

## **Attitude and Buying Behavior of College Students with regards to CSR Initiatives: an Empirical Research**

\*Irum Khan<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Neeti Kasliwal<sup>2</sup> and Dr. Mahesh Chandra Joshi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Research Scholar, Poornima University, India)

<sup>2</sup>(Associate Professor, IIHMR University, India)

<sup>3</sup>(Associate Professor, Poornima University, India)

Corresponding Author: Irum Khan

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the impact of CSR initiatives on Consumer's attitude that results in purchase intention. Consumer attitude is taken as an independent variable whereas consumer buying behavior as a dependent variable. A conceptual model that integrates the hypothesized relationships and the impact of CSR initiatives on consumer's attitude and buying behavior is used to frame the study. Using linear regression analysis the results showed that CSR initiatives have a significant impact on Consumer's attitude and buying behavior.*

**Keywords:** *corporate social responsibility, consumer attitude, consumer's purchase intention*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

There is growing demand of the research related to exploring the links between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and market behaviour with regards to its impact on consumers. Carroll (1991) analyzed that CSR is divided into four different levels: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. Economic responsibility refers to the profitability of the organization, while legal responsibility is complying with laws and regulation. As for the ethical perspective, the organizations' operation should go beyond the laws to do the right thing in fair and just ways. Philanthropic responsibility refers to voluntary giving and service to the society. Today, consumers are aware of the corporations' responsibility due to education and through the exposure of the media. It may no longer be accepted that business organizations neglect CSR. The role of businesses in society is not only about creating profit but is also focused on acting responsibly towards stakeholders and the environment (Harrison & Freeman, 1999). So, the present study investigates the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and its impact on consumer attitudes and consumer buying behavior.

**Attitude:** Attitude is defined as “a person's favorable or unfavorable feelings towards an object”. Herbert Spencer and Alexander Bain introduced the term attitude in psychology in the early 60's. During that time "attitude" meant an inner state of readiness to perform a job or a task (Cacioppo et al., 1994). According to the Expectancy-value theory (Fishbain), Attitude is a part of belief. Thus, the beliefs can be considered as the causes of the attitude (Kordnaeij et al., 2013).

**Consumer Buying Behavior-** Understanding consumer buying behavior help marketers to get clear view point of their customer; moreover, it could also be useful to develop an effective marketing strategies. If marketers have clear view point about the consumer buying process, they will get the knowledge about how the costumers try to get information about the products they want to purchase, what factors encourage them and what factors influence their buying decision (Bakhshi, 2012).

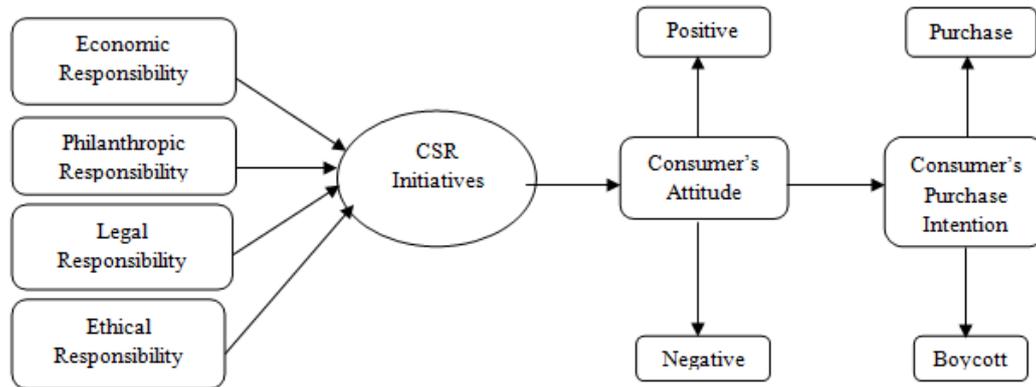
**CSR Impact on Consumer's Attitude and Consumer Buying Behavior-** The attitude is formed first then behavior is formed subsequently (Reily et al., 1999). The researchers conducted during the 21st century approve that attitude has a huge impact on marketing and consumer behavior. So, costumer attitude to the service or product is the key factor of anticipating and continuing customer behavior and the attitude is some passivity or a sense of agreement or disagreement about a stimulant. Stimulants are emotional feelings that people have about any phenomenon (Montazeri et al., 2013). So the hypothesis is:

H1: There is a statistically significant impact of consumer attitude towards buying behavior with regards to CSR initiatives.

