NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BRAND EQUITY AND ITS EFFECT ON SAUDI CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING

MBA THESIS

ABDULLAH BAHAJRI

Nicosia

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Approval

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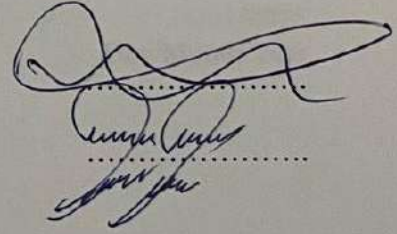
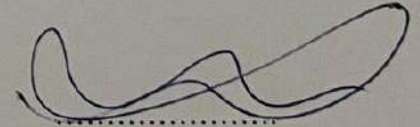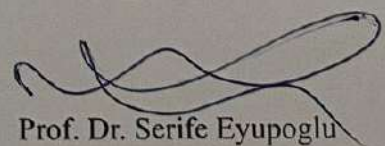| Examining Committee	Signature
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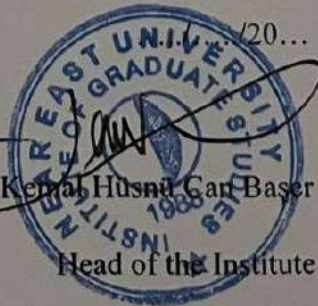
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information, documents, analysis, and results in this thesis have been collected and presented according to the academic rules and ethical guidelines of Institute of Graduate Studies, Near East University. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced information and data that are not original to this study.

Abdullah Bahajri

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ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility and brand equity and its effect on Saudi consumer decision-making

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January, 2025

This study examines the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Brand Equity on consumer decision-making among university students in Saudi Arabia. By leveraging quantitative research methods, the study explores how CSR initiatives influence trust, ethical perceptions, and consumer loyalty, while assessing the role of brand equity in fostering emotional connections, brand awareness, and purchasing behavior. Regression analysis reveals that CSR accounts for 36.8% of the variance in decision-making, emphasizing its importance in shaping ethical and social perceptions. BE, however, demonstrates a stronger influence, explaining 56.6% of the variance, driven by key components such as brand loyalty and awareness. The findings underscore the synergistic effect of CSR and brand equity, highlighting their complementary roles in building consumer trust, loyalty, and willingness to pay premium prices. While CSR adds ethical value to brands, brand equity reinforces emotional and cognitive connections, creating a robust framework for consumer engagement. The study identifies limitations, including cultural and economic factors unique to Saudi Arabia, and offers actionable recommendations for businesses, such as enhancing transparency, integrating CSR and brand equity strategies, and tailoring approaches to local markets. These insights provide a foundation for future research and practical applications in socially responsible branding.

Key Words: Corporate social responsibility, brand equity, decision-making.

ÖZET

Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk ve marka değeri ve bunun Suudi tüketici karar alma sürecine etkisi

Bahajri, Abdullah

MBA, İşletme Bölümü

Ocak, 2025

Bu çalışma, Suudi Arabistan'daki üniversite öğrencileri arasında Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk (KSS) ve Marka Değerinin (BE) tüketici karar verme süreci üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Çalışma, nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden yararlanarak, KSS girişimlerinin güveni, etik algıları ve tüketici sadakatini nasıl etkilediğini araştırırken BE'nin duygusal bağlantıları, marka farkındalığını ve satın alma davranışını güçlendirmedeki rolünü değerlendiriyor. Regresyon analizi, KSS'nin karar vermedeki varyansın %36,8'ini açıkladığını ortaya koyuyor ve etik ve sosyal algıların şekillenmesindeki önemini vurguluyor. Ancak BE, marka sadakati ve bilinirliği gibi temel bileşenlerden kaynaklanan varyansın %56,6'sını açıklayarak daha güçlü bir etki gösteriyor. Bulgular, CSR ve BE'nin sinerjik etkisinin altını çiziyor ve bunların tüketici güveni, sadakati ve yüksek fiyatlar ödeme isteği oluşturmadaki tamamlayıcı rollerini vurguluyor. KSS markalara etik değer katarken, BE duygusal ve bilişsel bağlantıları güçlendirerek tüketici katılımı için sağlam bir çerçeve oluşturuyor. Çalışma, Suudi Arabistan'a özgü kültürel ve ekonomik faktörler de dahil olmak üzere sınırlamaları belirliyor ve işletmeler için şeffaflığın artırılması, KSS ve BE stratejilerinin entegre edilmesi ve yaklaşımların yerel pazarlara göre uyarlanması gibi uygulanabilir öneriler sunuyor. Bu bilgiler, sosyal sorumluluk sahibi markalamada gelecekteki araştırmalar ve pratik uygulamalar için bir temel sağlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, marka değeri, karar verme.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In the era of social media awareness and secondary boycott when social responsibility and the pervasive power of social media greatly impact individuals and businesses, even the slightest misstep can result in significant repercussions. Large firms tend to exhibit a greater degree of prudence and attentiveness when it comes to managing their public perception. The positive impact of corporate social responsibility initiatives on businesses and their reputations has been shown in numerous studies.

Although the concept of corporate social responsibility did not emerge in scholarly literature until the 1930s and 1940s, its roots can be traced back several centuries. The initial scholarly articulation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) emerged during the 1950s, positing that corporate leaders ought to base their decision-making on societal ideals. During the 1970s, there was a notable increase in societal awareness regarding environmental issues, human rights, and labor rights. Consequently, this led to a heightened need for corporations to assume greater responsibility in these areas. In 1979, Caroll delineated the several obligations and expectations, namely economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary, that were imposed on corporations. It was recognized that these aims were essential for businesses and did not represent mutually exclusive facets. The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) throughout the early 2000s encompassed the notion that firms were assigned a novel societal function. This entailed the fulfillment of social expectations and the pursuit of sustainability, hence necessitating strategic decision-making by corporations to align with society's demands. During the 2010s, the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 marked a significant milestone in the establishment of a new social contract. This contract entails the expectation that corporations will actively contribute to the attainment of the SDGs. Subsequently, scholarly discourse surrounding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has primarily focused on its practical application and its influence on certain performance domains that can be partially associated with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Meanwhile, the conceptualization of CSR has continued to revolve around its capacity to create mutual benefit. According to (Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019), The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a significant influence on shaping an organization's public

image, brand equity, and consumer behavior. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has the potential to significantly influence the formation of favorable or unfavorable perceptions of firms and their products, consequently augmenting consumer loyalty and overall economic performance. According to the study conducted by (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). According to a study on CSR trends, attitudes, and opinions, the vast majority of American students and faculty emphasized the value of social responsibility and the idea that companies shouldn't put their financial interests ahead of their moral or social obligations ((Ahlquist, 2007); (Gorondutse & Abdullah, 2014)). Higher education should be essential in communicating and converting social responsibility into practical practices if future private sector owners and entrepreneurs are to embrace and use it (Nasser, 2013). Understanding what drives social responsibility can be improved by researching the opinions of students, aspiring leaders, and change makers (Shurden, Shurden, & Cagwin, 2008). Universities and colleges ought to equip their graduates for prosperous professions. It takes more than just teaching students job skills to prepare a well-educated workforce today (Mays, 2016). Although most students are socially conscious, they lack a unique method for addressing criticism and discussions and figuring out how to turn them into real-world actions (Singh, et al., 2023). Therefore, the corporate sector is in charge of bringing up the topic in higher education by either helping or hindering graduates from applying business ethics successfully (Strider & Alexandre, 2015). This study sought to investigate future employees' perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and related CSP trends, given the significance of CSR and sustainability initiatives and the requirement for employees who possess the moral attitudes and behaviors necessary to meet the challenges of firms' CSP in the future (Khan, Zahoor, & Irum, 2014). As a result, little is known about how young Generation Z students feel and know about CSP, as well as how college students see the quality of CSP education that prepares them to face such issues (Alghamdi, 2022). The unique institutional settings of Saudi Arabia make the necessity for such replications and extensive research in this field (Bundaleska & Dimitrova, 2011). The business world's high standards for students, stakeholders, and policymakers, along with the high population share of Generation Z, acknowledge that curriculum adaptation to market expectations is crucial for effectively supporting students' learning (America, 2014). Since numerous studies have shown the crucial connection between learning and improving teaching strategies

and business performance, notably in the field of corporate social responsibility, the caliber of these courses' merits particular consideration (Gkogkidis & Dacre, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

In general, there is a lack of research about the direct influence of CSR and brand equity on the consumer decision-making process, especially in Saudi-Arabia where there is a lack of researches and study on all those fields. Despite a growth in the past 20 years, research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is still disorganized and scattered across several academic publications, which results in conclusions that are extended from the level of a single country to the entire MENA region. (Pinto, 2023). Saudi Arabia's present level of corporate social responsibility (CSR) awareness shows that both consumers and businesses are beginning to understand how important CSR is. Even with this recognition, a lot of businesses still have trouble successfully incorporating CSR into their operating frameworks. Sector-specific awareness levels differ, with traditional industries showing the biggest gaps in comprehension and involvement (Alatawy & Alqahtani, 2019). According to surveys, Saudi customers have a moderate awareness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies, even though businesses' adoption of these measures varies (Yusuf & Atassi, 2016). Additionally, research indicates that although younger generations exhibit a stronger propensity for corporate social responsibility (CSR), older generations may continue to be resistant or doubtful about these ideas (Alghamdi, 2022).

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to bridge the gap in literature regarding this topic, and to study the impact of CSR and brand equity on Saudi consumer decision-making process and what influence this process, and to investigate the consumer's behavior and decision-making process and whether CSR activities influence it in KSA.

Research questions

Q1: Do corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts have an impact on the decision-making process of Saudi students' behavior?

Q2: Does brand Equity have an impact on the decision-making process of Saudi students' behavior?

Research hypotheses

H1: Corporate social responsibility activities have a positive effect on students' decision-making

H2: Brand Equity has a positive effect on students' decision-making

Limitations

The limitations are the lack of the researches and studies in this field in Saudi-Arabia as well as the lack of data regarding the awareness of the CSR initiatives as perceived by the consumer. CSR concept and application is considered new in Saudi-Arabia as the regulation for it were implemented in 2017 as part of the Vision2030. (Allui & Pinto, 2022).

