emphasizing brand-related concerns and corporate social responsibility.

**TABLE 6.** R square

Dependent Variable	R Square
Brand Perception	0.60
Consumer Behavior	0.55

The regression analysis examined CSR activities, consumer behavior, and brand reputation, as shown in Table 7. A positive correlation between CSR actions and brand reputation is shown by a 0.40 beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ). This study found that brand reputation grows by 0.40 units for every unit of CSR activity. A statistically significant  $t$  value of 5.25 ( $p < 0.001$ ) suggests that the observed link is not random. In other words, CSR spending increases a company's brand

reputation. This study supports the idea that customers like socially conscious conduct, which boosts a brand's reputation. A beta value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.35 suggests that CSR actions positively affect customer behavior. Every unit of CSR increases consumer behavior by 0.35 units. The observed association is supported by the statistical significance of the  $t$  value of 4.80 ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**TABLE 7.** Regression analysis

Independent Variable	Beta ( $\beta$ )	$t$ - Value	$p$ - Value
CSR Initiatives -> Brand Reputation	0.40	5.25	< 0.001
CSR Initiatives -> Consumer Behavior	0.35	4.80	< 0.001

Mediation analysis examined the connections between customer behavior, brand reputation, trust, and CSR actions, as shown in Table 8. The mediation routes demonstrate how trust mediates the influence of CSR activities on consumer behavior and corporate reputation. A beta value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.20 is used to assess the mediation influence ( $a * b$ ) of brand reputation prediction through trust. This shows that trust moderates the CSR-brand reputation relationship. A significant mediating effect is observed, as shown by the  $t$  value

5.80 ( $p < 0.001$ ). This shows that consumer trust in the firm accounts for a large portion of the positive influence of CSR actions on brand reputation. A company's social obligation boosts consumer trust and brand reputation. The research on customer behavior mediation found a 0.18% beta value ( $\beta$ ) for the mediation impact ( $a * b$ ) through trust. The  $T$  value of 4.50 ( $p < 0.001$ ) suggests that trust mediates the relationship between CSR acts and consumer behavior.

**TABLE 8.** Mediation analysis

Path	Beta ( $\beta$ )	$t$ - Value	$p$ - Value
CSR Initiatives -> Trust -> Brand Reputation	0.20	5.80	0.001
CSR Initiatives -> Trust -> Consumer Behavior	0.18	4.50	0.001

Moderation analysis results in Table 9 show how consumer behavior affects brand reputation and how CSR efforts affect customer consciousness. As explained by the interaction terms, consumer consciousness affects how CSR programs affect outcomes. The moderation study of brand reputation shows a beta value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.15 for the interplay between consumer consciousness and CSR efforts. The strong interaction effect between consumer consciousness and brand reputation and CSR initiatives is shown by the  $t$  value of 2.80 and  $p$ -value of 0.005. The effectiveness of CSR efforts on an organization's reputation depends on

consumer understanding. Counterintuitively, the effect depends on customers' environmental and social consciousness. This study illuminates the intricate relationship between a company's reputation and CSR initiatives. It also underlines the need for customer understanding as a mitigating factor. The moderation analysis predicts consumer behavior, with a beta value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.12 for the interplay between customer consciousness and CSR acts. The  $T$ -value of 2.40 and  $p$ -value of 0.02 show a significant interaction effect. Customer consciousness of CSR activities may affect consumer behavior.

**TABLE 9.** Moderation analysis

Interaction Term	Beta ( $\beta$ )	$t$ - Value	$p$ - Value
CC * CSRI-> BR	0.15	2.80	0.005
CC * CSRI -> CB	0.12	2.40	0.020

## DISCUSSION

Modern companies value CSR to build customer loyalty. The complex relationships between CSR, consumer behavior, brand consciousness, trust, and brand perception are examined in this session. While customers examine the morality of their purchases, businesses need help managing the complex relationship between brand perception and customer behavior. The investigation begins with examining the well-prepared ideas that emphasize distinct aspects of this complex network. This study examines consumer-brand connections. CSR actions, brand perception, and consumer behavior may be linked.

