

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON PURCHASE BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM URBAN CHINESE CONSUMERS

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Abstract. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a critical factor influencing consumer behavior in modern markets, especially in emerging economies such as China. This study investigates the impact of CSR on purchase behavior among urban Chinese consumers, focusing on CSR as a multidimensional construct encompassing environmental responsibility, ethical practices, consumer protection, and community engagement. A questionnaire survey was conducted with 336 urban consumers, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to test the relationship. The results indicate that CSR has a significant positive effect on purchase behavior, suggesting that consumers are more likely to buy products from companies perceived as socially responsible. CSR operates as both an informational and emotional cue, enhancing trust, reducing perceived risk, and aligning consumer decisions with ethical and social values. The findings highlight that urban consumer in China increasingly consider social and environmental factors in their purchasing choices, reflecting a shift toward value-driven consumption. The study contributes to CSR research by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context and offers practical implications for firms seeking to strengthen consumer loyalty and competitive advantage through responsible business practices. Transparency, authenticity, and effective communication of CSR initiatives are emphasized as critical for influencing consumer behavior.
Keywords: *corporate social responsibility, purchase behavior, perceived risk, urban consumers*

Introduction

In recent decades, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly important issue in the global business environment (Wirba, 2024; Kolk, 2016). Companies are no longer evaluated solely based on their financial performance; instead, stakeholders, including consumers, governments, and communities, expect firms to demonstrate responsible behavior toward society and the environment (Ganesh and Venugopal, 2024). CSR generally refers to the voluntary actions undertaken by corporations to integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and stakeholder interactions (Fallah Shayan et al., 2022). These responsibilities may include environmental protection, ethical labor practices, consumer protection, community development, and philanthropic activities. The growing importance of CSR is closely related to the transformation of modern consumer markets. With the rapid development of information technology and social media platforms, consumers are now more aware of corporate activities and can easily access information regarding firms' social and environmental practices. As a result, corporate behavior that was previously invisible to the public has become increasingly transparent (Naim, 2023). Consumers today are more likely to evaluate not only the functional attributes of products but also the ethical reputation and social responsibility performance of firms.

In China, CSR has gained significant attention alongside the country's rapid economic development and increasing environmental and social challenges (Zhang and Hao, 2024). The Chinese government has introduced a variety of policies encouraging enterprises to adopt responsible business practices, including environmental regulations, sustainability reporting guidelines, and initiatives promoting green development. At the same time, urban consumers in China are becoming more conscious of social and environmental issues such as pollution control, product safety, and corporate ethics. As their income levels and education levels rise, consumers are gradually shifting from purely price-oriented purchasing decisions toward more value-oriented consumption patterns. Urban Chinese consumers represent a particularly important research group in this context (Li et al., 2023). Cities in China are characterized by higher levels of economic development, better access to information, and greater exposure to global consumption trends. Urban residents are therefore more likely to be aware of CSR initiatives and to incorporate such information into their purchasing decisions. For example, companies that engage in environmentally friendly production, charitable activities, or ethical business practices may develop stronger brand images and gain greater consumer trust (Sarath Chandran, 2025). Conversely, firms that fail to meet social responsibility expectations may face reputational damage and declining consumer support (Hillestad et al., 2010).

Despite the increasing prominence of CSR in corporate strategies, several theoretical and practical issues remain unresolved. First, although many studies suggest that CSR can positively influence consumer attitudes, the extent to which CSR actually affects purchase behavior remains debated. While some scholars argue that consumers reward responsible companies by purchasing their products, others suggest that the impact of CSR may be limited due to factors such as price sensitivity or skepticism toward corporate motives. Second, much of the existing literature has been conducted in Western contexts, where consumer awareness of sustainability and ethical consumption has developed over several decades. The findings from these studies may not fully apply to emerging economies such as China, where cultural values, institutional environments, and consumer priorities differ significantly. In particular, Chinese consumers may evaluate CSR activities differently depending on the type of responsibility involved, such as environmental protection, employee welfare, or community engagement. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the impact of corporate social responsibility on purchase behavior among urban Chinese consumers. Specifically, CSR is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that includes environmental responsibility, ethical responsibility, consumer responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility. Purchase behavior refers to consumers' actual or intended decisions to buy products or services from socially responsible firms. Using a questionnaire survey of urban consumers in China and applying structural equation modeling (SEM) techniques, this study investigates whether CSR perceptions significantly influence consumer purchase behavior. By providing empirical evidence from the Chinese urban consumer market, the study contributes to the literature on CSR and consumer behavior.

