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The Effect Of CSR On Consumer's Buying Behavior

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Abstract:

Although research into CSR and consumer behavior is still relatively young, there exists growing interest in studying the links between CSR and marketing of different products. The consumers of India are now well aware of and that companies now have to show responsibility towards society and the environment. The companies up to a certain extent has been realized that their socially responsible behavior have a direct impact on the consumer buying behavior. But what is the actual impact of companies' engagement in CSR on consumer behavior? The main objective is to investigate whether CSR has an impact on consumer trust and whether consumer trust has an impact on purchase intention, taking random stratified sample of 500 respondents using Multiple Linear Regression technique. For measuring CSR economic, ethical, philanthropic and legal, variables have been considered from Carroll's definition. This study found that CSR has a strong positive relationship with consumer trust and consumer trust has a strong positive relationship to purchase intention. This study will have implications for academicians to have an understanding relating to dynamics of the role of corporate social responsibility in consumers' buying behavior. This is also important for a manager that a substantial and identifiable consumer group exists that considers company's level of social responsibility in its purchase decisions. There are important lessons drawn from this study that owing to strengthening of consumers' awareness and rights in today's market scenario and companies who disregard expectations concerning social responsibly may risk consumer boycotts and criticism.

Key words: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, Green growth.

1.Introduction

Multinational corporations introduced the term stakeholder in the late 1960's. Stakeholders are those who were in any way affected by the corporations' activities. Subsequently, the term "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) came into use. The aim of corporate social responsibility is to take responsibility for all the company's actions and to put a positive impact on its communities, environment, consumers, employees and all other stakeholders (Freeman, 2010). CSR is not a new idea, more companies than ever before are supporting CSR initiatives like corporate philanthropy, minority support programs, cause-related marketing and socially responsible manufacturing practices and employment—and they are doing so with real marketing and financial muscle. More than 80% of the Fortune 500 companies address CSR issues on their websites, reflecting the persistent belief among business leaders that today CSR is not only an ethical vital, but also an economic one. One stakeholder group that appears to be particularly susceptible to a company's CSR initiatives is its customers. Marketplace polls suggest that there is a positive relationship exists between a company's CSR activities and consumers' reactions to that company and its products. The 2002 Corporate Citizenship poll by Cone Communications finds that 84% of Americans said that they would like to switch to the brands which are associated with a good cause, if quality and price are same.

This positive link of CSR to consumer backing is spurring companies to assign greater energies and resources to CSR. In other words, entice of larger consumer profits has contributed extensively in current years to the strengthening of the business case for CSR activity. Moral imperatives notwithstanding, business leaders are struggling with the appropriate goals guiding the formulation and deployment of CSR initiatives that will reap the greatest benefits for their companies. They are also, at the same time, realizing the urgent need to measure the returns to various CSR initiatives. For this, many companies have started practices such as corporate social reporting, social audits, and the triple bottom line. A lot of work has already been done in Western countries for identifying an organization's behaviour towards consumer purchasing decisions. On the other hand, not many studies have been conducted in emerging markets, such as India. CSR activities should improve a corporation's image in the market.

The objective of the paper is to investigate whether CSR initiative has an effect on trust and purchase intention of Indian consumers. We are concerned about exploring that whether consumers in India take into the consideration of organization's CSR issues before

using organizations' products and services. This study will also be useful for business houses in understanding the consumers' concern for the CSR programs that they should be engaging in, and it will also contribute to the existing literature.

To achieve the objectives of the study the paper is divided into following sections. Section 1 i.e. The present section gives the conceptual framework of CSR and its various dimensions. Section 11 gives review of existing literature. The third section contain details on the model development and hypotheses, methodology used and findings will be in the fourth section and conclusions and summery will be in the fifth section. References form the part of last section.

2.Review Of Literature

The following section gives the review of existing literature

2.1.Corporate Social Responsibility

During the 21th century, the environmental aspect of CSR grew even stronger and society's increased interest regarding environmental issues gives a new picture of CSR. Therefore, higher pressure was put on corporations and their initiatives in support of the environment. In the European Commission's CSR-report from 2002, CSR is described to have a close relationship between societies and companies to deal with both social and environmental concerns: "CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. In their most recent definition, the European Commission (2011) explains CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society".

Another definition which is very famous is "The total corporate social responsibility of business entails the simultaneous fulfilment of the firm's legal, economic, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. Or we can say that the CSR firm should strive to make a profit, be ethical, obey the law and be a good corporate citizen" (Carroll, 1991).