Definition of Terms

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility alternatively referred to as corporate citizenship, is a structure that businesses voluntarily follow to ensure their accountability to internal stakeholders, such as shareholders, as well as to the broader public. Through the implementation of (CSR), firms demonstrate their consciousness of the impact they have on the social, economic, and environmental spheres, among other facets of society. According to (Fernando, 2023). There exist four primary categories of corporate social responsibility (CSR), including environmental, charitable, ethical, and economic.

Environmental responsibility. refers to the ethical obligation of an organization to conduct its operations in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on the environment. This entails adopting practices and policies that prioritize environmental sustainability and strive to reduce the organization's ecological footprint. This sort of corporate social responsibility is widely prevalent. There are multiple approaches that can be employed to achieve this objective, including but not limited to the reduction of detrimental practices, the implementation of energy regulations, and the offsetting of energy consumption.

Ethical responsibility. pertains to the need to ensure that a corporation conducts its operations in an ethical manner and with equitable practices across all levels of the organization. This encompasses the equitable treatment of everyone who

is involved, including shareholders, investors, employees, and consumers, among others.

Philanthropic responsibility. sometimes referred to as humanitarian responsibility, pertains to an organization's objective of enhancing the global community and society through charitable endeavors.

Economic responsibility. entails the fulfillment of an organization's commitments across the aforementioned areas of duty. The objective is not solely focused on profit maximization but rather on ensuring that the firm has a good influence on the environment, individuals, and society. According to (Stobierski, 2021).

Brand equity

The collection of a brand's assets and liabilities is referred to as brand equity, encompassing its name and symbol. In general, it has the potential to either enhance or diminish the value proposition for the customer. Brand equity has the potential to contribute value to the corporation beyond its impact on customers, as it can produce cash flow for the organization through several means. According to (Aaker, 1991).

The customer decision-making

Customer decision-making is influenced by a wide range of factors, both internal and external, that shape how individuals perceive, evaluate, and ultimately decide to purchase a product or service. These factors can vary depending on the specific product, industry, and individual preferences. The decision-making process starts by identifying a need, and starting to collect information about how to solve this need, study the alternatives, then make the purchase decision and evaluate that decision.

There are five main stages of consumer decision-making process according to (Rojhe, 2020):

1. Need recognition: it is the first and most important step, once the customer recognizes the need to buy something new the process begins.

2. Search for information: in this step the customer starts to find out the available options.

3. Evaluating the alternatives: in this step the customer starts to compare the available choices to help you make the best choice possible.

4. Purchasing decision: during this stage, the consumer is ready to buy.

5. Post-purchase evaluation: The customer assesses the product or service after making the purchase to determine whether it was worthwhile or if they would suggest it to others.

CHAPTER II

Literature review

This chapter highlights the essential relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Equity, and decision-making. The synthesis of existing research reveals key findings about the positive impact of CSR on brand equity, while also identifying gaps that warrant further investigation, particularly in the context of different industries and consumer perceptions. Future studies could explore the nuances of how varying CSR strategies affect brand equity across diverse market segments.

Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility started having an important role in the economic and administrative research from the early 1930s until today. The seeds to CSR activities can be traced back to the industrial revelation, since having the beginning of the big industrial cities and their pure interest in making profit and not entertaining the idea of CSR, that led to a big gap in the society, the rich got richer and the poor poorer. Based on that CSR started to have its importance, since many industries started to take the situation of its labor into consideration and the challenges that they are facing. Hence one of the main aims of CSR is the fair working conditions for the labor.

Internationally many organizations helped in forming and identifying CSR and called for it to be implemented in corporations. The UN in 2001 discussed CSR initiatives to help the low-income class, and to confirm the rule of the social responsibility of these organizations, and to establish international standards for the organizations in the global economy, that focuses on the main goals of the businesses as well as human rights and the environment.)Al Mabrook(2020 ،.

One of the main goals of CSR is to generate value to stakeholders, partners, suppliers, distributors, customers, the workers and their families, the environment, and the local society in general. So far CSR cannot be defined in a clear way to be forced by laws either locally or internationally, the main force that drives these initiatives is that they are voluntarily. And that has resulted in a variety of activities from different organizations depending on the abilities the organization has. These initiatives can change depending on the needs of the society and the economical and political factors.

Some countries are calling for CSR activities to be mandatory on organizations such as (Germany, France, UK, and Netherlands). While others think that CSR initiatives should remain voluntarily and does not require to be forced by laws, and these laws might force organizations to do only what is required from them. (Elasrag, 2014). There are mainly 4 types of CSR: environmental, ethical, philanthropic, and economic:

Environmental responsibility

It is when an organization is active in promoting sustainability and conserving the nature. It is the conviction that the company ought to act in the most ecologically responsible manner. Businesses can adopt a number of strategies to be more environmentally conscious, including: lowering harmful practices, such as the usage of single-use plastics, waste, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. Reliance on renewable energy, recycled and/or partially recycled materials, and sustainable resources are ways to control energy use. Offsetting negative environmental impact: donating to related causes, planting trees, and funding research. (Stobierski, 2021).

Ethical responsibility

It means operating with transparency, integrity, and values. (Palmer, 2023). Organizations that adapt to ethical responsibility aim to be ethical to all its stakeholders, including leadership, employees, suppliers, and customers. Many businesses have procedures in place to make sure they aren't buying goods made in sweatshops or using child labor. (Stobierski, 2021).

Philanthropic responsibility

It refers to an organization's aim to make the society in which it operates and the world in general, a better place. (Stobierski, 2021). It is an organization's way of giving back to communities through volunteer work, community involvement, and charitable donations. It can support variety of causes such as, education, social welfare, and health. (Palmer, 2023).

Economic responsibility

It refers to an organization's responsibility to back all its financial decisions and its dedication to doing good. The end goal is not just maximizing profit but also ensuring that it impacts positively the environment, people, and society. (Stobierski, 2021).

Some examples are Investing in local communities, Supporting small and local businesses by sourcing products and services, and donating to local organizations. (Palmer, 2023).

A study in Saudi Arabia that contained over 100 company revealed that there is a confusion about the initiatives of CSR, and came out with three possible reasons for that. First one is that many think that CSR activities are part of the cultural and religious teaching, second think that CSR initiatives are part of the charity work that companies do through charity organizations and lastly some think that CSR activities are a responsibility and a strategy for the company. The study also revealed that many interviewees realize that the organizations are missing the strategies to implement CSR initiative within the organization. Although many of the companies do realize the challenges that facing the development in SA such as job opportunity, the lack of skilled workers, etc.

Another study done by (Al-Ahli commercial bank, 2009), on the CSR activities and how it was viewed by the Saudi society revealed that 62% think that social services strengthen the relationship between the organization and its customers, while 48% believe that organizations that are involved in CSR activities have good work ethics.

Another study done by (Riyadh chamber of commerce,2009) stated some of the reasons that hinders the spread of the social responsibility in organizations: The non-existence of CSR ideology in many of the Saudi companies, most of the Saudi companies are unorganized. Adopting CSR initiatives requires organization, the lack of charity work to develop the community, most of the charity works done by the companies are non-developing works, and the lack of understanding and knowledge as so many are still confusing charity works and CSR initiatives. (Elasrag, 2014).

Brand Equity

The value premium a company receives from a product with a well-known name in comparison to other items is known as brand equity. Creating a product that is immediately recognizable, memorable, and of excellent quality can help build brand equity. Large-scale ads can also aid in building brand equity. It somewhat encourages consumers to be willing to spend more for the brand (Hayes, 2023).

Elements and importance of brand equity:

The basic components of brand equity are: consumer perception, negative or positive impact, and the resulting value. The knowledge and experience (consumer perception) of the product and the brand in general build the brand equity. How the consumer perceives the brand is directly related to the brand's results in either positive or negative way. A positively perceived brand or product can increase revenue or profit. If the way a brand was perceived is negative the consumer is most likely to pay more for the other generic brands rather than the negatively known brand. One of the reasons for a negative brand equity is environmental disasters. Elements of brand equity according to (Hayes, 2023):

Brand awareness. the extent to which consumers are familiar with the brand and recognize it.

Brand loyalty refers to how often a consumer chooses a specific brand over other brands or products.

Brand image. how the consumer perceives the brand and it associated qualities, such as quality, uniqueness etc.

Brand association. It refers to any emotional or psychological association the consumer has with the brand, such as reliability or nostalgia.

Brand value. The overall benefit and value the consumer attribute to the brand. Which can influence the decision-making process.

The effect of brand equity on customer confidence during the purchasing decision process is significant. Consumers prefer to gravitate towards products they perceive as high-quality and are already familiar with. Brand equity, particularly when linked to superior quality, offers value to consumers, enhancing their enjoyment when utilizing the product or brand. According to (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, the effect of corporate

social responsibility on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction, 2023).

According to (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, the effect of corporate social responsibility on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction, 2023) The term "brand image" describes the character attributes of a business or one of its brands that are present in the marketplace, as well as how consumers view that same brand and/or product, as evidenced by the connections that are deeply rooted in their memories.

According to (Rahul, 2021): The primary factor influencing brand equity, or consumers' overall opinion and sentiment about a brand, is brand image, which also affects customer behavior.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have been found to create value for consumers, leading to a subsequent boost in sales for firms that implement such activities. These activities exert an impact on the levels of happiness, loyalty, and trust that customers perceive towards the organization. Trust is a crucial factor in fostering commitment. Commitment encompasses three primary components: it necessitates a prolonged duration, it signifies a desire, and ultimately, it must be directed towards attaining client contentment. Trust and dedication exert a beneficial influence on the perception of value. According to the study conducted by (Servera-Francés, Piqueras-Tomás, & Lidia, 2019). CSR activities can significantly impact a firm's or organization's brand image. By committing and dedicating ethical and sustainable practices, firms and organizations can distinguish and set themselves apart from their competitors and cultivate a positive more favorable perception of their brand among consumers. (Deep, 2023).

