



## Article

# Linking Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumer Identification and Purchasing Intention

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**Abstract:** Apart from the broad oversight of a company's supply chain practices, more businesses are recognizing the importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its influence on societal well-being. In addition to their financial success, ratings are being developed to analyze how well most corporations perform regarding their CSR operations. This grade can then be used to determine the market success of each firm. This study's objective was to examine the mechanisms of how customers intend to pay premium prices for companies' CSR activities, i.e., how CSR affects consumer–company identification and purchasing intention. We employed a questionnaire-based study to evaluate our research model generated from the literature. Using PLS-SEM, a quantitative analysis based on responses from major businesses in Pakistan was conducted. The results indicate that CSR is significantly correlated with brand image, consumer–company identification and identity attractiveness, and further leads to higher consumer satisfaction and purchasing intention. This paper contributes to the literature by confirming that consumers in Pakistan intend to buy CSR-conscious products and are willing to sponsor companies' CSR activities. It implies that investing in CSR may improve a company's financial performance and competitive advantage. On the other hand, the stability of this association calls for additional testing and empirical investigation.

**Keywords:** corporate social responsibility (CSR); consumer–company identification; customer satisfaction; brand image; purchase intention



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## 1. Introduction

For all firms, regardless of what they do or where they are, it is crucial to comprehend CSR, which covers social, economic and environmental duties as well as societal welfare [1]. Prior research suggests that CSR has a favorable impact on customer satisfaction, a company's identity, reputation, staff engagement and overall company performance [2]. Conducting CSR operations is essential, since it helps businesses effectively manage their sustainable development in relation to their environment [3]. The business must let its consumers identify with them in order to keep them as customers. When this happens, customers also promote the business. This approach is recognized as “consumer–company identification,” wherein customers identify themselves in relation to their status as customers of the firm and their perceptions of the organization as a whole [4,5]. Consumer–company identification, according to [6], is “based on customers' identification with the firms that assist them in satisfying one or more important self-definitional requirements.” According to the authors of [7], the effort to acquire a good or to visit a place that sells services constitutes purchase intention. This concept is shown by [8], which shows a direct correlation between customer loyalty and perceived service quality. If customers are devoted, they have a chance of making a purchase, and thus there is a strong desire to make a purchase.

Financial success was formerly the most important measure for determining a company's worth. Firms with higher financial margins were awarded higher rankings. The

maximization of shareholder wealth was the most crucial goal of profit-driven businesses. In the past, there was little attention to CSR in this area. However, in the last decade, the public image of CSR has shifted dramatically [9]. A company's performance has increasingly been judged regarding its contribution to society [10,11]. As a result, a corporate social responsibility (CSR) plan is a way for businesses to reduce the adverse effects of their operations on the natural, cultural and social contexts [12]. CSR refers to an organization's obligation to society as a whole, not only to its shareholders and consumers [13]. Customers are more exposed to various issues, including currency crises, natural disasters, climate change, vast regional disparities and financial crises in industrialized countries. These are concerns for businesses to address to play a positive role in society by incorporating CSR into their business plan to achieve customer satisfaction and long-term competitive benefits [8]. As a result, an increasing number of businesses have introduced a variety of socially responsible activities to demonstrate their dedication to this philosophy, including energy and water saving, recycling and community participation [14].

One of the key reasons for this increased interest is the belief that CSR impacts consumer satisfaction and purchase decisions when businesses are operating in a highly competitive market with ever-increasing customer expectations [15]. As a result of increased worldwide competition, slower growth rates, reduced population growth and oversupplied and mature markets, many businesses are having trouble expanding their market share [16]. Due to the obvious advantages, businesses have become increasingly engaged in caring for and keeping their consumers. Customers that are loyal are more inclined to buy, spend and suggest more [17]. On the other hand, creating client loyalty is a challenge for businesses, since switching suppliers can be risky because it is impossible to predict the quality of a service before it is used [18].

In order to expand the number of devoted customers, companies work to establish long-term connections with them by satisfying their varied needs and preferences [19]. With the growing interest in customer relationships, it has become clear that both theory and practice must include customer satisfaction and purchase intention as important constructs in relationships and their antecedents. There are a variety of viewpoints on this issue in the literature [17,20]. Prior research has focused chiefly on major marketing principles such as customer satisfaction [21] and customer trust [22]. As part of their efforts to understand service dynamics, services scholars continue to pay close attention to these social exchange characteristics. An integrated approach that combines these elements into holistic conceptualizations has recently gained popularity [8]. To date, the literature has paid inadequate attention to social identification antecedents of consumer satisfaction (e.g., identification and attraction) and has not yet included them in current frameworks. According to recent research, a social identity viewpoint may be beneficial in examining the interaction between businesses and their stakeholders [6]. The impacts of consumer identification with the firm on customer loyalty are documented in the academic literature [23–25]. Customer identification with a business (C–C identification) is a cognitive state of consumer connection and closeness to a firm [26], resulting from a subjective comparison between the organizational entity and the customer's own identity. Since a subject may meet self-definitional requirements through his or her association with a socially responsible organization, identity attraction can be employed to give a more effective explanation for the effects of CSR on customer satisfaction [27]. However, little research has examined the interactions among social exchange variables such as contentment and purchase and social identity components such as identification and attraction to explain consumer satisfaction [28,29]. Since both social identification processes [30,31] and understandings of service dynamics [32] make a contribution to customers' psychological phenomena, it seems logical to include both courses in a broader conceptualization of customer satisfaction development. This study proposes an integrated approach for closing the gap.