The study also offers several contributions. Theoretically, it enriches CSR research by examining its direct impact on consumer purchasing decisions in an emerging economy context. Methodologically, it employs quantitative analysis using SEM to test the relationship between CSR and purchase behavior. Practically, the findings provide

valuable insights for companies seeking to strengthen consumer loyalty and market competitiveness through socially responsible business practices.

Literature review

Corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility refers to the obligation of businesses to operate in ways that contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of employees, communities, and society as a whole (Paruzel et al., 2023). The concept has evolved significantly since it was first introduced in the mid-twentieth century. Early discussions of CSR emphasized corporate philanthropy and ethical obligations, whereas contemporary interpretations highlight the integration of social and environmental concerns into business strategies (Cezarino et al., 2022). One of the most influential frameworks for understanding CSR is Carroll's four-dimensional model, which categorizes corporate responsibilities into economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. According to this model, companies must first be economically viable and comply with legal regulations. Beyond these basic requirements, firms are expected to operate ethically and voluntarily contribute to social welfare. CSR activities can take many forms. Environmental responsibility may involve reducing pollution, conserving resources, or adopting sustainable production processes. Ethical responsibility includes fair labor practices, transparency in business operations, and respect for consumer rights (Fatima and Elbanna, 2023). Philanthropic activities often involve donations to charities, educational initiatives, or community development programs. Empirical studies have shown that CSR can influence various organizational outcomes, including corporate reputation, employee satisfaction, and financial performance. Companies that actively engage in CSR initiatives often build stronger relationships with stakeholders and develop more positive brand images. However, the effectiveness of CSR strategies depends on how stakeholders perceive the authenticity and relevance of these initiatives.

Purchase behavior

Consumer purchase behavior refers to the process through which individuals identify their needs, search for information, evaluate alternatives, make purchasing decisions, and evaluate their satisfaction after consumption (Júnior et al., 2023). Understanding consumer behavior has long been a central focus of marketing research, as it helps companies design effective strategies to meet customer needs and improve market performance. Traditional models of consumer behavior emphasize economic and psychological factors that influence purchasing decisions (García-Salirrosas and Rondon-Eusebio, 2022). These factors include product quality, price, brand reputation, perceived value, and personal preferences. According to classical consumer behavior theories, consumers are generally assumed to make rational decisions by evaluating the costs and benefits associated with different product options. However, modern research suggests that consumer decision-making processes are more complex and influenced by various social and ethical considerations. With the development of global communication technologies and increased access to information, consumers are now able to learn more about corporate practices and social issues. As a result, ethical consumption has emerged as an important phenomenon in contemporary markets. Ethical consumption refers to purchasing decisions that reflect consumers' moral values and social concerns (Meng et al., 2024). Consumers who engage in ethical consumption

may prefer products that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, or ethically produced. For example, some consumers choose products with eco-labels, fair-trade certifications, or environmentally sustainable packaging. In addition to ethical considerations, consumer trust and corporate reputation play important roles in shaping purchasing decisions (Tao et al., 2022). When consumers perceive a company as trustworthy and socially responsible, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward its products. This positive perception may increase their intention to purchase and recommend the brand to others. In urban markets, consumers often exhibit higher levels of awareness regarding environmental protection and social responsibility. Urban residents typically have greater access to information, higher education levels, and stronger exposure to global consumption trends. As a result, their purchasing decisions may be more strongly influenced by corporate behavior and ethical considerations compared with consumers in less developed areas.

Corporate social responsibility and purchase behavior

The relationship between corporate social responsibility and consumer purchase behavior has received increasing attention in the fields of marketing and business ethics. Scholars generally argue that CSR can influence consumer behavior through several psychological and social mechanisms (Ramtiyal et al., 2024). First, CSR initiatives can significantly enhance corporate reputation and brand image. Companies that demonstrate commitment to environmental protection, ethical practices, and community development are often perceived as trustworthy and responsible organizations (Qalati et al., 2024). This positive reputation can reduce consumers' perceived risk when purchasing products and strengthen their confidence in the company. Second, CSR activities can influence consumers' emotional responses toward brands. Consumers often prefer to support companies whose values align with their personal beliefs and ethical standards. When consumers perceive that a company contributes positively to society, they may experience a sense of moral satisfaction or pride when purchasing its products (Vu et al., 2022). This emotional connection can strengthen brand loyalty and encourage repeat purchasing behavior. Third, CSR may serve as a signal of product quality and organizational competence. Some researchers suggest that consumers interpret CSR engagement as evidence that a company has strong management capabilities and long-term strategic orientation (Hayat et al., 2022). As a result, CSR initiatives may indirectly influence consumers' perceptions of product quality and reliability.