According to (Al-Harbi, 2024) 48% of consumer in Saudi Arabia chooses their products based on quality, availability, brand equity, and suitable prices. A study done by a company named Tolona showed an increasing tendency for demands by the consumers in Saudi Arabia. The study shows that 48% of the participants prefer sustainable packaging for their products, and 37% are willing to pay a higher price for that. While 82% think that it is crucial that the brands are socially and environmentally responsible.

Decision-making process

Choosing a course of action from a variety of options is a basic cognitive process known as decision-making. For many facets of life, it is essential, including personal, organizational, and societal contexts. Effective decision-making requires the ability to analyze information, evaluate options, predict potential outcomes, and consider the implications of choices. Various decision-making models exist, ranging from rational approaches that emphasize logical analysis to behavioral theories that consider emotional and psychological factors. Understanding these models can enhance an individual's or organization's ability to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, ultimately leading to better outcomes. In an ever-changing environment, the ability to make timely and effective decisions is a vital skill for success. (Shukla, 2022)**.**

Consumer decision-making process

Many industries rely heavily on the decision-making process of their customers. Professionals in sales and marketing frequently feel that understanding purchasing behavior requires a thorough comprehension of this process. Improving your comprehension of the process could improve your chances of effectively selling a product or service (Garcia et al., 2023). The consumer decision-making is connected and influenced by the consumer behavior. The factors of consumer behavior directly influence the decision-making process. During the past few decades, behavioral decision theory has been one of the marketing fields with the most active academic research efforts. Behavioral decision theorists claim that there are many situations in which consumers make irrational choices. These and other research highlight how important decision context is and how useful customer behavior is. Understanding how these effects manifest in the marketplace can be crucial for marketers. Their and other scholars' attempts to question the rationality assumptions and predictions of economic theory gave rise to the field of behavioral economics (Stankevich, 2017).

According to (Garcia, et al., 2023) The consumer decision-making process refers to all of the factors that a person considers while determining whether to buy a decent product or service. Also known as the buyer choice process, it is a five-step procedure that begins with the identification of a need and ends with an evaluation of the purchase's worth. Knowing how customers make decisions is essential because it helps you anticipate their needs and create marketing or sales tactics that are specifically

designed to satisfy those needs. Understanding how consumers make decisions also has the following benefits:

Leverage against the competition. By understanding the buying habits of customers in your industry, you may develop unique sales and marketing strategies that encourage more people to select your products over those of a competitor.

Knowledge about your customer base. You can determine key characteristics of your target market, including their initial demands, preferred communication channels, and preferences for particular attributes (e.g., budget, design, or quality), by reflecting on how customers make decisions in the past. You can use this data to guide upcoming advertising campaigns, marketing campaigns, and product launches.

Sales and customer base growth. You can offer more pertinent marketing materials and distribution strategies when you comprehend how a customer views a need. These may result in increased market penetration and income.

The five stages of decision-making process are: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and evaluating the purchase.

Problem Recognition. Realizing that they have a need or issue and need a solution is the first stage in the consumer decision-making process. Problem recognition may be impacted by external factors like education, dissatisfaction with the products on the market, or advertising, as well as internal factors like new expectations, interests, or beliefs. When people see a need, they are compelled to find a solution and devote more time and energy to weighing their options (Oluwatoni, 2023). It's fascinating to see that marketers intentionally try to close the gap between the desired and actual statuses of their clients. Customers will identify and buy a good or service as a result of this discrepancy creating a need. Customers build wants when they identify an unmet need and believe a product will meet it. Additionally, marketers may fabricate a situation or necessity to instill a sense of insecurity in the consumer in the absence of the product or to elevate a desired status in the eyes of the public. Some of the factors that influence these moments include the existence or creation of a desired (preferred) state, the availability of information about new status (new products or versions of the products), the potential for related or complementary items for this product to create a need, and customer-driven reasons (Stankevich, 2017).

Information search. after the consumer acknowledge the problem, the second step is searching this problem or need. In this context, "research" encompasses a broad

range of activities. It usually necessitates a proactive search for information, such as reading internet reviews or testimonies, speaking with agents and current clients, or trying things out in stores. In other situations, it could be more passive, like when you watch ads (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, 2023). If a customer notices a particular problem or requirement at this time, they will very certainly be encouraged to hunt for information both within and externally. This also holds true for customers who are trying to determine how valuable a potential good or service is. The alternatives available to the customer are determined or explained in this step (Shukla, 2022). The buying decision influenced by different sources is shown in figure 1. The risk involved, the consumer's level of interest, and their past experience buying the goods all influence how long is usually spent on this step. After generating a set of possibilities to choose from, the client has constructed an evoked set. These are the most preferred choices. The customer will conduct further study to further reduce his possibilities after choosing the package. (Stankevich, 2017).

Figure 1

Buying Decision Influence ("Digital Democracy Survey)
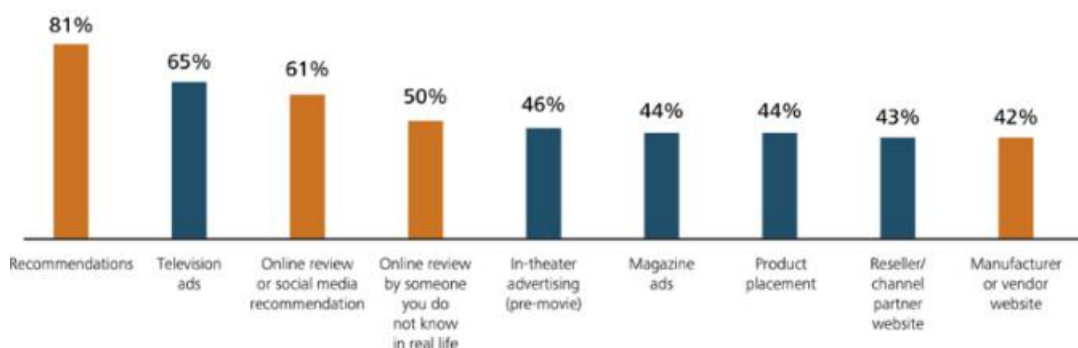
Examination of alternatives. When a customer learns more about a product or service that meets their needs, they compare it to similar offers from several suppliers. The desired parameters are often derived from preliminary consumer research. As customers peruse the available options, they could search for features that distinguish one product from another, like pricing, quality, brand awareness, industry trends, etc. according to (Rodrigues & Borges, 2015) The primary conclusions of the CSR literature state that customers are curious about businesses' social practices and are impacted by them when making purchases. Consumers often believe that choosing and purchasing specific brands is influenced by a company's social responsibility profile.

Purchase decision. After assessing the alternatives, the consumer proceeds to the fourth step of the buying process—the actual purchase. A customer must still follow through on his selection and finish the transaction even after selecting a brand. Furthermore, a consumer may first indicate that they would like to purchase a particular product but decide not to proceed with the purchase. Additional decisions regarding influencing factors, such as where, when, and how much money to spend on purchases, can be required. A lot of the time, especially with complicated purchases like cars, computers, and consumer electronics, there is a delay between deciding and making the purchase. The choice and actual purchasing time for nondurable products, which include many low involvement items like everyday goods, may not take long (Stankevich, 2017).

Post-purchase evaluation. The customer is constantly assessing the performance of the product. The customer will either be satisfied or dissatisfied after the evaluation. If customers are satisfied with the product's performance, they will make more purchases. The purchaser will praise of the products. On the other hand, if the product does not live up to the customer's expectations, they will stop purchasing it. The merchandise will consequently get negative press (Shukla, 2022).

It is important to remember that routine or habitual decision-making processes serve as the foundation for a large number of customer purchases. For many low-cost, frequently purchased products, the decision-making process consists of just determining the problem, performing a quick internal search, and making the purchase. The consumer hardly ever tries to perform external searches or alternative analysis. Not all of the steps apply to products that are bought regularly because the customer already has preferences and brand loyalty, and the procedure is perceived as automated (Stankevich, 2017).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant role in influencing decision-making within the business context. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives serve as catalysts for enhancing trust, contentment, and brand equity among customers. Consequently, numerous firms allocate resources towards CSR endeavors as a means to cultivate and fortify their reputation. The extant body of evidence suggests that organizations that demonstrate accountability in the public sphere may gain a competitive edge, enhancing their financial success. According to (Mahmood & Bashir, 2020). Costumers do not always perceive CSR activities in a positive way, a

main concern that always arises that, in order to finance these activities, the prices of the products will increase. While CSR activities are financed from the profits generated by the company. The type of CSR makes a different on how costumers perceive it. For example, companies that do philanthropic work and benefit the whole society were more likely to be perceived as pricy to cover these costs, when compared to other companies that have internally targeted CSR activities for its employees. (Chadwick, 2016).

According to (Garcia, et al., 2023), gaining a better understanding of the consumer purchasing behavior might increase your chances of successfully marketing a good or service if you operate in any of these fields.

Consumer behavior

According to (Peighambari, Sattari, Kordestani, & Oghazi, 2016) Social researchers have always been quite interested in consumer behavior, which has grown significantly over the last fifty years or more. Accordingly, consumer behavior has been the center of attention in many studies. The literature on this topic is extensive and diverse as the behavior constantly changes adopting to the changes in technology, economy, and society, these factors can affect the consumer behavior.

Consumer behavior is the study of individuals, groups and organizations when choosing, buying, and using a product or service to meet their desires and needs (Widodo, 2021). The interest in consumer behavior began in the 20th century in 1935 with the first model by Gabriel Tarde, since then many scholars and researchers were invested in this topic and many models were developed and created up until 2021. (Paz & Vargas, 2023). According to (Paz & Vargas, 2023) the theoretical conception of the behavioral models has evolved over the past 50 years. There are three different methodological approaches to these models: aprioristic, empirical, and eclectic. These three approaches draw the consumer behavior model in the last few years.

Aprioristic. This approach's strength is in its utilization of a significant theoretical foundation, which incorporates known theories and concepts from different sciences. The ideas created using this method, however, are not included in the consumption scenario and frequently involve laboratory trials with students.

Empirical. This approach uses data from panels and field tests, develops a theoretical framework based on behavioral pattern observation, applies the research to actual situations, and measures user consuming phenomena. This approach's drawback is the relative paucity of explanatory powers and the dearth of social science ideas.

