

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to examine the role that CSR plays on consumer purchase decisions using a quantitative descriptive method of researching customer attitudes and likes. Information was gathered from structured online and offline questionnaires from a pool of 150 participants. Participants were sampled using a convenience sampling method that helped in ensuring that a wide cross-section of various demographics had been covered. These participants were students, salaried staff, and business owners. Based on the data, 73.3% of the respondents consider CSR to be a significant factor in their purchasing decisions. Working professionals and business owners, especially those aged between 31 and 45, are the key groups in decision-making by CSR. The other aspect highlighted by the report is that consumers give importance to varied priorities in matters related to CSR activities. Consumers prefer the CSR activity of environment protection the most, with 33.3% of the consumers. Educational support and medical care initiatives come next and third, respectively, at 26.7% and 23.3% of the consumers, respectively. Companies that are actively involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR), especially environmental sustainability and social welfare initiatives, have a higher chance of enhancing their brand image, establishing consumer trust, and driving positive purchasing behavior, as indicated by the study, which points to increasing ethical consciousness among consumers, especially among the younger generation.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Consumer Purchasing Decisions, Consumer Perceptions, Environmental Sustainability, Social Welfare Initiatives, Brand Perception, Ethical Consumerism, Stakeholder Engagement.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Companies operating in emerging markets are considering a range of new measures to position themselves as industry champions and boost their profitability, which further solidifies their market-leading position. These activities are generally backed for a limited number of motives; the primary concept behind these initiatives is sustainable development. "Strategic companies which planned to increase external stakeholders towards environment and society values that will add value to shareholders" was how Bansal defined business sustainability. Sustainable development has been established as development which addresses the needs of the current time without undermining people's capability to proceed further to meet such needs. companies nowadays have been presented with an idea of how to conduct business and that there are alternatives for companies beyond making maximum profits, due to the expansion of modern business.

Today, companies that balance and maintain the community, ecology, and ecosystem along with financial development and growth are trendy. Organizations in the late 1960s started talking to those who would be influenced or impacted by the works being employed and referred to them as stakeholders. Being responsible for all the planned and executed initiatives that are beneficial to society, the environment, employees, stakeholders, and customers is the objective of CSR. CSR is not a new phenomenon, and numerous organizations have understood and executed CSR initiatives. For instance, all corporations as well as little businesses have a focus nowadays on CSR issues in their sites, showing how much, they share in believing CSR does not just serve as it pertains morally, but CSR likewise plays an extremely important function based on economic interest. The corporation social obligation creed, through which significant additions like sustainable precepts derive important significance, is substantially affected mostly through the process in economic advancement requirements.

As many sustainable practices as possible should include community expectations on environmental variability, not only for the present generation but also for generations to come. Nonprofit work, environmental conservation, solving social problems, and much more must be accomplished. Businesses increasingly understand that whether or not the media surrounding corporate social responsibility is accurate, consumers' perceptions of the firm and its products will influence their decision to buy and will damage the company's reputation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Boccia and Sarnacchiaro (2018) conducted in a significant and typical Italian city, taking into account a statistically valid sample of over 300 families chosen for their practical relevance to the project's objectives. Modern businesses and consumers place a premium on social and environmental issues since they cannot function only on a profit-driven premise. In this study, we surveyed consumers to see if the solidarity of good activities affected their choices; the findings warrant additional analysis. The investigation made use of a survey with a predetermined sample size. The goals of this study are twofold: first, to examine customer preferences regarding a company's responsible initiatives; and second, to test and validate a structural equation model that will help us understand the sources of consumer behaviors related to responsible initiatives and the factors that influence their purchasing decisions.

Contini et al. (2020) investigated how customers value different CSR activities and corresponding CSR fields while assessing a firm's loyalty. The need to consider stakeholders' expectations in constructing a firm image is recognized by corporate social responsibility, or CSR, research. Yet, research on CSR practices that are more firm-oriented and widely accepted in the business world dominates this stakeholder-oriented perspective in the literature. Our study fills this gap by looking at how consumers are impacted by various CSR initiatives. Information gathered from 1516 consumers in the key cities of the BRICS economies—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—illustrates how consumers' perceptions towards their energy supplier are based on information regarding CSR initiatives in distant places. While in contrast to other CSR initiatives which promise credible communication and negative environmental impacts, it is evident in our research that consumers value the most CSR activities which reduce a firm's

contribution to local community impact. Differences across the BRICS countries underscore the importance for multinational companies to adapt their corporate social responsibility communications strategy for other developing countries.

