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# 'Leveraging on CSR as a tool of brand communication based on consumer's perception with extrapolation from a novel 3-factor model

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## Abstract

This study is to establish that consumers' perceptions can trigger value creation from commitment, and pursuit of CSR by an organization can bring leverage and advantage by adopting the same as a brand, when fused to life-style and culture, while an extrapolation has been made from a novel 3-factor model of consumer responses as presented and newly introduced and adapted (draft study, Adewole 2023). Consumer decision-making process reflects the "black box models from cognitions, cognitive pathway, some intrinsically inner hidden pictures, and rational choices"; strategically, a smart and well-communicated brand can impact financial performance, thus emphasizing the significance of the brand from the consumer side. It can be inferred that culture and traditional behavior play significant roles in brand perception, which can generate and create other leads, such as preferences, intentions, and repeats, considering the complexes, unpredictable trends, or patterns associated with consumers' expressions and behavior in the context of a black box, rational and complex mixes, even justified and vividly affirmed by the result of the 'hypothesis testing and verification of the composite attributes and evident from the 'ANOVA and multiple comparison, which gave a  $p$ -value exceeding ( $>0.05$ ).

**Keywords** Brand, Brand reputation, Communication, CSR, Value creation, Equity, Consumer perception, 3-factor model

## Introduction

This study is to examine and extensively delineate how consumers' perceptions can trigger value creation from commitment and pursuit of CSR by an organization and adopting the same as a brand, lifestyle, and culture, while being strongly cognizant of consumers as key and dominant or essential and significant players with extrapolation and deductions from a novel 3-Factor Model.

The present study also highlights and enumerates the key benefits of embracing CSR, overall, tenaciously and

strategically in enhancing and increasing effectiveness, operational efficiency, and increased or enhanced financial performances.

Emphatically, as outlined, there is a crucial and expedient need for companies and organizations to look beyond the 'ultimate goals of economic drives, wealth creation, and accumulation, while also focusing and committing zealously to environmental courses, consumers' interests from a creation-driven path, and embracing and building profitable customer relationships, particularly seeing the customer as an essential entity and embracing CSR as a core and vital tool of brand communication as enumerated.

The main purpose again within the central objective and primary context of this presentation and research

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activity is to examine the potentials of using, and adopting brand communication, and the core elements of CSR as a strategic tool by corporations in enhancing their brands, creating and generating leads and preferences, building a brand reputation and translating to brand equity, engendering value creation from building a profitable customer relationship, increasing operational efficiency and effectiveness, striking a balance, and even possibility of financial performances: “cognizant of ties, cultures, cognitions or cognitive thinking, impulses, thoughts and lifestyle associations or connections with brands in the context of consumer behavior as an extrapolation.”

As highlighted and enumerated in the literature, organizations do engage in one of the four components of CSR, among “economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic” (Carroll, 1979; 2015; Loosemore & Lim, 2018).

The multidimensionality of ‘CSR is becoming more prominent and obvious and has also been pinpointed in the literature (Aguascalientes & Medero Gómez, 2016; Correa, 2007), among other authors. The multidimensionality of CSR is reflected in having deeply evolved and taken a broader perspective (Morejón & Lorenzo, 2020), as evident from studies. CSR activities appear in various and diverse forms, including corporate philanthropy, corporate charity funds, environmental protection, investments in R&D, and employee volunteer programs (Chen and Huang, 2018), as well as the emphasis on the responsibility and roles of companies towards the environment, employees, and multiple stakeholders (Andreu Pinillos et al., 2020).

Cuong and Long (2020) demonstrated the influence of brand image on consumer satisfaction based on a survey of Vietnamese fast-food restaurants. As shown and revealed based on the results obtained, by aligning with the extant literature and the findings of this study, stressing and emphasizing the effects of image and brand equity on consumer satisfaction, while reflecting on consumer behaviour, and responses, it can be stated that brand image is an antecedent of consumer satisfaction as a key determinant and plays a positive impact or role as an influencing factor (Cuong, 2020).

It has been found and revealed that a service offering quality improves the brand image and also consumer satisfaction (Hsieh et al., 2018). Thus, it can be inferred that consumers who recognize a positive brand image tend to incline and align with the opinion and believe that a high satisfaction is created by a brand (Mohammed and Rashid 2018; Zehra & Arshad 2019).

Interestingly, in the context of social media, and referring to the extant and existing traditional tools of communication and brands as adapted in this study, it has been

concluded that more consumer satisfaction is derived from a favorable brand image (Arghashi et al., 2021).

Brand has become broadened and widened in scope as an interesting scheme.

Brand loyalty is a key and fundamental theme, considering its key and potential roles, and most importantly, in the focus of this study, discerning how CSR can be used as a tool of brand communication, leveraged on and adopted in building a brand reputation and translating to equity as a gain or benefit, then emphasizing consumers’ perceptions, and evaluating responses from the novel 3-factor model and layers as presented.

It has become clear and understood that trust is a factor, key, and integral while considering the prospects of a buyer’s behaviour, customer’s satisfaction, and brand loyalty from a CSR perspective (Ahmed et al., 2020a, 2020b; Sürücü et al., 2019; Vlachos et al., 2009; Lu et al., 2019). In fact, the customer’s insights into CSR and strategies have become of concern for marketers and strategy makers (Lu et al., 2020; Jeon & An, 2019; Sharma & Jain, 2019). When customers believe in the notion that an organization is trustworthy and behaves in a socially responsible manner, the evaluation and assessment of a company may be positively affected or influenced (Edinger-Schons et al., 2019).

Consumers are supposed and expected to be key players and prioritized as stakeholders who can dictate and determine the profitability of the company on the basis of their commitment, loyalty, and fervour with preferences, desires, or intentions shown and expressed for the brand to go for their products and services by voting their purses and wallets in financial commitments to such offers, or buying products and services created.

Reputable brands committed and devoted to CSR and inclined to environmentally friendly courses, can trigger consumers’ interests and attractions who can become the brand loyalists and evangelists who promote such brand, building and developing preferences and eventually foster a brand translation to equity, increased profitability, and financial performance from acquired preferences and perceived quality with desired intentions, and repeats among all from overall effectiveness, operational efficiency, and performances.

This paper is classified and segmented into the introduction, problem statement and purpose, literature, methodology, findings, discussion and results, and conclusions, while making some key recommendations and emphasizing some key implications for practice, research, debates, and academia.

### Problem statement

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a necessity in an emerging business trend of applications and use as demanded (Botero Pérez & Franco Acosta, 2016).

Interestingly, CSR has widened in scope, broadened, and is still expanding. CSR activities, and scope include philanthropic CSR, business-process CSR (Habel et al., 2016); social alliance CSR, and value-chain CSR (Chen and Huang, 2018; Porter and Kramer, 2011).

Companies are aware and conscious of their roles and contributions towards the creation of a better society (Fernández, 2015). They are also aware of their responsibilities and expectations towards the environment, employees, and multiple stakeholders (Andreu Pinillos et al., 2020).

An issue of increased concern is the recent rise in activism and increasing trend of incidences of litigations from interference with environment from activities of corporations and companies, jury and legal suits brought against corporations over time in the past few decades. This is potentially dangerous with possible adversity and has a negative bearing on the corporations, which can dent their image or be a point of brand attack and also result in a huge loss of financial resources in seeking legal redress and overturning such suits and legal case filings.

### Literature review

CSR has been defined by various scholars in a number of different ways and perspectives. For instance, CSR is prevalently or commonly defined as "actions beyond the interest of the firm that are necessitated as expected and demanded by law" and that appear to further some social goods (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Based on shared-value CSR, emphasis is placed on the interdependence between corporate economic goals and social well-being (Cheng & Huang, 2018).

From a macro-definition perspective, CSR can be defined as the numerous strategies applied in any business that aim to achieve financial benefits along with environmental and social development (Khaskheli et al., 2020; Tiwari et al., 2021).

The strategic perspective has become quite pertinent and crucial based on frequent changes, evolutions, and emerging trends seen in recent years, as presented in the literature. The strategic concept of social responsibility was explicitly outlined and synthesized supportive of the literature (Heikkurinen, 2018).

Value creation and shared value do co-exist, and have been highlighted (Porter, 2006, 2011). In fact, to extend the context, value creation can be applied strategically, linked and connected with brands and the core messages

transmitted from the communication, lifestyles and cultural context as enumerated in this study.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been identified and outlined, while recognized a good strategic marketing tool or instrument and device (Kuokkanen and Sun 2020). Strategically, and adopting CSR with dexterity as a tool of brand enhancement and postponing, organizations can create better value, and get a competing edge, and advantage over competitors. Thus, in line with the literature evidence, it is clear from a strategic point of view that strategically positioning the brand can offer the company or organization a better advantage as a point of differentiation from its competitors, and existing markets or products (Harjoto and Salas, 2017). Consumers' perceptions of a company's CSR tend to affect their purchase intentions, and willingness to buy the brands or goods offered and accept its offerings (Wang et al., 2021).

