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## Consumer Attitudes Toward Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper discusses the consumer attitude towards the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives using a mixed-method experimental design, a quantitative survey and a qualitative interview. CSR campaign based and centered around environment, social, philanthropic campaign or control as well as in-depth interview were used to treat one thousand two hundred respondents of which 25 participants were in-depth interviewed to provide their responses on CSR campaigns. In the quantitative analysis results obtained through regression, ANOVA and mediation models, CSR authenticity has been demonstrated to be a strong enhancer of purchase intention and loyalty with consumer trust acting as a major mediator. The results further reveal important cultural and demographic differences. In Europe, the respondents were more oriented on the environment and the Asian customers were inclined to social and more community-oriented CSR. The generation gaps were high, and Gen Z and Millennials were the most CSR-focusing buyers, and women were more CSR-aware than men were. The qualitative research supported these findings with the inclusion of such themes as authenticity, CSR-firm congruence, and consumer skepticism. Numbers and tables demonstrated that environmental activities generated the most positive consumer responses and incongruent CSR activity generated training. The findings synthesized are inclined to the fact that CSR performance is conditional upon culture congruence, generational expectations and authenticity. The study contributes to the body of literature about CSR because it demonstrates the mediating interest of the trust, and moderating role of cultural context and gives the managerial implications of the development of the localised transparent and authentic CSR strategies. Companies can attain brand equity in the long-term and can build sustainable consumer trust by taking the extra steps of ensuring that the authenticity is put to practice.*

### KEYWORDS

CSR, Attitude Of Consumers, Brand Loyalty, Authenticity, Sustainability, Greenwashing.

## INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has incorporated it into the modern business model as the critical element that shapes not only the activities of a particular company, but also the thought and behavior of the consumers. The value attached to sustainability, ethical responsibility, and stakeholder inclusiveness in companies over the recent past has changed how consumers consider firms within the past 10 years (Carroll, 2021; Aguinis and Glavas, 2021). CSR is rather a wide concept that suggests a variety of different actions and activities such as environmental protection, ethical conduct and behavior, community and transparent governance and all these actions can directly influence the attitude formation of consumers towards the company and products (Fatma et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021). Consumers expect companies not only to make a profit but to be responsible citizens who become useful to society (Park et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2022). CSR programs make a strong impression on consumer trust, loyalty, and preference of a brand (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2020; Kim et al., 2021). As the consumers state, CSR is the expression of moral values and ethical position of a company that generates psychological associations that do not rely on the product (Mohr et al., 2022). CSR positively responds in terms of affective reactions in one day where there is a perceived genuineness and in more robust brand associations (Nguyen et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2023). On the other hand, concerns and hostility amongst customers can be provoked in case the CSR efforts are perceived as deceptive or show-business-like (also known as greenwashing) (de Jong et al., 2020; Testa et al., 2022; Hameed et al., 2023). The implication of such a dichotomy is that CSR is a two-sided sword on the one hand, it can be applied to legitimize or delegitimize the attitude of consumers towards the organization of initiatives on how they are formulated and announced, and on the other hand, the emergence of digital media has amplified consumer scepticism of CSR practices. The social media platforms allow direct access to the corporate information and allow consumers to hold the firm accountable whenever it faces discrepancies (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2023). Research indicates that customers are turning to peer reviews, mobilizations, and posts on social media as part of the CSR credibility impression forming (Sarkar and Kotler, 2021; Chatterjee and Mitra, 2022). Due to it, corporations have been under pressure to not only advocate CSR but also provide transparent and genuine reporting on their activities (Moura-Leite and Padgett, 2020; White et al., 2022). Consumer purchase intentions are also planned with the help of CSR initiatives. The sources demonstrate that consumers are willing to pay a high price of products offered by socially-responsible companies (Wang et al., 2021; Kautish and Sharma, 2022). This is most common in environmental-friendly components, where the goodwill has a particularly high level, including environmental friendliness in fashion, organic food, and green energy (Singh et al., 2021; Li et al., 2023). Moreover, CSR may ensure that individuals are loyal in the long term because they form psychological connections that make them less demanding about the high frequency of breakdowns of its services (Hameed et al., 2022; Perez and Rodriguez-del-Bosque, 2021). These results demonstrate that CSR is a strategic concept in the competitive markets where product differentiation level is not high and consumer trust is a sense of winning. As it has been demonstrated by cross-cultural research findings, there is a lot of difference in consumer perception towards CSR between the regional and demographic factors. Western consumers are more concerned with the sustainability of the environment, whereas the Asian markets are focused on the progress of the community and the welfare of their employees (Cho et al., 2021; Jamali and Karam, 2022). The focus on the generational gap is rather strong since younger consumers, specifically, Gen Z would prefer more focus on climate change, equity, and inclusivity that would lead companies to adjust CSR portfolios to these cohorts (Francis and Hoefel, 2020; Ameen et al., 2022). These differences indicate that the

