Impact of CSR, Brand Image, Brand Equity and Consumer Satisfaction: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this paper are to study the effect of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on brand. image & brand equity and its effect on consumer satisfaction. The study is of quantitative type methodology, using the implementation of an online questionnaire distributed to people who bought, In the time of pandemic, a product that employed a CSR action. Data were then analyzed using Smart PLS based on Structural Equation Model. There is a conclusion that the CSR could be drawn the effect of initiatives on consumer satisfaction is mediated by the brand image, demonstrating this as a positive relationship and brand equity. In addition, companies reap benefits in terms of brand image and brand equity by leveraging on CSR programmes. Previous studies have found that consumers' satisfaction is not directly impacted by and contrary to what has been determined, satisfaction is not a function of the type of personalization performed. This research has also revealed that CSR effect on brand image is greater for men, and CSR initiatives' impact on brand equity is also higher for regular purchase consumers.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, consumer, satisfaction, brand

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, the consumer is more demanding and expects brand to be able to offer more than just quality product for a low price. Hence, corporate social responsibility(CSR) has been regarded as a good strategic marketing tool (KuokkanenandSun2020), and the positioning of the brand in terms of differentiation from the competitor brands (Harjoto and Salas2017). The role of consumers' perception of company CSR on their intention to buy the brands is discussed (Wangetal.2021). Brands that consider themselves socially responsible are preferred by the consumers when they are evaluating similar products (Porter and Kramer 2006), and thus CSR is influencing the behavior of consumers (Kuokkanen and Sun 2020). The role of CSR in business is important and can assist decision makers in making intelligent decisions for the businesses and their stakeholders (Hameed et al.2018). CSR concerns represent action in line with your stakeholders' expectations (Harjotoand Salas 2017).77% of consumers are motivated to purchase products or services from companies that believe in making the world a better place (Stobierski 2021). Furthermore, CSR also brings benefits to society, through the reduction of possible negative impacts caused by business activity, especially in services (Han et al.2020), and as a lever for an organization oriented to sustainability in three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) (Hiep et al.2021). CSR is having a direct impact on corporate results (Lee et al.2020; Ramesh et al.2019) and influence several aspects, including corporate reputation (Bianchi et al.2019; Chaudaryet al.2016; Stanaland et al.2011), consumer trust and repurchase intention; consumer loyalty; and the perception of corporate performance (Chaudary et al.2016; Stanaland et al.2011).Overall, a willingness to engage in social responsibility activities is conducive to positive results for a company. Therefore, CSR activities may help companies to improve reputation and corporate image (Wang2020).CSR helps to increase brand awareness (Zhang2014) and impacts brand performance (Cowan and Guzman2020).

Consumer satisfaction has been an important research focus, as organizations (Belloetal.2021; Leeetal.2020; Mohammed and Rashid2018; Riveraetal.2016; P rayag et al.2019) understand that priority must be given to the desires and preferences (Khudhairetal.2019). Customer satisfaction can be improved through CSR initiatives like employee education/training actions (Rivera et al.2016). Since brand image started to be researched, it has been widely considered in the academic and practical circles, and it plays an important role in marketing activities (Zhang2015). Application of CSR practices affects brand image (Harjoto and Salas2017), which means that the brand is strategically positioned as a part of the CSR concept (Cowan and Guzman2020). Besides the image of the brand, there are reasons to believe that CSR can also positively impact on brand equity including brand recognition, brand loyalty, brand associations and perceived quality (Aaker1996). So, antecedents of satisfaction should be analyzed to predict consumer behavior (Palací et al.2019) in different contexts. While the food industry has been studied (Cuong2020; Hsieh et al.2018), the literature is silent regarding contexts where CSR actions and their effects on the brand image and equity brand involve (Cowan and Guzman2020) a field that is ripe for further research to examine a brand's performance for undertaking CSR initiatives (Rivera et al.2016). Thus, this article aims to study the relationship between these concepts. So, the main objective of this research is to understand the effect of CSR on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction. This study is conducted in quantitative approach with an online questionnaire distributed to all consumers who purchased a product during the pandemic. Using the structural equations method, we tried to validate the hypotheses formulated based on some links between the constructs CSR, brand image, brand equity, and customer satisfaction. The paper starts by discussing the four major topics under study, in light of the existing literature: corporate social responsibility, brand image, brand equity and, finally, consumer satisfaction, then the conceptual and research hypotheses are presented, moving subsequently to the analysis and discussion of the results. Last but not least, conclusions are drawn and some suggestions are given for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