As a source of communication about organizational identity, CSR reflects a company's core values (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). According to Yoon and colleagues' (2006) lab study of associations drawn regarding customers of socially responsible firms, these organizational images carry and convey strength. CSR initiatives impact on consumer satisfaction as investigated (Agyei et al. 2021; Fatma et al. 2018a, 2018b; Mohammed and Rashid 2018; Park et al. 2017). By being socially responsible towards stakeholders, companies can create good and ample opportunities, obtain and get good advantages. Organizations can benefit in aspects, such as WOM communication, loyalty, and financial profitability (Palací et al. 2019) from prediction of consumer behaviour by analysing the antecedents of consumers' satisfaction. Mohammed and Rashid (2018) concluded that CSR positively affects consumer satisfaction based on Carroll's (1991) four dimensions of CSR.

Furthermore, Goia, Schultz, and Corley (2000) stressed the reciprocal relationship between organizational identity and image, arguing that, contrary to standard definitions associating identity with unalterable, enduring characteristics, organizational identity is a dynamic construct. Pointing further to the significance of corporate identity, and image, organizations and companies can enhance reputation and corporate image through CSR activities (Kodua et al. 2022; Harjoto & Salas 2017; Özcan & Elçi 2020). Furthermore, every socially responsible business activities of businesses can influence brand image and brand loyalty (Loosemore & Lim, 2018).

Firms are made up of several stakeholders and players or participants competing intensely and keenly for organizational resources, which are indeed limited and scarce; hence, borne out of this fact or reality, it has become imperative for firms to identify strategies, ways, and steps for managing stakeholders (Bryson, 2005; Michelon et al., 2013). The type of stakeholders

proactively engaged and the resource control strategy or measures adopted impact significantly on the firm's corporate strategy. CSR initiatives augment and reinforce social corporate activities, in turn raising the interests of the company and the welfare of society, while fostering and promoting consumer trust (Sen, S.; Bhattacharya, 2001; Khan & Fatma, 2021).

Businesses that are believed, and known or portrayed to be socially responsible attract high level of customer's trust (Hu et al., 2020). According to Prayag et al. (2019) and He and Li (2011), CSR activities consumer satisfaction. When successfully achieved, 'CSR activities positively affect consumer satisfaction (Agyei et al. 2021; Mohammed and Rashid 2018). Customers are more satisfied when companies are perceived and seen as responsible (Zhang and Ahmad 2022). CSR is a key factor as a trigger, and precursor to promoting brand image and customer satisfaction (Bianchi et al. 2019).

Socially and ethically driven responsible initiatives reveal information about a company's personality and ideals which eventually aid and fosters a customer's level and perceptions of trust (Fatma et al., 2018a, 2018b b).

As revealed by (Hosmer, 1994), ethical standards should be considered, and taken into account while making strategic decisions by businesses in order to foster stakeholder confidence. Based on this opinion and perspective, (Pivato et al., 2008 (p. 5) claimed that consumer trust is one of the most indicators and direct results of a company's social performance reflective in its ethical standards. This had a substantial impact on how consumers reacted to CSR (Fatma & Khan, 2022).

As shown, a relationship between brand equity and customer satisfaction (Kim et al. 2020; Rambocas et al. 2018), thus, customers or consumers are essential part of the stakeholders.

Finally, and interestingly, and strategically pointing, corporate reputation can be enhanced and improved by taking part in CSR activities based on consumer evaluation and assessment or appraisal that perceive firms supporting stakeholders based on these activities (Rim & Kim, 2016; Kim, 2019; Mu et al., 2024).

Brand reputation has a significant impact on brand equity from responses of the customers from a study the fast food industry (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020). ' CSR leads to a strong brand reputation, clearly this can positively affect and translate to brand equity (Cowan and Guzman 2020; Kim and Manoli 2020; Zhao et al. 2021; Nguyen et al. 2022).

### Theoretical framework

Various theories of 'CSR have emerged over time, comprising "stakeholder theory, operational efficiency, and

legitimacy," even stakeholder management and corporate citizenship among other existing variants.

As of increased importance, communication plays a huge role and CSR can be a key tool, in fact stressing and emphasizing keenly and extensively on the consumer as a key entity, and dwelling keenly on its potential strengths if adopted by organizations as a strategic tool and device or key component and formation of the business model.

The bound and scope has been expanded in the context of consumer as a key and dominant player or entity from the theoretical framework of this study and the attempt at filling a gap by embedding brand concept from the communication, lifestyles and cultural contexts into "CSR engagement as a viable and practically oriented step in addressing key environmental issues, social concerns, and potentially addressing rising incidences of climate change". Actions, calls and protests or activism against virulent and adverse operations or activities of companies, firms, organizations, states, and institutions can be drastically and severely reduced and avoided, while leveraging on CSR as a veritable and strategic tool of brand communication.

### Factor model: of consumer responses, attitudes & behaviour

As proposed, the key layers comprise; perception, cognition & responses.

Layer 1

- perception of consumers and employees

Layer 2

- cognitive
- impulses and flows
- experienced and reverse reflective behaviour/backward induction and deductive reasoning behind the past

Layer 3

- responses
- outcomes from motivation
- future projections and prospecting

A nexus and extrapolation on the 3-factor model as presented in this study justifies and strengthens further the consumer behaviour theory on the notion of the "black box," and also reinforces the literature and stressing on the fact CSR can be strategically applied from the communication context and leveraged upon as consumers are key players or participants that are essential, and could be complex in nature regarding their behavioural

patterns, attitudes, responses and behaviours, and organizations must take strong cognizance of them. Thus, from a strategic point of view, a well-communicated brand is essential, as further and subsequently elaborated and enumerated in the modified and adapted extant and existing traditional tools of brand communication within our formative constructs.

### Consumer behaviour

Consumers are more satisfied with products developed by socially responsible companies (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006). Consumer satisfaction is derived from rational judgments and experience throughout the buying process (Palací et al., 2019). Again, service quality (Lee et al. 2020) and brand attitude (Lee et al., 2020; Rivera et al., 2016) leveraged by CSR tend to influence consumer satisfaction.

Furthermore, the 3-factor model of consumer responses as presented supportive of the extant literature and existing facts, and more recently, “action-based” (Harmon-Jones et al., 2015) and evolutionary (Egan et al., 2007) propositions have been put forward for explaining cognitive dissonances, and evidential diversity (Kuorikoski and Marchionni, 2016) has emerged for interpreting a widely known and studied cognitive phenomenon, which in actual sense and fact can shape consumer responses, behaviours, actions and decision makings or purchase decisions and intentions.

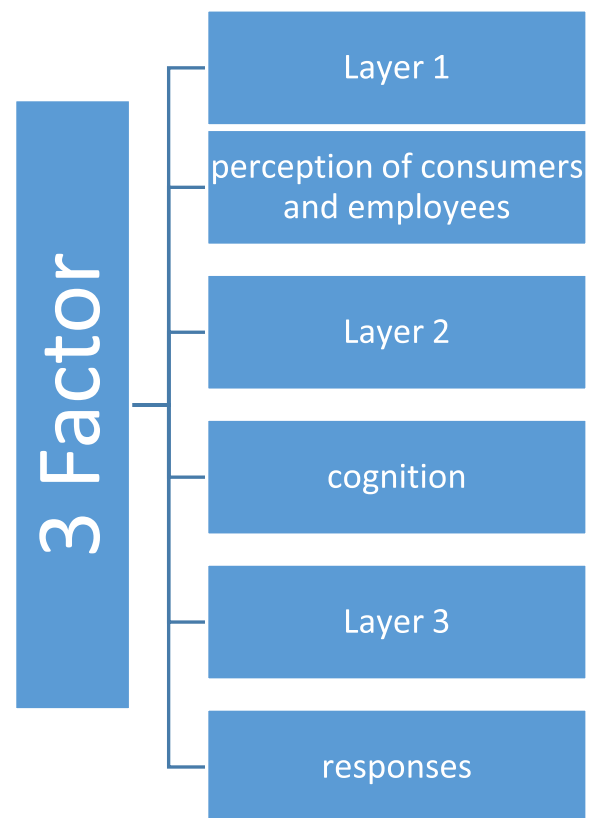
To stress further on the significance of the stakeholder theory regarding consumers being a key entity and component; consumer responses can generate; “preferences, intentions, communication & WOM, and end or final purchases and repeats from willingness and intentions”.

Hence, by extrapolating further, and reference to Fig. 1, the following relationship and template have been produced:

### Hypothesis framework

Based on the revelation by Benitez et al. (2017), consumers’ assessment and appraisal of new services or products launch are based on existing images in the market. Every effort the firm and organizations or companies put towards CSR implementation can improve the corporate image (Razalan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018) and also impact corporate evaluation and rating (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Romani et al., 2013). CSR has become increasingly sought and demanded by firms as an incentive tool for employees’ job performance and, consequently, for impacting and building on the returns of firms (Kim et al., 2017; 2018).