Empirical research conducted in various countries has generally found a positive relationship between CSR perceptions and consumer purchase intentions. For instance, studies have shown that consumers are more likely to support companies that actively engage in environmental sustainability programs or community development initiatives (Narayanan and Singh, 2023). However, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on cultural context, consumer awareness, and the perceived authenticity of CSR activities. Furthermore, consumers may respond differently to different types of CSR initiatives (Huo et al., 2022). Environmental responsibility may have stronger effects in markets where environmental concerns are prominent, whereas philanthropic activities may be more influential in communities where social welfare programs are highly valued (Narayanan, 2022).

Research gap

Although a large body of literature has examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility and consumer behavior, several research gaps remain. First, many existing studies have been conducted in developed economies such as the United States and European countries. These contexts often have long histories of CSR awareness and strong institutional frameworks supporting sustainable business practices. In contrast, emerging economies such as China are characterized by different cultural values, economic structures, and regulatory environments. Therefore, the findings from Western studies may not be fully applicable to the Chinese context. Second, previous research has frequently focused on consumers' attitudes and perceptions toward socially responsible companies rather than their actual purchase behavior. While positive attitudes toward CSR are important, they do not always translate into real purchasing actions. This phenomenon is often referred to as the "attitude-behavior gap," where consumers express support for responsible companies but fail to adjust their purchasing behavior accordingly. Consequently, more empirical research is needed to examine whether CSR perceptions can directly influence purchase behavior.

Materials and Methods

Research purpose and target population

The primary purpose of this empirical study is to examine the structural relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and purchase behavior among urban Chinese consumers. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether consumers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility significantly influence their purchasing decisions. With the increasing emphasis on sustainable development and ethical business practices, CSR has become an important factor affecting consumer attitudes and market competitiveness. Therefore, understanding the influence of CSR on consumer purchase behavior is essential for both academic research and business practice. Based on the literature review, corporate social responsibility in this study is conceptualized as consumers' perceptions of a company's commitment to social, environmental, and ethical responsibilities. These responsibilities may include environmental protection, ethical business conduct, consumer protection, and community engagement. Purchase behavior is defined as the tendency or intention of consumers to purchase products or services from companies perceived as socially responsible. This behavior includes not only actual purchasing actions but also consumers' willingness to recommend responsible companies and maintain long-term purchasing relationships with them.

The target population of this study consists of urban consumers living in major Chinese cities. Urban consumers are selected as the primary research subjects because they typically have higher levels of education, income, and access to information compared with rural consumers. These characteristics make them more likely to be aware of corporate social responsibility issues and incorporate such considerations into their purchasing decisions. In addition, urban markets in China are characterized by intense competition and diverse product offerings, which provide consumers with greater opportunities to evaluate companies based on their social responsibility performance. The respondents of this study include adult consumers who have experience purchasing products or services in the marketplace. They are expected to possess sufficient knowledge and awareness to evaluate companies' CSR activities and report their purchasing tendencies accurately. By focusing on urban consumers, this

study aims to provide meaningful insights into how CSR influences purchasing behavior in rapidly developing consumer markets in Chin.

Sampling method

This study adopts a stratified sampling method combined with convenience sampling to collect empirical data from urban Chinese consumers. First, several major Chinese cities are selected to represent different levels of economic development and geographic regions. These cities include large metropolitan areas in eastern China as well as developing cities in central and western regions. The stratification based on geographic distribution helps improve the representativeness of the sample and reduces potential regional bias. Within each city, respondents are recruited through both online and offline channels. Online questionnaires are distributed through popular Chinese survey platforms and social media networks, which allow researchers to reach a large number of respondents efficiently. Offline questionnaires are also distributed in public places such as shopping malls, universities, and office areas to ensure diversity among participants.

A total of 400 questionnaires are distributed during the data collection process. Participation in the survey is voluntary, and respondents are informed that their responses will remain anonymous and confidential. This approach helps reduce social desirability bias and encourages participants to provide honest answers. After the data collection stage, the questionnaires are carefully screened to remove incomplete responses and invalid answers. For example, questionnaires with missing data or identical answers for all questions are excluded from the analysis. After this screening process, approximately 320 to 350 valid questionnaires are expected to be retained for further statistical analysis. This sample size satisfies the minimum requirements for structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. According to methodological guidelines, SEM generally requires a sample size of at least 200 observations to ensure reliable parameter estimation and model stability. Therefore, the expected sample size in this study is considered sufficient for conducting the proposed statistical analyses.