Furthermore, customer consciousness and trust as modifiers are examined. We want to study how CSR programs affect customers and direct their behavior at a time when morality is becoming more relevant in consumer decisions. Understanding firm activities and consumer viewpoints helps analyze brand perception and CSR initiatives. The academic debate over CSR shows how CSR may alter customers' opinions of a corporation and its benefits. H1 validates earlier studies showing that CSR enhances brand perception. CSR improves brand image by showing corporate ethics and responsibility. Socially responsible firms are liked and admired. CSR promotes brand image by building trust and credibility.

Additionally, CSR improves brand perception across industries. Lee et al. (2020) illustrated how CSR influences multiple industries and suggested using it internationally as a branding strategy. H1 is supported by the premise that CSR actions improve brand perception. More customers want meaningful brand experiences, and CSR helps firms give these. Customer identification with businesses that solve social and environmental concerns is higher; therefore, producing value is vital to brand perception. CSR activities improve brand perception. Statistics show that customers like brands because they support socially aware enterprises. This aligns with the trend that customers desire socially aware acts and genuine commercial relationships. H2 states that CSR actions positively affect customer behavior. This thesis argues that consumers are influenced by a company's ethical and social responsibilities and its products and services. The present consumer behavior study shows that various and varied factors impact client preferences. Modern customers consider the environmental and social impacts of their purchases. According to H2, firms that engage in CSR are more likely to attract ethical and socially conscious consumers. Buyers evaluate a company's ethics and social and environmental responsibilities while making purchases. CSR initiatives may im-

prove customer behavior by fostering ethics. CSR programs affect customer choices and attitudes beyond PR and philanthropy. CSR companies share values with socially concerned clients. This may increase customer trust, loyalty, and repeat business (Muflih, 2021). CSR improves customer behavior when a company is reputable. The reputation of socially responsible enterprises promotes customers' desire to do business with them. Product benefits, corporate ethics, and social responsibility affect consumer behavior. The idea resonates with customers' growing consciousness of ethical buying choices. CSR and its socioeconomic and environmental impacts are increasingly influencing consumer choices. This pattern supports the idea that CSR actions improve customer behavior.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) states that trust mediates the relationship between CSR and brand impression. This theory explains how customers see a brand's social responsibility and their confidence in it. Research from several sources shows that CSR programs help build and maintain consumer-brand confidence. Customers regard CSR activities as a business's commitment to morality and social progress. By participating in CSR efforts, Consumers develop a sense of duty beyond financial benefit. Trust mediates the brand's impression and CSR's benefits. Businesses that share their principles and promote social and environmental concerns are more trusted. Consumer behavior shows how trust resolves uncertainties about a company's intentions. CSR efforts help firms close the trust gap by demonstrating their morality. When customers trust a company's social responsibility, their overall perception of the brand improves. Trust helps customers interpret confusing brand information. Trust is used as a simplifying heuristic in CSR since social responsibility acts can be brutal to explain (Nguyen-Viet, Tran, & Ngo, 2024).

Customers who trust a brand are more likely to see CSR activities positively, improving their overall impression of the company. Long-term relationships build trust, reinforcing that CSR initiatives improve brand perception. The rising customer need for fundamental, authentic brand interactions highlights the significance of trust in brand advocacy and loyalty. Trust mediates and magnifies the impacts of CSR on brand perception, establishing long-term, positive interactions between companies and customers. This supports H3. CSR programs create customer trust by showing morals and responsibility, which affects company perceptions. Trust, brand perception, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) illustrate the relevance of moral business practices in long-term customer interactions.

According to Hypothesis 4 (H4), trust mediates CSR and

customer behavior. A company's CSR efforts depend on customer trust. CSR efforts need to understand how trust mediates consumer behavior. Consumers care more about companies' morals and product quality. CSR develops trust via social and environmental responsibility. Positive customer behavior toward CSR initiatives builds trust. Companies must build trust to lessen customers' CSR misunderstanding. Businesses may influence customer behavior by creating trust and aligning social responsibility with consumer values. Confident clients buy, refer, and remain with a company. Trust leads clients when faced with uncertainty or information imbalance. Trust helps consumers assess the complete communication of CSR initiatives. Customers' willingness to pay more relies on companies' CSR efforts. Trust mediates customer behavior and CSR activities, making it essential in CSR strategy (Bigné et al., 2023). Trust builds long-term consumer relationships and influences instant behavior, helping businesses thrive. Trust significantly mediates CSR program success and customer behavior, supporting H4. Trust mediates consumer behavioral and CSR initiatives. Customer trust affects a company's social responsibility. Business CSR initiatives may affect customer behavior and develop lasting connections by embracing trust's mediating function.

