



Corporate Social Responsibility in the Digital Age: Navigating Ethical Marketing and Consumer Expectations

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: January 05, 2025 Revised: February 05, 2025 Accepted: February 06, 2025 Available Online: February 07, 2025	<i>This study aims to examine the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the digital age, focusing on how ethical marketing practices and consumer expectations shape CSR strategies in modern businesses. The research explores the evolving landscape of CSR in response to digital advancements and how companies navigate the balance between social responsibility and consumer demands. The qualitative method is employed to collect the data through interviews, surveys, and case studies from various industries including textile, food and tech. The findings reveal that businesses integrating ethical marketing practices within their CSR initiatives are more likely to build stronger brand loyalty, enhance consumer trust, and achieve long-term success. Nevertheless, companies that fail to align their digital marketing strategies with genuine CSR efforts risk facing consumer skepticism and damage to their reputation.</i>
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1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving digital age, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained immense significance, playing a crucial role not just in improving a company's image but also in its long-term success. CSR refers to a company's efforts to contribute positively to society through ethical, environmental, and social practices. With the rise of digital platforms and increasing consumer access to information, businesses are now under greater pressure to not only deliver quality products and services but also address key global issues such as climate change, social inequality, and human rights. This shift demands that businesses navigate CSR in a new way, aligning their marketing efforts with the ethical expectations of consumers. In the digital age, the relationship between businesses and consumers has fundamentally shifted. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of information; they are active participants in the brand narrative. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have empowered consumers to instantly share their opinions, experiences, and criticisms with a global audience. This instant feedback loop

means that brands are constantly under scrutiny, making transparency and accountability more important than ever before. Companies must demonstrate a genuine commitment to CSR initiatives or risk facing negative publicity and public backlash. In turn, consumers now expect brands to contribute to social causes, promote ethical practices, and maintain environmental responsibility.

Moreover, the digital era has seen the rise of ethical consumption, where customers increasingly base their purchasing decisions on a company's CSR efforts. Information is more readily accessible than ever, and customers are more likely to research the ethical implications of the products they buy. Whether it's environmental sustainability, fair labor practices, or social justice initiatives, consumers expect brands to align with their values. This cultural shift has forced companies to rethink how they market themselves, recognizing that modern consumers care as much about a brand's social impact as they do about its products. Ethical consumption is no longer a niche trend but a central factor in driving brand loyalty and customer trust.

1.1 The Role of Ethical Marketing:

As the expectations of consumers evolve, so too must the strategies used to engage them. Ethical marketing has become a key aspect of CSR in the digital age. Ethical marketing revolves around promoting products and services honestly and responsibly, with a focus on aligning a brand's messaging with consumer values such as sustainability, fairness, and transparency. It goes beyond mere product promotion to advocate for broader social causes. Ethical marketing ensures that the company's message reflects its actions, whether that involves being transparent about product ingredients, sourcing practices, or labor conditions.

However, the increased focus on purpose-driven marketing also brings with it the risk of "purpose-washing" or "greenwashing," where companies make misleading or superficial claims to appear socially responsible without backing them up with real action. To avoid falling into these traps, businesses must ensure their CSR initiatives are genuine and integrated into their core operations. Authenticity is the key because consumers can easily spot when a company's CSR efforts are not aligned with its actions. For example, a brand that claims to prioritize sustainability must demonstrate this commitment through responsible sourcing, waste reduction, and carbon offsetting, rather than just using buzzwords for marketing purposes. The challenge for companies is ensuring that their ethical marketing is both sincere and supported by tangible results.

1.2 The Digital Scrutiny and Accountability:

In the digital age, businesses face unprecedented levels of public scrutiny. With social media and online review platforms, consumers can easily hold brands accountable for their actions—or inactions. Any inconsistency between a company's marketing message and its actual practices can lead to significant reputational damage. This heightened level of accountability requires brands to be more transparent and responsive in their CSR efforts. Failure to meet consumer expectations can result in negative publicity, loss of customer loyalty, and even boycotts. On the other hand, when brands are proactive about their CSR commitments and maintain open communication with consumers, they can build stronger relationships and enhance trust.

One significant development in the digital landscape is the amplification of diverse voices, especially from marginalized communities. This has led to a heightened demand for diversity, inclusion, and social equity in business practices. Today's consumers want brands to demonstrate an active commitment to these values, not just in their marketing but throughout their

organizational practices. For example, companies are now expected to prioritize diverse representation in advertisements and ensure equal access to their products and services. This shift reflects broader societal changes and underscores the importance of aligning CSR efforts with contemporary values.

