

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BUYER BEHAVIOUR: A STUDY IN DUBAI, UAE

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Abstract

This research examines if a firm's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities influence consumer willingness to engage with that firm. This is a question mired in cultural nuances and we chose to investigate it in the context of Dubai, UAE. Most existing studies on this topic are done in the European or North American contexts and are inconclusive, too. The study employed the survey method of research and inferential analysis. Stratified sampling technique was used and a total of 386 responses were collected from shopping malls, coffee shops, universities, prayer congregations, and various social media outlets. No significant relationship was found to exist between consumers' positive attitude towards CSR activities and their perception about the suitability of these initiatives. Yet, their perception of control over the purchase outcomes was found to have a positive relationship with their attitude towards CSR activities. The concept of CSR has a long way to go in Dubai and possibly the entire MENA region before consumers start viewing it to be as important as factors like price and quality in their purchase decisions.

Keywords: CSR, consumer behaviour, culture, social media, control, MENA, UAE.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a global phenomenon yet consumer reactions to CSR are not as straightforward (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Swaen, 2003). Evidence suggests that numerous factors affect whether firms' CSR initiatives translate into consumer purchases or not (Vázquez-Burguete, Sahelices-Pinto, & Lanero-Carrizo, 2017). CSR activities are viewed with a long-run profit maximisation (Carroll, 1999; Guliani, 2016; Castellanos & George, 2020) goal where "primary" effects of CSR on brand and company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004) are combined with "secondary" outcomes in the long run in the form of resilience to negative company information, word-of-mouth etc. The advertisement dimension of CSR activities is not hidden from the customers (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2016); in fact, businesses do not hesitate to use their CSR contributions as marketing themes (Rahman, Rodríguez-Serrano, & Lambkin, 2017). No doubt, certain industrial domains trailed over others in this regard (Di Benedetto, 2017).

CSR's effects on consumer behaviour have been of interest in recent past (Carvalho, Sen, Mota, & Lima, 2010; Dodd & Supa, 2011; Kolkailah, Abou Aish, & El-Bassiouny, 2012). Evidence also suggests that though consumers have a positive attitude towards companies engaging in CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Kotler & Lee, 2005; Vlachos et al. 2009), their purchase intentions are dependent on variables other than CSR like price and quality (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Sometimes, CSR is just assumed as a non-negotiable aspect of the very existence of firms; in some other cases, there is absolutely no expectation (Bagheri, Abdolvand, Tabibi, & Khidayari, 2017). With apparent consumer stated interest in CSR and the uncovered gap between attitudes and purchase behaviour, there is increasing pressure on strategist to align these tactics to deliver business results (Rangan, Chase, & Karim, 2015) and therefore we see the urgency in CSR research to understand its connections and effects with consumers and markets.

This research contributes to the understanding of consumers' attitudes and purchase behaviours regarding socially responsible companies and is therefore a link in the on-going debate about the long-term effects of CSR on consumer behaviour. This link of long-term effects is conspicuously missing in the extent literature (Carroll & Schwartz, 2003; Sheikh, 2019). This empirical research contributes to the attitude-purchase gap studies and can result in shaping CSR activities from the practitioner's point of view in the Dubai market. Findings can help managers design CSR initiatives not purely from the ethical/philanthropic view but also the perspectives of economic gains in the form of improved employee morale and company image. Particularly, in UAE and MENA stakeholders are found not to fully understand what CSR entails and the cultural differences need to be incorporated into a more contemporary definition of CSR (Munro, 2013). This research focuses on readdressing the relationships between consumer attitudes and buying behaviours and therefore can highlight certain areas of execution that need to incorporate originality and value addition in the design of CSR initiatives.

1.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main question this research aimed to investigate was:

RQ₁: Do the consumers make conscious effort to purchase from CSR active organisations?

Based on this question the null and alternative hypotheses were stated as:

H₀: Consumer attitude towards CSR companies is not significantly positively related to their purchase intentions

H₁ Consumer attitude towards CSR companies is significantly positively related to their purchase intentions

However, according to previous research, the relationship between attitude and purchase behaviour is not so straightforward and this gives rise to several other questions that were considered in this research as follows:

RQ₂: Do the consumers consider switching to brands that are actively involved in CSR activities?