Carroll proposed other responsibilities in the following decreasing order of importance, after economic: legal, ethical and philanthropic. This concept by Carroll (1979) suggests that a business should follow four components: economic responsibility, ethical responsibility, philanthropic and legal responsibility, (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Carroll, 1995). The first component is economic responsibility. This is the business' fundamental responsibility to make a profit and expand. The second component is legal responsibility which means a business must obey the law and work within the legal framework of society. The third is ethical responsibility which means a business has to value the rights of others and meet the hope applied by society to do what is right. The last component is philanthropic responsibility which means a business should add to and support the broader community and improve the quality of society (Carroll, 1995; Snider et al., 2003).

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2006) has defined CSR as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, as well as that of the local public and society at large; management studies have defined CSR as a company's obligation to operate in an economically and environmentally sustainable way at the same time recognizing the interest of all stakeholders and maximizing social, economic and environmental values (Waddock and Post, 1990;Wood, 1991; Matten et al., 2003; Waddock, 2004). Although there is still no agreement on any one definition of CSR, each and every definition is based on the thought that CSR is about how a business takes account of its social, economic and environmental impacts in the way it operates. We presume that consumers are affected by the fact that how effectively business is completing its ethical and philanthropic responsibilities because they believe that legal responsibilities all business complete because these responsibilities have legal backing. So to measure ethical and philanthropic responsibilities we have taken three factor first is how effectively business house is taking care of environmental sustainability, second is how effectively they are taking care of local community and Third is whether they are selling environment friendly green products or not.

2.2.Consumer Trust

Trust is regarded as an important component in business, but, there is confusion regarding the definition and the concept of trust among many authors who have different perspectives on the definition and concept of trust (Swean & Chumpitaz, 2008). Trust is also defined as a set of beliefs, a desire, and accumulated assumption directed towards a brand (Swean & Chumpitaz, 2008). Trust is resulting from the motives, characteristics, and intentions of the exchange partners and the evaluation, assumptions, and prediction by the consumers as to the promised outcomes of the company (Cannon &Doney, 1997).

According to Swean & Chumpitaz (2008) trust have there are three main perspectives, which includes perceived credibility (capability of associate to fulfill and satisfy customer satisfaction), perceived integrity (capability of associate in terms of keeping promises and honestly), and perceived benevolence (capability of associate to prioritize interest of consumers).

- **Affect-Based Trust**

Affect Based Trust is the emotional based trust of one individual combined with others (McAllister, 1995). According to the study of Chun Ha, Yang-Kyu, & Cho (2011) affective trust includes the characteristics of openness, understanding, honesty, liking, benevolence and respect. Affect based trust is one individual's degree of confidence in a partner on the basis of a feeling or an emotional factor, a concern displayed by the partner (McAllister, 1995). Therefore, affective trust is usually based on a long-term trust between two parties.

- **Disposition-Based Trust**

Dispositional-Based Trust is the tendency of one person to trust another, it is the propensity to trust others, it represents an individual's stable personality trait (Rotter, 1980). Based on the study by Rotter (1980), an individual's general orientation relating to trust is very important in new situations and in situations of ambiguity when the individual is unable to predict the behavior of others. Gill et al. (2005) supported the thought that tendency to trust is very important when there is uncertain information about the trustee's intention.

- **Cognition-Based Trust**

Cognition-Based Trust is explained as rational, objective, methodical evaluation by a trustor concerning a target as being trustworthy (Olugbenga, 2006). The notion of cognition-based trust was explained by several authors McAllister (1995), Johnson & Grayson (2005) and Erdem & Ozen (2003) in terms of a rational based willingness or you can say degree of confidence of one individual used in trusting the other party's competence and reliability.

Mayer et al. (1995) stated that previous researchers explored different characteristics of a trustee that leads to cognitive trust, including availability, consistency, competence, fairness, integrity, locality, discreetness, openness, receptivity, judgment, trustworthy intentions, promise fulfillment, motives, benevolence, ability, honesty, and group goal. Though, ability, benevolence and integrity are the three commonly mentioned characteristics that trustors use when cognitively judging the trustee. Mayer et al. (1995) suggested that a trustor is likely not to trust in future interactions, if the trustee lacks benevolence, ability, or integrity. Regarding the three characteristics of a trustworthiness,

2.3. Concept Of Consumer's Purchase Intention (PI) And Impact Of Purchase Intention And CSR

According to Espejel et al. (2008) buying intention is a prediction of consumer attitude or behavior towards a future purchase decision. In other words, buying or purchase intention is a pattern of consumers' attitudes or beliefs, regarding their future purchases. The positive attitudes of consumers towards the company's reputation, image, and product evaluation can be influenced by CSR activities (Dacin & Brown, 1997). A number of studies have showed that there is a positive relationship between a business's CSR program and consumers' attitudes towards that organisation and its products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2000; Creyer Ross, 1997). Mohr, Harris and Webb (2001) examined and their finding indicated a important relationship between CSR and consumer responses. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) research on reaction of consumers to CSR shows that CSR will directly affect consumers' intentions to purchase corporation's products.