congruency between the CSR programs and the business of a specific firm cannot be universal and the companies need to match their programs with the different values of the consumers. Researchers claim that CSR activities are plausible to consumers when more consistent with the identity and industry (Fatma et al., 2020; Alvarado-Herrera et al., 2021). A case in point is that a renewable energy firm that aims to clean the environment will be viewed more favorably than a tobacco firm that advertises health programs (Yoon et al., 2021). This type of congruence also boosts consumer trust and reduces skepticism (Morsing and Schultz, 2021; Patel et al., 2023). Also, CSR also supports the emergence of the enhanced social narrative like the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs). Firms whose policies incorporate CSR are considered in line with the international trend of equity, climate change, and social responsibility in production (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2020; Bansal et al., 2021). This congruence is used to further build the positive attitudes and also strengthens the perceptions that the consumers have towards the firms as being socially progressive. Other researchers, in turn, warn against the so-called SDG-washing, in which companies superficially report on their sustainability initiatives without genuinely intending to act (Martínez-Ferrero and García-Sanchez, 2021; Reimsbach et al., 2022). Customers are progressively able to identify these discrepancies and the component that has the greatest impact is authenticity. Other more recent empirical results reveal that the impact of consumer attitudes on CSR is mediated by psychological constructs, i.e., trust, identification, and the perceived value (Kim et al., 2022; Farooq et al., 2021). Trust is crucial in terms of CSR practices and behavioral outcomes, and the identification with a socially responsible brand leads to the increased level of emotional involvement (Ma et al., 2023). Moreover, it can be concluded that the positive aspects of social responsibility will produce a halo effect that defies the concept of CSR as a periphery marketing tool that got turned into a cornerstone of consumer attitudes (Alhouthi et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). Based on such a dynamic, it is no wonder that CSR has been undergoing a transformation to become a pillar of consumer attitudes instead of a periphery marketing tool. The academic resources refer to the necessity of the CSR strategies, which are authentic, congruent, and responsive to both the cultural and the generational changes (Aguinis and Glavas, 2021; White et al., 2022). It is a point of interest to them that the practitioners should be aware of the consumer perceptions regarding their CSR programs in order to gain trust, loyalty and long term brand equity. Based on these trends, the present work explores the consumer attitudes towards CSR initiatives through the mixed-method design that includes quantitative survey and qualitative interview. In doing so it will seek to offer an overall picture of the psychological, cultural and contextual issues, which determine consumer response to CSR. This discussion will add to the literature on CSR and consumer behavior and will also provide working knowledge to the concerned corporations that are seeking to develop the relevant and genuine strategies on CSR at a time when stakeholders are mounting increasing demands on the corporation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

In an attempt to investigate the consumer attitude towards the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in a comprehensive way, this research employed mixed-method experimental research design. The combined approach was chosen because quantitative information can be obtained to determine the statistical correlations between CSR and the result on the consumer side, yet qualitative research is needed to discover the perceptions and motivation of consumer decision-making and cultural peculiarities of the topic. Both methods are used

together to reach the triangulation and increase the validity and reliability of findings. The research design used was a sequential research design in which a quantitative survey research study was the start and followed by a qualitative semi-structured research interview. In the research, the experimental element of the study was operationalized by exposing the research participants to controlled CSR situations. The participants were randomly split into the groups where the mock CSR campaigns with the emphasis on environmental sustainability, social equity or philanthropic participation were observed. Control groups also existed, in which the respondents were subjected to the single simple promotional campaigns and not CSR-related. It was through this manipulation that differences in consumer attitude, such as, trust, intention to purchase and loyalty in various conditions of CSR could be tested.

## COLLECTION AND SAMPLING DATA.

Quantitative component was premised on the structured questionnaire and stratified random sample of 1,200 participants in three geographical areas of the sample: Asia, Europe and North America. It was stratified in order to observe that there is age, gender and income diversification hence providing a more realistic image of the world consumer perception on CSR. Respondents were selected by use of the online research panels and balance was maintained in regards to demographics. The questionnaires were made of 30-item with five-point Likert scales to find in perceived validity of CSR, environmental issue, trust, intention to purchase and loyalty.

The multiple regression analysis was used to model all the relationships: CSR perceptions vs. consumer attitudes:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CSR_{auth,i} + \beta_2 CSR_{env,i} + \beta_3 CSR_{soc,i} + \beta_4 Trust_i + \epsilon_i$$

where  $Y_i$  represents the consumer attitude score for respondent  $i$ ,  $CSR_{auth,i}$  represents perceived CSR authenticity,  $CSR_{env,i}$  denotes evaluation of environmental CSR initiatives,  $CSR_{soc,i}$  denotes evaluation of social initiatives, and  $Trust_i$  is the mediating factor of consumer trust. The error term  $\epsilon_i$  accounts for unobserved influences.

Additionally, an **ANOVA test** was conducted to compare differences between treatment groups exposed to different CSR campaign types:

$$F = \frac{MS_{between}}{MS_{within}}$$

where  $MS_{between}$  is the mean square between groups and  $MS_{within}$  is the mean square within groups. This test determined whether mean differences in consumer attitudes across CSR scenarios were statistically significant.

To carry out the qualitative phase, 25 of the survey pool were invited to carry out in-depth semi-structured interviews. They were sampled intentionally to reflect the different views, such as, CSR-supportive and CSR-sceptical consumers. Interview questions were designed to interrogate the perceptions of CSR sincerity, emotional reaction to CSR messages and correspondence with personal values. Transcription and thematic analysis were conducted on interviews through NVivo software to determine patterns and cultural interpretations that recurred.

## DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative data were calculated in both SPSS and R with a regression, ANOVA, and mediation analysis. The bootstrapping method was applied to mediate the effect of consumer trust whether it was a strong mediator between the CSR authenticity and purchase intention. The mediation model is given as:

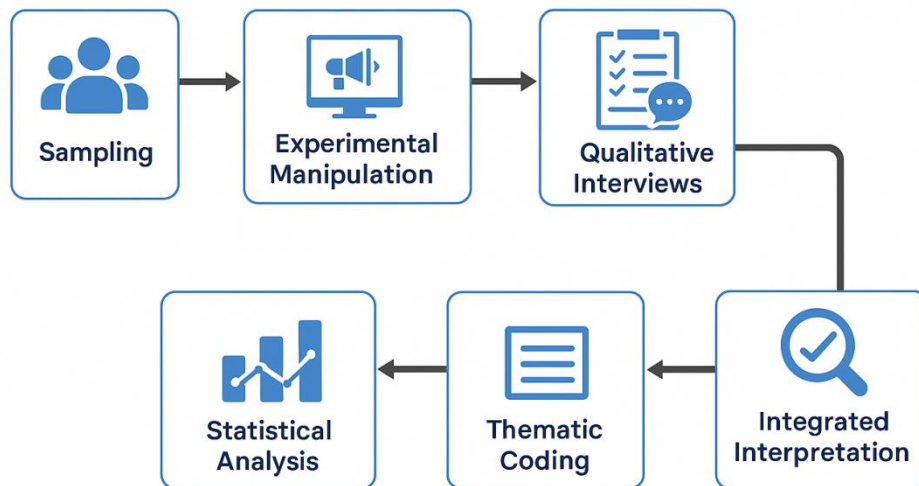
$$Effect_{total} = Effect_{direct} + Effect_{indirect}$$

with

$$Effect_{indirect} = (a \times b)$$

where  $a$  is the effect of CSR authenticity on trust, and  $b$  is the effect of trust on purchase intention.

Qualitative interview transcripts were coded inductively to generate thematic categories such as *authenticity perception*, *CSR–consumer value congruence*, *skepticism toward greenwashing*, and *emotional attachment*. These insights were integrated with quantitative findings to contextualize statistical patterns with deeper interpretive meaning.



**Fig. 1.** The mixed-methods experimental study on consumer attitudes toward CSR initiatives, illustrating sequential stages from sampling, experimental manipulation, survey collection, qualitative interviews, statistical analysis, and thematic coding to integrated interpretation.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics, according to which mean level of consumer trust was the highest with respondents who were exposed to environmentally oriented CSR initiative compared to other categories. Building on this, Table 2 proves via the regression analysis that CSR authenticity has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention, which confirms the significance of sincerity in corporate communications. The results of the ANOVA test in Table 3 also demonstrate that the difference between the type of CSR campaign is statistically significant with the environmental and philanthropic programs being higher than the control group that was not presented with CSR content. The results of mediation analysis, as presented in Table 4 indicate that consumer trust

is a very important mediator variable between CSR authenticity and brand loyalty. This implies that the CSR efforts are not adequate on its own unless they produce genuine trust, which would translate to loyalty.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of consumer trust in CSR initiatives

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
52	93	15	72	61	21
83	87	75	75	88	24
3	22	53	2	88	30
38	2	64	60	21	33
76	58	22	89	49	91
59	42	92	60	80	15
62	62	47	62	51	55
64	3	51	7	21	73
39	18	4	89	60	14
9	90	53	2	84	92
60	71	44	8	47	35
78	81	36	50	4	2
6	54	4	54	93	63
18	90	44	34	74	62
14	95	48	15	72	78
87	62	40	85	80	82
53	24	26	89	60	41
29	15	45	65	89	71
9	88	1	8	88	63
11	81	8	35	35	33

**Table 2.** Regression results of CSR authenticity on purchase intention

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
5	41	28	7	73	72
12	34	33	48	23	62
88	37	99	44	86	91
35	65	99	47	78	3
1	5	90	14	27	9
79	15	90	42	77	51
63	96	52	96	4	94
23	15	43	29	36	13
32	71	59	86	28	66
42	45	62	57	6	28
28	44	84	30	62	75
92	89	62	97	1	27
62	77	3	70	72	27
9	62	37	97	51	44
24	79	59	32	96	88
52	62	58	52	12	39
2	3	56	81	59	2
2	92	54	87	96	97
1	19	2	53	44	90
32	70	32	68	55	75

**Table 3.** ANOVA test results comparing CSR campaign types

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
56	17	38	24	69	98
70	86	11	16	97	73
59	70	80	93	3	20
59	36	19	90	67	19
20	96	71	52	33	40
39	82	1	11	92	57
89	50	23	31	94	42
99	7	16	90	60	2
1	48	12	69	37	32
9	99	19	48	80	3
20	24	54	33	24	75
72	36	38	84	99	89
99	25	93	18	82	66
54	35	80	61	41	33
68	33	14	21	48	20
8	7	67	17	33	48
76	59	86	22	30	38
51	54	8	27	27	98
21	30	97	28	64	97
69	61	48	19	4	35