Eclectic. This approach combines the two earlier approaches; it uses the empirical approach's experiments and investigations, as well as the theoretical principles of the aprioristic approach. This approach's shortcoming is that it is more complicated than the other two, and because there are a lot of variables and interrelationships, it needs the backing of a lot more studies from different disciplines of study.

Just like there are different approaches to the model, there are also different kinds of the defined model. Taking the economic factor as a reference to the analysis there are two types of models according to (Paz & Vargas, 2023):

The microeconomic model. The global economy's pricing and product patterns serve as the foundation for this model. It is predicated on the average consumer and disregards their preferences.

The macroeconomic model. It focuses on the economic flows. The resources' trend and evolution, as well as their monetary value. According to this concept, an individual's income and savings are used for consumption. Its analysis of relative income clarifies how changes in income affect people's or families' consumption. Families or individuals perceive abrupt changes in income as transient, so that their consumption does not adjust accordingly.

According to (Paz & Vargas, 2023), some authors point to three main consumer behavioral models as being the most complete and exclusive: the models are devised by Howard-Sheth, Nicosia, and Engel, Blackwell & Miniard. It is worth noting that Howard-Sheth's model has great predicting ability.

The consumer behavioral models:
1- Howard-Sheth 1969 figure 2: The model explains how various people's purchasing behaviors change throughout time. More specifically, the brand-choice behavior of the buyer. The authors outline the elements of the consumer choice-making process, which comprise a number of potential actions, a set of reasons, and decision mediators that assist in aligning the motives with the

alternatives. They also show how a mix of choice elements influences search processes and the integration of data from the buyer's social and commercial settings, and they observe how these components change over time as a result of repetition. This model proposes three levels of consumer decision-making: restricted issue solving, comprehensive problem solution, and habitual response behavior.

Figure 2

Model of consumer behavior by Howard and Sheth (1969).
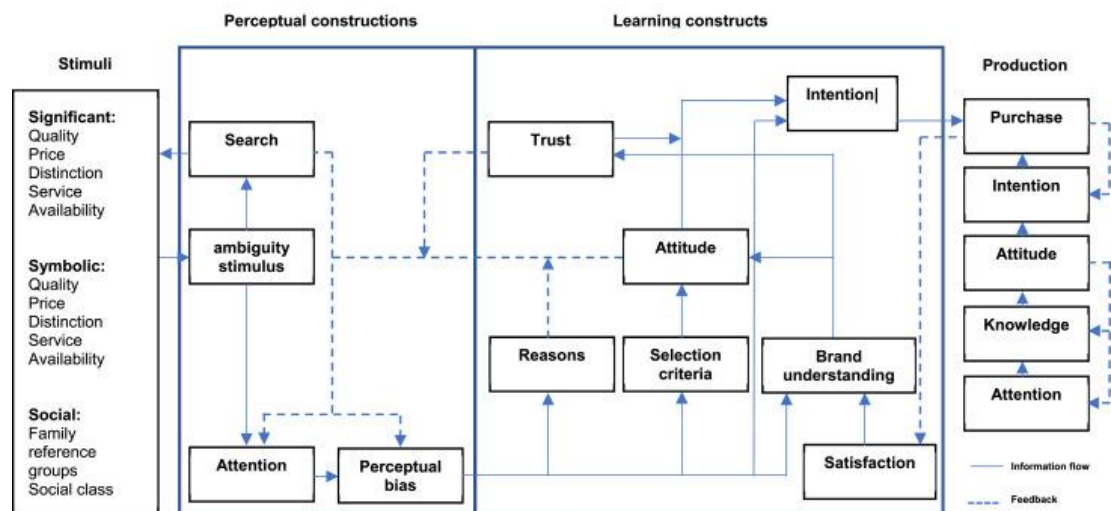
2- Nicosia 1966 figure 3: The information sharing that occurs between a brand and its customers is the main focus of this model. It utilizes an events-based flow across multiple fields, or stages.

Figure 3

Model of consumer behavior model by Nicosia (1966).
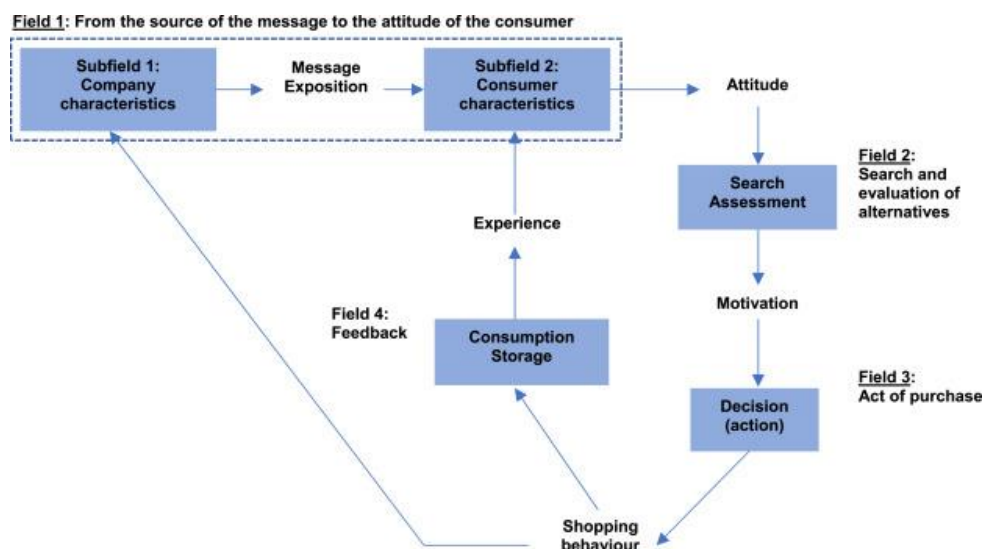
3- Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1968 figure 4: The components of the choice process in this consumer model are the input, information processing, decision process, and variables influencing the decision process. The decision process component consists of the following five steps: need identification, search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and results. (Stankevich, 2017).

Figure 4

Model of consumer behavior and decision making by Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1968).
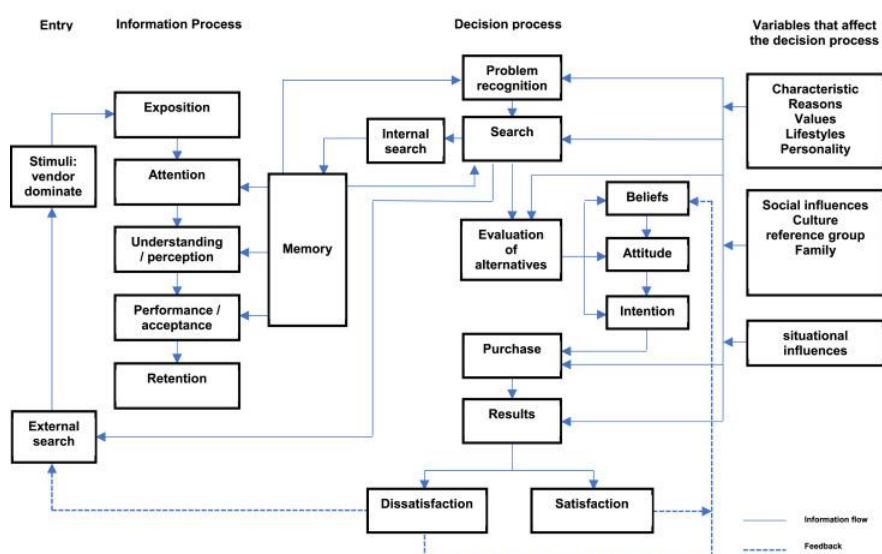
It is worth noting that the latest consumer behavioral model done in 2021 by Vasilica-Maria that considers consumer online purchase intention. This model contains

indirect relationship between the characteristic of the purchase medium, the evaluated risks, consumer motivation, and the perceived quality of the product (Paz & Vargas, 2023).

There are several factors that can influence consumer behavior such as cultural factors, social factors, personal factors, and psychological factors. (Widodo, 2021).

Factors influencing CB

Cultural Factors. cultural consideration is an important factor when determining the needs of consumers. Every society in the world has a different culture, which varies from a country to another and sometimes from one city to another.

Culture. has different definitions, some define culture as a system of shared beliefs, rules, and values that connects a whole society together. (Shukla, 2022). Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others." (Eriksson & McCollum, 2019).

Sub-culture. to every culture there is a sub-culture, it is a sub-culture inside a culture that is followed by smaller groups of people. Similar age, interest, and expertise is what bring the sub-culture groups together. Those members have similar habits a purchasing pattern. (Shukla, 2022).

Social Factors. a way to explain the influence of others on our decision-making can be explained by social factors. Family, friends, and social media influencers are among these elements that influence us. Humans are social creatures. To come up with an opinion or a decision we go through debates and the opinions of others. While living in a certain society, it is important to follow the rules of that society and its regulations, that was set by the community. (Shukla, 2022) The social factors that influence our decision-making can be classified as:

Reference Group. According to (Rojhe, 2020), These groups have an impact on people's behavior based on their perceptions of them. Membership groups, such as family, neighbors, and coworkers, directly affect how consumers behave. Despite their desire, people do not belong to the Reference groups. A person's conduct and attitude are influenced by their reference groups both directly and indirectly. Reference groups can affect a person's behavior in three different ways. Reference groups influence an individual's attitude and self-concept, introduce them to new habits and lifestyles, and

help them build a feeling of validation from others. The opinion leader is Another important effect that persuades people to pursue their opinions and beliefs in opposition to topics, goods, and domains.

Statue in Society. An individual socioeconomic status has an influence on the consumer behavior. (Chapman, 2022). People have distinct roles and hold a variety of positions within their groups, belonging to different kinds of groupings affects how they behave. (Rojhe, 2020)

Personal Factors. studying and understanding consumer behavior can help, and assist us in understanding the purchasing habits and spending trends of the consumer. Each consumer has different preference and not everyone like to buy similar things. Personal factors play an important role on consumer purchasing decisions such as (Shukla, 2022):

Occupation. The decision to buy is significantly influenced by a person's employment. The type of work has a direct impact on the brand, product, and service that a person choose for themselves. (Shukla, 2022)

Age. the age factor is the most obvious personal factor that affects and influences the consumer behavior. (Chapman, 2022). As a person progress through life, his interests and preference in products, brands, and services change. People from different age groups have different choices when it comes to clothing, technology, and diet. (Shukla, 2022).