There are currently a wide range of definitions given to the term CSR. The majority of them are congruent and therefore, the lack of a universal consensus on a definition is not relevant (Dahlsrud 2008). This lack created by the wide scope of the concept and the various perspectives shared by scholars (Brunk2010) is not enough to explain, in practice, the concept of CSR in a normative manner. This is because it is necessary to establish a common ground to connect the different concepts of CSR (Okoye2009). Votaw(1972) mentions that CSR does not have the same meaning for everyone, since for some, it means legal responsibility, for others, it can be understood as socially responsible behavior at the ethical level, and for others, it can mean the responsibilities in general. CSR is also considered as a charitable contribution and as the setting of a higher standard of behavior on entrepreneurs than on citizens in general. Carroll(1999) did a study and discovered there is a number of aspects mentioned by various authors. Generally speaking, authors connect CSR to economic, environmental, social, ethical, philanthropic and legal elements and more. The concept, moreover, is a process of construction and ought to be more emphasized on the measurement of it and empirical research is significant as a link between theory and practice. The consequences of CSR are known to have various impacts on customer loyalty, corporate reputation and customer trust (Islametal.2021). In general, a commitment to socially responsible actions leads to positive outcomes for a company. Indeed, CSR activities enable the companies to improve their reputation and corporate image (Kodua et al.2022; Harjoto and Salas2017;ÖzcanandElçi2020). Besides brand image, there are grounds to suggest that CSR can also positively impact brand equity as well (Cowan and Guzman2020; Kim and Manoli 2020; Zhaoetal.2021;Nguyenetal.2022). When done successfully, the CSR activities can positively influence consumer satisfaction (Mohammed and Rashid 2018; Prayagetal. 2019; Zhang and Ahmad 2022), because if companies are considered responsible by consumers, they will experience higher levels of satisfaction, which means that CSR activities can contribute to consumer satisfaction. CSR is a key precursor to promoting brand image and customer satisfaction (Bianchietal.2019).

Brand Image(BI)

These associations are stored in the memory of consumers (Leone et al.2006), and relate to the personality of the company and/or one of its brands operating on the market (Dong2016) or to the perception of the same brand and/or a product (MalmelinandMoisander2014). Brand image is related to the brand itself and reflects the strength and essence of a brand (Dong2016), which is related to a series of associations (Aaker1992). Martínez

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et al.(2014), regarding brand image, studied two dimensions of the brand the affective and the functional. The functional dimension is related to physical attributes that are easily measurable, and the emotional dimension relates to a psychological dimension expressed in the form of emotions and attitudes towards the company (Kennedy1977). Notably, the current study was conducted on the basis of the two above mentioned dimensions in measuring brand image. With regard to the relationship between CSR and brand image, a few studies that correlated these two concepts are available (Kodua et al.2022; Mohammed and Rashid2018; Özcan and Elçi2020; Srivastava2019). When CSR actions positively contribute to society, the environment and working conditions of the CSR actors and society as a whole, consumers prefer the products/services of the CSR actors. As a result, there is an improvement in brand image (Maldonado-Guzman et al.,2017) and in clients' retention, indicating willingness to return to the same and to have other behaviours and intentions, namely revisiting intention, making recommendations and willingness to pay more (Singh et al.,2023).When a company knows how to inspire trust, build up credibility, and develop an image in the eyes of others, the strength of the brand image will increase (Maldonado-Guzman et al.2017).The brand image has a positive impact on consumer satisfaction and this impact is mediated by CSR contributions (Bianchietal.2019). Brand image is cognitively and affectively affected by corporate social responsibility (HeandLi2011).The brand image of CSR is extended to customers, but also to other stakeholders (Sun and Cui2014), and the organizations should create communication strategies that can promote the CSR initiatives, with an extension of the brand image (Bianchi et al.2019). Based on the above, the following hypothesis is framed.

H1: CSR initiatives positively influence brand image.