Questionnaire design and measurement

The questionnaire used in this study is designed based on established measurement scales from previous research and adapted to the context of Chinese consumers. The questionnaire consists of three main sections: demographic information, corporate social responsibility measurement, and purchase behavior measurement. The first section collects basic demographic information about respondents, including gender, age, education level, monthly income, and occupation. These variables help describe the sample characteristics and allow for descriptive statistical analysis. The second section measures consumers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility in *Table 1*. CSR is measured using six items that capture different aspects of corporate responsibility, including environmental responsibility, ethical practices, consumer protection, and community involvement. The third section measures consumer purchase behavior in *Table 1*. This construct is assessed using six items that reflect consumers' willingness to purchase products from socially responsible companies, recommend responsible brands to others, and maintain long-term purchasing relationships. All measurement items are evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 represents "strongly disagree" and 5 represents "strongly agree." The Likert scale is widely used in social science research

because it allows respondents to express varying degrees of agreement and provides suitable data for statistical analysis.

Table 1. *The measurement items.*

Code	Item description
Corporate social responsibility	
CSR1	The company actively engages in environmental protection activities.
CSR2	The company treats employees fairly and responsibly.
CSR3	The company provides safe and high-quality products to consumers.
CSR4	The company conducts its business in an ethical and honest manner.
CSR5	The company contributes to community development and social welfare.
CSR6	The company considers the interests of society when making business decisions.
Consumer purchase behavior	
PB1	I like to spend a long time in this coffee shop.
PB2	I often revisit this coffee shop.
PB3	I prefer this coffee shop compared with other similar places.
PB4	I would recommend this coffee shop to others.
PB5	I feel emotionally attached to this coffee shop environment.
PB6	I intend to continue visiting this coffee shop in the future.

Data analysis strategy

The data analysis process in this study consists of three main stages: descriptive statistical analysis, reliability and validity testing, and structural equation modeling. First, descriptive statistical analysis is conducted using SPSS software to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Variables such as gender, age, education level, income, and occupation are analyzed to provide an overview of the sample structure. In addition, the means and standard deviations of the main variables, CSR and purchase behavior, are calculated to understand the general trends in the data. Second, reliability and validity analyses are performed to ensure the quality of the measurement scales. Internal consistency reliability is assessed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. A Cronbach’s alpha value greater than 0.70 is generally considered acceptable, indicating that the measurement items consistently reflect the underlying construct.

Construct validity is evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) conducted with structural equation modeling software such as AMOS. Convergent validity is assessed by examining factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Factor loadings are expected to exceed 0.60, while CR values should be greater than 0.70 and AVE values should exceed 0.50 to indicate satisfactory convergent validity. Discriminant validity is also examined by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the correlations between constructs. If the square root of AVE is greater than the correlation coefficients, discriminant validity is considered to be adequate. Finally, structural equation modeling (SEM) is applied to test the hypothesized relationship between corporate social responsibility and purchase behavior. SEM is an effective analytical technique that allows researchers to simultaneously evaluate measurement models and structural relationships between latent variables. Model fit is evaluated using several widely accepted indices, including the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Acceptable model fit is indicated when χ^2/df is less than 3, CFI and TLI values exceed 0.90, and RMSEA is below 0.08.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics

The final sample consisted of 336 valid responses collected from urban consumers in several major Chinese cities. All respondents reported having regular purchasing experience and familiarity with products or services offered by different companies. Gender distribution in the sample was relatively balanced, which helps reduce gender bias in the analysis of consumer purchasing behavior. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents were between 26 and 45 years old, accounting for approximately 58.6% of the total sample. This age group represents the most active consumer segment in urban markets and is generally characterized by stable income and strong purchasing power. Younger consumers aged 18–25 accounted for 21.7% of the sample, while respondents above 45 years old accounted for about 19.7%. Regarding education level, the sample showed a relatively high level of educational attainment. More than half of the respondents held a bachelor’s degree, while approximately 18.2% had obtained a master’s degree or higher. Higher education levels often correspond to greater awareness of social and environmental issues, which may influence consumers’ perceptions of corporate social responsibility.

