

CSR's Impact on Fashion Consumer Behaviour: Unravelling the Nexus between Purchase Intention and Consumer Happiness

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Abstract

Many organisations are managing sustainability issues and learning how to enhance stakeholder engagement. However, few studies have addressed the influence of consumer happiness on the relationship between corporate sustainability and consumer behaviour. Therefore, this study examines the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on purchase intention, with consumer happiness serving as a moderating variable. Consistent with the literature, CSR and consumer happiness are measured as multidimensional constructs, and purchase intention is measured as a single-factor latent variable. These results suggest that CSR and consumer happiness are positively correlated with purchase intention. Furthermore, consumer happiness moderates the relationship between CSR and purchase intention. These findings have implications for the academic domain and fashion industry.

Keywords: *consumer happiness, purchase intention, CSR, sustainability, fashion.*

JEL Classification: O14, M30, Q5

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Spanish retail sector has been important to the national economy, accounting for approximately 15% of the country's gross domestic product over the past decade. Dominated by multinational fast fashion retailers, such as Mango, Zara, H&M, and Primark, this sector has historically been characterised by innovative strategies aimed at meeting dynamic consumer demands. However, recent years have seen heightened consumer awareness of the negative externalities of the global fashion industry. These concerns encompass ethical and environmental dimensions driven by the industry's dependence on polluting inputs, hazardous working conditions, and chemical contamination that adversely affects workers' health, predominantly affecting low-to-middle-income countries (Henninger et al., 2017). Such challenges have garnered negative media attention, posing significant reputational risks to brands.

Traditionally, corporations have not been held fully accountable for their social responsibilities. However, increasing consumer demand for sustainably produced goods has elevated expectations for businesses adopting socially conscious practices (Nickerson et al., 2022). This paradigm shift has spurred the emergence of a slow fashion movement that emphasises longer production cycles and ethically manufactured apparel to mitigate the adverse effects of fast fashion (Pookulangara & Shephard, 2013). These developments underscore the critical need for corporate strategies that address environmental and social issues, which can serve as a source of competitive advantage (Nguyen, 2023). Furthermore, sustainability initiatives provide a foundation for differentiation strategies, enhancing brand equity (Lu et al., 2020; Rozsa et al.,

2022) and fostering engagement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities (Androniceanu, 2019; Vavrova, 2022).

The concept of CSR has been a topic of scholarly debate since the mid-1950s, gaining prominence over subsequent decades. By the late 2000s, Dahlsrud (2008) identified 37 definitions of CSR, noting that the ambiguity surrounding the term stemmed more from its social construction than from definitional inconsistencies. Although no universal definition exists, Mu et al. (2023) describe CSR as a set of strategic initiatives that enable organisations to simultaneously achieve economic, environmental, and social objectives. These initiatives encompass corporate philanthropy, legal compliance, ethical market practices, and strategic investments (Chen & Huang, 2018). Despite a general consensus on the principles underlying CSR, much of the research focuses on its impact on consumer loyalty and satisfaction (Shiri & Jafari-Sadeghi, 2023), leaving the efficacy of individual CSR dimensions underexplored.

Happiness, a fundamental human aspiration, has been extensively examined in academic literature as a driver of individual behaviour. Defined by Veenhoven (2014) as a positive evaluation of the quality of life, happiness is conceptually linked to consumer happiness (Ayadi et al., 2017), consumer satisfaction (Suchanek & Kralova, 2018), subjective well-being (Desmeules, 2002; Zhan & Zhou, 2018), and hedonic enjoyment (Theodorakis et al., 2015). However, a precise definition of consumer happiness remains elusive, as research often relies on broader constructs, such as subjective well-being, reflecting a general perception that life is good (Myers, 1992). To advance our understanding, contextualising happiness within consumer-specific scenarios is necessary, thus emphasising its distinct dimensions.

This study aims to address critical gaps in the literature by investigating the relationship between CSR and purchase intention in a marketplace increasingly shaped by consumer awareness of global issues, such as climate change, corporate ethics, and stakeholder well-being (Chovanová Supeková et al., 2023). Although prior research underscores the growing demand for sustainable products as a marker of responsibility (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2017), the influence of authenticity and consistency in CSR practices on consumer trust and purchase decisions remains insufficiently explored. Modern consumers are adept at detecting inauthentic CSR efforts, necessitating companies to align their CSR actions with their core values and authentically communicate these efforts to foster trust and engagement (Cuesta et al., 2023).