Brand Equity(BE)

Aaker(1996)'s definition of brand equity implies a set of assets and requires an investment in the creation and enhancement of these assets through brand management. Brands are valuable to consumers but they are also valuable to the company itself, such as through the brand name or symbol. The author suggests four components to brand equity: brand recognition, brand loyalty, brand associations and perceived quality. Burmann et al. (2009) consider brand equity to be the current and future value of the brand. This is defined by internal and external performance and comprises of three core components, including brand value at psychological, behavioral and financial levels. Brand equity has a different meaning for different stakeholders. As an example, what is important to a brand owner may not be relevant to society (Naidoo and Abratt2018). Brand equity can be defined in many different ways, depending on the context. In an attempt to provide managers with more specific information about the marketing program and how it raises the brand equity, Keller(1993) conceptualized brand equity based on consumers. The concept of brand equity, which is more than brand value, is introduced in the Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model. Taking a broad perspective on CSR, it can be said with the research conducted that in general, CSR positively affects brand equity (Alakkaset al.2022; Wang et al.2021; Zhao et al.2021). Lin and Chung(2019) explored the effect of CSR on brand equity in the restaurant industry. Brand equity researched included perceived quality, brand recognition, brand image and brand loyalty, as per the authors, companies with CSR activities benefit from their CSR practices compared to those without. Bhattacharya et al.(2020) demonstrated that CSR is an important variable in the context of economic recessions and Wang et al.(2021) found that CSR positively affects brand equity in the case of cosmetics purchases. Thus, based on the above, the following hypothesis if framed:

H2: CSR initiatives positively impact brand equity.

Consumer Satisfaction(CS)

It is notable that most researchers do not give a specific definition of conceptualization of satisfaction (Prayag et al.2019). Satisfaction is, however, an emotional state that could only be achieved after the consumer makes a judgment about a service or product and their reactions to it (Westbrook1987), and it's totality can only be attained when the needs and wants of the consumers are put in first place (Khudhairetal.2019). Palací et al(2019) believes there are two ways to internalize the experience with the brand affective and cognitive, which will have an effect on the level of satisfaction of the consumer. The study of the main antecedents of satisfaction has become a strategic issue. Consumers are becoming more autonomous, reflective and critical, in fact. Therefore, the antecedents of satisfaction need to be analyzed more deeply, to predict some consumer behaviors and to derive, a series of beneficial results for the organizations, such as WOM communication, loyalty, financial profitability, etc. (Palací et al.2019). According to Mohammed and Rashid(2018) who adopted the four dimensions of CSR presented by Carroll(1991), it was found that CSR has positive impact on consumer satisfaction. In fact, one of the primary purposes of CSR is the potential benefits companies can gain from being socially responsible to the stakeholders. However, consumers seem to need special attention, as CSR activities have a significant effect on consumer-related outcomes (BhattacharyaandSen2004).Consumers are currently more pleased with products of a socially responsible company (Luo and Bhattacharya2006). Consumer satisfaction is created by rational judgements and experiences made during the consumer buying process (Palacíetal.2019) while service quality (Leeetal.2020) and brand attitude (Leeetal.2020; Riveraetal.2016) that CSR utilizes would have an influence on consumer satisfaction. On the basis of the above discussion, the present study proposes to examine the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer satisfaction as suggested by the following hypothesis: Consumer satisfaction is influenced by CSR initiatives (Agyei et al.2021; Fatma et al.2018; Mohammed and Rashid2018; Park et al.2017).

H3: CSR initiatives positively impact customer satisfaction.

This study will also assess the effects on image and brand equity on consumer satisfaction. Hsieh et al.(2018), in the study of catering, found that the quality of the service presentation is not only able to enhance the brand image, but also the satisfaction of consumers. Within the food industry, the authors Cuong and Long(2020) have proven the influence of the brand image of Vietnamese fast-food restaurants on consumer satisfaction. In fact, considering the results obtained, it can be stated that brand image is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction and positively impacts it (Cuong2020).Therefore, consumers who are aware of the positive brand image, feel that the brand delivers high satisfaction(Mohammed and Rashid2018;Zehra and Arshad2019).Additionally, in As per the context of social media, it can be concluded that, the better the brand image is, the higher the level of satisfaction of the consumers is. (Arghashi et al.2021).Thus, the following hypothesis arises:

H4: Brand image positively influences customer satisfaction.