Economic condition. economical condition of the consumer is a major factor in in influencing the consumer's decision. A personal budget dictates whether the consumer can afford one product or the other. (Chapman, 2022).

Lifestyle. It is referred to as the consumer's way of life, which is defined by their hobbies, passions, or points of view. It also explains how they interact with the outside world. (Rojhe, 2020).

Psychological Factors. purchasing decision are heavily influenced by psychological factors. Motivation, perception, education, and attitude and beliefs are an example of that. The amount of motivation, perception, learning, and attitude and beliefs varies from one person to another. Individual choices are influenced by their beliefs, and values. (Shukla, 2022)

Motivation. Motivation is an internal state that stimulates, energizes, and guides a person's actions toward a certain objective. Psychological, safety and security, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization are the five requirements identified by Abraham Maslow. Unmet demands affect consumer behavior. (Sukla, 2021). Needs are not met until they reach a certain level of intensity and become motivators for the consumer to fulfill the need. According to Freud, people are not truly and completely aware of their motivations. (Rojhe, 2020).

Perception. It involves choosing and analyzing the data to provide a meaningful interpretation. Through their five scenes, the information is conveyed to the individuals. (Shukla, 2022). Consumer perception is a significant factor in the decision-making process; advertisements, social media posts, reviews, and promotions all influence people psychologically to persuade them that a product is valuable. (Chapman, 2022). According to (Rojhe, 2020) for interpreting information there are three various processes in which make a determination how individuals interpret their information, such as selective consideration, selective distortion, and also selective retention.

Learning. learning is an individual's evolvement in his behavior as a result of prior experiences. (Shukla, 2022). Each time an individual buys a product or service, their knowledge expands. (Chapman, 2022). According to (Chapman, 2022) there are two types of learning conditional learning is when an individual is repeatedly exposed to the product or service, prompting a response, Cognitive learning centers on the individual and their way of using their product or service knowledge to find a solution from their purchase.

Beliefs and attitude. Through practice and education, humans can acquire these factors. By forming an impression of the brands and products in the minds of the customers, they might affect their purchasing decisions. An explanatory concept about a thing that is grounded in information, perspective, and faiths is called a belief. Beliefs can also be shaped by human emotions. Human assessments, sentiments, and inclinations toward or away from objects, as well as judgments about things like likes and dislikes, are all considered aspects of attitude. (Rojhe, 2020).

According to (Kumar, Ahluwalia, Hazarika, Singh, & Goswami, 2022), Consumer behavior can be classified into four main types based on purchasing patterns and decision-making processes. Complex purchasing behavior occurs when individuals buy expensive and rarely purchased items, leading to deep involvement in the decision-making process and extensive research before making a choice. Dissonance-reducing purchasing behavior arises when consumers struggle to differentiate between brands, experiencing a sense of disharmony due to the absence of a clear favorite or familiar option. Habitual purchasing behavior, on the other hand, involves consumers making routine purchases with little thought or brand loyalty, driven more by habit than by brand preference. Lastly, variety-seeking behavior occurs when consumers switch between brands not due to dissatisfaction but out of a desire to explore new options and experiences.

Consumers are growing more awareness towards social and environmental issues, and are more eager to support businesses that share these values. By implementing CSR activities, firms and organizations can show their commitment to these practices, which can attract more consumers who are willing to pay a higher price for their products or services. Also, more consumers will be likely to trust and perceive the firm or organization in a positive way. Which leads to increased client's satisfaction. (Deep, 2023). Given that 48% of millennials say social media has no influence on their purchasing decisions, it is imperative that we take into account the characteristics of the current generation. Millennials are a significant social media audience that is difficult to influence. They consume different content on a variety of platforms through different devices and more likely to be influenced by what their peers and social groups think of them (Stankevich, 2017).

Relationship between CSR and decision-making

According to (Servera-Francés & Piqueras-Tomás, 2019) Customers are part of the stakeholder group that businesses interact with. Numerous research in the literature shows how CSR must have the ability to affect customer behavior. Customers are the most significant stakeholder, according to several authors. "Consumers are considered the stakeholder that is most affected by the achievement of an organization's goals," Freeman, for instance, said in 1984. Moreover, and according to (Umair & Butt, 2024) many scholars have looked at the relationship between CSR and consumer behavior, however the topic of "whether CSR activities of companies positively influence consumer buying behavior or not?" has not been addressed. Few earlier studies investigated this relationship and found that CSR directly affects consumers' purchasing decisions. Additionally, their research revealed a strong correlation between these two constructs. Others contended that while making a purchasing decision, customers take a company's ethical practices into serious consideration.

CSR and consumer perception

Consumers' understanding of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is growing today and is a competitive benefit. Although a lot of study has been done in this field, not much of it has been done from the viewpoint of the consumer. (Kaushik & Pandey, 2020). Because they frequently assume that companies would behave in their best interests by maximizing profits, customers evaluate economic, social, and environmental CSR-related actions using a different frame of reference than they usually do. This contrast impact encourages consumers to begin thinking in order to gain confidence regarding the genuineness of companies' social aims. They behave in this manner because they hate feeling exploited by companies that promote social concerns. If this cognitive process is based on a positive evaluation of the company's economic, social, and environmental actions, customers' perceptions of its trustworthiness will be enhanced. (Curras-Perez, Alvarado-Herrera, & Vera-Martínez, 2023). According to (Rodrigues & Borges, 2015) Customers' perceptions of social responsibility initiatives and their overall attitude toward business operations are influenced by the information they are exposed to about them. Additionally, when a consumer learns about a firm he trusts' social responsibility initiatives, it influences both his or her evaluation of the company and his or her inclination to buy.

CSR and Brand loyalty

According to (Agu, Iyelolu, & Idemudia, 2024), Over the past decade, various studies have shown that consumers who perceive a brand to be socially responsible increasingly show loyalty to the brand and an emotional connection towards it. In empirical studies, positive relationships of varying degrees have been found between perceived CSR and brand loyalty. This variance suggests that brand loyalty may be influenced by a range of factors rather than by CSR alone. Proposed mediating variables such as brand trust and brand reputation are expected to influence the strength of the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty. In addition, consumer knowledge and personal values are expected to affect this relationship. Research shows that the relationships between perceived CSR and brand loyalty and knowledge, personal values and brand loyalty are mediated by brand trust and brand reputation. Consumers' emotional commitment to a brand will lead to repeat purchasing and word-of-mouth communication. In comprehensive concept analysis, brand loyalty can be explained as a commitment to a brand. (Iglesias, Markovic, Bagherzadeh, & Singh, 2020). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that consumers may place different degrees of importance on ethical and environmental attributes, possibly due to cultural or generational reasons. Trust in a brand and its reputation act as mediators in the relationships between CSR and customer loyalty and repurchase intentions. It is strategic to have well-implemented, meaningful, and effective CSR in order to build brand loyalty, increase trust and reputation, drive competitive advantage, and achieve success. It is important to build perceived brand image, brand trust, and brand loyalty that firms possess through well-conceived CSR that is relevant and of interest to target consumers. (Amoako, Doe, & Dzogbenuku, 2020).

CSR and Premium Prices

CSR practices at a brand level impact the willingness of individuals to pay premium prices for products and services. Available empirical evidence shows that people are willing to pay more for brands they see as being socially responsible. This willingness is influenced by the perceived value the CSR measures offer, the trust in the brand itself, and the alignment of CSR measures with personal values. This willingness varies among different industries and between various consumer groups. Once affected, customer loyalty plays a determinative role in "hidden prices" strategies: people loyal to a brand may be willing to engage in ethical consumption

even at a higher cost. (Narayanan, 2022). Though this strategy may generically work to the advantage of most brands, it is possible that, in some cases, it could act as a way to prevent the brand from adopting premium pricing strategies. This may happen when a relevant fraction of the public is skeptical about claims concerning CSR, or when the overall economic context is one in which consumers are generally more price sensitive and less keen to make choices that are not economically motivated. (Sun & Yoon, 2022).

The analysis of the available studies therefore brought to the conclusion that, although an extensive literature exists on the impact of CSR on the general attitude of customers towards a brand, there are only a few papers available that have directly investigated the relationship between CSR and willingness to pay higher prices for a product. More evidence is available suggesting that CSR does positively work as a differentiator in saturated markets, and it does so both for price promotions and loyalty programs. (Hulshof & Mulder, 2020). However, according to (Boronat-Navarro & Pérez-Aranda, 2020), in this regard, most of the authors limit the evidence to what happens in the U.S. situation. The importance of this evidence is quite relevant for the overall discussion, granting that one of the main limitations reported in the reviewed studies was skepticism on behalf of consumers about the truthfulness of CSR communications. Thus, some questions arise as to whether people are willing to pay a higher price for a product just because of the CSR of the company producing it, and whether higher prices charged for goods produced by companies practicing CSR are perceived as reasonable and therefore are not rejected.

H1: Corporate Social Responsibility activities have a positive effect on students' Decision-Making process.

Relationship between brand equity and decision-making

A well-recognized advantage of strong brand equity is its deep influence on consumer decision-making ((Arya, Pau, & Sethi, 2022); (Nuseir, 2021)). It represents all the cognitive and emotional elements that individuals associate, whether strong or weak, with a particular label. Hence, because high brand equity is linked to several intangible positive outcomes useful for companies, if the brand can influence consumer decision-making, it becomes essential to study the concept to satisfy this requirement. From a managerial point of view, brand equity is a desirable end state, being the vital springboard from which all aspects of brands that are important for long-term interactive marketing success flow (Arya, Pau, & Sethi); (Ha, Vo, & Nguyen, 2022). Managers, by understanding the brand equity of their firm's label, can predict and explain how their consumers make choices and engage preferences. Accordingly, brand equity can affect the pre-presentation, presentation, and post-presentation purchase attitudes of consumers and can account for the preference of relatively high equity brands. Hence, it influences product choice in various stages of consumer decision-making. Moreover, brand equity operates to link to the creation of specific mental associations with the products and services that result from effectively leveraging the brand (Arya, Pau, & Sethi); (Ha, Vo, & Nguyen).