In addition, the CSR concept has lately been employed in research using the customer loyalty model. Recent empirical research shows a beneficial association between CSR and consumer satisfaction [24,25,33,34]. Most of this research claims that CSR directly increases

customer satisfaction without needing intermediate variables. According to this research, CSR is such an important aspect of a company's image that it may automatically attract customers. However, given the construct's intrinsic complexity, it is unlikely that customers mechanically consider CSR while making purchasing decisions or picking which firm to build ties with [6]. This study believes that the function of social identity factors (e.g., identification, attraction) and social exchange variables (e.g., satisfaction and purchase) in CSR's impact on customer satisfaction may be better explained by integrating them in the analysis. Although multiple studies have attempted to relate CSR to customer responses, little is known about the various pathways that lead from CSR to satisfaction and purchase [24]. In reality, little study has been conducted to develop a conceptual model for how CSR affects customer satisfaction [35].

The current study adds to the body of knowledge in a variety of ways. First, it establishes and proves that CSR has a direct impact on the development of consumer satisfaction. Second, the importance of C–C identification and identity attraction in the CSR process to customer satisfaction and purchase intent is confirmed by this study.

## 2. Literature Review

According to a survey conducted in [36], 52% of customers prefer to suggest a company that supports a good cause over one that does not. Moreover, 55% of customers believe that, in a downturn, they would buy from brands that promote good causes even if they are not the cheapest. Companies that have prioritized CSR in their operations obtain the rewards of increased firm sustainability, lower liabilities and insurance costs and a better brand image. Corporations now understand that corporate social responsibility is intrinsically related to their credibility and brand identity [37]. Consumer perceptions of a corporation are divided into two categories: brand performance and brand image. Brand image refers to consumer views of a company that go beyond those that are directly reflected by the performance of the company and the quality of its products [38]. The contribution of a brand to overall business performance is referred to as brand performance [39]. Ref. [37] links brand performance to quantifiable and tangible impacts that a brand may have on a company's economic worth.

Companies must focus on establishing and sustaining customer happiness in today's marketplaces to acquire loyalty, and CSR has shown to be an effective strategy in this respect. The link between CSR and customer satisfaction, on the other hand, is mainly unknown [40,41]. CSR may have an impact on a company's brand value. In many areas, an intense rivalry has reduced the opportunities for distinction regarding technology and product/service quality. CSR is, therefore, a useful resource that can boost a company's reputation [42].

### 2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

During the industrial revolution, machinery in factories supplanted a large section of the human labor force. This contributed to the emergence of many millionaires and corporate executives, widening the divide between the elite and lower classes [42]. The substantial financial difference between the wealthy (entrepreneurs) and the poor (working class) prompted a cry for social justice, resulting in the development of solid socially responsible practices [9,42]. CSR has been more significant to multinational organizations in the previous two decades, with strong linkages to the economic cases for firms [43,44]. The main benefit of CSR is that it ensures that businesses meet their consumers' expectations [45]. According to [35], CSR is a good consequence that a firm gives while managing its routine business operations. CSR is a long-term commitment to social contribution, whether to society or the growth of a company's employees. As a result, a corporation as a whole may ethically conduct business, directly contributing to the benefit of society as a whole [46,47].

According to [48], when CSR and branding initiatives are combined, organizations may offer value in the eyes of both consumers and workers. According to [49], several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are looking at possibilities to make it legally

essential for CSR programs to become part of every corporation's business plan, owing to the relevance of CSR.

Ref. [50] argues that a company's CSR initiatives can influence society in four areas: the environment, community, workplace and commerce. According to the authors, these four CSR impact areas are linked to the organization's essential stakeholder groups. Shareholders, employees and unions, local communities and the government are the primary stakeholders that are influenced by the four CSR impact categories. According to the authors, a corporation (motivated by profits) must stamp its influence on the marketplace, workplace, environment and community in particular to be considered high quality. This is in addition to the company's usual focus on financial concerns. The authors also propose that, rather than focusing exclusively on shareholder maximization, a firm can design and implement carefully planned CSR activities to identify itself as a leader in terms of being a responsible corporate organization, taking all vital shareholder aspects into account.