Also, an excellent CR provides a shield against adverse customer perspectives because CR results from its business activities. In contrast, CSR initiatives are considered



**Fig. 1** 3 - Factor model of Consumer Responses. Source Author’s draft & present study

the most profitable method to construct a good reputation and perception among consumers and stakeholders (Lee et al., 2017; Lee, 2019). Thus, engaging in publicly accountable activities and contributing to the well-being of a society enhances the image and reputation of a company (Gulzar et al., 2018).

As revealed and unveiled by Melero-Polo and López-Pérez (2017), the consumer perspective of CSR initiatives impacts affirmatively building CR. Forcadell and Aracil (2017) agreed that suitable social activity among firms brings about increased CR.

Previous studies and the extant literature also indicate that CSR positively correlates with CR (Brammer and Pavelin, 2016; Gardberg et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2020a).

Several studies have unveiled the relationship existing between CSR brand image, (including Kodua et al. 2022; Mohammed and Rashid 2018; Özcan and Elçi 2020; Srivastava 2019). Products’ or services’ brand image is affected by CSR actions, meaning that when CSR works for the benefits of society, the environment, and the living conditions of its employees and society in general, consumers favor the products and services of these companies. Consequently, there is a significant improvement

in brand image (Maldonado-Guzman et al. 2017; Ahmed et al., 2020a, 2020b b) and in clients' retention that expresses intentions to return to the same (Othman and Hemdi, 2015) and to have other behaviors and intentions, such as revisiting the intention, making recommendations, and having a willingness to pay more (Singh et al. 2023). Corporate responsibility strengthens brand image when a company knows how to inspire trust, build credibility, and develop a strong image in the eyes of others (Maldonado-Guzman et al. 2017). Consumer satisfaction is influenced by brand image, which has CSR contributions (Bianchi et al. 2019). Brand image is cognitively and affectively affected by corporate social responsibility (He and Li 2011). CSR contributes to brand image, not only to customers but also to other stakeholders (Sun and Cui 2014), and the organizations should develop communication strategies that promote CSR initiatives, promoting their brand image (Bianchi et al. 2019).

Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis formulations have been proposed:

**'Hypothesis:**

- 1) Consumers are key stakeholders who are more likely to show penchant and preferences as they associate with companies that embrace CSR, noting that CSR itself is a viable tool of brand communication.
- 2) Brand image is cognitively driven and affected by 'CSR activities and engagements; strategically consumers can be made to live the brand as organizations can create and generate increased purchases and repeats from intentions to buy, and as well build a reputable and strong brand translatable to a brand equity.
- 3) A reputedly strong brand should be associated with core messages that can significantly impact and enhance the lifestyles, culture and values, and should be well communicated. This could potentially translate to enhanced and increased financial performances from intentions, purchases and repeats as a leverage from effective operational modules, channel effectiveness, enhancer and value creation.

**Methodology**

The present research is based on a combination of mixed methods comprising quantitative methods and qualitative approaches, extensively from grounded theory and literature presentation from a vivid qualitative analysis and quantitative treatments from inferential statistical method by applying data acquired from questionnaire administration and survey.

Two assumptions based on the 'null and alternative hypotheses are set, of fundamental importance, and which are to be verified by the t-test following the

assumptions of the normal distribution and its symmetry at the significance level and confidence bound interval for the set limit criterion and threshold of significant level -  $\alpha$ .

**Design**

Structured questionnaires and interview materials would be applied in data collection from randomly drawn participants and respondents from the population.

In respect of triangulation or convergence; the crucial question as sufficed and presented by Erzberger & Preirin (1997): are there convergences, complementarities, or divergences in the narratives produced by the different sources of data? Mixed methods research can be integrated across the method, methodology and paradigm (Greene, 2015). The point of integration is crucial and vital as identified (Johnson and Christensen 2017; Lall, 2021).

Probability sampling is advantageous and quite beneficial on the basis and obviously, that it allows diversity among a large population group or segment, and deviates from biases and in fact quite accurate.

In a real sense of research, validity is quite essential; recalling 'Ontology lies, resides and dwells in naïve realism (Shape & Spencer, 2003). The context of realism and materialism in ontological philosophical assumption, and sense or actuality inherently shows and reflects the consciousness and realization of flaws, biases, and human factors or undermining issues and factors always present around and can undermine or suppress and underestimate the research outputs which the researcher has to take cognizance of in the research design from data collection stage prior to the analysis and data interpretation to final presentation.

Ethical issues in qualitative research usually do arise; Schwandt (2007) suggested that traditional and modernist qualitative researchers, in a similar view to those of quantitative researchers, both argued that it is essential to ensure reliability in order to have and establish dependability. Based on an in-depth and deeper exploration, qualitative methods such as interviews allow for more thoughts and insights that are supportive of the literature (Wilhelmy & Köhler, 2021). They can also constitute tenets, basis, and ground for novel insights and a strong background for developing new theoretical insights, structures, and contrasts or comparisons for making empirical observations (Fisher & Aguinis, 2017; Dunwoodie et al., 2023).

Although, interviews do convey real life, and true experiences, but might be subjective in the real sense of naïve ontology, and could be biasedly flawed, thus, the researcher should be reflexive and exercise control over flawed bases and ethics. As interviews are instructively

detailed and explicit, they are of huge and tremendous advantages in capturing full insights and information, and worth it despite the rigours.

Multi approaches, multi – stages and mixed methods could be quite rigorous, hectic or tasking and laborious in real practices and practicality due to complexities, and design issues, but indeed, diverse, broad and extensive, and could be very rewarding. The techniques of articulating design complexity based on multiple purposes of mixing, have been outlined and elaborated by Schoonenboom et al. (2017).

In another deduction; random sampling and probability methods are highly advantageous and accurate allowing diversity in the sample group and avoiding biases as much as possible as participants or sampling subsets of the set and field stand equal chances or likelihood of selections to be chosen and picked, without prejudices or biases, nor undermining.

As the hypothesis formulations and framework is deduced prior to the sampling probability; sampling gives some prior expectation and stimulated logic sense and purpose to achieve and realize the set goals and aims of the research much precise, congruent and exact as possible.

The sampling method for collection of the required data should be appropriately chosen and designed effectively to meet the purpose and expectations of the research, while eliminating and avoiding potential flaws, biases and errors as much as possible and realizable.

#### Data collection, tools, data sources & kits

##### Data collection

Data collection is based on sampling and interview among selected respondents and participants drawn across a random poll of population from 'Roma across some organizations selected for this purpose and a section of consumers.

Data include 125 responses from questionnaires, additional 150 responses cutting across organization and public domains to capture more information to delineate and analyse expanded and modified form of the extant and existing traditional model of communication with the novel 3 Factor model. a minimum of 20 participants were involved in an interview to capture consumer perceptions from a qualitative study in addition to the data on quantitative study on consumer responses.

##### Tools

Data tools include questionnaires, personal interviews with phone conversations and analytical tools.

The key instruments include statistical tools, tests and hypothesis frames.

#### Instruments, assumptions & hypothesis formulations

The present research entails an extensive literature review and explicit qualitative narrative presentations, and an elaborate or extensive qualitative analysis within the framework, and concepts in support of the hypothesis formulations, and underlying assumptions, then subsequently followed with a detailed quantitative data analysis from probability and multi sampled data points subject to inferential statistics.

##### Assumptions

Basically, the t-test statistics follows the form;

$$= \frac{Z}{s} = \frac{(\bar{X} - \mu)}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$
, where  $\bar{X}$  is the sample mean from a sample  $X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n$ , of size  $n$ ,  $s$  is the ratio of sample standard deviation over population standard deviation,  $\sigma$  is the population standard deviation of the data and  $\mu$  is the mean.

$Z$  is designated to be sensitive to the alternative hypothesis, that is its magnitude tends to be larger whenever the alternative hypothesis is true and  $s$  is a scaling parameter that allows the t distribution to be determined.

Basically,  $X$  appears as a normal distribution with mean,  $\mu$  and variance  $\sigma^2$ .  $Z$  and  $s$  are independent, and  $ps^2$  follows a  $\chi^2$  distribution with  $p$  degrees of freedom under a null hypothesis for a positive constant,  $p$ .

- Setting 2 hypotheses: 'null & alternatives are to be statistically applied in testing and verifying our salient assumptions and initially set hypotheses with some extensions that subsequently emanated in the study.
- The hypothesis is to be tested based on the t- statistics according to the equation; written as presented above.

##### Data sources

Sources of data are primary sources from respondents based on the tools applied as mentioned.

##### Data points

Interviews, questionnaires and survey poll materials are used.

##### Measures:

Observations and ratings: These are based on Likert ratings (1 – 5):

The parameters and measures representing the dependent and independent variables are quantified from some randomly selected observations and from

the ranking and scaling as highlighted. The measures adopted include; brand awareness, advertisement, preferences & brands, image & brand attractiveness, ‘CSR, responses, cognition and perceptions.