Most respondents were employed in full-time positions, representing 63.1% of the sample, while students accounted for 16.7% and self-employed individuals represented 11.3%. Retired and unemployed respondents constituted a smaller proportion of the sample. In terms of monthly income, the largest proportion of respondents reported earning between RMB 5,001 and 8,000, indicating moderate purchasing power among urban consumers. Overall, these demographic characteristics suggest that the sample represents urban consumers who are economically active, relatively well educated, and capable of evaluating corporate social responsibility practices when making purchasing decisions. Detailed demographic statistics are presented in *Table 2*.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics results.*

Characteristic	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	165	49.1%
	Female	171	50.9%
Age	18–25 years old	73	21.7%
	26–35 years old	112	33.3%
	36–45 years old	85	25.3%
	46–55 years old	44	13.1%
	Above 55 years old	22	6.6%
Education level	High school and below	52	15.5%
	College diploma	86	25.6%
	Bachelor’s degree	137	40.8%
	Master’s degree	49	14.6%
	Doctorate	12	3.5%
Occupation	Employed	212	63.1%
	Self-employed	38	11.3%
	Student	56	16.7%
	Unemployed	19	5.7%
	Retired	11	3.2%
Monthly income	Less than 3000 RMB	48	14.3%
	3000–5000 RMB	76	22.6%
	5001–8000 RMB	104	31.0%
	8001–12000 RMB	73	21.7%
	Above 12001 RMB	35	10.4%

Measurement model assessment

To evaluate the measurement model, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were systematically assessed. Reliability and convergent validity were examined through standardized factor loadings, Cronbach’s α coefficients, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). All item loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 and were statistically significant in *Table 3*. Cronbach’s α values ranged from 0.704 to 0.930, indicating strong internal consistency. Additionally, all AVE values surpassed the minimum criterion of 0.50, confirming adequate convergent validity.

Table 3. Construct reliability and validity.

Category	Cronbach’s alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CSR	0.904	0.906	0.931	0.693
PB	0.918	0.920	0.941	0.728

The impact of corporate social responsibility on purchase behavior

To examine the hypothesized relationship between corporate social responsibility and purchase behavior, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples. This method allows researchers to estimate the statistical significance of path coefficients and provides confidence intervals for the estimated effects. The results presented in *Table 4* indicate that corporate social responsibility has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase behavior. The standardized path coefficient from CSR to purchase behavior is $\beta = 0.642$, with a t-value of 14.732 and a p-value less than 0.001. This result suggests that consumers who perceive companies as socially responsible are significantly more likely to purchase their products. The magnitude of the path coefficient indicates a relatively strong relationship between CSR and purchase behavior. In other words, corporate social responsibility plays an important role in shaping consumers’ purchasing decisions in the urban Chinese market. Companies that actively engage in environmental protection, ethical practices, and community development may therefore enhance their attractiveness to consumers. Furthermore, the structural model demonstrated satisfactory model fit indices. The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) was below 3, while the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) exceeded 0.90. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was below 0.08, indicating acceptable model fit. These findings provide empirical support for the hypothesis that corporate social responsibility positively influences consumer purchase behavior. The results suggest that CSR initiatives not only enhance corporate reputation but also directly affect consumer decision-making processes.

Table 4. The result of directing effect.

Category	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P values
CSR → Purchase Behavior	0.642	0.639	0.044	14.732	0.000

The findings of this study confirm that corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchase behavior among urban Chinese consumers. The structural model analysis shows that CSR has a strong positive effect on purchase behavior, indicating that consumers are increasingly attentive to companies’ social and ethical practices when making purchasing decisions. This result reinforces the growing consensus in marketing and management research that CSR is not only a

moral obligation for firms but also an important strategic factor influencing consumer behavior. From a consumer decision-making perspective, the results suggest that CSR functions as an important evaluative signal that reduces uncertainty and strengthens consumer trust. In competitive markets characterized by numerous product alternatives and information asymmetry, consumers often rely on corporate reputation and ethical conduct as indicators of reliability and product quality. When consumers perceive that a company actively fulfills its social and environmental responsibilities, they are more likely to view the company as trustworthy and credible. This positive perception, in turn, increases their willingness to purchase products from that company. In this sense, CSR operates as a reputational mechanism that transforms ethical perceptions into concrete purchasing behavior. Another noteworthy implication of the findings is that CSR may influence consumer behavior through both cognitive and emotional mechanisms. On the cognitive level, CSR activities provide consumers with information about the company's ethical standards and operational transparency. Consumers may interpret these signals as evidence that the firm maintains responsible management practices and high-quality production standards. On the emotional level, CSR initiatives may evoke positive feelings such as admiration, trust, and moral satisfaction. Consumers often experience a sense of personal fulfillment when supporting companies that contribute positively to society or protect the environment. These emotional responses can strengthen brand loyalty and encourage repeated purchasing behavior.