## 2.2. Influence of CSR Associations on C–C Identification, Identity Attractiveness and Brand Image

CSR organizations represent an organization's position and operations in relation to its considered societal responsibility [43]. A growing body of research proposes to investigate the impact of CSR associations on customer attitudes and actions, with a focus on the collective's identification with the enterprise. Multiple writers have found that CSR associations favor customer identification with the brand [24,25,51]. Furthermore, although CSR information is best used to develop feelings of identity and connection for the customer toward the firm, some academics believe it connects to consumer trust and satisfaction [52,53]. Concerning the relationship between CSR and C–C identification, the organizational identification literature teaches that a company's CSR programs reveal a corporate character and identity, which enables stakeholders to associate with the firm based on an assessment of the overlap between their own identities and that of the company [27,54,55]. CSR efforts provide the firm with an image of being attentive to the demands of the society on which it depends for continued existence and survival [24]. According to recent research on C–C identification [6,56], CSR activities are crucial parts of corporate identity that can drive consumers to identify and build a feeling of connection with the firm. According to [57], "the manner that CSR programs provide benefits for firms appears to be through enhancing consumers' identification with the company". As a result, those who are aware of a business's attempts to promote socially responsible activities acquire stronger levels of identification with the organization than those unaware of these initiatives [58]. Furthermore, it is believed that individuals are more likely to attract and create a positive picture of organizations with greater levels of CSR to exhibit a more ethical and social image and to boost their self-esteem [59].

## 2.3. Hypothesis Development

### 2.3.1. CSR, Consumer–Company Identification and Customer Satisfaction

Consumer–company identification (CCI) is frequently described as the degree to which a consumer identifies with a certain company's commercial aims and principles in general [60]. According to [6], CCI is the willingness of customers to identify with them and build substantial relationships with a brand, resulting in consumers being champions for the product, service and what the firm represents. CCI is frequently calculated in three ways: (1) the desire to support a certain firm; (2) the association with the specific business; and (3) the resemblance between the specific firm's other customers [61–63]. According to [4], CCI is how a corporation conducts itself throughout the trade and its commercial aim to influence purchasing habits. In this context, the author states that CSR activities can influence CCI, since CSR efforts can improve customers' capacity to identify with a certain product and firm. Nonetheless, some researchers have said that a few studies had been conducted to evaluate whether a CCI–CSR association exists [61,62]. According to [64], there is no CCI–CSR link in terms of consumer loyalty. Given the varying perspectives

on the subject, this study aims to determine whether the CCI connection affects consumer satisfaction and whether CSR values cause this relationship.

**Hypothesis 1 (H1).** *CSR has a direct positive impact on consumer–company identity.*

**Hypothesis 2 (H2).** *Consumer–company identity has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction.*

### 2.3.2. CSR, Identity Attractiveness and Customer Satisfaction

A company's attractiveness is determined by its ability to meet at least one of the three basic consumer self-definitional needs [6]: self-continuity (the desire to discover the company's identity related to their own), subconscious (the need to differentiate themselves from others in collective settings by associating with a corporation that has a unique culture, policy, framework or some other arrangement of unique characteristics) (the need to feel associated with a company that has an attractive perceived identity to enhance their self-esteem through acquiring a more positive evaluation of themselves) (the desire to be linked with a corporation that has an appealing perceived identity in order to boost their self-esteem by obtaining a more positive appraisal of themselves).

According to [65], firms that identify themselves with consumer traits perform better than companies that identify themselves with their goods. According to [66], organizations may differentiate themselves from their rivals by conducting business in line with their corporate purpose, emphasizing client loyalty. According to [56], a company may attract customers by presenting a distinct identity. The authors also claim that CSR values can improve identity attraction. In this regard, [56] suggests that business success is linked to CSR activities and that CSR values may assist a firm to increase its identity attractiveness, hence enhancing consumer satisfaction. In this sense, one may hypothesize a link among CSR, business identity attractiveness and consumer satisfaction.

**Hypothesis 3 (H3).** *CSR has a direct positive impact on identity attractiveness.*

**Hypothesis 4 (H4).** *Identity attractiveness has a direct positive impact on customer satisfaction.*

**Hypothesis 5 (H5).** *Identity attractiveness positively affects consumer–company identity.*

### 2.3.3. CSR, Brand Image and Customer Satisfaction

Giving out branded items to clients can help firms become noticed in the beginning [67]. CSR has increasingly been seen to be tied to a company's reputation and brand identity [41]. Customer satisfaction is connected to brand image [68]. In other words, there may be a link between CSR and customer happiness via brand image. A company's CSR actions can improve its brand image and, as a result, overall consumer satisfaction.