H₀: There is no positive relationship between an organisation's involvement in CSR and consumer's intention to switch.

H₂: There is a positive relationship between an organisation's involvement in CSR and consumer's intention to switch.

This hypothesis aligns with Dodd and Supa (2011) position that consumers are more likely to switch to organisations that engage in CSR practices.

RQ₃: Do consumers consider the financial motive for CSR activities more fitting than purely philanthropic motives?

H₀: Consumer's CSR perceptions are not positively related to their perceptions about the suitability of the CSR initiative.

H₃: Consumer's CSR perceptions are positively related to their perceptions about the suitability of CSR initiative

This hypothesis aligns with Vlachos et al. (2009) position that consumers' perceptions of motives influence their evaluation of CSR efforts.

RQ₄: Would consumers purchase from organisations where they have greater perceived volitional control over the proposed outcome?

H₀: Consumer's CSR perceptions are not positively related to their perception of control over the purchase outcomes.

H₄: Consumer's CSR perceptions are positively related to their perception of control over the purchase outcomes.

This hypothesis aligns with the Theory of Planned Behaviour proposed by Ajzen (1985) where consumers' behaviours were best predicted from their attitudes, perceived norms, and perceptions of control regarding the behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The key component of this model is behavioural intent, and it assumes that intention, influenced by attitude and control perceptions, will have the expected behavioural change also. However, there are several limitations to this assumption including that it does not account for other variables that factor into behaviour such as price, quality, brand familiarity and past experiences (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). There may be environmental or economic factors that may limit a consumer's intention to perform the behaviour. Lastly, there may be a time frame between intent and behavioural action. During the data collection stage, another limitation was encountered in the form of a not entirely favourable attitude towards research in this market. Most respondents were cooperative but at the same time did not want to give too many details. Hence, the written consent separately could not be attained. However, the respondents were assured of the intent of this research and complete privacy of their responses in writing at the introduction to the questionnaire before they proceeded to research scenario and questions on the link provided <http://purchaseintentions.questionpro.com>. Another limitation of this research is its focus on consumer-oriented CSR activities. Other stakeholder orientations like employee welfare, corporate governance and environmental responsibility were beyond the scope of this research.

2.1 Theoretical Orientation

In recent years, the concept of corporate social responsibility hence referred to as CSR, has expanded the thinking of marketers in new and more challenging modern environments. Modern research in this field has started to consider the relationships between societies and business in the light of the social challenges they face and have new applications for businesses in wealth creation and long-term potential. The pioneering contributions towards the normative definitions of CSR have come from Bowen (1950) and Davis (1960) who gave the concept of "philanthropic" objectives of businesses. Later, Kotler, who in the late 1960s was a major catalyst in the movement of marketing scholarship and research away from its conventional home in the commercial sector to a perspective that included the non-profit and social world (Andreasen, 2010). According to Kotler and Lee (2004), CSR sometimes called Corporate Social Marketing (CSM) is defined as a strategy that uses marketing principles and techniques to foster behaviour change in the target population, improving society while at the same time building the market for products and services (Kotler & Lee, 2004). Where businesses were long-considered to be profit-driven, such thought created a new perspective to develop corporate goodwill and social wellbeing. Behavioural change for the sake of improving health, safety or the environment is always the aim of corporate social marketing. The concept of CSR has both explicit and implicit elements and this lack of clarity in its normative definition has led to increasing misunderstandings about the nature of CSR.

To understand the concept of CSR, researchers have relied on its manifestations in corporate policy or institutional frameworks. Depending on the nature of the overall business-society relations, CSR tends to be *explicit*, i.e. codifies as corporate policies explicitly formulated by companies, or *implicit*, i.e. codified as institutional frameworks implicitly assumed by companies on social and environmental responsibility (Carson, Hagen, & Sethi, 2015). In whatever form it exists, CSR is now being adopted by companies to undertake corporate philanthropy, social awareness initiatives or corporate governance through political or financial systems, to include activities that contribute towards the enhancement of