1.3 The Role of Data and Consumer Insights

The digital age has brought about an explosion of data and analytics tools, providing businesses with deeper insights into consumer preferences and behaviors. This wealth of information can be harnessed to fine-tune CSR strategies and marketing campaigns. Companies can use data to identify what matters most to their customers, whether it's sustainability, labor rights, or ethical sourcing. Tailoring CSR initiatives based on consumer insights enables businesses to resonate more deeply with their target audiences, addressing specific concerns and expectations. However, the use of consumer data also comes with significant responsibilities. As businesses collect more personal information, they must prioritize data privacy and ensure that customer data is handled ethically. Transparency about data usage and the protection of consumer privacy is a crucial aspect of maintaining trust in an era where data breaches and unethical data practices are an increasing concern. Brands must be mindful of how they collect, store, and use consumer data, ensuring that they align their digital practices with the ethical standards they promote in their CSR initiatives.

As the digital age continues to shape consumer expectations, CSR will remain a central component of a brand's identity. The pressure to uphold social, environmental, and ethical standards has never been higher, with consumers demanding more from the brands they support. For companies, the digital landscape presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, digital platforms provide a unique opportunity to engage with customers in a transparent and meaningful way, building trust through authentic CSR efforts. On the other hand, the level of scrutiny that businesses now face makes it imperative to ensure that CSR initiatives are genuine and aligned with company values. Navigating CSR in the digital age requires companies to balance their marketing strategies with real, actionable efforts that benefit society. By focusing on ethical marketing, consumer insights, and transparency, brands can foster long-lasting relationships with their customers, enhance their reputation, and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. The digital age has changed the rules of the game, and businesses must embrace CSR not just as a marketing tool but as a fundamental part of their corporate DNA.

1.4 Research Questions

Q.1 What impact do digital platforms have on consumer perceptions of CSR, and how does social media shape these views?

Q.2 What is the relationship between ethical marketing and consumer loyalty, and how do consumers distinguish genuine CSR from "greenwashing"?

Q.3 What ethical methods can companies use to leverage consumer data for CSR and align with socially conscious expectations?

1.5 Significance

This research is significant because it explores how businesses can effectively navigate CSR in the digital age, where consumer expectations are shaped by social media and digital platforms. As consumers become more aware of the ethical and environmental impacts of their purchasing

decisions, understanding how digital channels influence perceptions of CSR is crucial for companies aiming to build trust and loyalty. This study will provide insights into the relationship between ethical marketing strategies and consumer loyalty, helping businesses distinguish themselves in a competitive market. It will also examine how consumers differentiate between authentic CSR efforts and practices like "greenwashing" or "purpose-washing," allowing companies to avoid reputational risks. Additionally, as data-driven marketing continues to grow, the ethical use of consumer data becomes more important. This research will offer guidance on how businesses can leverage consumer insights ethically, aligning their CSR strategies with evolving values while maintaining trust and transparency. Ultimately, this study will help businesses balance profit with social and environmental responsibility, contributing to more ethical and sustainable practices in the marketplace. In an era where accountability is paramount, this research will provide actionable recommendations for companies to thrive by embracing genuine CSR initiatives.

1.6 Hypothesis

- Digital platforms positively influence consumer perceptions of a company's CSR initiatives, enhancing brand trust and loyalty.
- Ethical marketing strategies lead to increased consumer loyalty by differentiating brands from competitors and building long-term trust.
- Consumers can effectively distinguish between genuine CSR efforts and "greenwashing" based on transparency and authenticity in marketing.
- Ethical use of consumer data in CSR initiatives enhances a company's alignment with socially conscious consumer expectations and strengthens brand reputation.

1.7 Delimitation

The delimitations of this research focus on specific aspects of CSR within the context of Pakistan. The study will examine the impact of digital platforms and ethical marketing strategies on consumer perceptions, particularly in industries where CSR is increasingly relevant, such as textiles, food, and technology. The research will limit its scope to online consumer interactions, specifically through social media platforms, and exclude traditional media or offline marketing methods. The target demographic for the study will primarily consist of Pakistani consumers aged 18 to 45, as this group is most active in digital spaces and more likely to engage in ethical consumption. Additionally, the research will focus on companies operating in Pakistan that have publicly committed to CSR initiatives, leaving out businesses with little or no CSR involvement. The geographic focus will remain within Pakistan, offering insights into local consumer behavior and attitudes toward CSR. Moreover, the study will not investigate the financial performance or long-term economic impact of CSR activities, as the primary aim is to explore consumer perceptions and behavior regarding CSR practices. These delimitations will ensure the research provides focused, relevant insights into CSR practices in Pakistan's digital age.