Brand Awareness and Recognition

Brand awareness is fundamental in the consumer decision-making process as it significantly affects the options that will be considered during the final selection of products (Shuai, 2016). Brand awareness is generally defined as the likelihood for a customer to either be familiar with or to remember a brand. In layman's terms, it is a measure of the extent to which a customer can recognize or recall a brand under varying conditions. The likelihood for a consumer to recognize a brand from visual or auditory cues has strong implications on whether a company's brand is considered in the final selection process by the consumer (Shahid, Hussain, & aZafar, 2017). The importance of the impact of brand awareness on sales cannot be overstated, as studies have shown that the level of brand recall in consumers is directly proportional to sales. Despite the importance of acknowledging brand awareness and highlighting the numerous strategies that emanate from the need of product managers to build brand visibility, academic scholars have been less interested in demystifying the process of enhancing the visibility of brands by understanding the consumer's purchase journey

underpinning brand recall and recognition. Brand awareness and recognition could be very important in subsequent stages of the common decision-making model. This implies that it would be critical for companies to devise strategies that would allow their clientele to have better chances of cognitively accessing, retrieving, and recognizing the brand during the final stage of the decision-making process the selection stage of the model (Dotta, Tolotti, & Yepez, 2016).

Brand Loyalty and Repeat Purchases

Brand loyalty is one of the key factors influencing consumer choices (Munyoki & Mwai, 2018). It has been stated that 'most repurchasers probably do not think that what they are buying each time stands out in such a way that they will not risk disappointment by not choosing another supplier.' However, there may be opportunities to identify different ways in which consumers attach emotional commitment to outcomes and relationships that support personal narratives and contribute to their self-esteem and emotional well-being (Vazifehdoost, 2014).

Factors Affecting Brand Equity

Brand equity is dependent on market conditions and influences (lajevardi, 2014). It is not a static concept; rather, it is a dynamic variable that can change with conditions. For instance, economic conditions can play a major role in changes in brand equity. Companies' brands can quickly close down products and services and adjust prices in response to economic changes.

Brand Image and Perception. Consumer perception of a brand is supported by brand image, which is defined as the set of mental associations held in a consumer's mind concerning a specific brand (Isoraite, 2018). It affects consumer perceptions and attitudes, facilitates cognitive associations, and aids brand image, helping consumers in the decision-making process. A solid brand image serves as a foundation for more intelligent strategic marketing choices on the targeting of particular market niches. (Dai & Chen, 2017).

Brand Associations and Attributes. The attribute and benefit associations attached to a brand are critical to the definition of brand equity (Shuai, 2016). Brand associations refer to the various thoughts, emotions, and attitudes that a consumer connects to a brand, often organized in consumer memory in terms of a network of interrelated associations (Friedman & Leclercq, 2015). These associations can be used

to convey what the brand represents and why the consumer should buy the brand (Shao, Zhang, & Chen, 2015).

H2: Brand Equity has a positive effect on students' Decision-Making

Research model

Figure 5

Research Model
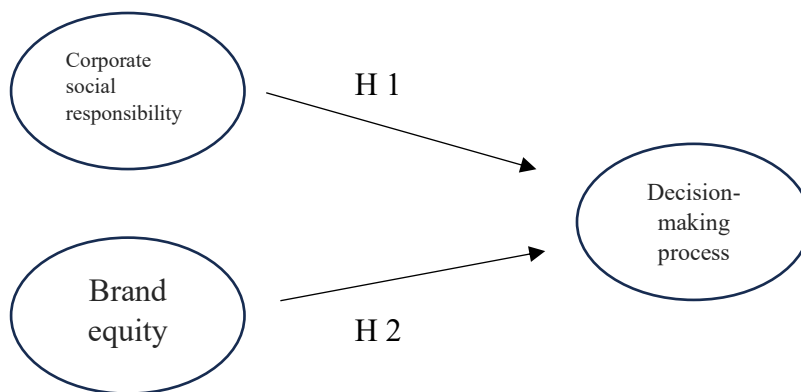
CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter explains the approach and procedures used to conduct the study. It outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analytical techniques, ensuring transparency and reliability in how the research was carried out.

Research design

The implementation of a quantitative research approach is preferred due to its reliance on objective measures of data obtained through a questionnaire. According to (Ghanad, 2023), The goal of quantitative research is to quantify and extrapolate data from a study sample while taking various perspectives into account. To validate the hypothesis developed in a specific study, the procedure entails the gathering, examination, and interpretation of measurable data. In order to assess ideas, quantitative research relies on the methodical collection and analysis of data using a logical methodology.

Population and Sampling

The data is gathered as primary data, sourced from high education students in Saudi Arabia. According to the higher education ministry in Saudi Arabia (MOE, 2021) there are 29 public universities, and 38 private universities. The number of higher-education students is approximately 1.9 million (Qandeel, 2023), the ideal sample size is 385. The researcher distributed 385 forms to student in both public and private universities, retained 280 responses, the number of valid responses for analysis is 243 with a responses rate of 63%. The students participating in this study are from 20 different universities in Saudi-Arabia both public and private. The majority of students were from King Abdulaziz university in Jeddah, while king Fahad university is the second in Damma and Jeddah university is the third university. The researcher utilized convenience sampling as sampling method, which is the technique of gathering data from a research population that the researcher can easily reach. (Golzar, Tajik, & Noor, 2022).

Data analysis procedure

After all the data are collected and organized, the data will be filtered, missing, duplicated, and omission data, will not be considered.

The analysis will be categorized into two main categories,

- Descriptive analysis: The purpose of descriptive analysis is to list or explain the characteristics of the data set. to determine the mean, median, and mode, or distribution and frequency.
- Making inferences from statistics, such as examining the correlation between variables or formulating forecasts, is known as inferential analysis.

The data will be analyzed using SPSS analyzing program.

Data collection tools and procedure

The data collection approach utilized online questionnaires shared through several social media platforms, with students from different universities, who also shared the questionnaire with their classmates, the students who participated in this study are from various departments in the university, majority are from engineering department and medicine, this method represents a convenient and expeditious means of engaging a large number of participants and promptly obtaining the desired outcomes. The data is collected in a period of 3 months, from 31.01.2024 until 30.04.2024.

The data type employed in this study will adhere to the Likert Scale, which typically utilizes a 5-point scale or satisfaction scale. This scale encompasses a range from one extreme to the other, with 1 representing complete disagreement and 5 representing complete agreement. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections, first section is about the demographic of the participants, which has 4 items about the age, gender, martial statue, and number of depends. The second part will contain the scales. In total there are 29 items. The first scale is sourced from (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos) about corporate social responsibility with 8 items in total that adheres to Likert scale of 5-points with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree, the Cronbach alpha is .890 shown in table 1. The second scale about brand equity is sourced from (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos), (Park & Gretzel), with 12 items, brand equity questionnaire is also adhering to 5-points Likert scale with 1 representing strong disagreement and 5 represents strong agreement, the Cronbach alpha is .891 shown in table 1. Lastly the scale about Decision-making with 9 items is sourced from (Park & Gretzel), (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos) it is also adhering to Likert scale of 5-points with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree, the Cronbach alpha is .913 shown in table 1.

Table 1

Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
CSR	.890	8
BE	.891	12
DM	.913	9
Total	.947	29

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The results of the study are presented in this chapter, with a focus on the key findings from the data analysis. The results are arranged to highlight the main conclusions and trends while also supporting the study's goals. These results provide a factual basis for comprehension of the topic and set the stage for further research and analysis in the discussion chapter.

Validity test

Table 6 presents the findings of the exploratory factor analysis conducted on the study measures (pattern matrix). The total number of variables is 29, 12 variables were deleted for their low factor loading, the remaining is 17 variables.

The loading factor for brand equity is between .460 - .792, with a Cronbach alpha of .859 and 41.1% total variance. as shown in table 6. The loading factor for CSR is between .759 to .844, the Cronbach alpha is .848. and the total variance is 10.5%. as shown in table 6. The loading factor for decision-making is between .722 up to .864, the Cronbach alpha is .881 and the total variance is 9.2%. as shown in table 6. The total Cronbach alpha is .908 as shown in table 2.

The KMO value of .884 shown in table 3.

Table 2

Pattern Matrix

	Component			Cronbach alpha	Total Variance %
	1	2	3		
BE1	.792				
BE2	.784				
BE4	.746				
BE5	.655			.859	41.1
BE7	.716				
BE8	.725				
BE9	.508				
BE12	.460				
CSR5		.759			
CSR6		.844		.848	10.5
CSR7		.828			
CSR8		.795			
DM1			.808	.881	9.2
DM2			.804		
DM3			.776		
DM4			.864		
DM5			.722		
Total				.908	60.8

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.[a] a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 3

KMO and Barlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.884
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2142.640
	df	136
	Sig.	.000

Descriptive analysis

The number of male responders is 153 with 63% and the female responders is at 90 with 37% (table 4).

Table 4

Gender Frequency

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	153	63.0
Female	90	37.0
Total	243	100.0

Most responders are aged between 26-35 years old with 53.1%, while 32.9% are aged between 18-25, and 9.9% are between 36-45, and the remaining 4.1% are above 46 years old (table5).

Table 5

Age frequency

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25	80	32.9
26-35	129	53.1

36-45+	24	9.9
46+	10	4.1
Total	243	100.0

111 responders with 45.7% are married while 54.3% (132) are single (table6).

Table 6

Marital Statue Frequency

Marital statue	Frequency	Percent
Single	132	54.3
Married	111	45.7
Total	243	100.0

Many responders have between 1-3 people depending on them financially with 37.4%, while 31.3 have no obligations to anyone, and 14.4% have dependencies between 4-5, and the remaining 16.9% have more than 5 people depending on them financially (table7).

Table 7

Dependance Frequency

Nr. Dependance	Frequency	Percent
None	76	31.3
1-3	91	37.4
4-5	35	14.4
+5	41	16.9
Total	243	100.0

Regression Analysis

In order to verify the causative relationship and moderating influence of the variables included in the research model, multiple regression analysis is used in this study.