“common good” whether explicitly or implicitly as corporate assumptions about social and environmental wellbeing. Over the years, CSR has continued to evolve to include more accountability and tangibility in its definition. Now, CSR is seen as a tool to connect with various stakeholders- that includes people and environment- to build a corporate reputation along with business success (Hack, Kenyon, & Wood, 2014). CSR initiatives, performed by a company, can create value for its consumers, which influence tangible long-term financial results and give benefits to society (Gadeikiene & Banyte, 2013). Moreover, CSRs effects on consumer behaviour (Kolkailah, Abou Aish, & El-Bassiouny, 2012; Carvalho, Sen, Mota, & Lima, 2010; Dodd & Supa, 2011) have also been of interest in recent past. These authors have shown interest in studying how consumer attitude towards socially responsible companies, perceptions of price fairness and feelings of personal satisfaction, and their buying intentions are affected by CSR.

The subsequent definition of CSR is a synthesis that includes (a) principles of corporate social responsibility; (b) processes of corporate social responsiveness; and (c) outcomes of corporate behaviour. The CSR model thus encompasses a *normative* foundation of CSR expressing what companies ought to do; a *descriptive* element focusing on what they do; and an *instrumental* element that draws attention to the actual outcomes of CSR initiatives (Blindheim & Langhelle, 2010).

3. THE RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

The design of this research was founded in the Reasoned Action Theory of Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) where they provided an understanding of consumer attitudes to predict their social behaviour (Gold, 2011). Although the power of the model to measure intentions has been good but its ability to predict behaviour based on the measured intentions has been questioned on several occasions. It has been accepted in the literature that external factors like time, resources, and promotional campaigns may influence consumer decision at the time of purchase, which can cause variation in the predictive ability of the model whereby behavioural intention is converted into actual behaviour. These limitations of the model were also accepted by Ajzen (1991) and he consequently introduced an improved version of the model i.e. Theory of Planned Behaviour (Haque, Azhar, & Manqoosh, 2014).

Wilson et al. (1975) concluded that the theory of reasoned action could be applied in the marketing context, and that attitude towards action (as suggested by the theory) predicted behavioural intention better than other models (Dodd & Supa, 2011). This theory, therefore, is the basis of determining the relationship between CSR and purchase intentions in this research. Furthermore, assuming that intention implies behaviour, the theory of reasoned action works well for predicting associations about attitudes of consumers in regard to CSR and purchase intentions for this study.

3.2 Research Instrument

The survey instrument used in this research is similar to the one used by Carvalho et al (2010) which uses the hypothetical scenario to assess reactions to CSR. Such data is collected using survey method with a questionnaire using 7-point Likert Scale with anchors “Strongly Disagree” (1) and “Strongly Agree” (7).

A hypothetical but realistic scenario (shown below) is presented to the respondents where they focus on a commonly purchased consumer product, clothes, to ensure the relevance to our respondents and their consequent involvement with the task. In the scenario, the target company is portrayed as having a fairly strong CSR record and responses are sought attitude towards this company, purchase intention and control belief. After reading the scenario the respondents answer the questions on the questionnaire using a 7-point Likert scale.

Clothes Shopping Scenario:

Imagine that you would like some new clothes, so you visit a shopping mall to compare prices and find something of good style and quality. During your visit you find a nice shirt in Store X, selling for Dhs: 110 but you also see a similar quality shirt in Store Y where it sells for Dhs: 90.

You also know that Store X has been involved for quite some time in improving the quality of primary education by investing in the local education programme targeted at talented but financially challenged children. Moreover, Store X has been implementing programmes to increase the quality of life for the employees and investing in social programmes. Store X is very transparent in their communication with customers and your contributions can be traced directly on their website.

3.3 Instrument Validation

The pre-validated questionnaire’s construct validity was confirmed through factor analysis. The scale proved to have a very good internal consistency with a Cronbach’s α coefficient of 0.8 (Cronbach’s α on standardised items: 0.813; $n=52$) (Kolkailah et.al., 2012). The instrument also has Face Validity as presented in Table 1 and was confirmed by three academics.