Pfajfar et al. (2022) looked into how businesses feel their CSR initiatives have benefited society and various stakeholders in an effort to fill this void. Although there has been a lot of study on CSR, the most of it has focused solely on how well companies are doing financially. In order to determine the social impact of CSR, they talk about how employee-centered CSR conceptualization incorporates social currents like diversity and inclusion. In this study, we integrate CSR and relationship marketing ideas into a conceptual model and test it with 411 B2B companies. We found that CSR initiatives that prioritize workers' needs outperform those that prioritize suppliers' needs, which benefits society at large, consumers, and employees. The best corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives will focus on improving relationships with specific stakeholders, such as consumers and workers, rather than with society at large. Also, when it comes to the reasons and effects of relationship quality, SMEs and big B2B companies see things differently.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a quantitative descriptive study design, collecting primary data through online and offline questionnaires with a standardized questionnaire. To find out how CSR affected customers' buying decisions, researchers used descriptive statistics (tables, graphs, percentages, frequencies, and frequencies) on data collected from 150 participants chosen at random via convenience sampling.

3.1 Research Design

The effect of CSR on stakeholder and customer purchasing decisions is examined in this study using a quantitative research strategy. Understanding consumer preferences and attitudes towards CSR efforts is achieved through the use of a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design helps in identifying trends and patterns between CSR awareness and purchasing behavior.

3.2 Data Collection Method

Principal data was collected via a standardized questionnaire to learn about demographics, CSR importance, and favorite CSR efforts. The survey questions were both multiple-choice and closed-ended. In order to ensure that a large sample size was representative, the survey was administered both online and offline.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

This approach made it possible to include individuals who had varied demographic profiles, thereby ensuring a representative sample of students, salaried workers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders. The research sampled 150 participants, and selecting them was undertaken through a convenience sampling technique.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

To summarize the demographics of the respondents, the importance of CSR, and their views towards initiatives, descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies were used to assess the obtained data. The results were displayed in tables and graphical forms to enhance the readability and understanding of the information.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In Table 1, the demographic breakdown of the sample of 150 participants is shown. Males comprise 53.3% of the sample, and females comprise 46.7% by count. The majority of the age group are those aged 31 to 45 (40%) and 18 to 30 (30%), and only 6.7% of the population is aged enough to be 60 or more. Most individuals are employed on a salaried basis (46.7% of the population), then company proprietors (23.3% of the population), students (20.0% of the population), and other members of the population (10.0% of the population).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	80	53.3%
	Female	70	46.7%
Age Group	18-30 years	45	30.0%
	31-45 years	60	40.0%
	46-60 years	35	23.3%
	60+ years	10	6.7%
Occupation	Student	30	20.0%
	Salaried	70	46.7%
	Business Owner	35	23.3%
	Other	15	10.0%