First the result of linear regression analysis to analyze the effect of CSR on decision-making as shown in (table 9) (beta = .568, t = 11.835, p = .000) was found to have a significant effect at 0.05 level. The model explains 36.8% of the variance in decision-making, as indicated by the R^2 value in (table 8). Therefore, it is proven that CSR activities are an important factor in the decision-making process. Which proves H1 to be correct.

Table 8

Model Summary for CSR and decision-making

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.606[a]	.368	.365	.60188

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR

Table 9

Regression analysis for CSR and decision-making Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	2.050	.166		12.353	.000	1.723	2.377
CSR	.568	.048	.606	11.835	.000	.474	.663

a. Dependent Variable: DM

The ANOVA analysis (table 10) demonstrates that the regression model for CSR significantly predicts decision-making, with an F-value of 140.072 and a p-value of 0.000.

Table 10

ANOVA Table for CSR and decision-making

ANOVAª

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	50.743	1	50.743	140.072	.000[b]
Residual	87.305	241	.362		
Total	138.048	242			

a. Dependent Variable: DM b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR

Correlation: All of the variables included in this study had positive (+) correlation coefficients. Table 11 displays the correlation analysis's findings. This suggests that the relationship's direction and efficacy support the theoretical validity of the hypothesis test.

Table 110

Correlation between CSR and decision-making

Correlations

		DM	CSR
Pearson Correlation	DM	1.000	.606
	CSR	.606	1.000

Second the result of linear regression analysis to analyze the effect of brand equity on decision-making as shown in table 13 (beta = .777, t = 17.717, p = .000) was found to have a significant effect at 0.05 level. The model explains 56.6% of the variance in decision-making, as indicated by the R^2 value in (table 12). Therefore, it is proven that brand equity is an important factor in the decision-making process. Which proves H2 to be correct.

Table 11

Model Summary for brand equity and decision-making

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752[a]	.566	.564	.49879

a. Predictors: (Constant), BE

Table 12

Regression Analysis for brand equity and decision-making

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.220	.158		7.720	.000	.908	1.531
BE	.777	.044	.752	17.717	.000	.691	.864

a. Dependent Variable: DM

The ANOVA analysis (table 14) demonstrates that the regression model for brand equity significantly predicts decision-making, with an F-value of 313.879 and a p-value of 0.000.

Table 134

ANOVA table for brand equity and decision-making

ANOVAª

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	78.089	1	78.089	313.879	.000ᵇ
Residual	59.958	241	.249		
Total	138.048	242			

a. Dependent Variable: DM b. Predictors: (Constant), BE

Correlation: Table 15 indicates that all of the correlation coefficients between brand equity and decision-making were positive (+).

Table 15

Correlations between brand equity and decision-making

Correlations

		DM	BE
Pearson Correlation	DM	1.000	.752
	BE	.752	1.000

CHAPTER V

Discussion and implications

The results of the data analysis are presented in this section, offering insights into the study questions. The significance, implications, and similarity or difference from previous studies are highlighted in the discussion, which interprets these findings in the larger framework of the body of existing literature. This chapter provides a thorough grasp of the research issue by bridging the gap between data and meaning by relating the findings to theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

The findings confirm a significant positive influence of (CSR) on students' decision-making processes. Regression analysis shows that CSR accounts for 36.8% of the variance in decision-making ($R^2 = .368$). This indicates that students are inclined to consider ethical practices, environmental sustainability, and social contributions of companies when making purchasing decisions, this validates (H1). However, this low percentage can be explained by many factors such as the lack of the awareness of CSR activities from the companies by the students, or mistrust of these activities which means that companies should work more on promoting their activities in the societies they work in. Survey data also revealed that students' perceptions of CSR initiatives strongly correlate with trust and loyalty toward brands. Brands perceived as socially responsible were associated with higher emotional connections and repeat purchases. This aligns with the literature, where positive CSR practices enhance brand credibility and loyalty (Agu, Iyelolu, & Idemudia). Lastly the findings demonstrate that CSR initiatives can increase students' willingness to pay premium prices for products. However, skepticism regarding the authenticity of CSR claims remains a moderating factor, particularly in price-sensitive contexts. These observations echo findings by (Sun & Yoon) and (Narayanan). The study demonstrates that CSR significantly influences consumer decision-making, corroborating findings by (Umair & Butt). The positive perception of CSR among students aligns with the idea that ethical and socially responsible practices enhance trust and credibility. This aligns with (Rodrigues & Borges) who emphasized that CSR initiatives shape positive consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions. However, the role of skepticism, as highlighted by (Sun & Yoon), remains critical. For CSR to be effective, companies must ensure transparency and consistency in their efforts to avoid consumer mistrust. The findings also reveal that CSR's influence extends beyond ethical perception to directly impact loyalty and

emotional attachment. (Agu, Iyelolu, & Idemudia) noted similar patterns, showing how CSR fosters strong emotional connections and repeat purchases. These results highlight the necessity of integrating CSR into core business strategies rather than treating it as a peripheral activity.

Brand Equity exhibits a stronger effect on decision-making than CSR, accounting for 56.6% of the variance (R^2 = .566). High brand equity fosters trust, loyalty, and emotional associations, significantly influencing purchasing behavior. These findings validate the hypothesis (H2) that brand equity positively affects decision-making, though it is over 50% of the students take brand equity into consideration when making decisions this number can be increased from companies by investing more in their brand equity components to make their brands more recognizable and more desirable for students. Key components such as brand awareness, loyalty, and image were found to play a crucial role in shaping decision-making. Brand awareness ensures familiarity, while loyalty drives repeat purchases. Positive brand associations further enhance consumer preference and trust. These findings align with theories by (Arya, Pau, & Sethi), and (Ha, Vo, & Nguyen). Brand equity emerged as a more potent factor than CSR in influencing decision-making, accounting for a higher variance in consumer behavior. This finding aligns with (Arya, Pau, & Sethi) who highlighted the multifaceted nature of brand equity—comprising awareness, loyalty, and positive associations—as a key driver of consumer preferences. The importance of emotional connections, as noted in studies by (Ha, Vo, & Nguyen), underscores the need for brands to cultivate strong relationships with their target audiences. A significant takeaway is the interplay between brand awareness and consumer trust. Brands with high visibility are more likely to be considered during the decision-making process. This finding is supported by (Dotta, Tolotti, & Yepez), who emphasized the critical role of visibility in influencing consumer preferences. While both CSR and brand equity are influential, brand equity demonstrated a stronger direct impact on decision-making. However, CSR acts as a key differentiator, especially in markets where ethical considerations and social responsibility resonate with consumer values. This dual impact suggests that companies should adopt an integrated approach, leveraging both CSR and brand equity to enhance their competitive positioning. By aligning CSR initiatives with brand equity strategies, organizations can create a compelling value proposition that appeals to both ethical and emotional drivers of consumer behavior.

In summary, the study highlights the complementary roles of CSR and brand equity in influencing decision-making among students. While CSR builds ethical credibility and social trust, brand equity strengthens emotional connections and brand loyalty, collectively driving students' choices.

The findings of the study offer both theoretical and practical implications, underscoring the interplay between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and brand equity in shaping consumer decision-making.

Theoretical implications

The study validates existing literature, including the works of Rodrigues & Borges, which emphasize CSR's role in shaping positive consumer attitudes. Similarly, findings by (Agu, Iyelolu, & Idemudia), as well as (Ha, Vo, & Nguyen), are corroborated, highlighting the influence of CSR and brand equity on trust, loyalty, and emotional connections. The research supports the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior models, where CSR fosters ethical and social trust, while brand equity drives emotional loyalty. Additionally, the identification of skepticism as a moderating factor, consistent with studies by (Sun & Yoon), (Narayanan), reveals its critical role in reducing the effectiveness of CSR initiatives. This emphasizes the need for further theoretical exploration into trust and perceived authenticity in consumer decision-making. The study also sheds light on the dual influence of CSR and brand equity in driving both ethical and emotional consumer behaviors. These findings call for a nuanced theoretical framework that integrates these two factors as essential components of comprehensive consumer engagement strategies.

Practical Implications

The findings highlight actionable strategies for organizations. Companies must actively promote their CSR initiatives to reduce skepticism and build trust. Transparency, consistent communication, and evidence of genuine social impact are crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of CSR efforts. Additionally, CSR initiatives should resonate with the values and concerns of the target audience, particularly student demographics, to enhance engagement. Students must graduate from college with "CSR values" that guide both their overall professional identities and managerial decision-making. While it might be beneficial to incorporate some traditional "core" courses within CSR, infusion and immersion appear to be the more popular strategies. As useful in certain sections as it is problematic in others, embedded CSR theory

postulates that knowledge of CSR is ingrained throughout the entire student learning process. One or two themes in the infused units specifically address the significance of CSR. The full scope of other subjects may also be covered, with CSR elements present. Framing CSR as more than just a business or marketing issue is one advantage of this multidisciplinary perspective. Thus, emphasizing the SPI closely reflects the ideals found in "the campus plan." The model promotes the creation of new courses or coordinated efforts between various academic institutions and schools that might not have previously collaborated to develop an interdisciplinary course. In terms of educational outcomes and knowledge sharing, collaboration when creating a new interdisciplinary course to address the same overarching issue or problem may prove to be far more advantageous than short-lived administrative review procedures, an online repository, or shared workshops. While some workshops, seminars, symposiums, and conference papers are shared among part-time or sessional teaching staff, there is a noticeable lack of policy, procedures, or administrative buy-in from full-time personnel, suggesting that a united front on CSR is uncommon in practice in business schools.

Brand equity emerges as a powerful driver of decision-making, accounting for a higher variance than CSR. To capitalize on this, companies should invest in key components such as brand awareness, loyalty, and image. Enhancing brand visibility and fostering emotional connections can significantly influence consumer trust and loyalty, leading to repeat purchases. An integrated approach to CSR and brand equity is critical.