According to [69], creating a strong brand image is an intriguing marketing strategy used by most private businesses. Most firms are now differentiated by their brand, and they are evaluated depending on how well they perform in the eyes of society [70]. This is further supported by the fact that technology and web-based intelligence sources aid customers in confirming a company's social responsibility indices. Brand image may influence satisfaction, and these two criteria can be influenced through CSR actions, according to [71].

According to the previous debate, there may be a link among consumer satisfaction, brand image, identity attraction and corporate social responsibility actions.

**Hypothesis 6 (H6).** *CSR and brand image are positively related to each other.*

**Hypothesis 7 (H7).** *Brand image has a direct positive impact on consumer satisfaction.*

**Hypothesis 8 (H8).** *Brand image positively affects identity attractiveness.*

#### 2.4. Consumer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention

According to [72], a customer's long-term desire to engage in business with a company is referred to as consumer satisfaction. The notion of the repeat purchase habits of a particular brand as an indicator of consumer satisfaction is used by [73]. This also includes the incumbent consumer's vocal advocacy of the presently utilized goods or services to those who have yet to test a particular product or service [73]. The author divides purchasing behavioral loyalty into three categories: (1) hardline—those who only buy one brand; (2) softcore—those who only buy a few brands; and (3) switchers—those who have no loyalty. According to research, CSR initiatives may be able to convert “soft-core” and “switcher” consumers to the “hardcore” group. According to [74], a devoted customer is rarely discount oriented, and the author links loyalty to brand recognition and affinity for a specific firm or its products. The author goes on to say that a company's societal contributions may improve consumer satisfaction.

According to [75], the consumer's perceptions of the attributes of the product or service as they apply to them as a specific individual are what determines whether or not a customer is satisfied. As a result, different customers express varying degrees of satisfaction for the same experience or service engagement [76]. According to the marketing literature, customer satisfaction is a crucial component of business philosophy and a key factor in a company's long-term success and market value [77].

**Hypothesis 9 (H9).** *Consumer satisfaction has a direct positive impact on purchase intention.*

The conceptual framework employed in this investigation is depicted in Figure 1. The framework is based on the literature, as previously described. There are six primary constructs in the framework, and Table 1 summarizes the constructs, operational definitions and sources from which they were obtained.

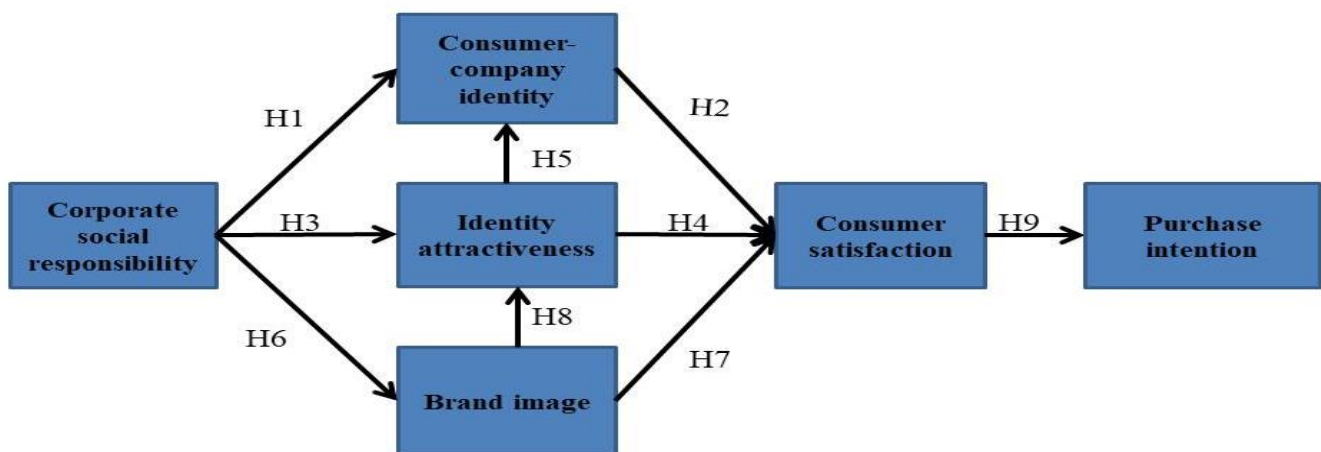


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Table 1. Constructs and operational definitions.

Construct	Operational Definition	Sources
Corporate social responsibility (CSR)	A firm's responsible attempts to effectively contribute to numerous stakeholder categories in society.	[78]
Consumer–company identity (CCI)	Significant and meaningful relationships between consumers and a company that leads them to become champions for the product and/or company.	[6]
Identity attractiveness (IA)	The capacity of a corporation to create/develop a distinct brand identity for its customers.	[56]

**Table 1.** *Cont.*

Construct	Operational Definition	Sources
Brand image (BI)	The value of a brand as perceived by consumers.	[79]
Consumer satisfaction (CS)	The degree to which customers identify with a business, resulting in purchases.	[80]
Purchase intention (PI)	A customer's propensity to acquire a specific product or service.	[81]

### 3. Research Methods

#### 3.1. Instrument Development

The instruments used in this study were adopted from the existing literature, which is shown in Table 2. The items borrowed for different constructs from prior studies are mentioned in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Constructs and their respective items.