The items of CSR are similar to the existing literature and those adopted from López-González et al. (2019). All items of CSR were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”). The alpha of CSR & brand was 0.88270. The results indicate that the factor loading of each item is greater than the standard value (0.70). So in this study, measures were considered adequate. The factor loading of each item is mentioned in Table three.

Brand communication was measured using a frame adapted based on similarity with items from the scale proposed by Dwivedi and McDonald’s (2018). This instrument considers the following dimensions: advertising promotion, sponsorship-public relations, social media, and CSR, which are consistent with the results of our content analysis. Brand image was assessed based on similarity with that adopted by Martínez and Pina’s (2009) that considers three dimensions: functional image, affective image, and reputation. Finally, Ebrahim et al. (2016) adopted a 3-item scale to measure brand preference, and Byrd et al.’s scale (2016) and rating can be used to assess intention to visit.

Brand communication and brand image were conceptualized as higher-order reflective-formative constructs. Accordingly, brand communication is formatively measured across four reflective dimensions (advertising promotion, sponsorship-public relations, social media, and CSR); and brand image is formatively measured across three reflective dimensions (functional image, affective image, and reputation).

CSR initiatives are derived from the previous literature.

Jeon & An, 2019; Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Suki & Suki, 2019; García-Fernández et al., 2018). The literature has previously based consumer satisfaction on indicators and constructs assessed and measured with scales from Dwivedi (2015) and Rambocas et al. (2018).

**Reliability test & validity**

The reliability test and validity assessment is done from the ‘Cronbach; alpha to assess these measures as presented in the following Table 1.

As shown in the table above; from Table 1, the ‘Cronbach alphas lies between 0.78947 and 0.92308, which far exceeds the threshold, and relatively high, hence justifying reliability of the variables and parameters or measures adopted for assessment and evaluation.

Table 2 shows that the “composite reliability (>0.60), Cronbach alpha (>0.70), and AVE (>0.50)” for each

**Table 1** ‘Cronbach alpha of the variables

	‘Cronbach alpha
Brand awareness	0.78947
Advertisement, preferences & communication	0.83768
CSR & Image captured	0.84906
Image & brand attractiveness	0.92308
Perceptions	0.82525
Responses	0.88225
Cognition	0.88299

Source: Present study draft & author’s draft

construct are within the acceptable range, which shows that the tool used for checking the hypothesis is reliable (Chatfield, 2018; Ahmed et al., 2020a, 2020b).

Source: Author’s draft & recent study, 2023 & 2024

The extent, to which all of the multiple elements of the model are used to test its convergent validity (Kura, 2017), shown in Table 3. For this, the threshold value, or least upper bound should be >0.6 (Hair et al., 2016). Since all values obtained met the threshold requirement, each data collection indicator is valid. However, a value of 0.3 indicates moderation.

Convergent validity criterion conveys and display actuality of the measures, and is affirmed by average variance extracted (AVE) (Ahmad S. et al., 2019). The AVE value should be larger or greater than 0.5, according to Fornell and Larcker (1981). The reliability of structures has been demonstrated using composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha value. The stability of structures has been measured and assessed or established using composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha value. According to the literature (Hair et al., 2013; 3030; 2021; Hair & Alamer, 2022), each construct should have a value larger than, or exceeding 0.7. However, all the variables in the sample have values that are greater than or equal to the threshold value as stated, and fall within the upper bounds.

**Results, findings & discussion**

‘N.B:

Group 1: ‘Brand consciousness, awareness and perception

Group 2: ‘People oriented domains, lifestyles, traditions or environment and local cultures

Group 3: Advertisement, preferences & communication

Group 4: Image & brand attractiveness

Group 5: ‘Cognition (Tables 4 and 5)

The formative constructs and parameters or indicators for brand communication as presented reflects on the extant and existing traditional tools drawn around;



**Table 2** ‘Cronbach alpha of the variables, Composite Reliability (CR) & ‘AVE

	‘Cronbach alpha	‘Composite reliability	‘AVE
Brand awareness	0.78947	0.87200	0.623
CSR & brand	0.88720	0.95600	0.84375
CSR, brand & perceptions	0.98640	0.96700	0.8785
CSR, brand & reputation	0.97820	0.9824	0.8825
Advert., preferences & communication	0.86225	0.88225	0.77224
Image & brand attractiveness	0.97625	0.99825	0.82250
Cognition	0.82050	0.88225	0.77025
Brand, inclinations, CSR & culture	0.89640	0.938	0.7900
Brand, lifestyles, CSR & interactions	0.92310	0.94000	0.79225
Responses	0.85254	0.88862	0.62254

**Table 3** ‘Convergent validity of the variables, Composite Reliability (CR) & ‘AVE from Factor Loadings

Parameter or variables	Indicators	Factorial loadings
Brand awareness	BR	0.7623
	BR2	0.7851
	BR3	0.7821
	BT4	0.7224
	BR5	0.7849
Advertisement, preferences & brand communication	PCR 1	0.8640
	BCP 2	0.8880
	BCA 3	0.8250
	BCSM 4	0.8825
CSR & image captured	CSR BP1	0.7825
	CSR BP2	0.725
Images & brand attractiveness	BF 1	0.8225
	BA 2	0.8225
	B3	0.7824
	B4	0.7721
Perceptions	P1	0.78804
	P2	0.7225
	P3	0.78233
	P4	0.77824
	P5	0.79044
Responses	‘cog.1	0.88225
	‘cog.2	0.86050
	‘cog.3	0.88224
	‘cog.4	0.88224
Cognition	R1	0.78824
	R2	0.7225
	R3	0.78825

“advertising, CSR, promotions and public relations or opinions”, which has been expanded further and modified to capture additional indicators and key parameters as presented.

**Table 4** Summarized statistics

	N	Mean	Std. dev.,	Std. err
Group 1	25	4.98	0.408	0.1069
Group 2	25	4.89	0.2803	0.10724
Group 3	25	4.88	0.240	0.0980
Group 4	25	4.80	0.4472	0.1939
Group 5	25	4.875	0.275	0.2000

**Table 5** ANOVA summary & statistics

‘Source	‘Df	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	4	1/3464	0.3366	0.5691	0.983
Within Groups	120	70.9751	0.5914		
Total	124	72.3215			

p-value: 0.983  
F: 0.5891

As shown in the table below; the formative constructs have been explicitly built and expanded on to elaborate further the subject of this discussion.

‘N.B:

The various indicators of the parameters are linked with the formative constructs of brand communication tools and instruments presented from the sampling and data collection.

The indicators are associated with brand communication from the formative constructs and the subsets of brand awareness comprises; BR, BR2, BR3, BR4 & BR5

For brand awareness, the formative constructs and subsets are built and estimated around;

BR Brand consciousness and awareness

BR2: Brand, ‘CSR & perceptions

BR3: Brand, CSR, image & reputation

BR4: Brand, ‘CSR, culture & inclination

‘BR5: Brand, ‘CSR, lifestyles & culture

BCPR1, BCP2, BCA3 & BCRM4: Image, brand communication, advertising, preferences & culture

CSR B1, CSR2B: ‘CSR & images captured from the brands. CSR B1 & CSR2B depicts CSR images from overall impression and activities driven around climate change, investment risks and meaningful activities of corporations to environment and wellbeing of consumers.

BF1, BA2, B3 & B4: image & brand attractiveness

### Factor model

#### Analysis

Brand communication and brand image have been conceptualized as higher-order reflective-formative constructs as unveiled from the extant literature findings.

Based on the extant, and existing traditional tools, brand communication has been formatively measured across four reflective dimensions (advertising promotion, sponsorship-public relations, social media, and CSR).

Furthermore; brand image has been formatively measured across three reflective dimensions (functional image, affective image, and reputation). A reflective latent construct entails that changes in the underlying latent construct are reflected and conveyed by changes in the indicators, indicating that reflective measures are caused by the latent construct (Jarvis et al., 2003). The findings indicate that reputation is the main dimension of brand image, followed by functional image and emotional image, based on the estimates from the beta.

Formative constructs are those measures that cause the construct and also indicate that the construct is fully derived by its measurement. As revealed from the previous finding, an improvement in the underlying latent construct would not require a simultaneous increase in all of the indicators (Bollen & Lennox, 1991). An improvement of brand communication can be achieved with a single improvement of any of its dimensions comprising “advertising, sponsorship-public relations, or social media”.

As unveiled; social media and advertising play key roles in shaping consumer buying behaviour (Adewole & Muthu, 2023). This can in fact impact on the brand, communication and the manner of propagation and promotions or campaigns. Similarly, a better brand image can be attained with different combinations of reputation and functional and affective image. In other words, an improvement in brand communication or image does not necessarily imply an improvement in all its constituent dimensions and, therefore, they are not considered reflective constructs. Similarly, as opposed to reflective indicators, formative indicators are not interchangeable because the construct is a weighted, linear combination of all its observed measures. The constituent dimensions of brand communication and

brand image represent different concepts, and eliminating a formative indicator from the measurement model would alter or change the meaning of the composite construct (Coltman et al., 2008).