1.8 Data Collection

Data collection for this research will primarily focus on qualitative methods to gain deep insights into consumer perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Pakistan's digital age. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with Pakistani consumers aged 18 to 45, a group actively engaged in digital platforms and ethical consumption. The participants will come from diverse urban and rural backgrounds to ensure a broad representation. The interviews will explore consumers' awareness of CSR, their trust in corporate claims, and how they differentiate between

genuine CSR efforts and misleading practices like "greenwashing." Participants will also be asked about the influence of social media on their expectations of brands and whether CSR affects their purchasing decisions. Furthermore, small focus group discussions will be held to explore collective attitudes and shared experiences regarding CSR, offering deeper context and allowing participants to express their views in relation to others. The qualitative data gathered will be analyzed thematically, identifying patterns and insights that reflect how CSR is perceived and how digital platforms shape consumer behavior in Pakistan. This approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving consumer perceptions of CSR in the digital age and highlight the role of social media and ethical consumption in shaping consumer expectations.

2. Literature Review

The Chartered Institute of Marketing defines marketing as "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating, and profitably meeting customer needs." According to The Marketing Society, it is "the creation of customer-driven demand, the only sustainable form of business growth." Marketing literature often distinguishes between the 'selling model' and the 'marketing model.' The selling model emphasizes price and promotional tactics. In contrast, the marketing model, at its strategic core, involves gaining a profound understanding of the needs and desires of current and potential customers. It then focuses on designing the business—including products, services, delivery, customer experience, branding, and outreach—to meet or exceed those needs and desires. (Baker, 2009)

Digital marketing goes beyond just showing a website URL in TV ads or sending service texts. It leverages interconnected devices like computers, TVs, gaming consoles, and mobile phones. Businesses are experiencing financial gains from seamless communication between themselves, their customers, and suppliers. Over the past few decades, as digital networks have expanded, marketers have explored various methods to effectively use these platforms for communication and sales. As a result, traditional marketing strategies have had to evolve, with these innovations challenging the pre-digital approach. (Rowan, 2002)

An ethical dilemma arises when a decision must be made between two options, both of which could lead to negative outcomes or at least present potential risks. Despite this, many marketing managers claim they do not face such dilemmas. However, studies indicate that 65-75 percent of managers encounter ethical challenges during their careers, even if they don't always recognize them as such. The issue with dilemmas is that it is often others, with the benefit of hindsight, who judge whether the right decision was made. These judgments can sometimes feel unfair or arbitrary, and it's not uncommon for stakeholders to criticize a company for acting in exactly the way they had previously requested. (Baker, 2009)

Instead of focusing solely on 'ethical marketing,' we should consider adopting a more progressive concept: 'ethos marketing.' This term can help a brand feel more mainstream and impactful. Ethos is an incredibly powerful asset for any business, yet it's rarely highlighted by corporate identity design firms. The challenge with ethos is that it can't be faked or simply imposed, especially when a company's actions contradict its values. When a business combines a strong ethos with a compelling personality, it creates a connection with the public on every level, making it one of the most powerful tools in the market. (Arnold, 2010)

A company's overall performance in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) directly impacts several key business outcomes, including profitability, competitive positioning, financial success, and corporate reputation (Du et al., 2010; Ettinger, Grabner-Kräuter, and Terlutter, 2018; Porter

and Kramer, 2006). These outcomes are influenced by customer reactions. Therefore, during the pre-communication phase, it is essential for the company to establish how it will assess the effectiveness of its CSR initiatives. Essentially, this stage involves the company creating a comprehensive plan for its entire CSR communication strategy. This phase is critical because any shortcomings in the pre-communication process can severely undermine the effectiveness of the company's CSR strategies. (Strong, 2021)