Construct	Items	Sources
Corporate social responsibility	The brand is focused on improving society's well-being. The company is socially conscious. The brand firm adheres to strict ethical guidelines.	[78,82]
Consumer–company identity	It seems like a personal affront when someone criticizes this firm. When I talk about this firm, I frequently use the word “we” rather than “them.” I am curious to hear what others have to say about this firm. It seems like a personal compliment to me when someone appreciates this firm.	[24]
Identity attractiveness	X is a really appealing company. X appeals to me since it is distinct from the rest of the financial sector. I feel happy when I deal with X because I can tell they understand me. It has a well-known and renowned identity.	[56]
Brand image	It is a good idea to use the company's products. For me, using the company's products is beneficial. The organization provides excellent service.	[83]
Consumer satisfaction	This company's CSR policy matches my expectations. Overall, I am pleased with this company's CSR efforts. Overall, I am pleased with this company's goods and services.	[68]
Purchase intention	I will continue to think of the firm as my primary brand. I will continue to use the company's services. If someone asked for my opinion, I would suggest this firm.	[84]

#### 3.2. Sample and Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to quantitatively analyze the data gathered from Pakistani customers in order to validate the conceptual model. The study employed the widely used survey questionnaire approach for data gathering, which is defined as a prepared series of questions asked in the same sequence to elicit responses from various participants [85]. These surveys can be performed by an interviewer (e.g., telephone questionnaires) or self-completed [86]. Based on a literature search, the questionnaire items applied in this study were amended from prior investigations. It consisted of 20 elements in all, divided into 6 categories: corporate social responsibility, Consumer–company identity, identity attractiveness, brand image, customer satisfaction and purchase intention. “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” were the answers on a five-point Likert scale.

Pakistan was the location of the survey that was used in the empirical analysis. Budget and time restrictions, as well as the seeming impracticability of surveying the whole population, forced the researchers to rely on sampling as the only viable option [86]. The notion is that, by selecting pieces through sampling, researchers are able to make conclusions about the complete population [87]. The random sampling method was used

to gather the data. Using personal physical surveys, we contacted random customers in numerous cities of Pakistan to obtain the data.

During the first portion of the assessment survey, we questioned consumers regarding their age, gender, education and job. Participants were given questionnaires, which were obtained after they replied. A total of 335 of the 550 surveys issued were returned. Nevertheless, 316 valid surveys were completed. The demographic features of the respondents are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Respondents' descriptive statistics.

Total Number of Respondents ( <i>n</i> = 385)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	154	48.7%
	Female	162	51.2%
Age	18 to 30 years old	145	45.8%
	31 to 40 years old	95	30.0%
	41 to 50 years old	46	14.5%
	51 years old and above	30	9.5%
Education	Primary Education or Lower	20	6.3%
	Middle School Education	25	7.9%
	High School Education	45	14.2%
	Bachelor's Degree	127	40.2%
	Postgraduate Degree	69	21.8%
	Diploma/Certificate	30	9.5%
Income	0–20,000RS	27	8.5%
	20,001 RS–30,000 RS	107	33.8%
	30,001 RS–50,000 RS	87	27.5%
	50,001 RS–80,000 RS	52	16.4%
	80,001 RS–100,000RS	26	8.2%
	More than 100,000 RS	17	5.3%

## 4. Data Analysis and Results

### 4.1. Techniques

In previous decades, the covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) approach has been employed for complicated analyses including latent and observable variables. The number of articles utilizing PLS-SEM has recently surpassed the number of published papers using CB-SEM [88]. Without making assumptions about the distribution of the data, the PLS-SEM approach is frequently employed in research publications that estimate complicated models with many constructs, structural pathways and indicator variables. Furthermore, PLS-SEM is a method for SEM that is based on estimations of the statistical models' causal predictions [89,90].

Due to its superiority over all of the other structural equation models, the data were analyzed using partial least squares (PLS). In addition, it can compute dynamic models with diverse relationships [91], as the goal of population estimation is not expected [92]. There are two parallel versions of PLS: the internal and external versions. Whereas the exterior model addresses correlations among latent variables and their indicators, the internal version refers to the relation among latent variables [93]. In contrast, PLS delivers the narrowest loads on variable placement. PLS thus decreases the bias caused by software covariance approaches such as LISREL and AMOS based on factors [94]. We applied the bootstrapping procedure to record the significance level of path coefficients. In the verified model, all concepts were characterized as meditative since their measuring aspects demonstrated these concepts [95]. SmartPLS (version 3.2.1) was used to evaluate the data collected from the survey.