Table 1. Face Validity of Test Statements

Test Item	Test Statement	Survey Questions:
Attitude towards socially responsible company	I consciously try to purchase brands that are active in social responsibility activities	Store X demonstrates that it is involved in the community
		Store X makes investments in worthwhile causes
Purchase Intention	I will switch my brand to another, more socially responsible brand, only if price and quality were not compromised	I would probably buy clothes from Store X
		I would be willing to buy clothes from Store X
		The probability that I would buy from Store X is very high
Control Belief	I trust those social campaigns more where I feel my purchase will directly effect the social cause	If quality is not compromised, I would buy clothes from Store Y where they cost less
		Store X is using social programmes as a marketing gimmick to sell more expensive clothes
		I trust Store X because they are transparent with utilisation of my contribution
	I am more likely to purchase those brands that allow me to make direct contributions to the social cause	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection was done using stratified sampling technique which is deemed most appropriate to generate a required sample size of 384 since the population is heterogeneous and does not share the same characteristics or behaviours in different strata (DeFusco, et.al, 2001). The strata generated were gender, age and nationality and a total of 386 responses were collected from shopping malls, coffee shops, universities, prayer congregation and online sources like Facebook and LinkedIn. The questionnaire was posted online and after clicking “next” on the written consent, the respondents were asked to respond to the survey on the iPads provided (in case of face to face survey) or through email (in case of a mailed questionnaire). Overall, 427 people responded to the questionnaire but only 386 submitted the completed forms. Highest representation for gender strata was for females 60%, for nationality strata were for Pakistani/Indian nationals 57% and age strata were for 36-40 years old at 26%. Of the total 386 respondents, the breakup in term of the place of data collection is as follows; Amity University - Dubai (in two session) drew 135 respondents; Dubai Academic City food court drew 183 respondents; Starbucks at Mercato Mall received 11 respondents; prayer congregation elicited 6 respondents; Mercato Mall food court drew 4 respondents; school group and Facebook notification (due to snowballing) drew 34 and 13 respondents respectively.

According to the Dubai Statistics Centre, the current resident population of Dubai is 2.4 million. Although the active daytime population, which comprises of permanent residents and temporary residents that commute to work in Dubai from neighbouring emirates is considered to be 3.4 million (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2015). UAE population is unusual, as the majority of it is comprised of expatriates with local Emiratis only 19% of the population, 23% non-local Arabs and Iranians, 50% South Asians from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Philippines and a fewer 8% Westerners and East Asians from UK, South Africa, US, Australia, China and Nepal. Moreover, 69% of the permanent resident population at the end of 2014 was males while 31% was females (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2015). Most prevalent age brackets are 30-34, 25-29 and 35-39 with 17%, 16% and 13% representation respectively (Dubai Statistics Centre, 2015).

The required sample size was derived by using the Cochran formula with confidence level 95% and e as 5%, the z value is 1.96, p is 0.5 to maximum variability, and calculated n_0 is 384. With N as 2.4 million, the arrived sample size is 383. It is also important to note that this sample consists of both males and females between the ages of 20-40+. Stratified sampling technique is deemed most appropriate to generate this sample size, as the population is heterogeneous and do not share the same characteristics or behaviours (DeFusco et.al, 2001). The strata, thus, generated are gender, age and nationality.

4. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this research three items were adapted from previous research as the main constructs; Consumer Attitude toward companies engaging in CSR, Purchase intention of the consumer from companies engaging in CS, and their positive perception of CSR companies if they believe they have control over the outcome of their behaviour.

Consumer’s positive perception toward a company engaging in CSR is dependent on their perception of the intended motive of CSR (H_3), and the degree to which they believe they have control over the desired outcome from their purchase behaviour contributing to CSR (H_4). In the presence of a resulting positive perception, they might exhibit a purchase intention from such company (RQ_1) or might switch from their usual brand to this company’s brand (RQ_2). Such an attitude – purchase intention relationship is considered in this research under H_1 and H_2 where the positive relationship, as well as its significance, is examined. Positive CSR perception linked to motives and control belief is considered in H_3 and H_4 which in turn are related to RQ_3 and RQ_4 .