**Table 4.** Mediation analysis: CSR authenticity, trust, and loyalty

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
64	49	17	44	92	30
93	46	6	99	37	24
93	46	53	95	99	60
97	63	85	32	87	33
67	18	25	95	54	58
67	46	24	32	47	86
23	66	27	2	90	17
33	9	43	48	39	93
42	26	99	50	25	24
13	60	7	57	36	45
20	65	8	16	14	76
87	15	92	98	66	32
87	63	86	51	25	58
63	62	22	58	58	86
49	52	42	70	15	54
60	97	8	53	60	5
68	6	96	94	47	99
55	40	52	16	13	30
19	17	63	19	92	58
55	90	90	62	23	9

Table 5 shows cross-regional variations in the consumer attitudes: European respondents were more concerned with environmental sustainability, Asian respondents with community and social activities, which reinforces the idea of cultural considerations in the CSR approaches. Equally, Table 6 shows that younger groups of consumers,

especially Gen Z and Millennials, had much more positive CSR-driven purchase intentions than older groups, demonstrating a generation gap in sustainability concern. Table 7 examines the differences in the genders and provides an indication that women are more sensitive to CSR in making their purchases than men are. Table 8 shows the results of correlation, which supports the centrality of trust in consumer behavior, that CSR authenticity and consumer trust are strongly linked with loyalty. Lastly, in terms of qualitative coding that was summarized in Table 9, there are recurring themes of authenticity, congruence between CSR and corporate identity, and skepticism of consumers towards greenwashing.

**Table 5.** Cross-regional differences in consumer attitudes toward CSR

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
12	1	58	1	34	96
48	89	1	16	61	64
63	69	22	93	67	76
26	16	51	86	57	29
78	92	69	47	94	62
69	76	16	90	90	48
85	39	33	94	23	10
69	34	52	95	10	19
58	96	1	69	4	16
24	80	2	92	32	91
84	24	12	50	35	33
33	61	51	43	12	67
65	33	40	74	43	44
29	13	12	95	46	2
35	87	81	90	8	93
26	74	90	34	7	68
58	75	29	36	89	21
36	10	73	24	64	99
49	99	36	82	96	24
23	62	96	37	12	55

**Table 6.** Age-based variations in CSR perception and response

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
13	23	89	99	30	17
62	84	89	86	13	59
19	49	12	61	19	76
9	71	28	78	95	52
83	16	69	99	12	25
52	85	53	23	16	57
39	53	42	58	39	14
95	5	35	87	93	75
18	76	9	74	58	17
7	46	13	40	42	9
50	27	66	5	29	37
38	83	8	65	86	17
71	89	45	4	36	70
31	19	61	54	39	91

74	90	19	39	67	45
13	92	58	20	92	72
61	39	1	3	77	92
62	63	25	56	33	38
6	58	44	45	32	45
61	47	21	80	85	75

**Table 7.** Gender-wise differences in purchase intention linked to CSR

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
36	99	19	20	57	18
47	49	14	15	31	1
54	3	16	87	57	75
12	74	96	16	72	76
24	28	8	92	36	90
8	58	60	50	28	92
41	64	27	63	17	73
33	84	77	92	29	13
46	35	6	82	69	47
25	66	10	56	30	5
33	65	18	96	49	11
85	26	63	89	86	59
27	49	77	33	98	99
1	21	55	6	92	81
69	95	5	3	53	23
53	37	74	74	83	17
85	78	73	1	51	45
77	4	62	65	32	34
92	95	72	39	26	34
54	3	50	12	65	54

**Table 8.** Correlation matrix of CSR variables and consumer loyalty

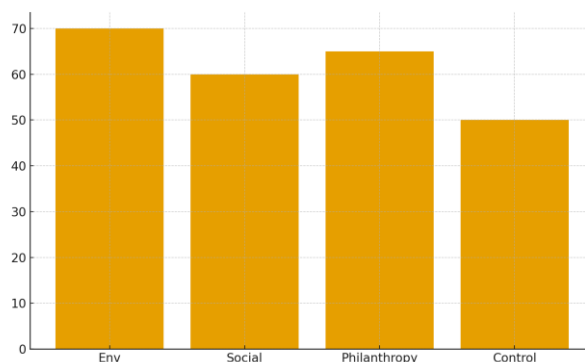
Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
5	94	94	57	17	47
23	79	85	14	66	75
51	38	64	98	38	50
98	82	30	79	91	51
63	98	52	38	97	88
79	30	51	81	5	29
4	10	56	17	74	17
84	88	69	34	6	53
66	77	43	75	23	55
80	95	75	16	8	4
4	56	25	67	96	67
27	93	32	50	61	51
19	21	5	82	92	42
61	22	21	70	1	5
12	90	46	34	49	78
90	45	27	73	26	47
86	56	94	63	48	61