Based on the results shown, and as presented in Table 6 above, the multidimensional nature of brand communication s passively influenced by the various four dimensions outlined in varying degrees: advertising promotion most strongly ( $\beta=0.454, p<0.001$ ), followed by sponsorship-public relations ( $\beta=0.366, p<0.001$ ), CSR ( $\beta=0.270, p<0.001$ ), and lastly social media ( $\beta=0.131, p<0.001$ ). Concerning brand image: reputation has the highest influence ( $\beta=0.540, p<0.001$ ), functional image is the second ( $\beta=0.346, p<0.001$ ), and affective image is the last one ( $\beta=0.324, p<0.001$ ).

As estimated, ( $\beta=0.288, p<0.001$ ), for activities driven around climate change, investment risks and concern for social wellbeing and the environment.

Organizations that are strongly committed to social interests and their brands, image and reputation, and embrace communication from a strategic point of view can gain a competitive edge, and be well positioned as the beta estimates associated with a statistical significance for organizations whose CSR activities are driven around climate change, risks & investments and social concerns.

Furthermore, such corporations and organizations in an environmental and ethical or moral sense would take utmost priority in protecting the social – wellbeing of the communities they operate and contribute towards welfare packages and incentives stimuli or surplus for communities in providing social amenities and infrastructures to enhance their life styles (Table 7).

**Table 6** Constructs of the variables, & parameters from formative constructs for brand communication tools and preferences based on literature & extant traditional tools

Parameter or variables	Indicators	Estimate	T value
Brand awareness	BR	0.625	4.367
	BR2	0.678	5.285
	BR3	0.634	3.872
	BR4	0.725	8.248
	BR5	0.685	6.825
Advertising, preferences & brand communication	CPR 1	0.366	5.981
	BCP 2	0.454	7.376
	BCA 3	0.288	6.245
	BSCM 4	0.131	2.594
CSR & images captured	CSR B1	0.270	5.739
	CSR B2	0.288	6.225
Image & brand attractiveness	BF1	0.374	8.124
	BA 2	0.324	7.052
	B3	0.576	10.909

**Table 7** Intentions, repeat purchases & buys – Brand; Lifestyles, cognition, culture & inclination from ‘CSR activities

Parameters:	β	R <sup>2</sup>	α	p value
Intentions, repeat purchases & buys – Brand; Lifestyles, preferences. cognition, culture & inclination from ‘CSR activities	0.9878	0.9235	0.8358	<.0001

$$repeat\ purchases = \alpha + \beta.ILFstyles$$

The above equation represents and expresses the relationship between ‘intentions, repeat purchases, brands and cultures, lifestyles & inclinations from regression – fit; a high R – squared value of 0.9235 implies and justifies the fact that as inferred. This strong values are reflective of the findings that lifestyles, cognitions and cultural values with preferences built, and developed from ‘CSR activities are key factors, and consistency with the literature that brand preferences can increase purchase intentions (Mutzakr & Damus, 2018).

This is also further strengthened and justified by the *p* value obtained from the SEM or regression fit indicating statistical significance on the existing relationship between the dependent and independent variables considered from “intentions, repeat purchases, brand and culture, lifestyles, inclinations and orientations” of the people.

$$reputaton = \alpha + \beta.ILFstyles&comm.$$

The above equation expresses the relationship between ‘Image & brand reputation – communication & inclination from regression model – fit; a high R – squared value of 0.8825 implies and justifies the fact that as inferred.

This relationship is further strengthened and justified by the *p* –value obtained from the SEM analysis or regression fit, which indicates a statistical significance on the existing relationship between the dependent and independent variables assigned and considered from ‘Image & brand reputation – communication & inclination and culture, lifestyles, inclinations and orientations of the people.

‘N.B:

Comm.: Communication

The results indicate that brand communication has a positive and significant influence on brand preference based on ‘CSR activities; thus, H1 is supported ( $\beta=0.9858, p<0.00001, t=4.3785$ ). Brand image from culture, cognition, lifestyles and inclinations from ‘CSR activities has a positive and significant influence on brand image & preference; thus, H2 is supported, also based on the same estimates ( $\beta=0.9858, p<0.001, t=4.3785$ ).

Brand communication exerts positive influence on brand image; which can lead to and generate or

create preferences, thus, H3 is supported ( $\beta=0.7858, p<0.0001, t=3.4783$ ). That is, brand communication has an indirect influence on brand preference through brand image, which mediates the relationship between brand communication and brand preference. This indirect effect that could be triggered by brand communication with brand image, and resulting brand preference from customer relationship in building and creating interactions is positive and significant ( $\beta=0.7858, p<0.001, t=3.4785$ ).

Finally, brand preference from cognition exerts a significant positive influence on intention to visit; repeat buys and purchases, thus, H2 is further supported, which also aligns with the model from Fig. 2 based on the same estimates ( $\beta=0.9878, p<0.0001, t=4.3785$  (Table 8).

**Qualitative results on consumer’s perception: “Themes & Analysis”**

**Responses towards Decision making Processes of Consumers**  
The responses are based on perceptions, cognition & experiences based on the results of the qualitative study (Tables 9 and 10).

Perception of consumers and employees from reputation

- perception from awareness, communication & message
- perception of effectiveness from experiences & activities or engagement
- perception of image
- perception from association, culture & link or lifestyles

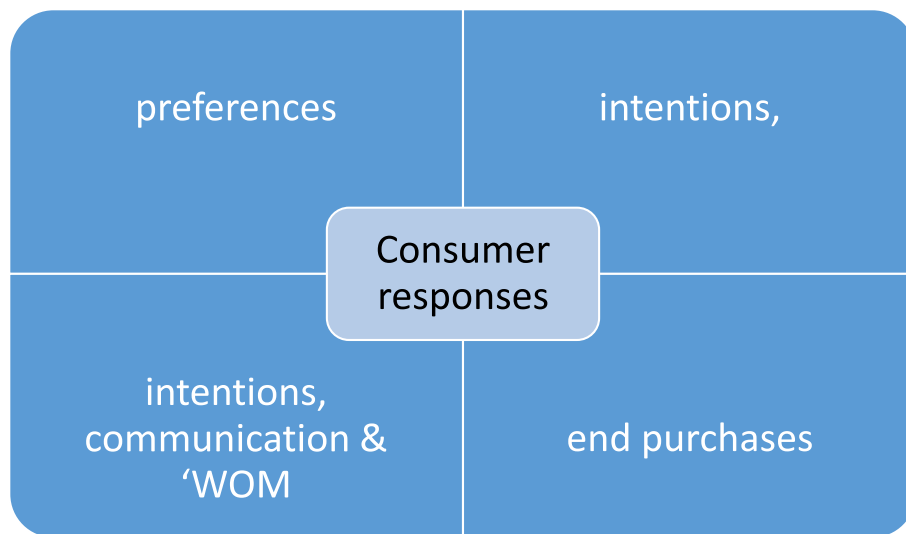
Layer 2 presents cognition:

- cognitive
- impulses and flows or feelings and emotions
- experienced and reverse reflective behaviour/backward induction and deductive reasoning behind the past
- inner motivations, drive & self

Themes:

Perceptions & preferences: perceptions will generate and lead to preferences.

Perceptions & intentions: perceptions will lead to intentions cognitions & decisions: cognition will generate and lead to purchase decisions and intentions evaluation: the end or final purchases is followed by assessment and evaluation following post purchases dispositions or expressions and reactions.



**Fig. 2** Consumer responses leads generated & decisions. Source Author’s draft & present study

**Table 8** ‘Intentions, repeat purchases & buys – Brand; Lifestyles, cognition, culture & inclination from ‘CSR activities

Parameters:	$\beta$	R	t	p-value	SER $\beta$ :
Intentions, repeat purchases and buys – Brand; Lifestyles, preferences, cognition, culture & inclination from ‘CSR activities	0.9878	0.9610	4.3785	<.0001	≈0.2256

**Table 9** ‘Image & reputation – communication & inclination

Parameters:	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\alpha$	p value
Image & brand reputation – communication & inclination	0.7858	0.8825	1.1090	<.001

**Table 10** ‘Image & reputation–communication & inclination

Parameters:	$\beta$	R	t	p-value	SER $\beta$ :
Image & reputation–communication & inclination	0.7858	0.9394	3.4785	<.001	≈0.2256

The emerging themes depict and align with the model presented in Fig. 2.

Furthermore, a full and detailed insights into consumer responses of decision making process is significant as responses triggered by preferences can shape the entire behavioural pathway, and reflect n purchase intentions, actions and decisions. This can create a brand equity from an enhanced image and reputation.