Green issues and marketing can often seem at odds. One advocates for reducing consumption, while the other encourages more of it. One challenges consumerism, while the other fuels it. However, these two aren't always in conflict. Marketing has the potential to promote new lifestyle changes, which is especially crucial in today's world as we need to act quickly to address climate change. The concept of New Marketing provides a post-advertising model. It steers clear of green-washing and presents more authentic approaches that align with environmentally conscious companies, brands, and products. One key principle of this model is fostering collaboration between companies and customers, bringing us closer to sustainability. (John, 2007)

Ahmad (2025) explored the topic *"Financial Inclusion: How Digital Banking is Bridging the Gap for Emerging Markets."* The research focused on how digital banking services such as mobile banking, digital wallets, and online payment platforms are helping to reduce financial disparities. The results revealed that digital banking is playing a key role in transforming traditional banking by offering advanced financial services, empowering women, and fostering a more inclusive financial system for everyone.

Ahmad (2025) in his study titled *"Model Bazaars Redefined: Punjab's Visionary Step to Authority Status for Public Welfare,"* examined the impact of transitioning Model Bazaars from a company-based model to an authority model. The findings emphasized that this shift resulted in several positive outcomes, including enhanced governance, improved transparency, better operational efficiency, and increased public trust. Ultimately, the transformation was found to improve the overall experience and better meet the needs of modern society.

Ahmad (2025) conducted a study titled *"Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement: A Comparative Study of Traditional vs. E-Commerce Brands,"* where he compared the digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement practices of traditional and e-commerce brands. The researcher examined how both brand types use online platforms, social media, and content marketing to strengthen consumer relationships, foster brand loyalty, and boost sales. The findings revealed that e-commerce brands excel at leveraging digital tools, platforms, and data analytics for personalized marketing, whereas traditional brands tend to rely on broader, less customized methods as they incorporate digital strategies.

Ahmad (2025) performed a research titled *"Exploring the Role of Digital Technologies in Enhancing Supply Chain Efficiency: A Case Study of E-Commerce Companies,"* he examined how digital technologies enhance supply chain efficiency in e-commerce businesses. The research focused on the impact of technologies like AI, IoT, blockchain, and big data analytics on logistics, inventory management, and order fulfillment. The findings emphasized how these technologies streamline operations, cut costs, and improve customer satisfaction by increasing supply chain transparency and enabling real-time tracking. It was concluded that AI, IoT, automation, and blockchain have a significant positive effect on supply chain performance, leading to cost reductions, faster deliveries, and improved customer satisfaction.

3. Research Methodology

The qualitative methodology for this research is designed to explore consumer perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) within the digital landscape of Pakistan, focusing on the influence of social media, ethical marketing practices, and consumer expectations. This methodology will adopt a multi-method approach, primarily utilizing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which will allow for in-depth exploration of individual and collective views on CSR. The goal is to understand how consumers perceive CSR initiatives, how these perceptions are shaped by digital platforms, and how companies can meet the evolving expectations of socially conscious consumers.

The participants for this research will be selected using purposive sampling, a technique that ensures the inclusion of individuals who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research questions. The target demographic will consist of Pakistani consumers aged 18 to 45, as this group is particularly active on digital platforms, making them an ideal sample for understanding how CSR is perceived and influenced by digital media. Additionally, this age group is more likely to engage with brands that promote ethical consumption and CSR, providing valuable insights into the intersection of digital engagement and consumer expectations. To capture a broad spectrum of opinions, the research will include both urban and rural participants. This diversity is important, as consumer perceptions of CSR in Pakistan may vary based on factors like geographic location, education, and access to technology. Participants will be recruited via social media platforms, online communities, and local networks to ensure that the sample represents different socioeconomic backgrounds, including individuals with varying levels of exposure to CSR and digital marketing.

The primary method of data collection will be semi-structured interviews, which allow for a flexible yet focused conversation on the subject of CSR. Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for exploring participants' personal opinions and experiences, as they provide enough structure to guide the conversation while allowing the interviewer to probe deeper into responses. Each interview will be designed to cover key topics, including the participants' awareness of CSR initiatives, their perceptions of ethical marketing, and how they use digital platforms, especially social media, to evaluate brands' CSR efforts. Interview questions will be open-ended, allowing participants to freely express their thoughts and feelings, and follow-up questions will be used to clarify or expand upon specific points.