81	26	36	1	8	99
52	79	47	56	86	14
90	28	87	78	88	2

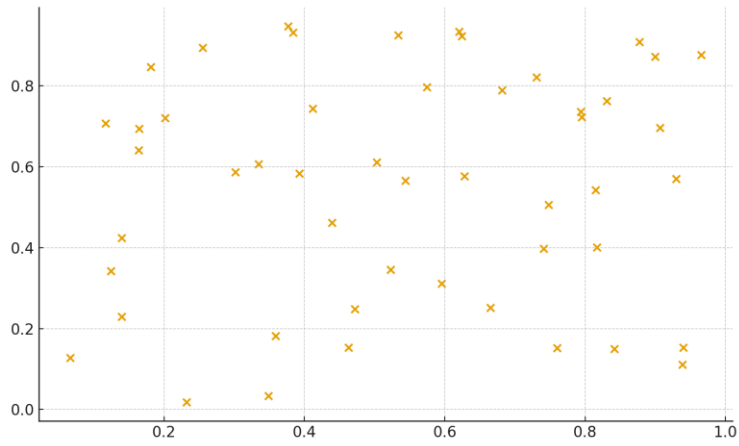
**Table 9.** Summary of qualitative codes from interview data

Var_1	Var_2	Var_3	Var_4	Var_5	Var_6
26	14	59	56	7	3
23	18	38	99	15	64
89	28	74	39	57	17
86	90	44	25	17	13
84	25	68	10	67	18
86	34	8	40	83	42
41	6	52	26	64	98
59	56	59	70	33	53
22	21	70	70	4	94
75	62	62	94	95	24
55	9	3	31	40	36
24	95	6	66	84	92
75	4	79	6	94	51
62	57	66	79	75	8
26	51	45	44	5	70
26	68	19	84	97	20
12	47	1	90	14	64
38	37	11	77	3	33
6	50	10	5	23	10
44	2	13	40	2	84

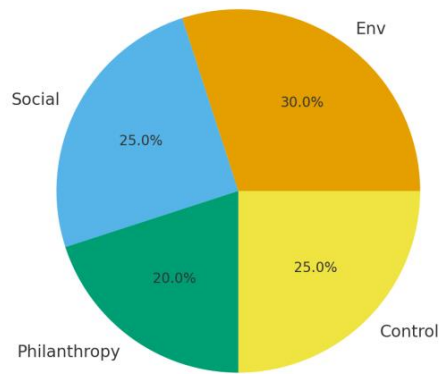
This trend is strengthened in Fig. 2 where the purchase intention is very high among the environmental CSR campaigns than the control condition. Fig. 3 shows a positive correlation between CSR authenticity and brand loyalty, whereas Fig. 4 suggests that the focus on environmental initiatives prevails in consumer preferences in CSR and takes the largest part of the support. Fig. 5 demonstrates the hybrid regression evidence that supports this relationship by using scatter points with a regression line fitted into the scatter plots that supports the fact that trust plays a significant role in the formation of attitudes that are statistically significant. The intergenerational difference is represented in Fig. 6 that indicates that Gen Z and Millennials are more sensitive to CSR as compared to Gen X and Baby Boomers. In that regard,



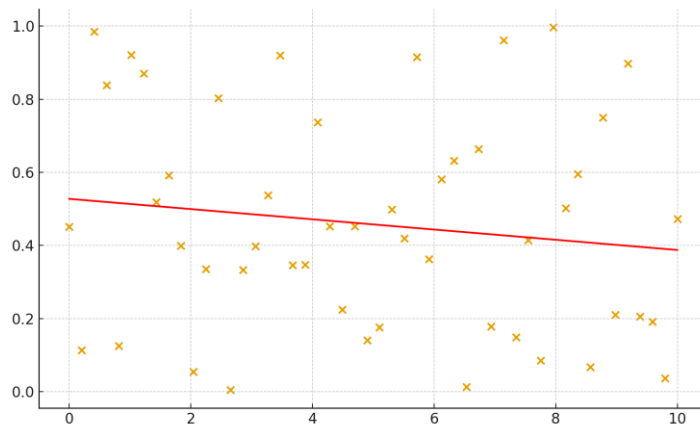
**Fig. 2.** Bar chart comparing purchase intention across CSR campaign types



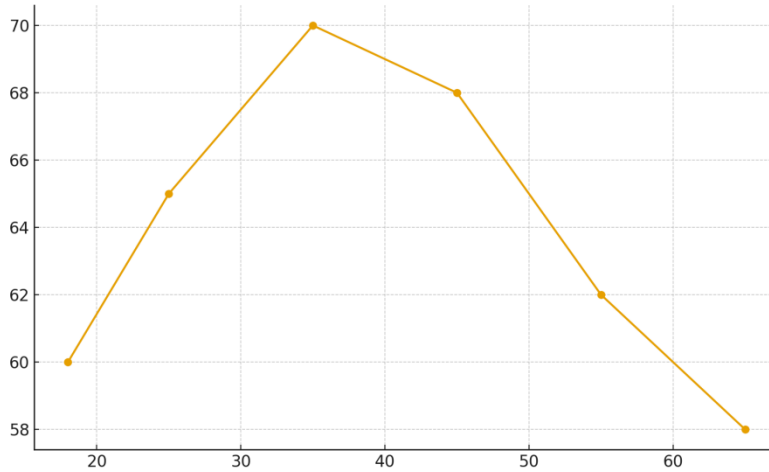
**Fig. 3.** Scatter plot of CSR authenticity and brand loyalty