It is extrapolated, projected and assumed from the responses captured from the interviews, survey and questionnaires in arriving at the ‘themes from the analyses and codes.

The point of convergence, nexus and connections or link is one critical point, and a vital and key factor or thing crucial in “mixed methods” research between the qualitative and quantitative methods from the methods or design, results, and analyses.

‘Comment(s):

The *p* – value (>0.05) from the assumption of the composite relationship existing and connecting the brands, awareness or consciousness; “lifestyles as a part of brand culture and lifestyles of the people”. Overall, the Italian perception of brand and awareness is quite high as shown and demonstrated by the people as

analyzed and captured from data in this poll and experimental survey.

This demonstrates a relatively high level of the brand consciousness, and experiences in the Italian domain illustrating from the general brand awareness across the fashion sphere and entire product lines existing and brands available in Italia. Brand can be seen and perceived or conceived as a general and core part of the traditions and lifestyles and cultural formation of the people.

Furthermore, in addition to the quantitative data collected and obtained from the poll and experimental survey, the qualitative analysis and data show and indicates there is a strong bearing “cultural lifestyles, orientations and beliefs of the people” play on the brand and essentially in connection with CSR. This also enhances the results from Table 6 on the traditional tools of brand communication based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> component and layer or strata carved around; CSR & images captured.

Corporations, companies or firms and organizations based on this can adopt CSR as a strategic tool, then carving it into their brands in as much as people associate with brands that show care for social welfare, environmental protection and such courses. This can be a selling point and a means of gaining a competitive advantage.

These align with the research findings, and previous research questions (Adewole, 2023) as presented and based on the scope of the present investigation and research.

**Factor model:**

As proposed, 3 layers are outlined and presented as follows.

Layer 1

- perception of consumers and employees from reputation
- perception from awareness, communication & message
- perception of effectiveness from experiences & activities or engagement
- perception of image
- perception from association, culture & link or lifestyles

Layer 2:

- cognitive
- impulses and flows or feelings and emotions
- experienced and reverse reflective behaviour/backward induction and deductive reasoning behind the past
- inner motivations, drive & self

Layer 3

- responses
- outcomes from motivation
- future projections and prospecting (Table 11)

‘N.B:

The various indicators of the parameters are linked with the formative constructs of brand driven tools and instruments based on the 3 - Layered model proposed and presented have been analysed from the information

**Table 11** ‘Constructs of the variables, & parameters

Parameter or variables	Indicators	‘Estimate	‘T value
Layer 1			
- perception of consumers and employees from reputation	P1	0.770	4.225
- perception from awareness, communication & message	P2	0.728	5.225
- perception of effectiveness from experiences & activities or engagement	P3	0.625	3.602
- perception of image	P4	0.725	9.772
- perception from association, culture & link or lifestyles	P5	0.885	6.825
Layer 2:			
- cognitive	Cog. 1	0.326	4.880
- impulses and flows	Cog2. 2	0.424	6.824
- experienced and reverse reflective behaviour/backward induction and deductive reasoning behind the past	Cog. 3	0.238	6.200
	Cog. 4	0.221	2.594
Layer 3:			
- responses	R1	0.384	9.224
- outcomes from motivation	R 2	0.644	8.225
- future projections and prospecting	R 3	0.625	12.829

unveiled by the sampling and data collection process. The perceptions, which could be extrinsic or externally influenced on various components and indicators or factors are shaped internally, or intrinsically by the cognitive thoughts and senses, self-motivated and outwardly transmit or reflect on the responses shown and made by the consumers or individual.

The indicators are associated with perceptions, cognition and responses from the formative constructs and the subsets identified based on the 3 - Layered model comprises; P BR, P BR2, P BR3, P BR4 & P BR5

Cog. 1, Cog. 2, Cog. 3, Cog. 4 from Layer 2;

R1, R2 & R3 from Layer 3.

Source: 'Author's draft & present study

Strategically; organizations can work around the following key areas to enhance their image, build a strong brand name and reputation around the brand identity and adopt communication to facilitate and enhance a translation to equity cognizant of the findings of the presently introduced novel 3 - Factor model.

Communication & brand: Brand can be seen and depicted as a communication tool capable of transmitting core messages and make a smart brand.

Image, preferences & brand culture: Brand culture can be a key facilitator and enhancer for a strong brand preference and image

Communication & strategic plans: Strategically, organizations can work emphatically on their communication plans and network.

Customer's perceived value, preferences & brand

Customer's satisfaction & unique experiences

Furthermore, the 3 - Factor model newly introduced reinforces, strengthens further and enhances the previous models of consumer behaviour presented around the black box by linking cognition with the core "thoughts of decision making." This is strongly supportive of the literature that perceptions of "product social responsibility" or "product innovativeness" can spill over to purchase intention (Chen and Huang, 2018), which, enhances corporate happiness such as high-profit level and large sales volume. Bhattacharya et al. (2021) also verified that CSR positively influenced firms' sales.

### Further discussion

The findings, based on consistency, align with the literature; for instance, the perception drawn that the CSR activities roles played by a company have a positive impact and implications on consumers as they are sensitive to social concerns (Sabate & Puente, 2003). Furthermore, the present findings are strongly supportive of the literature, as value-chain CSR engagement creates social value and achieves financial success via the daily

operations of a firm's value-chain systems (Chen and Huang, 2018).

As revealed by the responses of the customers in a study by Mahmood and Bashir (2020), brand reputation has a significant impact on brand equity in the fast food industry. This can be translated to other industries, sectors and emerging or existing organizations.

The results are consistent with the extant and available literature that found a positive connection, association, or relation between brand reputation and brand equity (Stanwick P & Stanwick S, 2003; Arzham & Ahmad, 2020).

The previous and present studies converge as 'CSR significantly contributes a huge role in enhancing and promoting the brand equity of an organization by developing and building a good reputation (Sabate & Puente, 2003; Lii & Lee, 2012; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

CSR initiatives, promotes brand image (Bianchi et al. 2019).

Thus, CSR can put a company or brand in proper positioning and attain a positive image as perceived, conceived, or seen in the eyes of consumers, the public, and the entire society.

Due to the fact that consumers like to associate and relate with brands and companies showing and expressing concern and care for the environment, social welfare, and well-being and are tenaciously committed to such a course and look far beyond economic interests, goals, and pursuits.

Furthermore, by strongly and sincerely committed to 'investment risks and capturing into their business models for the sake of sustainable marketing and long-term goals, they will drive strong consumer commitment, brand loyalty, and further or potential translation to equity.

Interestingly, and most crucial and fundamentally pertinent, funds and incentives can go into re-investments, plant expansion, operations, and increased production cycles and networks, which would foster and facilitate resource optimization and judicious utilization, which in turn translate to enhanced financial performance and profitability.

### Implications to practice, theory & debates

Consumers highly tend to associate and interact with brands based on their perceptions; this can, in fact, or in an actual sense, impact or influence the distribution channels and consequently, be linked to the value chain, distribution channels, and supply.

Brand loyalty is a key and fundamental theme to be explored and applied in marketing and management practices for its key roles, considering present trends and dynamics, such as disruptions in supply chains

attributable also to recent 'global waves of health pandemics from recent covid19 struck and challenge.

Brand plays a key role in value creation, and potentially capable of shaping the distribution channels, platform and entire distribution – supply chains. It is essential that companies identify and outline or specify key strategies that allow them to adapt to changing and emerging realities that can lead to a sustainable differentiation from others and existing competitors (Orviz Martínez et al., 2021; Ullah et al., 2021). CSR can be strategically applied as a tool of brand communication and leveraged upon, and interestingly extrapolating from the novel 3 - Factor model as presented.

Finally, organizations, brand managers and marketing teams should put adequate and significant efforts and keen attention in understanding and discerning their brands, how to position and clearly link and associate with the culture, 'thoughts, cognitions, lifestyles and orientations of the people from the context of strategic brand communication, adopting and employing 'CSR as a pivotal tool, and extrapolations into the 3 - Factor model presented in this study in order to drive their attentions, attractions and more significantly and importantly enhance their distribution and communication or information dissemination channels, digital networks or platforms, social media and online interactions, links and supply chains towards increased value creation, capturing and deriving profits in return.

### Limitations

A major limitation encountered in this study is fund limitation as this study was self-sponsored under no grant application at present. Again, the bulk of the data collection and survey was done within the peaks of the covid19 pandemics which made it tougher to collect the data, but this was subdued by working tenaciously and very hard enough.

### Future research avenues:

Future research activities can delve into the aspect of the 'black – box model of consumer behaviour and decision-making with rational choices from cognition in connection with CSR.

More emphasis can also be placed more on balance: "competing vs. complimentary" interests of CSR from the stakeholder perspective, taking business motives and 'CSR beyond economic interests or motives and dwelling around the realist's view.

An interesting area for possible research activities and endeavour is in the aspect of exploring new innovativeness, technology and sustainable templates from

a strategic point and organizational structural and design level, in fact in connection with supply chains, distribution and sustainable marketing.