H₁ is investigated through the questionnaire items 1 (CSR activity) to 5 (probability of purchase) and item 4 (willingness to purchase). H₂ relates to item 6 (probability of switching) in the questionnaire, whereas H₃ is investigated by looking at the relationship between items 1 (CSR activity) and 2 (suitability of CSR initiative) H₄ is investigated using item 1 (CSR activity) and 8 (degree of control over the desired outcome). Item 3 (purchase intention) is suited for RQ₁ and item 6 is suited for RQ₂. Items 7 (marketing gimmick) and 8 (control belief) are suited for RQ₃ and RQ₄ respectively. Next two sections will present the findings on these constructs in detail.

Demographic Statistics

A total of 386 responses have resulted in the demographic responses presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic Statistics

<u>Demographics</u>	<u>n=386 (%)</u>
<u>Age</u>	
20-25 years	21
26-30years	17
31-35 years	23
36-40 years	26
41+ years	13
<u>Gender</u>	
Males	40
Females	40
<u>Nationality</u>	
Pakistani/Indian	57
Local UAE Nationals	4
Arab Nationals	7
Far Eastern	4
Americans	3
Australians	3
Africans	8
Europeans	12
Others	2

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.1 Details of Analysis and Results

The population sample was analysed based on three strata of age, gender and nationality. To establish statistically more sound conclusions, the means of these responses were compared using t-test statistics and ANOVA to reach p-values to establish the significance of variance between these strata. Following a section of this chapter presents the results of these tests along the three strata.

4.1.1 Gender Comparisons

Gender comparisons of the total means along the three constructs do not show any significant variations. T-tests were conducted to find the p-values, which are presented in Table 3. Along the research construct Attitude of Consumers towards companies engaging in CSR, p-value > α at 0.5 (Table 3), for Purchase Intentions of consumers from CSR active organisations p-value > α at 0.4 (Table 4), and for the perception of Degree of Control consumers have over the purchase outcomes p-value > α at 0.6 (Table 5).

Table 3. Compare Means Male & Female Respondents for Research Construct Attitude

Descriptive Statistics				
Variable	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Female	231	5.32468	1.41828	2.01152
Male	131	5.41985	1.27674	1.63006
Two-tailed distribution p-level	0.52539	C. Value (5%)	1.96658	
One-tailed distribution p-level	0.26269	C. Value (5%)	1.6491	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 4. Compare Means Male & Female Respondents for Research Construct Purchase Intention

Descriptive Statistics				
Variable	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Female	228	5.07018	1.4943	2.23294
Male	129	5.18605	1.42942	2.04324
Two-tailed distribution p-level	0.47517	C. Value (5%)	1.96667	
One-tailed distribution p-level	0.23758	C. Value (5%)	1.64916	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 5. Compare Means Male & Female Respondents for Research Construct Control Belief

Descriptive Statistics				
Variable	Sample size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Female	231	5.07792	1.39346	1.94173
Male	130	5.14615	1.25205	1.56762
Two-tailed distribution p-level	0.64371	Critical Value (5%)	1.96659	
One-tailed distribution p-level	0.32186	Critical Value (5%)	1.64911	

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.1.2 Nationality Comparisons

Nationality comparisons along with the three constructs also do not show any significant differences between the mean responses. Upon conducting ANOVA to compare multiple means, no significant difference was found between various nationality responses.

Along the research construct Attitude of Consumers towards companies engaging in CSR, p-value > α at 0.3 (Table 6), for Purchase Intentions of consumers from CSR active organisations p-value > α at 0.5 (Table 7), and for the perception of Degree of Control consumers have over the purchase outcomes p-value > α at 0.7 (Table 8). This shows that no significant difference exists between means of various nationality responses.

Table 6. ANOVA Compare Means of Various Nationalities for Research Construct Attitude

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	15.11797	7	2.15971	1.18429	0.31057	2.03277
Within Groups	720.33769	395	1.82364			
Total	735.45565	402				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 7. ANOVA Compare Means of Various Nationalities for Research Construct Purchase Intention

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	10.51697	6	1.75283	0.84343	0.53708	2.12559
Within Groups	698.28283	336	2.07822			
Total	708.7998	342				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 8. ANOVA Compare Means of Various Nationalities for Research Construct Purchase Intention

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	7.0442	7	1.00631	0.55771	0.79016	2.03283
Within Groups	710.92102	394	1.80437			
Total	717.96522	401				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.1.3 Age Comparisons

Previous analysis showed that when compared for various age groups, consumer attitude response is highest in group 41+ as \bar{X} = 5.5 and lowest in 20-25 as \bar{X} = 5.1, purchase intention is highest for ages 26-30 as \bar{X} = 5.1 whereas people between 26-40 years tend to have a higher control belief as \bar{X} = 4.7.