The findings also reflect the changing consumption patterns of urban Chinese consumers. As China's economic development continues and living standards improve, consumers are gradually shifting from purely price-oriented purchasing decisions toward more value-oriented consumption patterns. Ethical consumption and socially responsible purchasing are becoming increasingly relevant in urban markets where consumers have greater access to information and higher awareness of environmental and social issues. The positive relationship between CSR and purchase behavior observed in this study suggests that companies operating in China can gain competitive advantages by actively integrating CSR initiatives into their business strategies. Furthermore, the results highlight the importance of transparency and authenticity in CSR communication. While consumers generally respond positively to responsible corporate behavior, they may also be skeptical if CSR activities are perceived as purely promotional or insincere. Therefore, companies should ensure that their CSR initiatives are genuine, consistent, and aligned with their core business practices. Transparent communication regarding environmental protection, product safety, employee welfare, and community development can strengthen consumers' trust and enhance the credibility of CSR efforts. From a broader perspective, the findings contribute to the understanding of how CSR influences consumer behavior in emerging markets. Compared with developed economies, CSR awareness in China has developed relatively recently. However, the results of this study indicate that urban Chinese consumers are increasingly responsive to socially responsible corporate practices. This trend suggests that CSR will continue to play a growing role in shaping market competition and consumer expectations in the future.

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of increasing consumer awareness of social and environmental issues, this study examined the impact of corporate social responsibility on purchase

behavior among urban Chinese consumers. Using a questionnaire survey and structural equation modeling analysis, the research investigated whether consumers' perceptions of CSR influence their purchasing decisions. The empirical results demonstrate that corporate social responsibility has a significant positive effect on consumer purchase behavior, confirming that socially responsible corporate practices can enhance consumers' willingness to purchase products from those companies. The study provides several important theoretical insights. First, it confirms that CSR serves as a meaningful determinant of consumer behavior in emerging markets such as China. While earlier studies on CSR and consumer behavior were primarily conducted in Western countries, the findings of this research suggest that Chinese consumers are also increasingly sensitive to corporate social responsibility issues. As urban consumers gain greater access to information and develop stronger environmental and social awareness, CSR becomes an important factor influencing their evaluation of companies and their purchasing decisions. Second, the study highlights the role of CSR as a reputational and ethical signal in the consumer decision-making process. Consumers often face uncertainty when evaluating product quality or company reliability. CSR activities provide valuable information that helps consumers form positive perceptions of a company's credibility and integrity. When companies actively engage in socially responsible initiatives such as environmental protection, ethical labor practices, and community development, consumers are more likely to trust these firms and support them through purchasing behavior. Third, the findings suggest that CSR can strengthen the emotional connection between consumers and brands. Supporting socially responsible companies allows consumers to align their purchasing decisions with their personal values and moral beliefs. This alignment can enhance brand loyalty and increase consumers' willingness to recommend responsible companies to others.

The results of this study also offer several practical implications for business managers and policymakers. For companies, integrating CSR into their long-term business strategies can enhance corporate reputation and strengthen relationships with consumers. Firms should actively engage in responsible practices related to environmental sustainability, product safety, employee welfare, and community development. At the same time, companies should communicate their CSR initiatives clearly and transparently to consumers through marketing campaigns, sustainability reports, and digital media platforms. For policymakers, promoting CSR awareness and establishing regulatory frameworks that encourage responsible corporate behavior can help create a more sustainable and ethical business environment. Government agencies may also support educational initiatives that increase public awareness of responsible consumption and sustainable development. Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research adopted a cross-sectional survey design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships between CSR perceptions and purchase behavior. Although the statistical analysis indicates a significant relationship, longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence regarding how CSR influences consumer behavior over time. Second, the sample of respondents was primarily drawn from urban areas in China. While urban consumers are important drivers of market trends, their attitudes and behaviors may differ from those of rural consumers. Future research could expand the sample to include participants from different regions and socioeconomic backgrounds to improve the generalizability of the findings. Third, the study focused primarily on the direct relationship between CSR and purchase behavior without examining potential mediating or moderating variables. Factors such as

consumer trust, brand image, perceived product quality, or environmental awareness may influence the strength of the relationship between CSR and purchasing decisions. Future research could incorporate these variables into more complex research models to gain deeper insights into the mechanisms through which CSR affects consumer behavior.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involved with any parties in this research study.

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