By supporting CSR activities, consumers are labeled ethical consumers (Auger et al., 2010). Accordingly, ethical consumption is defined as the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices due to personal and moral beliefs. This can be as simple as buying a product at an Oxfam store or as complex as boycotting goods consumption (Crane, 2001).

Research suggests that consumers in the developing or emerging economies cannot afford to be socially conscious, thus suggesting that social consciousness at the checkout counter is a luxury (Auger et al., 2010). In contrast, consumers in developed countries are thought to be more socially conscious due to product availability, and to possess greater willingness to pay for the "luxury" of social consciousness (Auger et al., 2010; Pelsmacker, Driesen and Rayd, 2005).

It seems clear that there are certain trends in ethical consumption. However, it is important to note that the majority of published empirical research on this topic emanates from developed countries (e.g., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore and Hill, 2005; Brown and Dacin, 1997; Creyer and Ross, 1997; Maignan, 2001; Maignan and Ferrell, 2000; Mohr and Webb, 2005; Sen, Bhattacharya and Daniel, 2006; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Maignan, 2001; Matten and Moon, 2004; Freestone and McGolrick, 2007). Yet, a number of studies have shown that consumer attitudes towards CSR tend to vary between cultures (Srnrka, 2004; Vitell, 2003; Auger et al., 2008) currently, we know very little about ethical consumption in developing countries.

2.4. Impact And Relationship Of Trust And Purchase Intention

According to one definition, trust is defined as a set of beliefs or customer expectation of a particular product or service. Many researchers found a positive relationship among trust and purchase intention in that trust can reduce uncertainty and positively influence buying behavior (Kenning, 2008). As an example, Roman (2003) found a positive relationship of trust and correct ethical behavior of bank employees; that trust affected positive customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Sirdeshmikh et al. (2002) also found that trust can positively affect customer loyalty.

In conclusion, trust has a positive impact on purchase intention as it is an affective identification by the customer with the organization. Loyalty and customer satisfaction emerge when the customers trust and rely on one particular product or service. Thus the higher degree of trust reflects to the higher degree of consumer's buying intention (Gefen & Straub 2004).

2.5. Relationship Between Trust And CSR

According to Swean & Chumpitaz (2008), CSR is regarded as a signal of trustworthiness that clarifies the effort of a company in terms of enhancing the welfare of customers. CSR programs have positive influence on customer's trust.

Regarding a theory proposed by Spence (1974), customer purchase intention can be weighted by a company's CSR activities as it reduces the inherent uncertainty in any transaction. Morgan and Hunt (1994) claimed that the affect of customers' trust is derived from existing values that customers and the company share with each other.

Thus, customers' trust can be defined as joint beliefs, regarding whether certain kinds of behaviors, goals and policies are significant, appropriate or good. A company can gain benefits from CSR activities through customer loyalty, positive brand attitude, customer

trust, increased profits.. In addition, there is much research supporting the idea that CSR activities increase re purchase intention, customer loyalty and trust (Yoon, 2006).

3. Model Development And Hypotheses

This paper had developed its conceptual framework for the literature review. The rationale of this study is to understand the relationship of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Purchase Intention and Consumer Trust, as a case study of India. In this study CSR is the independent variable, Consumer Trust is intervening variable, and Purchase Intention is the dependent variable. In a study by Adiwijaya & Fauzan (2012), a model proposed that cause-related marketing influences consumer loyalty, showing a positive relationship between CSR perception and consumer trust. Thus, this study by Adiwijaya & Fauzan (2012) is relevant to the relationship between CSR and consumer trust in the present study. Another study by Davis (2011) meant to measure factors associated with trust and its relationship to consumers' willingness to buy the advertised product.

The result of the study establishes a strong relationship between consumer trust and willingness to buy which is related to the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention of this study.

- Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between Consumer Trust and CSR programs of the organization.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between Purchase Intention and Trust of the Consumer.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between CSR and Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention

SUSTAINABLE CSR MODEL EMBEDING TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENSIONS CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