No significant difference was found to exist between various age responses as per the ANOVA tests presented above. Along the research construct Attitude of Consumers towards companies engaging in CSR, p-value > α at 0.2 (Table 9), for Purchase Intentions of consumers from CSR active organisations p-value > α at 0.6 (Table 10), and for the perception of Degree of Control consumers have over the purchase outcomes p-value > α at 0.4 (Table 11). This shows that no significant difference exists between means of various age responses.

Table 9. ANOVA Compare Means for Various Ages for Research Construct Attitude

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	2.05	4	0.5125	0.27558	0.8937	2.39543
Within Groups	706.69285	380	1.85972			
Total	708.74286	384				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 10. ANOVA Compare Means for Various Ages for Research Construct Purchase Intention

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	4.99017	4	1.24754	0.57616	0.6801	2.39594
Within Groups	805.48198	372	2.16527			
Total	810.47215	376				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 11. ANOVA Compare Means for Various Ages for Research Construct Control Belief

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	7.40357	4	1.85089	1.00998	0.40208	2.39549
Within Groups	694.55476	379	1.8326			
Total	701.95833	383				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

4.1.4 Testing the Relationships

To find relationships between the three constructs correlation analysis is conducted and the results are presented in Table 12. To calculate the significance of these correlations, ANOVA tests are conducted to find p-values in Tables 13-18. These results show that correlation between consumer attitude toward companies engaging in CSR activities and their probability of purchasing from that company is positive and significant at $r_s=0.56$, $\alpha=0.1$ and $p=0.0075$ (Table 13). However, their willingness to purchase although at $r_s=0.63$ is not a significant relationship because $p\text{-value} > \alpha$ at 0.805 as presented in Table 14. Consumer's positive attitude toward companies engaging in CSR activities related to the suitability of these CSR activities shows a correlation of $r_s=0.83$ which is quite high but here again $p\text{-value} > \alpha$ at 0.95 (Table 15) and is therefore not a significant relationship. Consumer's attitude toward CSR activities to their belief of degree of control over the outcome of these activities is significant at $r_s=0.51$ and $\alpha=0.05$ and $p\text{-value}=0.00197$ (Table 16) and is $> \alpha$ therefore, a significant relationship.

Correlation between Consumer's willingness to switch to brands of companies that engage in CSR activities and their positive perception of these companies is quite low with $r_s=0.1$ and $p\text{-value}=0.00$ (Table 17) and the correlation between their positive perception of companies engaged in CSR activities and their view of such activities used only as a marketing gimmick is also low at $r_s=0.07$ and $p\text{-value}=0.00$ (Table 18).

Table 12. Correlation Coefficients for Research Constructs

Research Construct	Spearman's Correlation (rs)	Pearson's Correlation (R)
Correlation between Consumer attitude toward CSR activities and their Probability of Purchase	0.56* n= 386	0.54* n= 386
Correlation between Consumer attitude toward CSR activities and their Willingness of Purchase	0.63* n= 386	0.6* n= 386
Correlation between Consumer attitude toward CSR activities and the Suitability of such activities	0.83** n= 386	0.82** n= 386
Correlation between Consumer Attitude towards CSR activity and Consumer's Control Belief over the outcome of these activities	0.51** n= 386	0.5** n= 386
Correlation between CSR perception and consumer willingness to switch brands	0.1* n= 386	0.1* n= 386
Correlation between CSR perception and CSR as a marketing gimmick	0.07* n= 386	0.07* n= 386

Note: *Correlation is significant at $\alpha= 0.1$

** Correlation is significant at $\alpha= 0.05$

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 13. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and Probability of Purchase