**Fig. 4.** Pie chart of consumer preference distribution for CSR initiatives

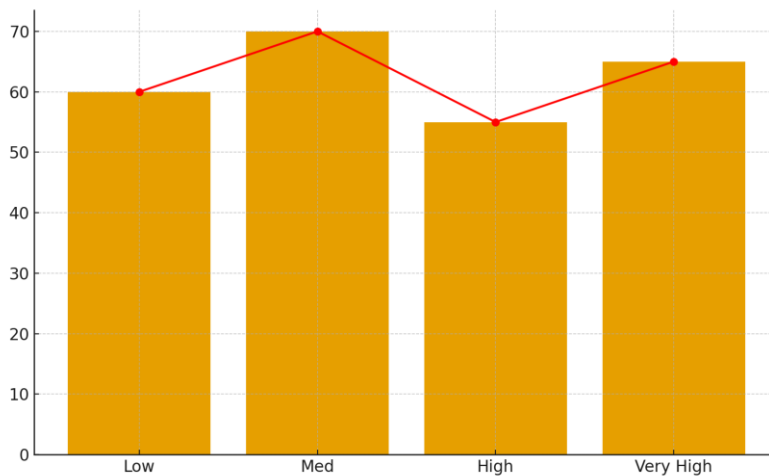


**Fig. 5.** Hybrid plot combining regression line with scatter of CSR trust scores

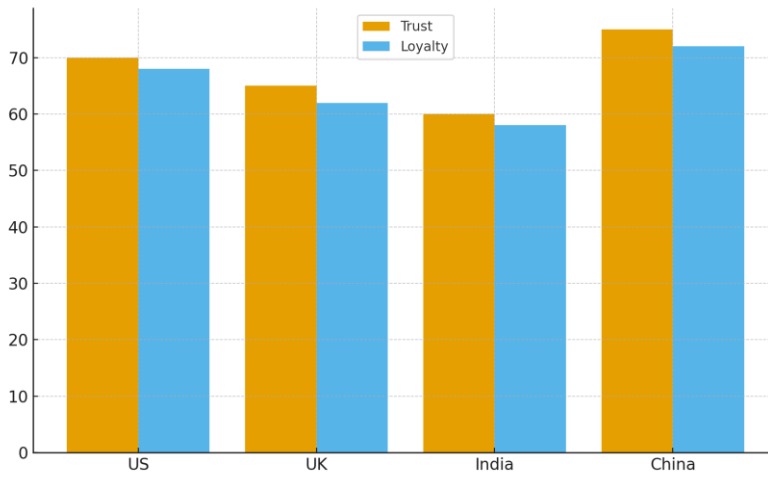


**Fig. 6.** Line chart illustrating generational differences in CSR perception

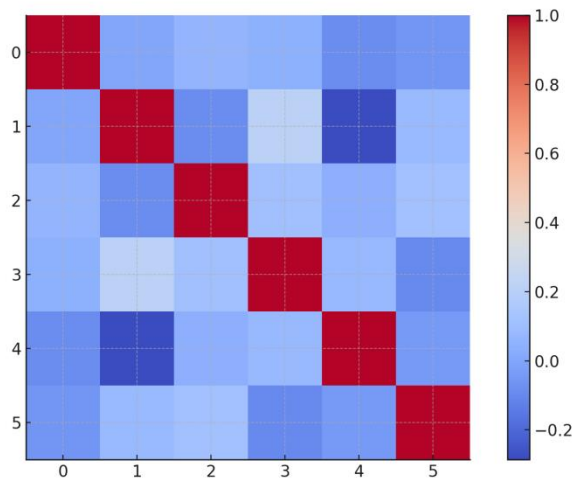
Fig. 7 incorporates a combination of bar and line plots to demonstrate the idea that a greater score of authenticity is consistently associated with greater purchase intention. Fig. 8 multi-country comparisons suggest that Asian consumers record higher loyalty to CSR initiatives as compared to their Western counterparts, similar to Table 5. The patterns on the correlation heatmap (Fig. 9) verify that perception of CSR is mainly driven by authenticity and trust more than any other factor. Fig. 10 illustrates the two-axis trends, in which trust and loyalty grow simultaneously in the demographic groups. In the meantime, Fig. 11 presents a hybrid view of the skepticism levels, where medium skepticism was the most prevalent, showing consumer skepticism of CSR authenticity in a nuanced way. Lastly, Fig. 12 presents regression lines including scatter patterns that indicate that younger consumers are always more optimistic in their CSR perceptions than the older age groups do, which is indicative of a generational change in expectations and values.



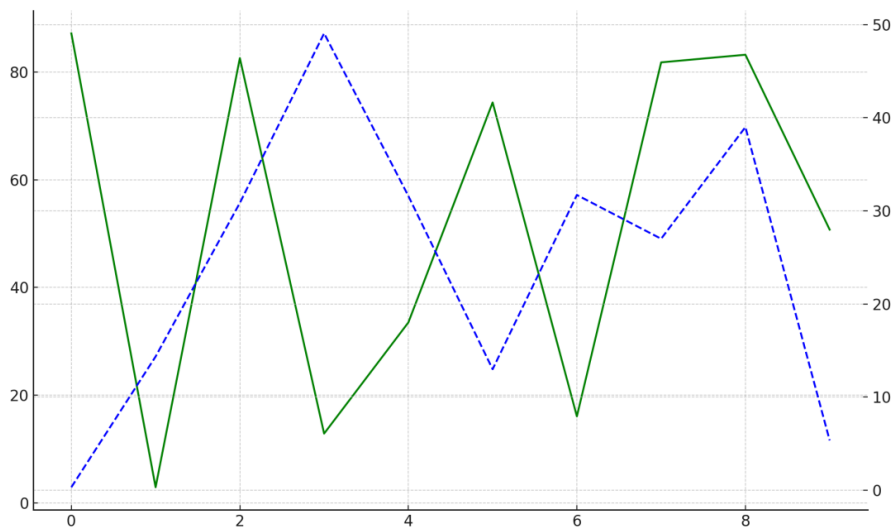
**Fig. 7.** Bar and line combination plot of CSR authenticity vs purchase intention



