The Effect of CSR Activities on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Image and Corporate Image on UNIQLO

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumer purchase intention, with corporate image and brand image as mediating variables, in the context of a multi-brand fashion company. The study utilized a quantitative approach with a correlational design, involving 140 respondents collected through an online survey using a Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Smart PLS 3.0 software. The results showed that CSR has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention, corporate image, and brand image. In addition, brand image also has a positive influence on purchase intention. However, corporate image did not show a significant effect in mediating the relationship between CSR and purchase intention, while brand image showed significant mediation. The validity and reliability of the data have been tested using the Confirmatory Factor Analysis method, with the results showing that all indicators are valid and reliable. This study confirms the importance of CSR as a strategy that strengthens corporate and brand image, while driving consumer purchase intention. Practical implications include the importance of fashion companies to design an integrated CSR strategy to increase competitiveness in the market. This research also recommends further studies to explore the mediation mechanism and expand the sample to other industries for generalization of the findings.

Keywords:
Corporate social responsibility; Purchase intention; Corporate image; Brand image; Fashion industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), according to Motilewa and Worlu (2015), is a management system and strategy that offers companies an edge by integrating social and environmental concerns into their operations rather than treating them as an afterthought (Porter & Kramer, 2011). However, brand and corporate image are not the same regarding CSR initiatives. Identifying that a company or brand's image impacts customer behavior, including purchase intention, is important while creating CSR initiatives at the corporate or brand level. A sustainable economic strategy that motivates companies to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions and add value for customers depends on corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Green & Peloza, 2011). Corporate image positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction, behavioral intention, and loyalty (Ardhana et al., 2024). However, some research evaluating the impacts of marketing campaigns has been performed against the theory that corporate image and brand are unrelated.

As defined by Cretu and Brodie (2007), brand and corporate image are distinct aspects that impact customers' buying decisions. They concluded that the CSR corporate image misrepresents the brand as a whole. In his research, Sofyan (2017) stated that the results showed that CSR significantly affects functional, emotional, and customer brand loyalty, and functional and emotional brand images strongly influence

customer loyalty. A few topics related to the connection between corporate image, brand image, and performance were also discussed. A company with multiple brands should be the primary focus of the research to learn how customers' cognitive reactions to corporate and brand-level CSR initiatives impact corporate and brand image, as well as how both types of image impact customers' purchase intentions. The results showed that partially Brand Image positively and significantly affects Purchasing Decisions (Siswanto & Hastuti, 2023). The industry became an important social problem globally because of its low labor standards and cost sensitivity (Cooke et al., 2005). In addition, a study by Chan et al. (2024) indicated that CSR practices (i.e., environmental and social CSR) positively influence purchase intention for apparel products. Thus, it is appropriate for multi-brand companies to research how corporate social responsibility (CSR) impacts consumer purchase intention, brand image, and corporate image. In addition, fashion brands have to spread their companies' risk and grab as many opportunities as possible (Arrigo, 2016; Lopez & Fan, 2009).

According to the background that has been described, some of the primary issues that require discussion were whether corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities will right enhance purchase intention, whether CSR activities will increase corporate image, whether CSR activities will optimize brand image, whether CSR activities will improve brand image, whether corporate image will improve brand image, whether corporate image will improve brand image, whether brand image will improve purchase intention, whether corporate image mediates the effect of CSR on purchase intention, and whether brand image mediates the effect of CSR on purchase intention. This study aims to determine how fashion companies' corporate social responsibility (CSR) impacts customers' purchase intentions through brand and corporate image mediation. The results of this study should provide significant insights and realistic implications for fashion companies with multiple brands, as CSR is another strategic dimension of the company that reinforces its commitment to sustainability and enables stakeholders to participate in business strategy (Gálvez-Sánchez et al., 2024). The paper is organized as follows: A complete explanation of the research design, data collection methods, and analysis strategies is included in the methodology section. The key findings are provided in the results section, and their implications are analyzed in the discussion section. The main results are clarified in the conclusion, and the ideas for further study and priorities are completed.