### 4.2. Common Method Bias

The phenomena in PLS-SEM are caused by the measurement method employed in the SEM study, not the network of causes, consequences and results in the model being



evaluated. The preceding criteria, for example, influenced the replies of many respondents in the same broad context, resulting in some common variance in the measures. The inferred social bias, combined with the questionnaire's response, was another possible reason for shared choice, contributing to the indicators' variability. As a result, the model may be considered free of common method bias if all VIFs resulting from a comprehensive collinearity evaluation are equal to or less than 3.3 [96]. Table 4 lists all latent variables in each of our models based on the total collinearity measure. The model shows a latent variable VIF below 3.3, as can be shown. There is no common technique bias discovered using the entire collinearity test methodology.

**Table 4.** Collinearity statistics (VIF).

Items	VIF
BI1	2.284
BI2	1.732
BI3	1.874
CCI1	1.697
CCI2	1.615
CCI3	1.708
CCI4	1.568
CS1	1.881
CS2	2.070
CS3	2.364
CSR1	1.631
CSR2	2.040
CSR3	2.165
IA1	1.742
IA2	1.717
IA3	1.321
IA4	1.761
PI1	1.873
PI2	2.113
PI3	1.783

#### 4.3. The Measurement Model

The internal consistency and validity of the reflective assessment method are essential components of its evaluation. Criteria for internal consistency that are acceptable include the following: Cronbach's alpha (CA) > 0.7; composite reliability (CR) > 0.7; and average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5.

Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite reliability values greater than 0.7 suggest adequate reliability [97], and the average variance extracted (AVE) should be greater than 0.5 [98]. The factors loading CA, CR and AVE are presented in Table 5 for all reflective constructions. There was strong reliability and average variance retrieved for all components, with CA, CR and AVE scores exceeding the required values of 0.70 and 0.5, respectively. The loadings of each item are listed in Table 5. Internal coherence (reliability), composite reliability values and Cronbach's alpha scores for each construct are all substantially above 0.70, which is the accepted standard for adequate reliability, e.g., as in [92,94,99]. Much social science research confirms our findings [91,100,101].

It was determined that all of the items should be strongly loaded on their respective latent variables, according to [99], due to the fact that all constructions had an AVE score more than 0.5 and that factor loadings were larger than 0.70, which met the requirements. Factor loadings having values of more than 0.6 is considered legitimate by [99].

To verify that the PLS path model's reflective components and their indicators had the strongest possible relationship, a discriminant validity evaluation was conducted [99]. For assessing discriminant validity, also termed as the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) rate of correlation, Ref. [102] suggests an alternative methodology based on a matrix, including several traits and multiple methods. A normal HTMT value of less than 0.90 was required

for all constructs, as shown in Table 6. In general, the techniques indicated a high degree of discriminant validity. The output of the outer model also led to initial trials, which included tests on one-dimensional constructs.

**Table 5.** Measurement model (convergent validity, reliability, discriminant validity and multicollinearity).

	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	(AVE)
BI	BI1	0.892	0.825	0.827	0.741
	BI2	0.828			
	BI3	0.862			
CCI	CCI1	0.808	0.808	0.811	0.634
	CCI2	0.777			
	CCI3	0.820			
	CCI4	0.779			
CS	CS1	0.848	0.847	0.851	0.766
	CS2	0.874			
	CS3	0.903			
CSR	CSR1	0.827	0.825	0.826	0.741
	CSR2	0.866			
	CSR3	0.888			
IA	IA1	0.824	0.788	0.789	0.613
	IA2	0.790			
	IA3	0.707			
	IA4	0.805			
PI	PI1	0.868	0.828	0.831	0.744
	PI2	0.877			
	P3	0.843			

**Table 6.** Heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT).

	BI	CCI	CS	CSR	IA	PI
BI						
CCI	0.346					
CS	0.458	0.385				
CSR	0.446	0.288	0.289			
IA	0.614	0.481	0.696	0.483		
PI	0.494	0.488	0.546	0.532	0.527	

#### 4.4. The Structural Model

A 95 percent confidence interval was calculated for indirect impacts using a 1000-resample bootstrap. According to the results of a mediation evaluation, brand image has a part in mediating the link between CSR and customer satisfaction. The findings of PLS bootstrapping are shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Results of path coefficients and confidence interval.