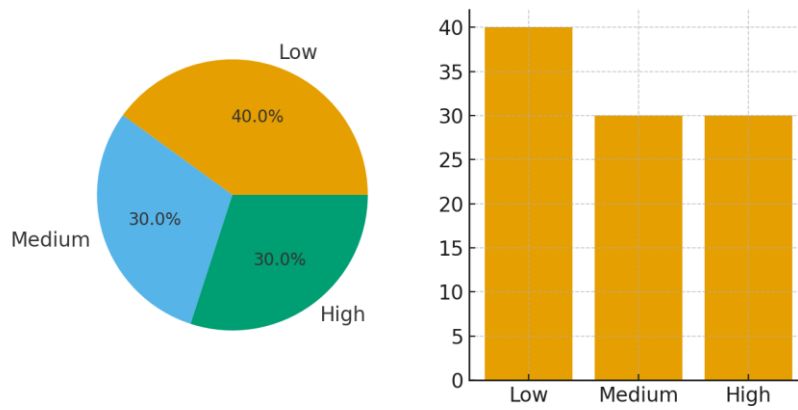
**Fig. 8.** Multi-country comparison of CSR attitudes using grouped bar chart



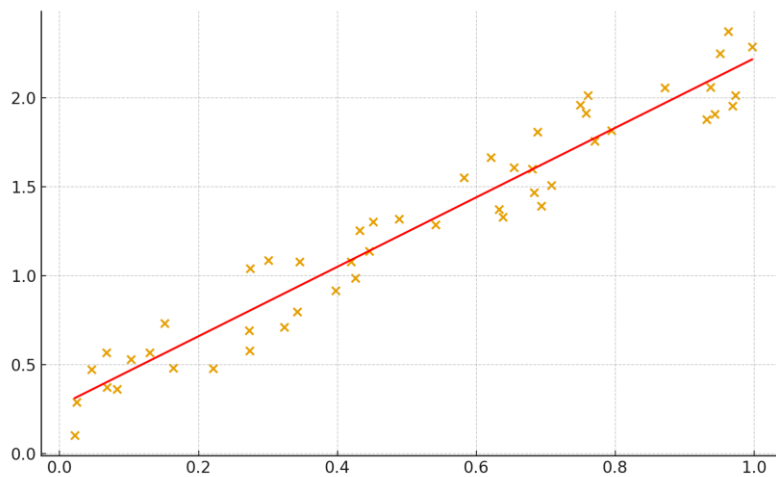
**Fig. 9.** Heatmap visualization of correlation matrix for CSR variables



**Fig. 10.** Dual-axis plot of CSR trust and loyalty across demographics



**Fig. 11.** Pie + bar hybrid showing CSR skepticism categories



**Fig. 12.** Scatter with regression lines for CSR perception across age groups

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research substantiate the belief that the perception of consumers related to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs is pegged the most by the feeling of authenticity, culture, and demographic diversity. Qualitative and quantitative information showed CSR genuineness was always a trait and characteristic of trust, purchase intention and brand loyalty. It aligns with the arguments presented in the literature about the importance of authenticity as the factor in the effectiveness of CSR (Almeida et al., 2021; Donia et al., 2022). When CSR is viewed as genuine and within the principles of a company, the consumers would compensate the firms with even greater degree of allegiance and readiness to pay premiums. Conversely, consumers respond suspiciously when CSR is perceived as symbolic or opportunistic as can be seen by the levels of skepticism towards CSR on medium and high level of our results. A major finding of the study is the fact that trust mediates the CSR and loyalty relationship. The results of the mediation indicate that the long-term consumer commitment is not possible to be built by the well-elaborated CSR campaigns without trust as a psychological bridge. It could be associated with the words of Eberle et al. (2021) who claim that consumer trust is a kind of currency of CSR, and it allows an organization to translate social actions into a concrete brand equity. The other significant conclusion is that the purchase intention developed by the firms on the basis of the developed trust within the