According to a study by Baden et al., as cited by Lee and Lee (2018), CSR influences key aspects such as market value, customer satisfaction, sales, and brand and company image. Additionally, research by Cho et al. (Lee & Lee, 2018) suggests that CSR initiatives impact buyer choices. Hadi (2011) defines CSR as a business initiative that fosters economic growth, ethical practices, and improved living standards for employees, their families, and the broader community. Customers are also willing to pay more for companies they perceive as socially responsible (Anselmsson et al., 2014). Corporate image, a key marketing management focus, reflects public perceptions, emotions, and attitudes toward a company (Furman, 2010; Wan & Schell, 2007). Several factors influence corporate identity (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006; Moon, 2007). Kang and Yang (2010), Karaosmanoglu and Melewar (2006), and Keh and Xie (2009) state that "corporate image," "corporate reputation," and "corporate identity" are interchangeable terms encompassing how customers perceive a company.

Studies by Berens et al. (2005) and Ellen et al. (2006) highlight that socially responsible behavior significantly impacts customer perceptions and profitability, with corporate image playing a role in green marketing. A strong corporate image, shaped by CSR, product quality, and ethical practices, enhances market positioning and customer loyalty (Z Zhang et al., 2020). Companies like Uniqlo exemplify this by integrating rapid production, fashion trends, and sustainability initiatives. In retail, brand image significantly influences consumer perceptions of private label brands (PLBs) compared to national brands, with factors like store location and brand compatibility playing a role (Vahie & Paswal, 2006). Kotler et al. (2015) define a brand image as customer values and opinions reflected in observed associations. Brand identity, advertising, and tangible (e.g., product quality) or intangible (e.g., emotional connection) attributes shape consumer perceptions. According to Anselmsson and Johansson (2007), uniqueness, origin, perceived quality, brand awareness, and CSR are crucial factors. Strong brand perceptions foster exclusivity and allow products to command premium prices.

Consumer behavior is influenced by psychological and decision-making processes that determine spending patterns (Kotler et al., 2018). It examines how individuals, groups, and institutions purchase, use, and fulfill their needs (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Khan et al. (2016) define customer behavior as the actions and decisions related to purchasing, evaluating, and using goods or services. Purchase intention refers to a customer's willingness to buy a specific brand or product. According to Gollwitzer et al. (2009), a decision links an individual to their future behavior. Wu and Huang (2023) state that higher perceived value increases purchase intention, while Schiffman et al. (2010) describe it as the customer's choice of a product or brand. Blackwell et al. (2006) explain that purchase interest results from brand evaluation through a complex decision-making process, starting with identifying a need or value, followed by information processing, evaluation, and ultimately, a decision to buy, avoid, or forgo. In summary, purchase interest reflects a customer's awareness and willingness to select and potentially buy a brand or product shaped by evaluation and perceived value.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The methods of this research are quantitative, emphasizing creating concepts based on facts or current data. Kuantitatif (2016) defines quantitative research methods as those based on positivism that study specific populations or samples. This method includes collecting data using tools for research and analyzing quantitative or statistical data to verify hypotheses. One of the applications, Smart Pls 3.0, will be used to process and analyze the data collected using primary data. The method used in this study is a correlational research design. Knowing whether and how strongly variables relate to others is the purpose of correlational research design. Variables are measured without changing them. This study aimed to consider if corporate social responsibility (CSR) impacts purchase intention using brand and company image mediated. The study's sample included 140 people who satisfied the criteria of never purchasing UNIQLO, while the population included consumers who were used to the company's products. Surveys using a Likert scale calculation of 1–5 were sent through a Google Form to allow collect this data.

This study also uses purposive sampling, which is one of the non-probability sampling techniques, as this research has specific criteria for sample selection, and the Likert Scale is the data collection technique. Useless/Handy, I am not like this/I am like this, Disagree/Agree, and I am not willing/I am willing are some of the selected possible responses included in the Likert Scale result form. Generally speaking, Likert scale sizes should be four or even six points. Respondents must be between 18 and 50 and must have not yet bought stuff from UNIQLO to be considered in the research sample. Data was collected from October 5 to October 9, 2024. Researchers targeted these ages because they think consumers in this age category are aware of and interested in fashion and programs, and they usually have enough money to purchase fashion items. This data collection is absolutely confidential for the convenience of the respondents who fill out the researcher's personal data. Various criteria were used to gather consumer data: age, gender, education, income per month, and monthly expenditures.