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	p Values	2.5%	97.5%
BI → CS	0.120	0.120	0.059	2.042	0.042	0.011	0.243
BI → IA	0.408	0.410	0.048	8.435	0.000	0.308	0.507
CCI → CS	0.105	0.109	0.053	1.969	0.050	0.006	0.211
CS → PI	0.460	0.464	0.043	10.758	0.000	0.379	0.543
CSR → BI	0.369	0.372	0.051	7.273	0.000	0.271	0.466
CSR → CCI	0.099	0.099	0.059	1.686	0.092	−0.014	0.212
CSR → IA	0.237	0.237	0.053	4.479	0.000	0.129	0.345
IA → CCI	0.347	0.350	0.055	6.362	0.000	0.242	0.463
IA → CS	0.471	0.468	0.056	8.463	0.000	0.365	0.570

## 5. Discussion

Overall, this research adds to previous CSR and CS research. The analytical results show that the final model was evaluated and based on a framework of assumptions, indicating that CSR plays a vital role in CS and PI. According to the research study, the relationship among CCI, CSR and CS is ambiguous [4,64]. Although some researchers, such as the author of [4], believe that CCI can lead to higher CS, the relationship among CCI, CS and CSR values is still unclear. Our findings are consistent with the literature's mixed viewpoints in this regard. H1 was accepted, meaning that CCI and CSR are connected. In this area, further research is needed. Furthermore, H2 acceptance is consistent with prior findings, and the findings of this study imply that CCI and CS are associated [6,61,62].

Hypothesis 3 states that CSR impacts organizational IA, meaning that CSR and the identity that CSR activities offer for a firm are linked. Our findings support this theory, implying that CSR actions impact a company's identity, making it more desirable to customers. When properly performed, CSR initiatives may boost a company's image in customers' eyes, making it more desirable in contrast to competitors [48]. Implementing efficient supply chain governance and providing consumers with clear and transparent pricing rules are examples of such strategies. Refs. [27,43,103–105] have all come to a similar conclusion.

Hypothesis 4 indicates that IA has a favorable influence on CS. Our findings support earlier assertions that a company's ability to recruit consumers is inextricably linked to customer pleasure. Ref. [106]'s work is recognized and supported by H4, but more studies are needed in this area because it has yet to be thoroughly explored.

In terms of H5, this research shows that IA and CCI are inextricably linked, which aligns with prior research [9,107]. In general, our findings support previous research claims that a company's ability to attract clients based on a distinctive value proposition in its product/service offering naturally leads to a significant and impactful relationship between consumers and a corporation, resulting in champions for the product and/or business [6,9,107].

The acceptance of Hypothesis 6 implies a connection between CSR and BI. This finding is in line with Ref. [69]'s prior study, which found that CSR imperatives may benefit all major stakeholders in a company, including customers. Consumers are likely to respect CSR ideas and values; therefore, the entire brand can be seen as adding value to their lives [48]. This finding is also in line with the prior studies by the authors of [9] and [108], who both claimed that, when CSR is correctly implemented in a company, it may lead to enhanced BI.

Hypothesis 7, stating that BI influences CS, was also accepted. Our findings suggest that BI has an impact on CS. Refs. [20,68,109] have all claimed that BI and CS are inextricably linked. More loyal clients typically result from a higher BI [109]. When customers see a brand as valued, they are more likely to buy from it again [20,108]. In terms of this hypothesis, our findings align with the literature; clients of the investigated firm are more likely to repeat purchases because they like the company's brand.

In Hypothesis 8, we looked at the relationship between BI and IA and concluded that the two concepts are linked. H8 is supported by our results, suggesting that BI and IA are linked. This is in line with prior studies by Ref. [107]. Stronger BI, according to [107], leads to a more appealing product or firm to customers. Similar ideas were found in Ref. [108]'s work. In this regard, our findings in relation to BI and IA are consistent with previous research reported in the literature.

Hypothesis 9 claims that CS has a direct positive relationship with PI, which is supported by our findings and is consistent with previous research [20,75,110].

From a practical standpoint, this study extends the traditional understanding of CSR's impacts on consumers, implying that CSR associations affect product assessment, customer identity, satisfaction and buying intention. Customers are more likely to feel that responsible organizations operate honestly in their operations and make decisions that represent the interests of both parties in the relationship, which contributes to these companies' trust-

worthiness and honesty, as well as to their customers' satisfaction. Furthermore, as part of their self-improvement and self-esteem, customers are more ready to relate to organizations that engage in socially responsible operations. Focusing on CSR is a powerful tool for building trust between businesses and their consumers. CSR enables relationships based on honesty and trust in the other's promises and deeds rather than laws and contractual agreements [111]. Thus, this study adds to the recent findings of a positive effect of CSR on customer identification [24,54] and customer satisfaction [25,52], and it extends the research by suggesting, constructing and verifying additional variables in the relationship between CSR and customer satisfaction.