Aaker(1992) states that value is important for consumer satisfaction in three ways. First, Brand value helps the consumer to understand, digest and remember all information about products and brands. It should then be mentioned that brand equity is also one of the factors that can make a consumer make a purchase decision, namely a consumer will tend to choose a brand that he or she has already used and feels the brand is of high quality or that he or she is familiar with. Last but not least, when the individual uses the product or brand, the consumers feel satisfied with the product because the brand components of value – brand equity, perceived quality, and brand associations – add value to the product. In fact, the existing relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction has been studied by several authors (Kim et al.2020; Rambocas et al.2018). Therefore, there is a theoretical link between brand equity and consumer satisfaction that allows for creating the following hypothesis:

H5: Brand equity positively influences customer satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used is quantitative. This study builds on existing theories and findings, and culminates in the confirmation or disconfirmation of the same theories(Newmanetal.1998).The observation instrument chosen was the indirect one, namely, the questionnaire survey method online. A pre-test was conducted with 10 respondents, but the questions did not change significantly so the same questions were used. The online questionnaire were distributed through social media since it is easily and quickly accessible. The questionnaire was sent out from 24 March 2022 to 10 April 2022. Thirty-one-five answers were obtained, 300 of which were usable. Fifteen answers were then excluded for being invalid due to referring to the brand of a service; referring to a non-existent brand; and not specifying a brand but rather a product. Therefore the invalid answers were not considered for this study due to the set criterion criteria.

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This research uses the Structural Equation Model to check if the idea we have is correct. We are using a computer program called Smart PLS version 3.3.9 to do this. The Structural Equation Model is a popular way to analyze lots of data at the same time and it is widely used by people who study business and social science.

People like to use the Structural Equation Model because it's easy to use and understand. It has an interface that lets us look at how different things are related to each other even if we cannot see them directly. We can also check if our results are strong and reliable. The Structural Equation Model is very flexible which means we can use it to study different things.

We made a list of questions to ask people. These questions were based on things that other researchers had already studied. We used something called a five-point Likert-type scale to measure peoples answers. This scale goes from 1 which means someone strongly disagrees, to 5 which means someone strongly agrees.

The questions we asked about how companies treat the world around them which is called Corporate Social Responsibility came from researchers like Martínez and others. We also asked questions about what people think of a brand and these questions came from the researchers.. We had to make some small changes because they were studying hotels and we are studying products.

We asked questions about how people value a brand and these questions came from researchers like Yoo and Donthu.. Finally we asked questions about how satisfied people are with a product and these questions came from researchers, like Dwivedi and Rambocas. The Structural Equation Model is a way to study all these things together.

The table below shows all the things we studied and the questions we asked.

Table 1. Constructs and respective scales.

Constructs	Scales
Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR)	At the economic level, the company: CSR1: Obtains the greatest possible profits. CSR2: Tries to achieve long-term success. CSR3: Improves its economic performance. CSR4:Ensures its survival and success in the long run. At the social level, the company: CSR5: Is committed to improving the well-being of the communities in which it operates. CSR6: Actively participates in social and cultural events. CSR7: Promotes a role in society that goes beyond simply generating profit. CSR8:Provides fair treatment to employees. CSR9:Provides training and promotion opportunities for employees. CSR10: Helps solve social problems. At the environmental level, the company: CSR11: Protects the environment. CSR12: Reduces its consumption of natural resources. CSR13: Recycles. CSR14:Communicates its environmental practices to its clients. CSR15:Exploits renewable energies in an environmentally friendly production process. CSR16: Carries out annual environmental audits. CSR17:Participates in environmental certifications.
BrandImage(BI)	Affective dimension BI1:This brand arouses sympathy. BI2:This brand conveys a personality that sets it a part from the competition. BI3:Buying products of this brand says something about the type of person I am. BI4: I have an image of the type of people who buy products of this brand. Functional Dimension BI5: The products offered by this brand are of high quality. BI6:The products offered by this brand have better features than those of the competition. BI7:The products offered by this brand are usually more expensive than those of the competition.
Brand Equity(BE)	Brand loyalty BE1: I consider myself loyal to the brand. BE2: This brand is my first choice. BE3:Idon'tbuyotherbrands if this brand is available in the shop. Perceived Quality BE4: The probability that this brand has quality is very high. BE5:The likelihood that this brand is functional is very high. Brand Associations BE6: I can recognize this brand among other competing brands. BE7: I know this brand. BE8: Some characteristics of this brand come quickly to mind. BE9: I can quickly remember the symbol or logo of this brand. BE10: I have trouble picturing this brand in my mind. Brand Comparison BE11: It makes sense to buy this brand instead of any other brand, even if the products are the same. BE12: Even if another brand has the same features as the brand I have mentioned, I will prefer to buy the brand I have mentioned. BE13: If there is another brand that is as good as the brand I have referred to, I would prefer to buy the brand I have referred to. BE14: If another brand is not different in any way from the brand I mentioned, it seems smarter to buy the brand I mentioned.
Consumer Satisfaction(CS)	CS1: I made the right choice when I bought this brand. CS2: I am satisfied with the brand. CS3: The brand meets my expectations. CS4:My choice for this brand is smart. CS5: This brand comes close to what I would describe as "perfect". CS6: I am delighted with the brand.