### Conclusion

CSR can be a key strategy in promoting brand reputation and translating it into equity while reaching and striking a balance between business, society, and the environment in the context of the brand in connection with consumer behaviour, perception, and awareness, and pertinently in association with the culture, lifestyles, and orientations of the people.

Consumers are dominant players that should be considered and prioritized as key and vital stakeholders by firms, companies, and organizations. This also justifies the newly introduced and novel 3-factor model that emphasizes "perceptions, cognitions, and responses," which are 3 key factors that shape the consumer's behaviour, actions, attributes, and responses or reactions, which can significantly tell and influence their key and core decisions that can in turn or resultantly impact firms, companies, and organizations in numerous ways, such as financial performances, sales, turnover, and profitability.

As revealed by the results of this study and in line with the literature, as mentioned earlier and enumerated, "CSR is a key subset of the extant and existing traditional template of communication that can significantly enhance the brand, enhance or stimulate, trigger or create a brand reputation, and translate into brand equity". Thus, CSR should be carved as a strategic tool and instrument into the business model as a part of the lifestyles of people, culture, orientations, and beliefs.

Since the emergence and creation in the 1950s until the present and recent, CSR has vastly evolved, changing and assumed a multidimensional perspective as enumerated and discussed in this study, essentially embedding stakeholder and CSR, while stressing consumer behaviour, brand awareness and perceptions, and dwelling on communication as a key and strategic tool.

The present trends, dynamics and manifestations from climate change and socio-economic impacts of their activities on the environment calls for a new shift and approaches beyond economic motives in the extant and emerging trends and dynamics. thus, CSR is a requisite and essential component required in the business model, and corporations, firms, organizations.

As consumers become attracted and inclined to brands that are committed to welfare and environmental protection courses, indicate that 'CSR is a key and potential tool that has become a tool that can be adopted in gaining a competitive advantage, profitability, enhancing and

improving financial performances towards overall effectiveness and operational efficiency.

From insightful clarifications; defining and elaborating on some fundamentals and branding perspectives, and being conscious of the fact the strong nexus or ties a strong brand and engagement have with the people in relation to associated feelings, emotions, psychology and cognition, it can be inferred that culture and traditional behavior play significant roles in brand perception considering the complexes, unpredictable trends, or patterns associated with consumers expressions and behavior in the context of a black box, rational and complex mixes, even justified by the result of the 'hypothesis testing of the composite attributes and evident from the 'ANOVA, which gave a  $p$  – value exceeding 0.05. The multiple comparison also points to the influences and how cognition, impulses, flows, and feelings as embedded compositely and inherent in culture, lifestyles, inclinations, and orientations can shape the brand and eventually drive perceptions and attractiveness, which further can translate to a positive influence and impact on the brand and stir and raise its image and reputation. and translate a brand reputable enough into equity.

In its increasing importance, CSR is a potential tool, most pertinently embedding and incorporating as part of the brand an embedded model and template capturing consumer perspectives behaviourally and based on responses for arriving at a business model that drives organizations and companies towards pragmatic steps attempted at 'climate change mitigation, an 'investment risk, and a potential hedge.

A CSR-based business model tied to the cultural and lifestyles of the people in brand context would foster effectiveness and efficiency in the operational modules as well as an impact on financial performance as unveiled from the qualitative data analysis, thus emphasizing the significance of brand.

Conclusively, a CSR-based business model and structure can enhance sustainability, profitability, long term prospects, fostering customer and brand engagement and relational building from the communication context by strategically embracing active tools of engagement and effectively transmitting core messages.

Finally, as a leverage, CSR should be considered as a key, vital, and strategic tool, embracing communication in business and management, and essentially in striking a balance between economic interests, societal needs, and the environment from the context of a socially responsible perspective, stakeholder and brand consciousness in association and connection with the culture, lifestyles, and orientations of the people.

## Appendix 1

Extract: From previous study, 2023

### Qualitative Results on Consumer's Perception: 'Themes & Analysis:

Deduction, Analysis & Interpretations from the Themes:

'Why do we emphasize 'CSR as a key and essential strategic need in business models and the need for organizations to tie brand to 'CSR, lifestyle and culture? Brand reputation will translate to equity, consumers will associate with brands and companies that care for welfare needs, environment and societal needs.

Extrapolated/Simulation: 'A Simulated/Extrapolated Responses and Illustrations of Consumers Responses based on Perceptions of Organizations– Business Models Attributes from 'CSR & Features from the Research Questions, Interview and Survey

It is extrapolated, projected and assumed from the responses captured from the interviews, survey and questionnaires in arriving at the 'themes from the analyses and codes:

A: I associate with companies, organizations and brands showing care for welfare needs, environmental related courses and societal needs. enjoy working in a diverse environment or workplace: 78-93%

B: Effective & integrated strategic mix from business models based on 'CSR and would enhance sustainable marketing and drive the path to 'climate change mitigation from a socially responsible perspective: 89–99%

C: A 'CSR based business model tied to cultural and lifestyles of the people from brand context would foster effectiveness and efficiency in the operational modules as well as impact on financial performance: 75–85% or over '^

D: A 'CSR based business model and structure can enhance change transitions from short term to long term goals, drive to sustainability, localized stabilization and 'sustainable domains: 85%

Consumer Perceptions from Organizational Structure, Business Model & 'CSR driven

Attributes: A simulated/extrapolated responses and illustrations of the research questions with the codes or short phrases and labelled categories; 'A, B, C & D. ^

The point of convergence is one thing crucial in 'mixed methods research.

'Comment(s):

As seen above the  $p$  – value (>0.05) implying the assumption of the composite relationship existing and connecting the brands, awareness or consciousness; 'lifestyles as a part of brand culture and lifestyles of the people and the overall Italian perception shown and demonstrated by the people as analyzed and captured from data in this poll and experimental survey.



This is highly perceived overall and relatively high of the brand consciousness, experiences in the Italian domain illustrating from the general brand awareness across the fashion sphere and entire products available in Italia and brand seen and perceived or conceived as a general and core part of the traditions and lifestyles and cultural formation of the people.

From the ‘themes, and specifically, C, the fact of convergence is established between findings of the qualitative and quantitative data. From the results,

‘*p* – value (>0.05) implying the assumption of the composite relationship existing and connecting the brands, awareness or consciousness; ‘lifestyles as a part of brand culture and lifestyles of the people and the overall Italian perception shown and demonstrated by the people as analyzed and captured from data in this poll and experimental survey.

Furthermore, in addition to the quantitative data from the poll and experimental survey, the qualitative analysis and data show and indicates there is a strong bearing ‘cultural lifestyles, orientations and beliefs of the people play on the brand and essentially in connection with CSR from theme C as emerged in Figs. 3 and 4. This also enhances the results from Table 6 on the traditional tools of brand communication based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> component and layer or strata carved around; ‘CSR & images captured.

Corporations, companies or firms and organizations based on this can adopt ‘CSR as a strategic tool, then carving it into their brands in as much as people associate with brands that show care for social welfare, environmental protection and such courses. This can be a selling point and a means of gaining a competitive advantage. ‘^

From these categories as stated from A, B, C, & D, the following themes emerge as; “brand reputation, brand equity, ‘sustainability/investment risks – climate change mitigation, and efficiency, effectiveness & enhanced performances” as presented in Fig. 4. These align with the research findings, research questions as presented and the scope of the investigation and research.

Emerging themes:

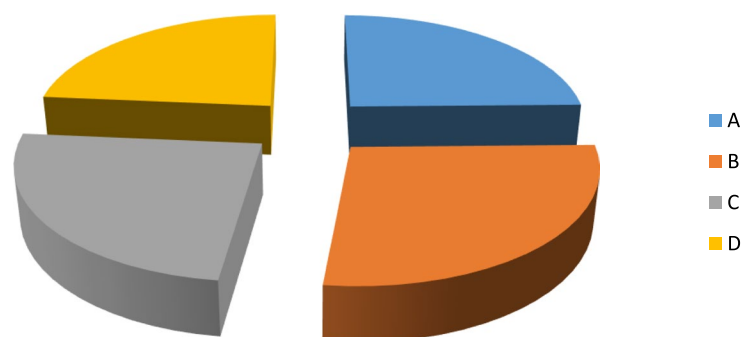
The point of convergence is one thing crucial in ‘mixed methods research;

‘Comment(s):