In many industries, the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand equity is increasingly recognized as a strategic imperative. Research indicates that CSR initiatives extend beyond philanthropic efforts and play a fundamental role in enhancing a company's brand equity—the value derived from its name and reputation. This study synthesizes key findings from significant academic contributions that explore the benefits of CSR in relation to brand equity. Sharif (2012) underscores the substantial impact of CSR on various stakeholders, including local communities and the environment. This connection is particularly significant as it not only enhances a company's reputation but also fosters customer trust and loyalty. The study highlights critical components of CSR—such as labor practices, environmental sustainability, and community engagement—that contribute to a firm's competitive

advantage and, consequently, its brand equity. By aligning corporate social responsibility initiatives with consumer values, organizations can cultivate a positive brand image that resonates with their target audience. Building on this perspective, Peltola (2014) emphasizes the role of consumer perception, particularly through the case study of Haglöfs. The study illustrates how consumers' purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by ethical considerations, reinforcing the necessity for businesses to integrate CSR strategically into their core operations. Authentic brand associations, which contribute to customer-based brand equity, can be strengthened through the effective communication of CSR initiatives. The findings suggest that firms must actively engage in transparent and meaningful CSR efforts to enhance consumer perceptions and foster long-term emotional connections with their audience. Together, these studies present compelling evidence for the positive correlation between CSR and brand equity, demonstrating that ethical business practices are essential for building a strong and reputable brand. A comprehensive analysis of this research suggests that CSR initiatives serve as a strategic tool for strengthening brand equity rather than merely fulfilling ethical obligations. Companies that successfully incorporate CSR into their branding strategies, ensuring alignment with consumer expectations, are more likely to gain a competitive advantage and enhance brand loyalty. The findings emphasize the importance of a proactive approach to CSR, ensuring that corporate actions are well-received by stakeholders and contribute to a strong, enduring reputation.

By aligning CSR initiatives with branding strategies, companies can create a compelling value proposition that combines ethical credibility with emotional loyalty. Treating CSR as a core business strategy rather than a peripheral activity can maximize its impact and effectiveness. Addressing skepticism is another important practical consideration. Ensuring the authenticity of CSR claims through independent audits, certifications, and transparent reporting mechanisms can build consumer trust. This is especially vital in price-sensitive markets, where skepticism about CSR efforts is more pronounced. Targeted marketing is also essential. Companies should design campaigns that highlight their social responsibility and brand strength, especially through emotional storytelling tied to CSR initiatives. Such strategies can foster deeper connections with ethically conscious consumers. Lastly, the findings have implications for policy and education. Policymakers can encourage transparency and accountability

in CSR reporting, fostering greater consumer trust. Collaborations between businesses and educational institutions can also play a significant role in raising awareness about CSR among students, enabling them to make more informed purchasing decisions.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion and recommendation

The main conclusions of the study are outlined in this chapter, along with their applicability to the goals of the investigation. Additionally, it offers practical answers or suggestions for further research based on the knowledge acquired.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Brand Equity on consumer decision-making among students in Saudi Arabia. CSR initiatives, when effectively implemented and communicated, positively affect trust, credibility, and ethical perceptions, which are critical factors in shaping consumer behavior. Students demonstrated a preference for brands that actively engage in ethical practices and contribute to societal well-being. Brand equity, however, emerged as a more dominant factor in influencing decision-making. Key elements such as brand awareness, loyalty, and positive associations strongly impact consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Brand equity not only fosters emotional connections but also enhances trust and brand reputation, making it a vital driver of consumer behavior. Importantly, the collaborative effect of CSR and brand equity was evident. While CSR adds an ethical dimension to a brand's appeal, brand equity strengthens its emotional and cognitive connections with consumers. Together, these factors create a robust framework for driving consumer loyalty and willingness to pay premium prices, particularly in competitive and socially conscious markets. The study also highlights the unique cultural and economic context of Saudi Arabia, emphasizing the need for localized strategies that align with consumer values and preferences. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on CSR and brand equity, offering practical insights for businesses aiming to enhance their market positioning and consumer engagement.

Recommendations

Brands should adopt clear and transparent communication to mitigate skepticism and strengthen consumer trust, and focus on building emotional connections through consistent and positive brand experiences. Organizations should align CSR initiatives with brand equity-building efforts to create a unified and compelling value proposition. The CSR practice of a firm is continuously shaped by highly educated professionals. University students and other well-educated future professionals are seen as crucial in

addressing a range of CSR issues. Enhancing university students' CSR skills and values enables them to develop into better, more responsible future professionals. Globally, the business community is becoming more interested in implementing and upholding CSR practices within their companies. Organizations in Saudi Arabia, however, describe themselves as less socially conscious than those in developed nations. Some conclusions are made for Saudi Arabian university students and aspiring researchers based on the debate above. First and foremost, Saudi universities ought to do more to give their students the information and abilities they need to become highly responsible workers. Second, Saudi firms should think about collaborating with these significant stakeholders to uphold and advance CSR practices, given the potential role that university students can play. Third, Saudi officials are able to acknowledge the critical role that each stakeholder may play in improving social cohesion with the state. Though in the Saudi context, the preceding sections have highlighted the significance of the new generation of college students in influencing the CSR initiatives carried out by the companies where they are most likely to work in the future. In keeping with the objectives and aspirations of Saudi Vision 2030, including these stakeholders should lead to cogently cooperative work that builds a more harmonious socioeconomic landscape in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. When educating consumers about CSR practices and their societal impact that can increase appreciation and support for socially responsible brands.

Given the unique cultural and economic dynamics of Saudi Arabia, brands should tailor CSR and brand equity strategies to resonate with local consumers and address their specific values and preferences. Lastly future research should include diverse demographic groups to better understand the broader impact of CSR and brand equity on decision-making.

Limitations

Limited studies have focused on CSR and brand equity within the Saudi Arabian context, which constrains the ability to generalize findings to the broader population. The use of convenience sampling may introduce bias, as the sample may not fully represent the diversity of Saudi students. Skepticism among students about the authenticity of CSR initiatives poses challenges to fully assessing their impact. The unique cultural and economic dynamics of Saudi Arabia may influence the applicability of global findings to this context. The study focuses on higher education

students, which may not represent other demographic groups, such as working professionals or non-student consumers.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Participant Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form Dear Participant, you are asked to participate in a research study that we are carrying out to understand the impact of Corporate social responsibility and brand equity and its effect on Saudi consumer decision-making. More specifically, we are looking for information what influences the decision-making process in the Saudi market. We will appreciate you to take the time to provide answers to various questions presented on this form. The survey data will be kept by the researcher for 1 year after the completion of the study, after which they will be deleted from our databases. By filling in the following scale, you agree to participate in this study. Please note that your participation in the study is voluntary and whether you agree to participate or not will have no impact on you. Your identity will not be revealed in any case to third parties. The data collected during this study will be used for academic research purposes only and may be presented at national/international academic meetings and/or publications. You may quit participating in this study at any time by contacting us. If you opt out of the study, your data will be deleted from our database and will not be included in any further steps of the study. In case you have any questions or concerns, please contact us using the information below.

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2. Prof. Dr. SERIFE EYÜPOĞLU Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Department of Business Administration Tel: +90 675 1000 Ext: 3102/03 E-mail: serife.eyupoglu@neu.edu.tr

Demographic questions

Q1. Which of the following age group do you belong to?

18-25 years

26-35 years

36-45 years and above

Q2. What is your gender?

Male

Female

Q3. What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Q4. How many people depend on you?

None

 1-3

4-5

More than 5

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback is valuable to us.

CSR questions:

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, the effect of corporate social responsibility on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction, 2023)

Q1 CSR1-My favorite brand is committed to improving the well-being of the communities in which it operates.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q2 CSR2-My favorite brand Actively participates in social and cultural events.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q3 CSR3-My favorite brand Promotes a role in society that goes beyond simply generating profit.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q4 CSR4-My Favorite brand Helps solve social problems.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q5 CSR5-My favorite brand Protects the environment.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q6 CSR6-My favorite brand Recycles.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q7 CSR7-My favorite Communicates its environmental practices to its clients.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q8 CSR8-My favorite brand Participates in environmental certifications.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Brand Equity questions: (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, the effect of corporate social responsibility on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction, 2023)**,)** (Park & Gretzel, 2010)

Q9 BE1- I consider myself loyal to my favorite brand.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q10 BE2- This brand is my first choice.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q11 BE3- I have favorite brands from which I buy over and over.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q12 BE4- I go to the same brand each time I shop.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q13 BE5- Once I find a product or brand I like. I stick with it.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q14 BE6- I am more likely to recommend and remain loyal to a brand that actively supports CSR causes.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q15 BE7- The most advertised brands are usually very good choice.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q16 BE8- I prefer buying best-selling brands.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q17 BE9- Well-known national brands are best for me.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q18 BE10- I have an image of the type of people who buy products of this brand.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q19 BE11- My favorite brand conveys a personality that sets it apart from the competition.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q20 BE12- Buying products of this brand says something about the type of person I am.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Decision-Making questions: (Park & Gretzel, 2010**)**, (Araújo, Pereira, & Santos, the effect of corporate social responsibility on brand image and brand equity and its impact on consumer satisfaction, 2023)

Q21 DM1- Getting very good quality is very important to me.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q22 DM2- In general, I try to buy best overall quality.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q23 DM3- I make special effort to choose the very best quality products.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q24 DM4- I carefully look at prices before buying items.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q25 DM5- I pay a lot of attention to price.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q26 DM6- I value advantageous prices more than other aspects.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q27 DM7- I made the right choice when I bought my favorite brand.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q28 DM8-My favorite brand meets my expectations.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

Q29 DM9-I am satisfied with my favorite brand.

- [ ] 1 - Strongly Disagree

- [ ] 2 - Disagree

- [ ] 3 - Neutral

- [ ] 4 - Agree

- [ ] 5 - Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B

Ethics Approval

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

31.01.2024

Dear Abdullah Salem Abdullah Bahajri

Your application titled **"Corporate social responsibility and brand equity and its effect on Saudi consumer decision-making"** with the application number NEU/SS/2023/1737 has been evaluated by the Scientific Research Ethics Committee and granted approval. You can start your research on the condition that you will abide by the information provided in your application form.

Prof. Dr. Aşkın KİRAZ

The Coordinator of the Scientific Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C

Turnitin Report

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND BRAND EQUITY AND ITS EFFECT ON SAUDI CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING by Abdullah Bahajri

ORIGINALITY REPORT

13%	7%	6%	6%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Christ the Redeemer College Student Paper	1%
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