RESULTS

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VII July 2026

Data started with factor analysis to see how things are related. The Bootstrapping test was used for this purpose. The PLS Algorithm test helped to find out how each item in a group is connected to the others. The analysis showed that all the items in the study are closely related to the groups they belong to. This is because the numbers are high which means the structure is clear. The numbers need to be 0.7 or higher to be good. Most of them are. However some items like CSR1, BI7 and BE10 did not fit well with the others because their numbers were low which are 0.351, 0.481 and 0.071 respectively. There were some items, like CSR2, CSR3, CSR4, BE5, BE8 and BE9 that also had low numbers, which made the groups they belonged to not very reliable. So these items were taken out of the study model. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table2. Measurement scales, reliability, and dimensionality.

	Loadings	**t-Value**	α	**CR**	**AVE**
Corporate Social Responsibility			0.922	0.933	0.517
CSR5	0.779	31.431			
CSR6	0.668	15.905			
CSR7	0.689	21.634			
CSR8	0.616	13.421			
CSR9	0.735	20.982			
CSR10	0.755	24.025			
CSR11	0.804	33.613			
CSR12	0.765	25.673			
CSR13	0.695	17.238			
CSR14	0.722	20.711			
CSR15	0.776	24.329			
CSR16	0.646	12.698			
CSR17	0.669	12.684			
Brand Image			0.798	0.855	0.500
BI1	0.664	14.823			
BI2	0.804	30.411			
BI3	0.583	10.969			
BI4	0.575	9.706			
BI5	0.802	32.464			
BI6	0.773	26.350			

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VII July 2026

Brand Equity			0.905	0.923	0.549
BE1	0.816	40.152			
BE2	0.792	31.048			
BE3	0.702	18.480			
BE4	0.643	16.061			
BE6	0.557	9.876			
BE7	0.605	13.111			
BE11	0.777	25.714			
BE12	0.856	41.568			
BE13	0.816	31.308			
BE14	0.774	24.867			
Consumer Satisfaction			0.900	0.924	0.668
CS1	0.812	28.423			
CS2	0.874	51.078			
CS3	0833	29.216			
CS4	0.814	29.976			
CS5	0.772	32.814			
CS6	0.796	33.528			

Following the use of Smart PLS and the PLS Algorithm test checked if the group of constructs is reliable. I started with Cronbach's Alpha test, which is shown in Table 2. The results show that all constructs are consistent because all values are than 0.700. It is important to note that this is a sign for the reliability of the constructs. The Cronbach's Alpha test is an indicator of reliability and in this case it gives us confidence in the constructs. The values, in Table 2 confirm that the constructs are reliable. The things that make up "CSR" "brand equity" and "consumer satisfaction" are really good because they have numbers all of them are 0.900 or more. The Composite Reliability is figured out from the results of the CFA. It is a good way to know if the constructs are reliable when it is 0.700 or more as Marôco said in 2014. In this study the construct with the number is "brand image" with 0.855, which is still 0.700 or more so we can say that all the measurements are good and valid. According to Hair and his team in 2018 the Average Variance Extracted should be than 0.5 so that the factors can explain a lot of the total difference in the original data. All the constructs have an AVE that's higher than 0.5 it is between 50% and 66.8%. When we look at the numbers that show how much each construct is related to the others we use the t-statistic from the Bootstrapping test. It should be more than 1.96 for the constructs to be valid. This is called validity and it means that the constructs are measuring what they are supposed to measure. Convergent validity is when two constructs that are supposed to be related actually are. This happens when the Average Variance Extracted of the construct is than 0.5, as Barclay and his team said in 1995. The AVE for all constructs is 0.5 or more so we can say that all the measurements are valid. Discriminant validity is when the items that make up a construct are different from the items that make up another construct. We can measure this by looking at the root of the AVE of a construct and how it is related to the other constructs. We tested the

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VII July 2026

validity by looking at the square root of the AVE values, which are in Table 3 and the relationship between the constructs. The AVE values should be higher than the numbers that show how much the constructs are related to each other as Fornell and Larcker said in 1981. So we can say that the constructs are measuring things and do not overlap, which means that the discriminant validity is supported, as Anderson and Gerbing said in 1988.