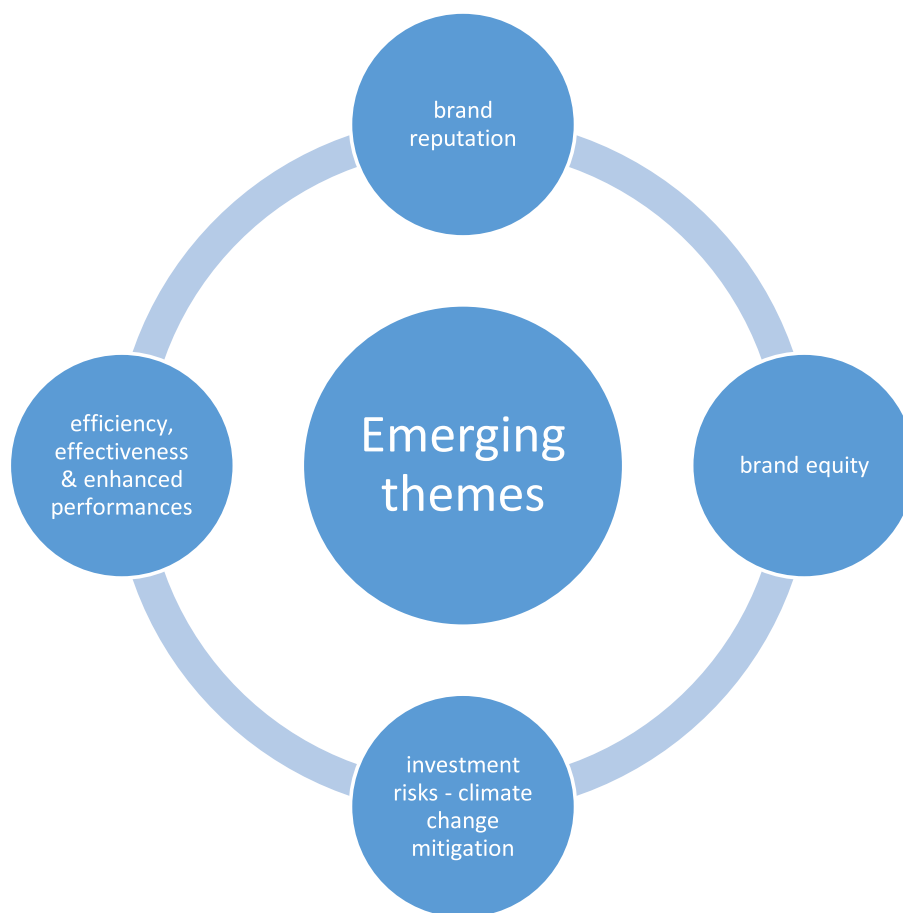
As seen above the *p* – value (>0.05) implying the assumption of the composite relationship existing and connecting the brands, awareness or consciousness; ‘lifestyles as a part of brand culture and lifestyles of the people and the overall Italian perception shown and demonstrated by the people as analyzed and captured from data in this poll and experimental survey.

This is highly perceived overall and relatively high of the brand consciousness, experiences in the Italian domain illustrating from the general brand awareness

### Consumer Perceptions: 'Organizations, features & attributes based on 'CSR driven Business Model



**Fig. 3** A simulated/extrapolated responses and illustrations of the research questions. Source: Author’s Extraction & Analysis. Attributes: A simulated/extrapolated responses and illustrations of the research questions with the codes or short phrases and labelled categories; ‘A, B, C & D. **A** I associate with companies, organizations and brands showing care for welfare needs, environmental related courses and societal needs. enjoy working in a diverse environment or workplace: 78–93%. **B** Effective & integrated strategic mix from business models based on ‘CSR and would enhance sustainable marketing and drive the path to ‘climate change mitigation from a socially responsible perspective: 89–99%. **C** A ‘CSR based business model tied to cultural and lifestyles of the people from brand context would foster effectiveness and efficiency in the operational modules as well as impact on financial performance: 75–85% or over ‘^ . **D** A ‘CSR based business model and structure can enhance change transitions from short term to long term goals, drive to sustainability, localized stabilization and ‘sustainable domains: 85%



**Fig. 4** Emerging Themes from Categories and Codes as Highlighted. Source: Author’s draft from present study, 2023

across the fashion sphere and entire products available in Italia and brand seen and perceived or conceived as a general and core part of the traditions and lifestyles and cultural formation of the people.

From the ‘themes, and specifically, C, the fact of convergence is established between findings of the qualitative and quantitative data. From the results,

‘*p* – value (>0.05) implying the assumption of the composite relationship existing and connecting the brands, awareness or consciousness; ‘lifestyles as a part of brand culture and lifestyles of the people and the overall Italian perception shown and demonstrated by the people as analyzed and captured from data in this poll and experimental survey.

Furthermore, in addition to the quantitative data from the poll and experimental survey, the qualitative analysis and data show and indicates there is a strong bearing ‘cultural lifestyles, orientations and beliefs of the people play on the brand and essentially in connection with CSR from theme C as emerged in Figs. 3 and 4. This also enhances

the results from Table 6 on the traditional tools of brand communication based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> component and layer or strata carved around; ‘CSR & images captured. ‘^

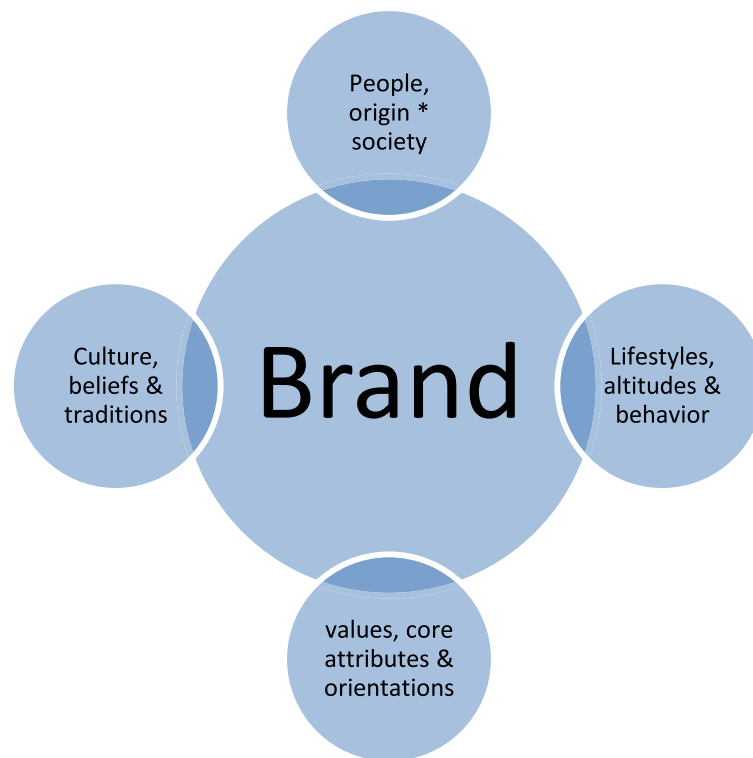
Corporations, companies or firms and organizations based on this can adopt ‘CSR as a strategic tool, then carving it into their brands in as much as people associate with brands that show care for social welfare, environmental protection and such courses. This can be a selling point and a means of gaining a competitive advantage. ‘^

**Appendix 2**

‘Recall:

1). A brand is an all – encompassing term and attributes depicted by ‘multiple characters and attributes crossing cultures, lifestyles, traditions and ways of life of the people.

As seen and shown; brand is multi – faceted beyond the ‘symbolic construct and all culturally, lifestyles,



**Fig. 5** Brand as a nexus, connection and association at centre, linking the people, lifestyles and their cultures. Source: 'Author's previous study & draft, 2021, 2023 & 2023

origin, values and cores – orientations encompassing and embedded!

This is the basis of fig. 4.0 previously presented as modified to drive and constitute the 'theoretical framework of the present study as extrapolated'^^^ (Fig. 5).

**Abbreviations**

'CSR	Corporate social responsibility
'BE	Brand equity
'BR	Brand relationship
'CR	Corporate responsibility or reputation
'WOM	Wood of mouth
CV	Coefficient of variance or variations $z_{cal} > z_{tab}(CV)$
z – tabulated	tab)
z – calculated	cal)
t-cal	calculated t-test statistics from formula or expression
$t_c$	critical value from the t-test
$\mu$	mean or sample mean
$\mu_0$	hypothesized or drawn population mean
'AVE	Average Variance Extracted
S.D	Standard deviation
SEM	Structural equation modeling
'SER <sub>β</sub>	Standard error of beta
Calculated z value	$Z_{cal}$
Tabulated z value	$Z_{tab}$

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**Author's contributions**

The author did the entire work encompassing; the preliminary questionnaire and interview draft, the data collection process and field work, the data compilation and refinement, analysis of data and the final reporting with the entire communication process.

**Author's information**

ADEWOLE Olu Korede is the founder and manager of "Literary Edifice" and "Global Resources Formazione"; these institutions have been strongly committed to intensive research, even though the full incorporation processes are still on - going. The parent body "Campagna Global Literary Edifice" was fully incorporated November, 2016 in Lagos.

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**Availability of data and materials**

The data applied and used in this research work were from questionnaire administration and personal interview conducted by the author in the course of this research project and investigation. The data was compiled and available with the author on request.

## Declarations

### Competing interests

The author declares there is no competing interest in any form, related or such.

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