Table 1. The demograpichs of the respondents

Variables	*n*	*%*
Gender		
Female	100	71.4
Male	40	28.6
Age		
18 – 29	77	55
30 – 39	26	18.6
40 – 50	16	11.4
>50	21	15
Educational Level		
Senior High School	18	12.9
Diploma	5	3.6
Bachelor	109	77.9
Magister	8	5.7
Average Personal Income Per Month		
1.500.000 – 5.000.000	84	60
5.000.001 – 10.000.000	44	31.4
10.000.001 – 25.000.000	11	7.9
>25.000.000	1	0.7
Average Personal Outcome Per Month		
1.500.000 – 5.000.000	107	76.4
5.000.001 – 10.000.000	29	20.7
10.000.001 – 25.000.000	4	2.9
>25.000.000	0	0

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Hypothesis Test Result
3.1.1. Direct Effect
The T statistic and P values obtained from data processing results are used to test the research hypothesis. If the P value is < 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted.

<div align="center">Table 2. Direct Effect</div>

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CSR -> PI	0,407	0,412	0,097	4,218	0,000
CSR -> CI	0,740	0,741	0,041	18,242	0,000
CSR -> BI	0,512	0,498	0,111	4,607	0,000
CI -> BI	0,334	0,352	0,128	2,600	0,010
CI -> PI	0,189	0,173	0,106	1,789	0,074
BI -> PI	0,289	0,301	0,100	2,899	0,004

H0 is rejected as the data above shows that each variable's P-value is less than 0.50. The Original Sample shows positive results. A positive correlation exists between CSR and PI, as indicated by the first test number for CSR on PI of 0.407, or nearly 1. It means that the PI will increase in proportion to the CSR value. This holds for other variables as well. Due to the positive Original Sample and P values < 0.50, the table above demonstrates that CSR⇒ PI, CSR ⇒ CI, CSR ⇒ BI, CI ⇒ BI, and BI ⇒ PI have a positive and significant effect. The PI's CI variable displays a P value of 0.074, indicating that it is not positive or significant because it is greater than 0.50.

3.1.2. Indirect Effect

<div align="center">Table 3. Indirect Effect</div>

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CSR -> CI -> PI	0,140	0,128	0,079	1,782	0,075
CSR -> BI -> PI	0,148	0,149	0,059	2,506	0,013

Based on the data above, P Values > 0.05 to the original sample of each variable is not favorable, showing that Corporate Image has no significant positive effect partially mediating CSR on Purchase Intention. As a result of each variable's positive Original Sample and P Values < 0.05, Brand Image data has a partially significant positive effect on mediated CSR on Purchase Intention.

3.1.3. Validity and Reliability Test

<div align="center">Table 4. Result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis</div>

Constructs	Items	Scales	Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	CSR1	Companies play an important role in absorbing the local workforce.	0.731			
	CSR2	The CSR program provides a new space for fashion enthusiasts.	0.879	0.845	0.724	0.646
	CSR3	The service to customers is so high.	0.795			
Corporate Image (CI)	CI1	Producing the most up-to-date products.	0.812			
	CI2	Large and attractive outlet.	0.873	0.862	0.760	0.676
	CI3	The product is well-known.	0.779			
Brand Image (BI)	BI1	International operational standards.	0.874			
	BI2	The quality of the product is comfortable.	0.810	0.867	0.770	0.686
	BI3	The price is relatively affordable.	0.799			
Purchase Intention	PI1	Interested in the product.	0.868	0.920	0.884	0.741
	PI2	Intention to buy the	0.881			

(PI)		product.	
	PI4	Interested in trying the product.	0.846
	PI5	Want to know more about the product.	0.849

The convergent validity test ensures a close relationship between indicators within a component. According to Hair et al. (2006), the loading factor for each indicator in PLS with reflective indicators should have an outer loading value > 0.7. However, a value between 0.5 and 0.6 is still considered sufficient (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). Based on the table, each indicator has an outer loading value > 0.60, indicating ideal and valid results in measuring latent constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value must be greater than 0.5 to be considered valid. From the table, the AVE for Brand Image is 0.686 (> 0.5), Corporate Image is 0.676 (> 0.5), CSR is 0.646 (> 0.5), and Purchase Intention is 0.741 (> 0.5). Thus, all indicators are valid as their AVE values exceed 0.5.