H5 suggests that customer consciousness influences the brand perception of CSR initiatives. This theory states that consumer consciousness and knowledge impact CSR and brand perception. Customer consciousness moderates the success of CSR initiatives, which are growing in organizations. Customer consciousness assesses social and environmental sensitivity. Customer consciousness influences a brand's CSR initiatives. Socially and environmentally conscious customers are likelier to enjoy CSR and brand perception. Recognizing consumers' diverse viewpoints and goals boosts customer consciousness (Suttikun & Mahasuweerachai, 2023). CSR initiatives need to be more well-known and well-liked. Hypothesis 5 suggests that CSR initiatives will affect brand perception more for customers who actively support them. This implies that consumers who value corporate social responsibility will identify and approve of a firm in this area. CSR initiatives lack social and environmental knowledge to improve customer perception. CSR initiatives must match the target audience's knowledge, objectives, and consumer feelings to improve brand perception.

According to H6's findings, customer consciousness moderates the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior. This hypothesis shows that CSR influences customer behavior based on social and environmental con-

sciousness. Customer consciousness must be understood to assess the whole influence on consumer behavior when CSR is integrated into company strategy. Customer consciousness measures how much customers care about social and environmental issues. CSR activities alter customer behavior based on consumer consciousness. Understanding and caring about social responsibility strengthens customers' CSR responses (Kim & Park, 2020). Customers' different tastes and interests make customer consciousness's moderating function more critical. H6 understands that clients value social responsibility differently. Customers actively seeking CSR-aligned products and services are more likely to be influenced by CSR activities. This suggests that more knowledgeable people are more likely to act ethically and socially.

## CONCLUSION

This study reviewed the complex relationships to fully understand how CSR activities affect brand perception and consumer behavior. Stakeholder theory, social identity theory, and ethical consumerism support the positive correlations between CSR, consumer behavior, and brand perception. According to empirical studies, CSR constantly affects customers' views of organizations and their support of programs. Trust as a mediator between CSR actions, consumer behavior, and brand impression is examined in detail. Cognitive dissonance and social exchange theories support these findings. Trust as a mediator has helped us understand how CSR activities affect brand perceptions and customer behavior. The study revealed the complexity of these linkages by addressing consumers' knowledge of the complexity of linkages. Consistent with contingency theory, consumers' attitudes to CSR initiatives varied by their beliefs and concerns. Empirical studies suggest CSR programs should be tailored to client consciousness levels. Universal methods may not encompass the complexity of customer responses. The findings of this study provide a complete picture of the varied linkages within CS) efforts, advancing existing understanding. The study emphasizes CSR's strategic value for companies. Trust, consumer values, and consumer consciousness are stressed as ways to improve firm reputation and customer behavior.

## Implications

This research improves knowledge of the complicated linkages between CSR actions, brand perception, and consumer behavior, advancing theory in numerous domains. Stakeholder theory, social identity theory, and ethical consumerism support the positive correlations between CSR,

consumer behavior, and brand perception. The data show that customers favor socially responsible enterprises and are more willing to endorse them. Theoretical frameworks are essential for understanding consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility. The study examines trust as an intermediate between cognitive dissonance and social exchange theories. This study reveals how CSR initiatives affect customer behavior and brand perception through trust, advancing psychological knowledge. Contingency theory encourages customer consciousness adaptation. This shows that consumer responses to CSR programs are multimodal, making contingency theory more complete. The report has practical implications, including guidance for companies pursuing strategic CSR influence. The research says CSR must mirror consumer values. Companies may customize their CSR efforts to their target audience's values by measuring consumer consciousness.