### *Managerial Implications*

These findings have significant management implications for businesses seeking to establish substantial and long-term connections with their customers. First, our findings show that businesses play a crucial part in customers' daily lives and may even impact the creation of an individual's identity. The findings imply that, by concentrating on factors that impact customer behavior (for example, CSR-based identification), managers can accomplish certain key and desirable outcomes, most notably consumer satisfaction and loyalty. These findings imply that managers should invest more in socially responsible activities, since customers prefer to support and reward organizations that are seen to be socially responsible by creating the highest loyalty toward them. In this regard, the strong significance of both CSR on C–C identification and C–C identification on customer happiness and purchase recommends that enterprises engage in corporate identity management. Managers must consider the relevance of the corporate identity to their target market. By carefully controlling corporate identity, managers can develop sensations of belonging and affiliation among diverse stakeholders [25] and can stimulate favorable attitudinal and behavioral reactions to the organization [43]. As a result, managers should strive to create a distinct CSR-based business brand that connects with customers. Managers may reinforce their business strategy by investing in CSR efforts, because a firm that delivers advantages via its numerous CSR activities is viewed as a corporation that is both capable and interested in caring for its consumers [24]. It is equally critical for managers to communicate company identity and the concept of identification among consumers when designing programs to reinforce customer happiness, deliver extra advantages and demonstrate trustworthiness. Companies can improve stakeholders' identification with the corporation by including CSR imagery in communications, by affiliating stakeholders to the company via shared concerns about a certain social or environmental cause or by developing stakeholder engagement around CSR operations.

Third, since CSR has a stronger effect on customer satisfaction, companies should assign their resources to improve these areas. Companies should invest more in CSR initiatives, since it has been demonstrated that one of the reasons a consumer feels satisfied with a company is the knowledge and perception of its social responsibility, which can be positively influenced by the corporate communication of its CSR program. In this sense, any communication that makes CSR programs more credible, authentic and distinct from competitors can considerably improve the company's attractiveness. Nonetheless, any communication seeking to tie enterprises to a socially responsible identity must evaluate the extent to which that CSR-based identity is appreciated by consumers and what characteristics might be exploited to boost self-importance views connected with that identity.

### **6. Implications to Theory**

According to this study, a higher degree of CSR engagement leads to stronger CS for a firm. CSR can give a corporation a competitive advantage, although the linearity of this link requires more testing and empirical investigation. According to our analysis of the research on CSR and marketing, although there is some evidence that CSR imperatives can have meaningful effects on a company's financial success and sustainability, the research generally lacks solid empirical support (e.g., [108,112]). Furthermore, a complete framework

for investigating the link between CSR and core marketing constructs such as BI, CS and customer identification with organizations is still in its early stages. As a result, the research approach employed in this study provides a foundation for future work and scholars who wish to investigate CSR, CS and PI.

### 7. Limitations of the Study

Although our hypothesis is validated, this study has a few drawbacks that suggest future investigation. The survey was conducted with a small number of respondents from a certain population. If respondents from various states or even countries are recruited, the findings may change. This is because the social attitude of a specific group of individuals may differ depending on their actual location. Future research should test this model with more extensive random samples or samples from different contexts, and any future studies should strive to include many firms in the study environment. Given the differences in demographics, lifestyle and possibly the knowledge of the CSR idea and application within an institutional environment, future studies should include a broader population or country. Second, other social exchange factors, such as customer commitment, can be incorporated in future research to establish a more inclusive and complete framework, providing new insight into the evolution and advantages of CSR. Third, new variables such as customer loyalty and its antecedents, such as perceived quality, perceived value and complaint handling, can be incorporated because our model's explanatory power can still be enhanced.

### 8. Conclusions

After analyzing past CSR research, we found few elements that relate CS to CSR, notably through the BI, CCI and IA relationships. In this perspective, one may argue that our study has improved and reinforced the impact of CSR on CS in the case of several enterprises in Pakistan.

The analytical findings demonstrate that positive associations exist, and a final model was developed to relate CSR and CS. CSR was found to have a significant association with BI, CCI and IA. The study comes to the conclusion that CSR is a factor that significantly affects customer satisfaction and purchasing intention. It demonstrates the connection between CCI and customer satisfaction, showing that, when customers view businesses as responsible, they become more satisfied. The research looks at CSR as a tool for businesses to draw in customers, since it increases brand attractiveness and makes them more appealing for doing the right thing by society. Customers are more inclined to develop a relationship with a company that they deem appealing for being responsible. All stakeholders, including customers, can gain benefits from CSR, as they tend to respect CSR concepts and view a brand as adding value to their life. Brand image is related to customer loyalty and satisfaction. If a brand is valued to satisfied consumers, they are more inclined to repurchase it. Additionally, it can be concluded that brand identity and image are intertwined; if people perceive a brand to be valuable, they are drawn to it. According to this study, there is a relationship between customer satisfaction and purchasing intention. The current study's limitations are also discussed to offer a complete picture of the situation in connection to this study. As such, future studies can use and expand on this study to investigate the importance of CSR in establishing effective brand strategies and unlocking the value that CS offers.

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