Table3. Discriminant Validity Analysis.

	CSR	**BI**	**BE**	**CS**
CSR	***0.719***			
BI	0.475	***0.707***		
BE	0.502	-	***0.741***	
CS	0.069	0.248	0.598	***0.817***

The "CSR" and "brand equity" and "consumer satisfaction" constructs are all good and valid. They measure what they are supposed to measure, which is what we want. The "brand image" construct is also good and valid. All the constructs have AVE values, which means that they are explaining a lot of the total difference, in the original data. The discriminant validity is also supported, which means that the constructs are measuring things.

Discriminant validity was also assessed by the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) of the correlations, with values below the threshold of 0.900. As such, discriminant validity is established (see Table 4).

Table 4. Heterotrait–Monotrait(HTMT).

	CSR	**BI**	**BE**	**CS**
CSR				
BI	0.524			
BE	0.530	0.842		

After the reliability and validity of the model have been established the next step is to assess the consistency of the structural model as stated by Hairetal in 2017. The structural model is used to define the relationships between the latent constructs. These constructs were previously studied by Marôco in 2014. Were also defined by the measurement model. Furthermore the structural model is used to determine the nature and intensity of each relationship as explained by Hairetal in 2017.

Hypotheses were also tested in this research. All hypotheses were accepted except for H3. The first hypothesis, H1 assesses the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives on brand image. The results show that the impact is significant with a value of 0.475 and a t-value of 9.494. The p-value is than 0.001, which means that H1 is confirmed. The second hypothesis, H2 was also accepted. This means that Corporate Social Responsibility activities have an influence on brand value with a beta value of 0.502 and a t-value of 11.089. However the research did not confirm H3, which studied the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and consumer satisfaction. The results show a beta value of 0.069 and a t-value of 1.719 with a p-value of 0.083. On the hand H4 and H5 were both confirmed. This means that there is a relationship between brand image and brand equity and consumer satisfaction.

The results of the Structural Equation Model are analyzed to understand the correlations between the constructs. The results in Figure 1 show that Corporate Social Responsibility has an impact on brand image and brand equity. Figure 1 also shows that brand image and equity have an impact on consumer satisfaction. It is also possible to verify that Corporate Social Responsibility does not impact consumer satisfaction directly. However

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VII July 2026

Corporate Social Responsibility can impact consumer satisfaction indirectly through brand image and brand equity as shown in Tables 5 and 6.

As already mentioned Corporate Social Responsibility has an impact on brand image and brand equity.This impact has weight in relation to brand equity than to brand image. The same happens regarding the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on consumer satisfaction.This means that Corporate Social Responsibility has an impact on consumer satisfaction through brand equity than through brand image. The following Tables 5 and 6 present the relationships, between these constructs.

Table 5. Measurement Analysis of Total Indirect Effects.