A variable is considered reliable if the Composite Reliability value exceeds 0.7. Based on the table, the Composite Reliability values are 0.867 for Brand Image, 0.862 for Corporate Image, 0.845 for CSR, and 0.920 for Purchase Intention, indicating that all variables are reliable. Reliability is also tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which is deemed acceptable if it exceeds 0.6 (Ghozali & Latan, 2020). The closer the value is to 1, the higher the internal consistency. According to the table, Cronbach's Alpha values are 0.770 for brand image, 0.760 for corporate image, 0.724 for CSR, and 0.884 for purchase intention. Since all values exceed 0.6, the data is considered reliable.
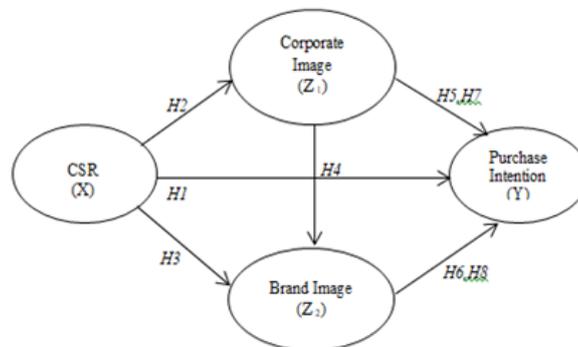

Figure 1. Path Diagrams

3.2. Discussion

The bootstrapping test results indicate that corporate social responsibility (CSR) positively and significantly impacts purchase intention (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05, O = 0.407). CSR also has a significant impact on corporate image (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05, O = 0.740) and brand image (P-value = 0.000 < 0.05, O = 0.512). Corporate image significantly influences brand image (P-value = 0.010 < 0.05, O = 0.334) but does not substantially impact purchase intention (P-value = 0.074 > 0.05, O = 0.189). In contrast, brand image positively and significantly affects purchase intention (P-value = 0.004 < 0.05, O = 0.289). The corporate image does not considerably mediate the relationship between CSR and purchase intention (P-value = 0.075 > 0.05). The latest study by Gálvez-Sánchez et al. (2024) examines the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumer purchase intention, considering the mediating roles of corporate image and brand image. The findings indicate that CSR positively and significantly affects purchase intention. However, the corporate image does not considerably mediate the relationship between CSR and purchase intention. In contrast, brand image serves as a significant mediator in this relationship. These findings suggest that corporate CSR efforts are more effective in enhancing consumer purchase intention through improving brand image rather than corporate image. However, CSR significantly impacts purchase intention through brand image as a mediator (P-value = 0.013 < 0.05).

4.   CONCLUSION

This study applies brand and corporate image as mediating factors to explore how corporate social responsibility (CSR) impacts consumer purchase intention in the fashion industry. The results show that CSR significantly and positively impacts company image, brand image, and customer purchase intention. While corporate image has no appreciable effect on buy intention, it has been shown that brand image significantly mediates the relationship between CSR and purchase intention. According to the research's implications, fashion companies can improve their corporate and brand image by implementing CSR initiatives, which will increase consumer purchase intentions. The findings also corroborate past studies that emphasize the

importance of CSR in building consumer loyalty and positive perceptions of companies and brands. To boost consumer purchase intentions, fashion companies with multiple brands must ensure that corporate social responsibility (CSR) improves the company's overall image and the reputation of each brand. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a strategic marketing tactic that fashion companies can use to make their brands more appealing.

Authorities in the fashion industry may also consider passing legislation encouraging companies to participate in more CSR activities since it has been shown that CSR initiatives enhance consumer behavior. It should be noted that this study has limitations even though it provides valuable information. Because this study only includes a sample of people who have never purchased anything from UNIQLO, its findings might not apply to other consumer categories. This study also employed a Likert scale survey approach, which may be influenced by respondent bias. To better understand why consumers, respond to corporate social responsibility, it is recommended that a qualitative study be conducted in the future. Further studies could expand the range of industries to ascertain whether these findings are consistent across sectors. Overall, this study shows that the fashion industry's corporate social responsibility (CSR) positively affects consumers' intentions to buy, primarily through improving brand perception. Therefore, CSR should play a significant role in marketing and branding campaigns for companies looking to boost their long-term sustainability and competitiveness.

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