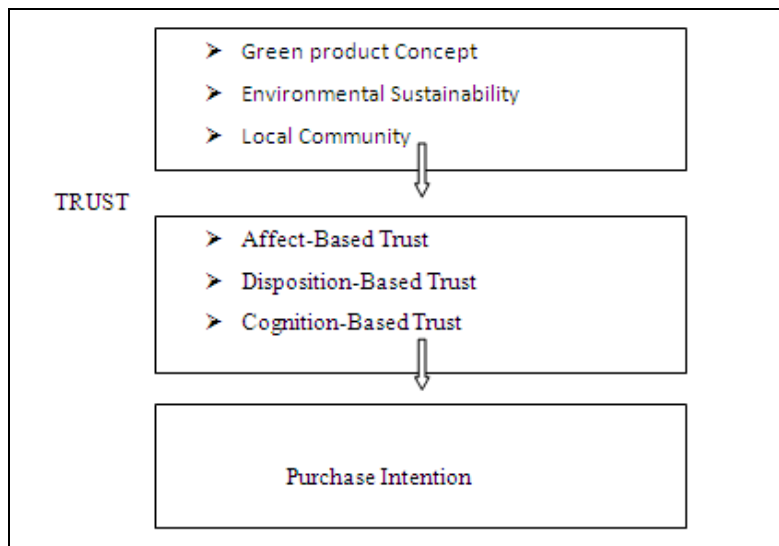


Figure 2

4. Methodology And Findings

In this study, a structured questionnaire is used for collecting data of the effect of corporate social responsibility on purchase intention and consumer trust. Thus, the questionnaire of this research consists of three main parts, CSR, Purchase Intention and Consumer Trust. We have used five-point Likert-Scale to measure all questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part provides a few screening questions: all the respondents are required to be at least 18 years old. First of all, the consumers are asked about the factors that affect their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. The second part measures respondents' perspectives by using a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The last part consists of five questions of general information on the respondents, including age, gender, occupation, education level, married or unmarried and income of the person.

In this test of model fit and hypothesis testing we used the generalized least square (GLS) which indicates noteworthy differences between the data and the theory being tested. Therefore, the mixed indices recommend moderate support for the theoretical model see Table 1.

Name of variables	Estimate
Mean_ Affect-Based Trust	.876
Mean_ Disposition-Based Trust	.794
Mean_ Cognition-Based Trust	.469
Mean _Green Products	.767
Mean Environmental Sustainability	.588
Mean Local community	.538

Table 1: Hypothesis Testing Results

Chi-square = 42.421, df=7, CMIN/DF =7.6, p-value = 0.000, CFI=0.967, RMSEA=0.08, Hoelter=254 (0.01)

The results of hypothesis testing on the basis of Multiple Linear Regressions (MLR) is shown in the table. R-Squared Multiple Correlations identified mean of trust (Affect-Based Trust = 0.876, Disposition-Based Trust = 0.794, Cognition-Based Trust = 0.469) and CSR (Green Building Concept= 0.767, Environmental Sustainability = 0.588, Local Community = 0.538) on the other hand, the overall path analysis presents the significant level among all three major variables.

Direct, indirect, and total effects of variables.

Variables	Direct	Indirect	Factor loading
ABT(TRUST)	1.045	0.0000	.956
DBT(TRUST)	1.011	0.0000	.785
CBT(TRUST)	.798	0.0000	.675
GP(CSR)	1.097	0.0000	.921
ES(CSR)	1.012	0.0000	.694
LC(CSR)	1.003	0.0000	.821

Table 2

In the table above we showed the direct effect of Trust and dimensions of trust (Affect-Based Trust, Cognition-Based Trust and Disposition-Based Trust), as well as, the direct effect of CSR and Green Building Concept, and Environmental Sustainability, Local Community in MLR. Total effects of Trust on Affect Based-Trust were 0.956. Total effects of Trust on Cognition-Based Trust were 0.675. Moreover, the total effects of trust of Disposition- Based Trust were 0.785. On the other hand the total effects of CSR on Green Product Concept, Environmental Sustainability and Local Community were 0.921, 0.694, and 0.821 respectively.

5.Summary And Conclusion

In this paper we have shown the perception of consumers based on their rational, emotional and individual judgments towards their willingness to purchase a product in the context of the concept CSR (Local Community, Environmental Sustainability, and Green Product). On the basis of the analysis of this study, we have shown that there is a positive relationship between CSR result in consumer trust and a positive intention to purchase a product. The result of this study indicates important differences between the data and the theory. Hence, the mixed indices suggest moderate support for the theoretical model.

Thus, the results of this study supported by Kenning (2008) and Swaen & Chumpitaz (2008), found that CSR can play an important role in building a long-term relationship with consumers. Therefore, CSR programs encourage people to trust a company to fulfil the terms of the exchange and do as expected (perceived credibility) and be forthright and honest (perceived integrity) (Swaen & Chumpitaz , 2008). This study also supported by the results found in Kenning (2008) that specific and general trust has positive effects on buying behaviour.

Managers must note that this study supports previous results reported in the literature, telling that a substantial and identifiable consumer exists that take into the consideration a company's level of social responsibility in its purchase. Manufacturers and retailers can appeal to this group while at the same time meeting their business objectives and make contributions to society. Though, companies that endorse themselves as socially responsible need to be ready to deal with criticisms of any irresponsible behaviour they are seen as committing, as information spread within seconds in this information technology era. On the other hand, companies who ignore expectations concerning social responsibly may risk consumer boycotts because of the increase of consumers' awareness in today's market scenario.

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