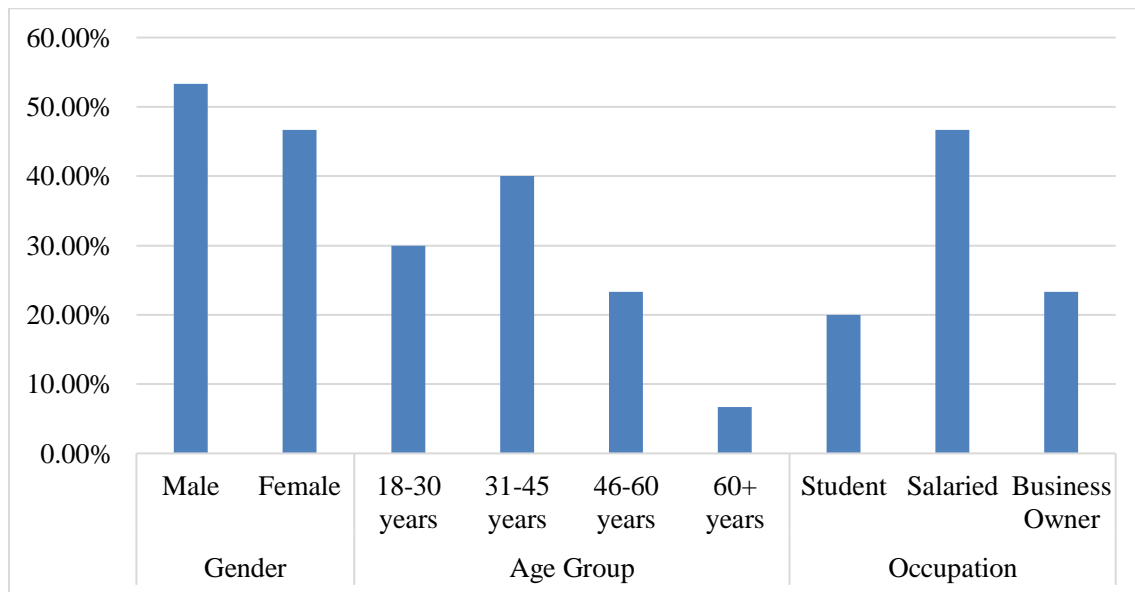


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The findings indicate that business owners and working professionals are crucial in decision-making purchases, with a balanced gender view. The prevalence of the 31-45 years age group

indicates their involvement in CSR-based decisions, while the inclusion of students with a twenty percent share shows the increasing ethical awareness among young consumers. There is lesser CSR impact on the buying behaviors of elderly, as shown through the minimal contribution of elderly members (6.7%).

A summary of the views held by respondents on the importance of CSR in their buying decisions is given in Table 2. Most customers, 40.0%, find CSR to be very important, while 33.3% find it to be important. This means that 73.3% of consumers value CSR highly when making buying decisions. Simultaneously, 16.7% of interviewees are neutral in their opinion, while 6.7% and 3.3%, respectively, view it as not important or not important at all.

Table 2: Perceived Importance of CSR in Purchasing Decisions

Importance Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very Important	60	40.0%
Important	50	33.3%
Neutral	25	16.7%
Not Important	10	6.7%
Not Important at All	5	3.3%

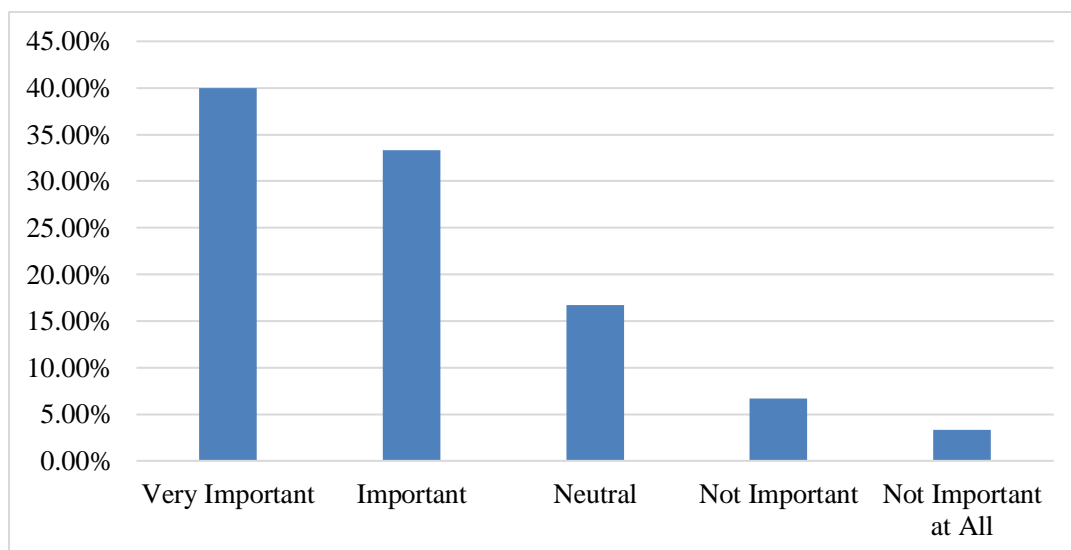


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Perceived Importance of CSR in Purchasing Decisions