## II. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The consumers of India are now well aware of and that companies now have to show responsibility towards society and the environment. By taking random stratified sample of 453 respondents using Multiple Linear Regression technique, this study found that CSR has a strong positive relationship with consumer attitude and consumer attitude has a strong positive relationship to purchase intention.

The conceptual model that integrates the hypothesized relationships as well as the moderating impact of CSR is



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Frame Work

Source: Prepared by analyzing past papers

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The undertaken research is a cross sectional descriptive study with consumer's attitude as independent variable whereas "consumer's buying behavior" associated with CSR initiatives as dependent variables. A questionnaire survey was carried out to collect the view of consumers in Jaipur (Rajasthan). As the study aims to examine the importance of CSR on consumers' buying behavior, the target population comprised of the college going students. Total sample of 600 students was collected and out of them 453 valid samples were taken for the study. The questionnaires were conveniently distributed to consumers in different colleges.

The questionnaire consists of three major sections. Section A gathers demographic information, section B gathers information on consumers' awareness and attitude towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) and section C covers statements on consumer behavior towards CSR activities engaged by the business organizations.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to evaluate the reliability of the measures. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.790.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Consumer General Awareness towards CSR

The summary of the findings is shown in Table 1. 30.6% of the respondents said that they understood the concept of CSR well, whereas the other 38.4% respondents indicated that they understood the concept of CSR moderately. On the other hand, 29% of the respondents indicated that they had little understanding of CSR, and 2% of them indicated having no understanding of CSR. This finding indicates that the majority of the respondents seem to have a good understanding of CSR.

**Table 1**  
Consumer General Awareness On Corporate Social Responsibility (Csr)

Knowledge level on CSR	Percentage (%)
Well Understood	30.6
Moderately understood	38.4
Little understood	29
Not at all	2
Awareness About CSR Activities of the Companies	Percentage (%)
Aware of 0 CSR Activity	11
Aware of 1-5 CSR Activities	80
Aware of 6-9 CSR Activities	9

**TABLE 2** Summary Of Sample Characteristics

Parameters	Category	Frequency	%
<b>GENDER</b>	Male	229	50.6
	Female	224	49.4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>AGE</b>	18 -20 years	166	36.6
	21-23 years	161	35.5
	24-26 years	126	27.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>EDUCATION</b>	Undergraduate	207	45.7
	Post Graduate	246	54.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>FAMILY INCOME</b>	Rs1,00000- Rs3,00000	118	26
	Rs3,00001- Rs5,00000	182	40.2
	Rs5,00001 and above	153	33.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100</b>

In total, males represent 50.6% of the respondents, whereas females represent 49.4%. Respondents were divided into three age categories: 18 to 20, 21 to 23 years old, 24 to 26 years old. The majority of the respondents (36.6%) were between 18 to 20 years old during the survey period, whereas those respondents who were of 24-26 years old were the minority.

The majority of the respondents (54.3%) were post graduate student. Regarding income level, the majority of the respondents (40.2%) have a family income of of Rs 5,00001 and above yearly during the survey period.

**Impact of CSR Activities on Consumers' Attitude and Buying Behavior**

The values of correlation coefficients (R) can lie only within the range from -1 to +1. According to the model summary of multiple regressions in Table 3, the R is 0.518. Because multiple R is positive in value, it shows that there is a positive linear relationship between consumers' attitude and buying behavior with regard to CSR initiatives.