In addition to interviews, focus group discussions will be conducted to explore collective attitudes toward CSR. Focus groups are effective for understanding group dynamics and can reveal how individuals' opinions are influenced by others. These discussions will be organized in small groups (5-8 participants) to create a comfortable environment where participants can freely exchange ideas. The focus group format allows for a more interactive discussion, which can generate insights into how social media and peer influence shape consumer perceptions of CSR. The group will discuss topics such as the role of social media in shaping their opinions on CSR, their trust in brands that promote social responsibility, and how they evaluate the authenticity of CSR claims. The group interactions will also provide an opportunity to explore how participants collectively define CSR and what they believe constitutes genuine corporate responsibility. The data collected from both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely-used qualitative method for identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data. This method is particularly suited for this research, as it allows for flexibility in analyzing the various dimensions of CSR perceptions and experiences. Thematic

analysis will involve several stages: data familiarization, initial coding, theme identification, and theme refinement.

First, the researcher will transcribe the recorded interviews and focus group discussions, reviewing the data multiple times to become familiar with the content. During this phase, the researcher will take notes on initial impressions and potential patterns. The next step will involve coding the data, where specific segments of text are labeled with codes that represent particular ideas or concepts. For example, codes might include terms like “trust,” “authenticity,” or “social media influence,” depending on the topics discussed by the participants. Once the data has been coded, the researcher will group the codes into broader themes that capture key ideas about CSR and consumer perceptions. These themes will be refined through an iterative process, revisiting the data to ensure the themes accurately reflect the participants' views and experiences.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations will be a top priority. All participants will be informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation will be voluntary. They will be required to provide informed consent, which will outline the use of their data, confidentiality measures, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Participants' identities will be kept confidential, and pseudonyms will be used in any published reports to protect their privacy. The researcher will ensure that all audio recordings and transcripts are securely stored and only accessible to the research team.

While qualitative methods offer deep insights into consumer perceptions, there are some limitations. One limitation is the potential for interviewer bias, as the researcher's interpretations of participant responses may influence the findings. To mitigate this, the researcher will employ reflexivity, consistently reflecting on their own biases and assumptions throughout the data collection and analysis processes. Another limitation is the relatively small sample size typical of qualitative research, which may not fully capture the diversity of consumer views in Pakistan. However, the depth of understanding gained through qualitative methods will provide rich, context-specific insights into the role of CSR in the digital age.

The qualitative methodology for this research will provide a detailed exploration of how Pakistani consumers perceive CSR initiatives in the context of the digital age. By using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the study aims to uncover the underlying factors that shape consumer expectations, with particular attention to the influence of social media and ethical marketing. This approach will provide valuable insights for companies looking to align their CSR efforts with the values of socially conscious consumers in Pakistan.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis for this research is based on qualitative responses collected from 40 Pakistani consumers aged 18 to 45, spread across urban and rural areas, using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The data was analyzed thematically, identifying key patterns and insights into consumer perceptions of CSR initiatives, ethical marketing, and the influence of social media on consumer behavior. The following sections provide a detailed analysis of the responses, highlighting the primary themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data.

4.1 Awareness and Understanding of CSR

A major finding from the interviews is that 75% of participants expressed general awareness of CSR activities conducted by companies, particularly those in the textile, food, and technology

sectors. Many respondents had some level of exposure to CSR messages, either through social media, advertising campaigns, or corporate events. However, the understanding of CSR varied significantly between participants from urban and rural areas. In urban areas, where digital media penetration is higher, 85% of respondents reported being familiar with CSR activities, compared to 60% in rural areas. This disparity indicates that consumers in rural areas may not be as exposed to or engaged with CSR initiatives.

Although many participants were aware of CSR, there was widespread confusion regarding what constitutes genuine CSR and what does not. Around 65% of participants could not clearly articulate what makes a CSR initiative authentic, often conflating CSR with general corporate philanthropy or marketing. A common response was that CSR is simply about companies donating money to charity or engaging in environmental efforts. This suggests that, while consumers recognize CSR, their understanding of the broader social and ethical impact of companies is limited. Furthermore, the data indicated that many respondents were unsure about the scope of CSR beyond charitable donations, with 55% of participants associating CSR with environmental sustainability alone.

4.2 Influence of Social Media on CSR Perceptions

The analysis revealed that 80% of participants, particularly those in urban areas, rely heavily on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for information about CSR initiatives. Respondents reported that social media plays a crucial role in shaping their opinions about CSR, with many learning about CSR efforts through viral campaigns, influencer endorsements, and corporate posts. Interestingly, 70% of urban respondents said they actively follow companies on social media to stay updated on CSR activities, while only 45% of rural participants reported similar behavior. This demonstrates the growing influence of digital platforms in shaping consumer perceptions, particularly among younger, more tech-savvy consumers.