The research identifies CSR as having significant effects on customer behavior, as almost three-fourths of respondents identify its relevance. The fact that such a high percentage of responders are neutral (16.7%) provides room for CSR sensitization campaigns to continue impacting attitudes. That it is certain that ethical and socially responsible corporate activities rank prominently in purchasing behavior is evident in the low level of those individuals (10%) who do not accept the importance of CSR.

A summary of respondents' preferences for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities is presented in Table 3. Of the activities that were endorsed by respondents, the most endorsed activity was protection of the environment. The second highest rate is education support (26.7%), followed by health programs (23.3%), and lastly community development (16.7%), which shows varying degrees of interest in different corporate social responsibility (CSR) schemes.

Table 3: Preferred CSR Initiatives

CSR Initiative	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Environmental Protection	50	33.3%
Education Support	40	26.7%
Healthcare Initiatives	35	23.3%
Community Development	25	16.7%

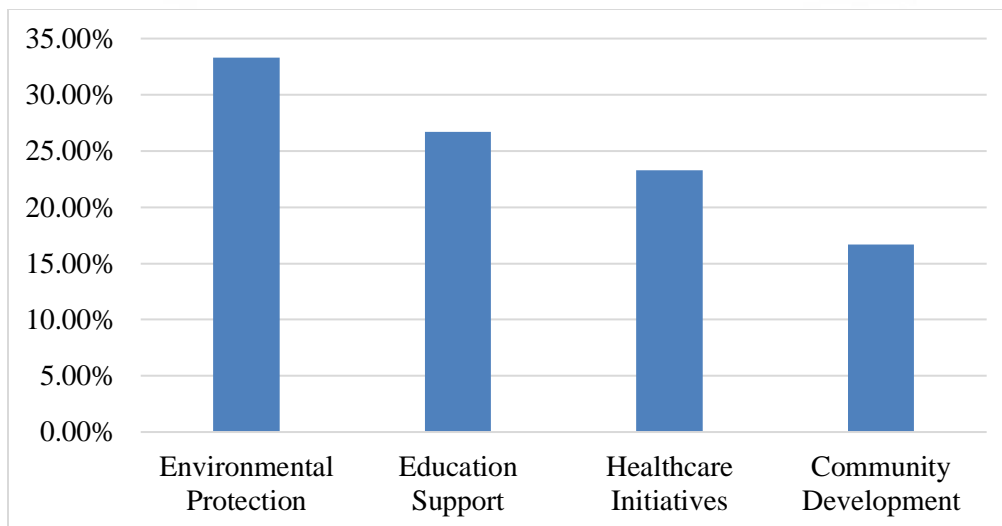


Figure 3: Graphical representation of Preferred CSR Initiatives

Growing awareness of ecological concerns is seen in the results, which suggest that consumers value environmental sustainability. Moreover, activities related to education and health carry a lot of significance, which means that society puts emphasis on the long-term growth and well-being of its people. While community development (16.7%) is the least favored option, it still gets high support. According to these preferences, it seems that firms focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities that offer educational, healthcare, and environmental services are likely to align with the consumers' expectations and drive their buying behavior.

5. CONCLUSION

The survey results show that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. Three hundred and thirty-three percent of the respondents regarded CSR as important or very important. It is apparent from the demographic study that business owners and working professionals, especially those between 31 and 45 years old, are the most significant decision-makers. In addition, younger consumers, including students, are showing greater sensitivity to ethical issues. Due to customers' focus on social welfare and sustainability, environmental conservation stands out as the most popular CSR initiative (33.3%), followed by supporting education (26.7%) and healthcare (23.3%). Based on the results, firms that adopt strong corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, especially in the environments and

education sectors, are more likely to meet consumers' expectations, improve their image of the brand, and influence their purchasing behavior.

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