Client interactions and CSR program efficacy improve with customization. CSR activities require trust-building, according to the study. Transparency, consistency, and authenticity in CSR statements enhance customer trust. Using CSR to influence brand perception and customer behavior requires trust. Corporate social responsibility should go beyond the norm, the studies show. Corporations may target populations with CSR by analyzing consumer consciousness. This targeted method increases CSR and displays social and environmental concerns. This data proves that CSR is a strategic requirement, not just PR. CSR efforts should be seamlessly integrated into strategic business strategy as essential. Understanding trust stresses CSR consistency. To gain customer trust, companies must follow their ideals. Market research must track consumer issues and attitudes to understand customer consciousness fully. This dynamic knowledge helps firms to swiftly change their CSR strategy to stay current and aligned with their target audience. Strategic CSR actions are necessary because of their practicality. This study suggests that corporate social responsibility may boost a company's market position. CSR that aligns with customer values and conscience may increase brand image and competitiveness. This difference increases customer loyalty, word-of-mouth, and competition. Long-term customer ties built through CSR programs boost brand trust and reputation. Companies using CSR to show themselves as socially responsible gain more ethical and sustainable customers.

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## Limitations and Future Direction

### Limitations

The contributions are essential, yet there are limitations. The literature review examined various cultural settings and industries, limiting the findings' generalizability. Cultural diversity and industry-specific factors influence consumer views of CSR programs. Thus, extending this study's findings to other cultures or enterprises is risky. The research relies on current literature, which may overlook CSR trends. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) industry is dynamic; thus, this study may only partially reflect evolving business practices and customer expectations. This research only looks at CSR programs' positive aspects, ignoring customer concerns. The disadvantages or critiques of CSR initiatives may help us understand how CSR influences customer behavior and brand perception.

Additionally, differences in CSR initiative effectiveness were not examined. Industry-specific CSR efforts may be needed. Further research is needed to understand customer responses in diverse contexts better. The study also uses self-reported metrics, which may include social desirability bias. Participants may answer to comply with society's standards rather than convey their genuine opinions, which might affect the results and the study's internal validity. This study still needs to analyze the temporal aspects of CSR impact thoroughly. CSR length and timing should be studied to determine how they affect customer perceptions and behavior.

### Future Direction

Further research is needed to determine how CSR programs affect brand perception and consumer behavior. When considering CSR activities, examine concerns, adverse effects, and industry-specific customer response. Combining behavioral metrics or observational data with survey data may improve research quality. In response to CSR's ever-changing influence, longitudinal research may track consumer opinions and activities. CSR initiatives temporal breadth, duration, and consistency can help organizations establish long-term CSR strategies. Understanding how consumers interact with CSR information online and how digital platforms and social media impact CSR activities may give current insights into CSR communication dynamics and consumer-brand relationships.

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## APPENDIX

Questionnaire for the effect of corporate social responsibility initiatives on brand perception and consumer behavior.

### **Brand Perception**

1. This brand is trustworthy.
2. This brand is reputable.
3. This brand makes honest claims.

### **Consumer Behavior**

1. If I have a useful idea on how to improve service, I let the employee know.
2. When I experience a problem, I let the employee know about it.
3. When I receive good service from the employee, I comment about it.
4. I said positive things about my bank and the employee to others.
5. I encouraged friends and relatives to use bank.
6. I recommended bank to others.
7. I assist other customers if they need my help.
8. I give advice to other customers.
9. I help other customers if they seem to have problems.
10. If the employee makes a mistake during delivery, I would be willing to be patient.
11. If I have to wait longer than I normally expected to receive the service, I would be willing to adapt.
12. If service is not delivered as expected, I would be willing to put up with it.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

1. The hotel improves the tourism industry.
2. The hotel generates employment through its operations.
3. The hotel strives to activate the local economy.
4. The hotel strives to achieve sustainable growth.
5. The hotel properly implements health and safety rules and regulations.
6. The hotel has established appropriate regulations for customers to abide by.
7. The hotel strives to abide by regulations related to its customers' well-being.
8. The hotel has established ethical guidelines for business activities.
9. The hotel tries to become an ethically trustworthy company.
10. The hotel makes efforts to fairly treat customers.
11. The hotel participates in a variety of volunteer activities by starting the company's volunteer group.
12. The hotel supports social welfare projects for the underprivileged.

### **Brand Trust**

1. I trust on the quality of this banking company.
2. Is interested in its customers.
3. Is honest with its customers.
4. Make me feel a sense of security.

### **Consumer Consciousness**

1. I consider myself a conscious consumer.
2. When purchasing, I am always interested in the making of the product (components, quality).
3. I will continue to buy from brands that are aware of their actions toward society and nature.
4. I would switch to apparel brands that provide donations to the society.
5. I will boycott apparel brands that use child labor in their production process.
6. I value brands that offer job opportunities and hire without discrimination.