	Total Indirect Effects	**t**	***P* Value**
CSR→CS	0.418	10.062	0.000

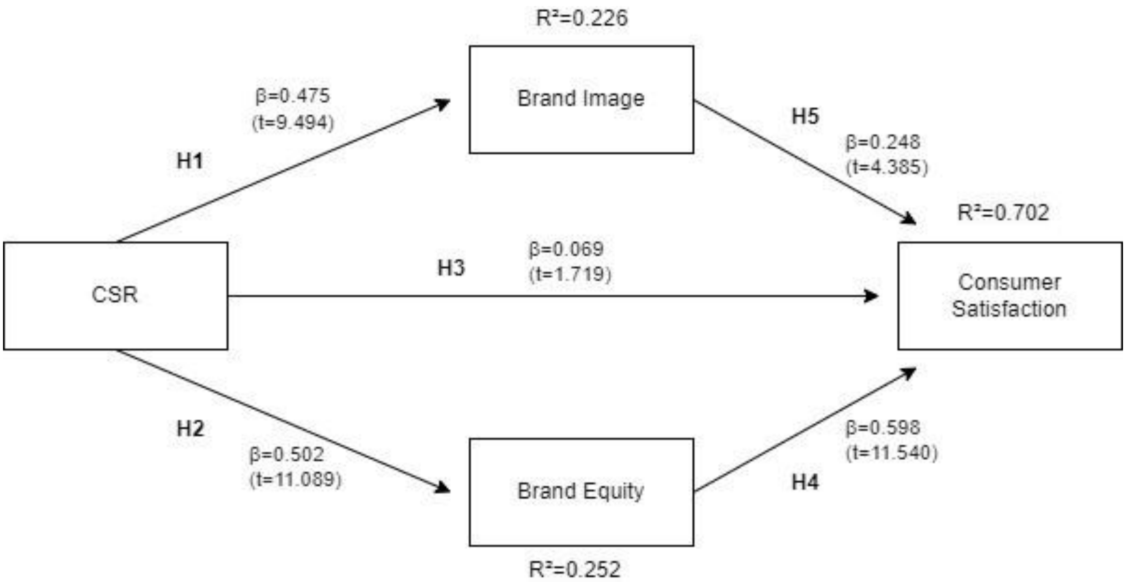

Figure 1 : Structural Model

Table 6. Specific Indirect Effects.

	Specific Indirect Effects	**t**	***P* Value**
CSR→BE→CS	0.300	8.684	0.000
CSR→BI→CS	0.118	3.722	0.000

We looked at the results in a way using a multi-group analysis to see if there were any differences based on two things: gender and how often people buy things. So we made models for each group of people who answered our questions.

Gender

We divided the people who answered our questions into two groups: one for women and one for men. There were 201 women and 98 men. One person did not want to say if they were a man or a woman so we did not include them in either group. This did not change the results we found. The results show that men and women are much the same except when it comes to how companies do good things for society and how that affects what people think of the company. It seems that men care more about this than women. For men the connection between companies doing things and what they think of the company is stronger than it is for women. This means that companies that want to be successful those that mostly sell to men should do good things for society.

ISSN No. 2321-2705 | DOI: 10.51244/IJRSI |Volume XIII Issue VII July 2026

Men think it is important for companies to be responsible and care about society. This makes them like the company more. CSR activities are important for brands those, with a lot of male customers because men value companies that do good things. The frequency of purchase of the branded product that consumers initially mentioned in the questionnaire was evaluated.

Table7. Multi-group analysis based on gender.

	***β*Female**	***β*Male**	***β*Differ-ences**	***p*Female**	***p*Male**	***p*Value**
CSR→BI	0.396	0.637	0.241	0.000	0.000	0.026 *
CSR→BE	0.482	0.551	0.069	0.000	0.000	n.s.**
CSR→CS	0.047	0.145	0.098	n.s.**	0.037	n.s.**
BI→ CS	0.280	0.153	−0.127	0.000	n.s.**	n.s.**
BE→CS	0.588	0.642	0.054	0.000	0.000	n.s.**

Frequency of purchase

Next we looked at how people buy the product. We made two groups. Group 1 is people who do not buy the product often. This group has 187 people who buy the product a few times a year or less than a year. There are 127 people who buy a times a year and 60 people who buy less than once a year. Group 2 is people who buy the product a lot.This group has 113 people. 74 People buy a few times a month. 24 People buy once a week. 15 People buy a few times a week. In general the two groups are not very different. People who buy more often think CSR activities are more important than people who buy less often. The frequency of purchase of the branded product is important here. People who buy often like the brand more. This is because they know more about what the brand does. So they think the brand is more valuable. This makes sense because when people know what a brand is doing they like the brand. The study of Wang et al. (2021) says the same thing. They say that when a brand tells people about its CSR activities people know more about the brand. Then people, like the brand more and think it is a brand. This makes people want to buy the brands products.

DISCUSSION

The study allowed for the conclusion that Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives influence brand image, is, H1 was accepted. So according to Maldonado-Guzman and other people in 2017 companies see an improvement in brand image when they invest in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. The numbers show this too with a beta of 0.475 and a t value of 9.494. This means Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives in medium sized companies affect how people think of the company for both products and services. Other people like Martínez and others in 2014 studied the hotel sector. Found that Corporate Social Responsibility affects how people feel about a brand more, than what the brand can do. So when we think about products this research shows that if companies want to improve brand image they should use Corporate Social Responsibility as one of their strategies. Brand image is not the thing that affects brand equity. Corporate Social Responsibility activities also have an impact on brand equity. In fact the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility activities is even bigger. The numbers show that Corporate Social Responsibility activities have an effect on brand equity. This means that what we thought would happen is true. Other people have also written about this in the past. For example Alakkas and his team wrote about it in 2022. Wang and his team also wrote about it in 2021. Zhao and his team wrote about it in 2021 too. They all said that Corporate Social Responsibility activities are important for brand equity.