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	14.61172	1	14.61172	7.18768	0.0075	3.85352
Within Groups	1,571.42	773	2.03288			
Total	1,586.03	774				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 14. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and Willingness of Purchase

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	0.10663	1	0.10663	0.06046	0.8058	3.84766
Within Groups	2,649.03	1502	1.76367			
Total	2,649.14	1503				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 15. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and CSR Suitability

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	0.00513	1	0.00513	0.00293	0.95684	3.85332
Within Groups	1,376.47	786	1.75123			
Total	1,376.47	787				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 16. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and Control Belief

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F Crit
Between Groups	17.91541	1	17.91541	9.63877	0.00197	3.85338
Within Groups	1,453.49	782	1.85868			
Total	1,471.41	783				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 17. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and Willingness to Switch Brands

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	144.77726	1	144.77726	65.65458	0	3.85339
Within Groups	1,722.21	781	2.20514			
Total	1,866.99	782				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 18. ANOVA: Consumer CSR Perception and CSR as a Marketing Gimmick

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	p-level	F crit
Between Groups	169.40015	1	169.40015	80.65567	0	3.85341
Within Groups	1,638.22	780	2.10029			
Total	1,807.62	781				

Source: Field Survey, 2020

As may be noted, in this research, no strong relationship was found to exist between consumers' positive attitude towards CSR activities and their perception about the suitability of these initiatives but their perception of control over the purchase outcomes was found to have a positive relationship with their attitude towards CSR activities. This is in congruence with previous research findings of Fishbein & Ajzen (2010), where behavioural control was found to be an antecedent of behavioural intentions.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to find to examine the relationship between CSR activities and customer attitudes towards a firm. Both theory and common sense would say that there is a significant positive relationship (Han, Zhuangxiong, & Jie, 2018). However, there are various subtle nuances there: say, the extent to which consumers perceive CSR as a marketing gimmick rather than something down with a genuine interest to advance societal interests. Likewise, certain cultures might feel significantly less of

a need for CSR than the others; in some national cultures, businesses should just do the business. The extant research does not shed much light on these issues. We chose to investigate this relationship in the context of Dubai, UAE, primarily because of the fact that Dubai is a microcosm of global cultures even as it also being a major centre of progressive Islam. Stratified sampling technique was used and a total of 386 responses were collected from shopping malls, coffee shops, universities, prayer congregations, and various social media outlets.

In such a manner as to support the cultural nuances aforementioned, no strong relationship was found to exist between consumers' positive attitude towards CSR activities and their perception about the suitability of these initiatives. Yet, their perception of control over the purchase outcomes was found to have a positive relationship with their attitude towards CSR activities. This makes some sense because greater control over outcomes or internal locus of control would make consumers better connect their purchases with the CSR activities of the firm. In other words, consumers would feel they influenced if, how, and when the firm invested in the CSR activities. Another plausible explanation is that consumers are more likely to trust the CSR activities of a firm that is committed to its promise to its customers: it is unlikely consumers are excited about the CSR activities if the firm's products and services are inadequate. Regardless of the actual causation, it is evident that CSR activities alone do not make consumers perform an about turn in their perceptions about a firm.

The concept of CSR still has a long way to go before consumers start viewing it to be as important as factors like price and quality in their purchase intentions (Baskentli, Sen, Du, & Bhattacharya, 2019). Companies that educate the customers in not only the worthiness of their CSR cause but also provide feedback loops for customers to trace their contributions to check if their contributed money has reached the intended destination, tend to have more successful CSR programs (Maqbool & Zameer, 2018). While designing CSR programmes, companies can ensure that consumers are informed about the causes or motives of these efforts and also provide traceability of their contributions. Consumer scepticism will grow more and more if companies keep churning generic CSR programmes where they make claims but do not provide transparency (Kang & Namkung, 2018).

If there is one central learning from the present research, it is that consumers do not want to be passive spectators of the CSR activities and clap from the alleys. This could be seen as an increased level of consumer activism – a keener interest on how the profits derived from their purchase are put into use. A stronger engagement and involvement of consumers at all levels of developing CSR programmes will be very useful for companies that genuinely want to engage in CSR.

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