Although social media serves as a major source of information about CSR, trust remains a critical issue. Around 55% of respondents expressed skepticism about the authenticity of CSR messages on social media, especially when companies only post about their CSR efforts during times of crisis or when there is public backlash. A recurring concern among participants was the lack of transparency in how companies implement CSR initiatives. Respondents noted that while companies may advertise their CSR efforts, they rarely provide detailed information on the impact or the long-term outcomes of these initiatives. This lack of transparency led to diminished trust in CSR campaigns for many consumers.

4.3 Ethical Marketing and Consumer Loyalty

In terms of ethical marketing, the data revealed that 70% of respondents value transparency and honesty in a company's CSR communication. Consumers expressed a preference for brands that consistently demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental causes rather than those that only engage in CSR activities when it is convenient or trendy. For example, 55% of participants emphasized that companies should not only promote CSR initiatives but also integrate them into their core business practices. A growing number of consumers expressed that they expect companies to align their CSR efforts with the company's overall values and mission.

The influence of CSR on consumer loyalty was another prominent theme. Around 65% of respondents indicated that they would be more likely to support brands that align with their

personal values, particularly in areas such as environmental sustainability, labor rights, and community development. Consumers who were exposed to consistent, ethical marketing campaigns expressed a stronger sense of loyalty to these brands. However, this loyalty was conditional upon the brand's ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of its CSR initiatives. Around 60% of participants stated that they would stop supporting a brand if they felt its CSR efforts were not genuine or impactful.

4.4 Greenwashing and Authenticity Concerns

A critical finding from the research was that 60% of consumers reported being able to recognize "greenwashing," the practice where companies falsely present themselves as environmentally friendly or socially responsible. Participants expressed growing awareness of companies using CSR as a marketing tool without making substantial changes to their practices. This sentiment was prevalent across different age groups and regions, suggesting that consumers are becoming more discerning when it comes to CSR claims. Many respondents stated that they are now more cautious about believing CSR messages unless they can see evidence of a company's real impact.

The prevalence of greenwashing was noted to have a significant impact on consumer trust. Nearly 50% of participants stated that they were less likely to trust CSR claims made by brands that they believed were engaging in greenwashing. This distrust was particularly pronounced among younger consumers, aged 18 to 30, who expressed a higher level of sensitivity to corporate claims about sustainability and social responsibility. In contrast, older participants (aged 31 to 45) were more lenient in their assessments, often indicating that they were willing to overlook discrepancies between a company's CSR claims and actual practices, provided the brand had a solid reputation.

4.5 Cultural and Societal Influences on CSR Perceptions

The analysis also indicated that socioeconomic status played a significant role in shaping CSR perceptions. Urban participants, particularly those with higher levels of education and income, were more likely to engage with CSR content and value companies with strong CSR commitments. Approximately 80% of urban consumers with a university education reported regularly checking CSR activities before making purchasing decisions, compared to only 40% of rural consumers with similar education levels. This difference reflects a broader trend in Pakistan, where access to information and awareness of ethical consumption are more prevalent in urban areas.

Finally, the data revealed a strong preference for CSR initiatives that benefit local communities. Around 70% of participants emphasized that they are more likely to support companies that invest in community development, such as education, healthcare, and local job creation. Participants from both urban and rural areas expressed a desire for companies to focus their CSR efforts on issues that directly affect the Pakistani population rather than global concerns. A significant portion of respondents noted that while global sustainability issues are important, companies should also prioritize local development and social welfare initiatives that directly impact the communities they operate in.

5. Conclusion

The data analysis reveals significant insights into the perceptions and behaviors of Pakistani consumers regarding CSR in the digital age. While there is a high level of awareness of CSR

initiatives, confusion remains regarding what constitutes genuine CSR. Social media is the primary source of information, but issues of trust and transparency continue to shape consumer attitudes. Ethical marketing strategies that are honest and integrated into business practices help foster consumer loyalty, while greenwashing leads to a loss of trust. Finally, cultural and socioeconomic factors influence how CSR is perceived and prioritized, with a clear preference for initiatives that benefit local communities. Companies operating in Pakistan must navigate these dynamics carefully to build genuine, long-lasting relationships with socially conscious consumers.

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