**TABLE 3** MODEL SUMMARY OF REGRESSION

Model	R <sup>2</sup>	R	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.518 <sup>a</sup>	.268	.266	.32197	.268	165.361	1	451	.000

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Attitude
- b. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior

According to the model summary, R square is equal to 0.268, which is less than 1. Approximately 26.8% of variance in all the CSR components can significantly explain consumers' buying behaviour. The finding suggests that apart from consumer attitude, there are other factors that could also influence the consumers' buying behaviour.

According to Table 4, the p-value is .000, indicating that the consumer's attitude significantly influence consumers' buying behaviour.

**Table 4** ANOVA OF REGRESSION

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	17.142	1	17.142	165.361	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	46.856	451	.104		
Total	63.998	452			

- a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Consumer Attitude

**TABLE 5**  
COEFFICIENTS OF REGRESSIONS

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.180	.150		7.867	.000
	Attitude	.651	.051	.518	12.859	.000

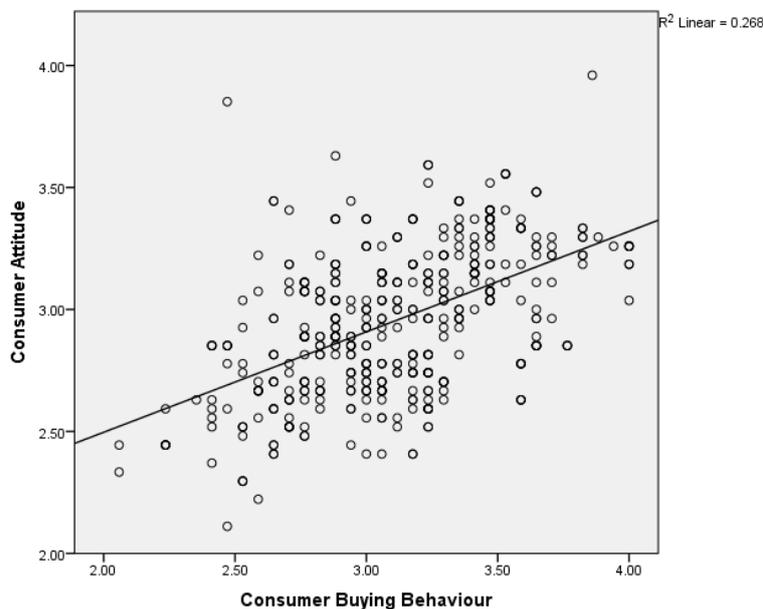
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Behavior

In Table 5, the linear regression analysis estimates the linear regression function to be  $y = 1.180 + 0.651x$ . it also shows that the **sig. value is 0.000** which is less than 0.05 indicate that **there is a statistically significant impact of consumer attitude towards buying behavior in regards of CSR initiatives.**

**TABLE 6**  
CORRELATION

		Consumer Attitude	Consumer Buying Behavior
Consumer Attitude	Pearson Correlation	1	.518**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	453	453
Consumer Buying Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.518**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	453	453

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



**Figure 2:** Regression plot diagram

Table 6 revealed that there is a significant relationship between Consumer Attitude and Consumer Buying Behavior. It has found that Pearson correlation value 0.518 and p value (sig value) is .000 which indicates there is a significant moderate positive correlation between consumer’s attitude and their buying behavior.

#### IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of the research revealed that there is a significant relationship between Consumer Attitude and Consumer Buying Behavior.

The major limitation relates to the sample and geographical restriction. With only 453 usable respondents, this sample size might limit the external validity of the findings.

In addition, there are still areas that can be staged for future research, such as research focusing on the different moderating factors, consumer awareness towards socially irresponsible behaviours of companies, the most important CSR sources of information.

The managers can use the results to better position their products in order to enhance an overall value. Manufacturers and retailers have an opportunity to attract this group while simultaneously meeting their business goals and make contributions to the Based on the finding of this study, managers could use the information to develop effective marketing plans and strategies.

In today's business world as a result of strengthening of consumers' awareness and rights, the companies who disregard the expectations concerning social responsibly may risk consumer boycotts.

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