Lai and his team showed that Corporate Social Responsibility activities can help both reputation and brand equity. So managers should pay attention to these activities even when they are working with businesses. Torres and his team studied brands around the world and found that Corporate Social Responsibility activities can affect brand value.

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Our study is different from the others. It still supports what they found. Brand equity is like a connection between the consumer and the brand. So Corporate Social Responsibility activities are important for brands that want to improve their value. Companies should do kinds of Corporate Social Responsibility activities like helping the environment, society and the economy. This can help increase brand equity and get benefits like making people want to buy from them.

We also wanted to see how Corporate Social Responsibility activities affect customer satisfaction.. This was the only thing we thought would happen that did not. The numbers show that Corporate Social Responsibility activities do not directly affect customer satisfaction. This is different from what Mohammed and Rashid said in 2018. It is also different from what Liu and his team said in 2022. They found that when a restaurant does things to help its customers health the customers are more satisfied.

There is a connection between Corporate Social Responsibility activities and customer satisfaction. It is just not direct. Corporate Social Responsibility activities can help improve brand image and brand equity. This can make customers more satisfied. So when companies are planning their Corporate Social Responsibility activities they should think about how it can affect their brand image.

We also found that brand image and customer satisfaction are connected. This is what Mohammed and Rashid said in 2018. Other people have also found this connection in industries like healthcare. This means that companies should think about things when they want to make their customers happy. It is not, about the product or how people interact with it.

Our study shows that customer satisfaction is affected by brand image and brand equity. This is what Kim and his team said in 2020 and Rambocas and his team said in 2018. So companies should do Corporate Social Responsibility activities. Tell their customers about them. This can help improve their brand image and increase brand equity. When this happens customers will be more satisfied. The company will benefit from it in the long run.

CONCLUSIONS

This research was done to see how corporate social responsibility actions affect brands and consumer satisfaction. The model used in this research fills a gap in the literature because it looks at how satisfaction's related to the brand and it considers the image, the value and the corporate social responsibility actions all at the same time. The data for this research was collected during the pandemic. It was interesting to see that the conclusions were different from what other research had found.

When the results were analyzed it was found that corporate social responsibility actions do affect satisfaction with the brand. They do it in an indirect way through the brand image and brand equity. This study is also useful for people who work in management, marketing and other areas related to marketing and management. It gives suggestions on how brands can develop social responsibility actions that meet consumers perspectives and achieve consumer satisfaction.

For example the impact of social responsibility programs on brand image is higher for men and for consumers who buy a product often the impact of corporate social responsibility on brand equity is higher than for consumers who do not buy it often.

So if companies do these activities they will be more likely to have consumers choose their products over their competitors products. This will result in a brand image for the companies products. This article has value because it presents a new model and conclusions and it is also useful for management. Companies must develop social responsibility actions and tell their target audiences about them so that they can increase brand equity and improve brand image. This will help them improve consumer satisfaction. One important thing found in this study is that managers can focus on brand value when consumers buy a product regularly. This means that consumers who buy a brands products often value corporate social responsibility initiatives than consumers who do not buy them often. So companies and brands should tell their loyal consumers about their corporate social responsibility initiatives so that they can reach consumers and make them value the brand more. This model can also be used in contexts and it can be used to look at specific products or services. Other things that can be analyzed include the impact on brand loyalty and preference. Data can also be collected after the pandemic to see how things have changed.

There are some limitations to this research. One limitation is that the sample of people used in the research has some discrepancies in terms of gender, qualifications and age groups. Another limitation is that only brand image and brand value were used, when there are other corporate social responsibility actions that could be considered. In the future more things can be analyzed. Finally the sample used in this research is limited to a number of brands so the results may not be representative of all brands. Corporate social responsibility actions are important for brands and consumer satisfaction. Brands must develop social responsibility actions to improve brand image and brand equity. This will help them achieve consumer satisfaction and be more successful. Corporate social responsibility actions are a part of a brands strategy. They can help brands build an image and increase brand loyalty. Corporate social responsibility actions are essential, for brands that want to succeed in today's market.

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