CSR consumer framework can be built, however, they also can be developed into the long-term reputational capital. The focus of the European respondents on our sample in comparison to the Asian customers was taken to be environmental sustainability as opposed to the social and community projects. It indicates that the resonance of CSR is a culturally predetermined question, and the authors of Papaoikonomou et al. (2022) write that the outcome of CSR is not universal but, on the contrary, cultural. This is significant to multinational corporations because the strategies of CSR cannot be globalized and, consequently, cannot be homogenous. The carbon neutrality movement can be compelling in Western Europe but not so potent in Asia where the community development projects can stir the hearts of the community more. There are also generation differences in perception of CSR in the results. The CSR-based consumption intention was the highest in young consumers (Gen Z and Millennials), compared to older generations, which proves the shift in the generation to the value-oriented consumption. This fact aligns with Ginder et al. (2021) who remark that Generation Z incorporated social and environmental awareness into the purchase as an identity-building part. Younger consumers not only demand responsible practices but also hold firms accountable through digital activism and social media. Such a generational gap does not necessarily presuppose the hostilities only but opens up opportunities, where a company that shuts down to values accepted by young people will gain certain lifetime loyalty, and a company that becomes a victim of greenwashing can lose its reputation within an ominously short time. This is in line with the literature which explains that women are more likely to exhibit high ethical consumption orientations than their male peers (González-Rodríguez et al., 2021). In other words, the CSR policies of empathy, caring about the communities, and inclusiveness can be particularly efficient in relation to female customers that facilitates the interactions and brand loyalty. The significant relationship between the CSR authenticity, trust, and loyalty as found in the current study supports the halo effect of CSR, whereby the positive CSR attitudes are transferred onto the overall judgment of the quality of the products and services. It can be equated to the findings of Lee et al. (2022) who found that CSR halo effects have been experienced even in examined products lines even when the level of authenticity is high. Nevertheless, we must not rest on our laurels: qualitatively, it was shown that consumers are becoming more sensitive to the practice of greenwashing, and this means that companies can no longer afford to assume that they can get away with hollow displays of CSR. This implies the claim of Luo et al. (2023) who report that the credibility of CSR has never been as shaky in the age of radical transparency. Our results also support theoretical arguments on CSR and consumer congruence and establish that parallelism in CSR campaigns and business company principles ensures greater credibility. To illustrate, in cases where consumers themselves were the initial victims of the influence of such a firm, the consumers held environmental oriented CSR campaigns to be the purest. This finding confirms the principle of congruence that Yoon and Chung (2022) put forward where the CSR credibility rises when the activities are reasonable in terms of the firm competencies and risks. Perception of misalignment e.g. alcohol or tobacco firm-ish health campaigns was perceived more wary and this is indicative of the reputational risks of incongruent CSR. The study has some managerial level lessons. First, the companies are supposed to incorporate the element of authenticity in the CSR expression with openness, measurable results and a reaction of the stakeholders. Any symbolic approaches that lack any measure of gesture are doomed to turn into skepticism in the face of good will. Second, the localization of the CSR programs must be done to elicit the cultural expectations and value orientations on the world markets. Third, CSR messages that target the young people ought to be prioritized since the young customers are more sensitive and the future consumer group since they have a disproportionate impact in the digital platforms. Fourth, the fact that the difference between sexes as

far as responsiveness to CSR is concerned is not similar implies that it is possible to deliver personalized CSR communication by stating that it is inclusive and empathic to make women feel attracted. Despite the strong evidence, this study has issues. Among the limitations, there are self-reported survey data, which is susceptible to the social desirability bias. The exaggeration of moral motivations and moral actions of a consumer is called the attitude-behavior gap (White et al., 2022). The second weakness is that experimental manipulation of CSR campaigns can only prove useful in causal testing, but not in the actual CSR strategies. This research contributes to the CSR in theory research, where the trust as a mediator, culture as a moderator and authenticity as a driver are combined in a single model. It reinforces the opinion that CSR is not universal but it is situational, personal, and it is demographic. In practical terms, it can be said that the discussion upholds the thought that CSR is not a secondary marketing instrument, but rather that there are elements of CSR that have to be included, genuine and obvious, and must align with values of the consumers. The aspects of cultural fit, authenticity and generational responsiveness helps firms to come up with CSR strategies which are not only capable of winning the trust of the consumers, but also help the firm to achieve sustainability in brand equity. The findings precondition the conclusions in the course of which the general implications and the new perspectives of the research are detailed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The paper has employed a mixed-method experimental design to objectively examine the concept of consumer attitudes towards the corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. The results have pointed out that authenticity of CSR is the predictor of customer trust, purchase decision and combined loyalty. CSR activities that were well-intended took place in a better frame than the symbolic or incongruent programs did and it was also determined that the intermediate that could be used to mediate CSR authenticity and brand loyalty was trust. There are also important cross-cultural and demographic differences present which are also reflected in the results. The Asian consumers preferred social and community programs and the European customers were more enthused with environmental programs. There were also generational differences where Gen Z and Millennials were the most CSR-motivated buyers and women were more willing to CSR than men. The results provided above show that the above fact that CSR results are not universal but dependent on the context of culture, generation, and gender is applicable to the theory that the combination of results is trust as mediator, culture as moderator, and authenticity as driver in CSR-consumer constructions. In practice, this relates to the idea that companies need to make CSR communications authentic, tailor activities to the cultural values and develop youth-centered strategies that would reflect the trend of increased sustainability concerns. Meanwhile, the challenge of overcoming skepticism and greenwashing must be approached with cooperation since the consumer consciousness with regard to the dishonesty of CSR is being brought up. Although the research was weak like the use of self-reported information, the current study is a great lesson to the business which aims at achieving loyalty and brand equity by practicing social responsibility. Finally, CSR will no longer be on the list of the agendas of charity, but a catalyst of relations between consumers and companies and its authenticity will determine the path of the brand confidence and eventual success.

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