Thus, this study aims to deepen the understanding of the interplay among CSR, consumer happiness, and purchase intention in the Spanish fashion industry. Specifically, this study examines the direct relationships between CSR and purchase intention and between CSR and consumer happiness, while exploring the mediating role of consumer happiness in the CSR-purchase intention relationship.

A key contribution of this study lies in integrating consumer happiness into the CSR-purchase intention framework, an area that has received limited attention. Although happiness is widely recognised as a fundamental aspiration (Veenhoven, 2014), its intersection with CSR and consumer behaviour has been minimally studied. By addressing these relationships, this study aims to illuminate the mechanisms through which CSR influences purchase intention and consumer happiness, offering valuable insights for businesses seeking to enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and ethical engagement.

This study contributes to existing literature in two significant ways. First, it conceptualises and operationalises consumer happiness as a multidimensional construct within a consumer behaviour model. Second, it establishes interaction effects between CSR and purchase intention, mediated by consumer happiness (Fig. 1).

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the relationships between CSR, consumer happiness, and purchase intention, forming the basis for the study's hypotheses. Section 3 describes the sampling process, analytical techniques, and measurement constructs. Sections 4 and 5 provide the results and discussion. Finally, Section 6 presents the conclusions, highlighting the key implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

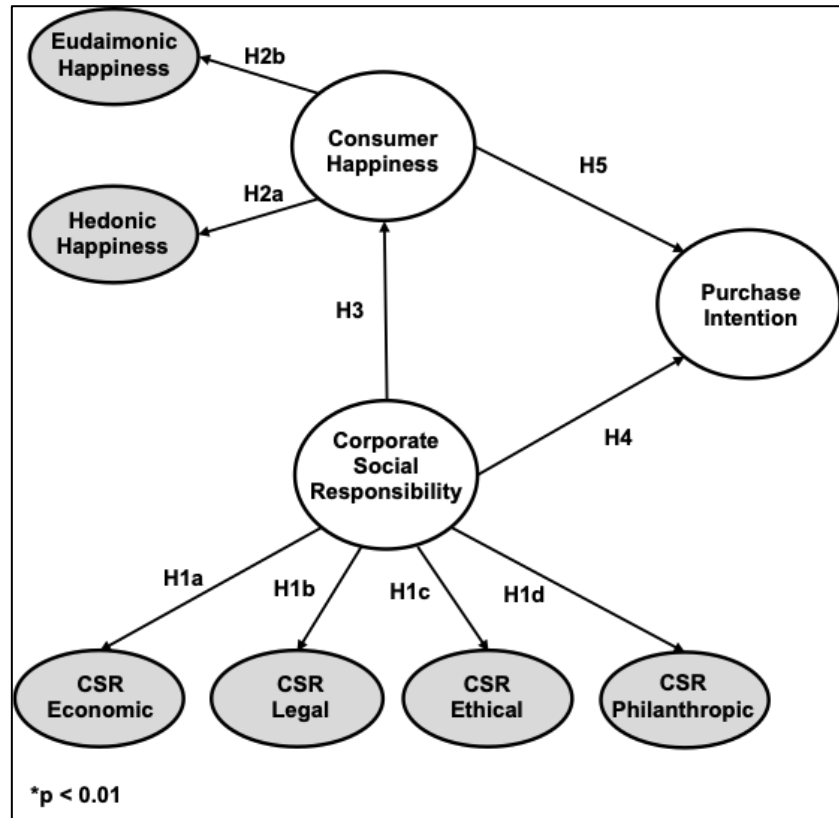


Fig. 1 – Theoretical model. Source: own research.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The Perception of CSR and its Dimensions

Conceptualising CSR remains a complex undertaking, as it cannot be adequately captured within a single dimension. To address this complexity, CSR is frequently categorised into multiple dimensions, reflecting its multifaceted nature (Bucaro et al., 2020). A common approach in CSR research is to define the construct in terms of stakeholder groups or organisational responsibilities to society, typically encompassing economic, ethical, legal, and discretionary dimensions (Carroll & Brown, 2018; Fatima & Elbanna, 2022; Maignan & Ferrell, 2000; Turker, 2009). However, some scholars have advocated for alternative theoretical frameworks that extend beyond the stakeholder perspective to provide a more comprehensive understanding of CSR (Frynas & Yamahaki, 2016). The selection of CSR dimensions must align with the specific study objectives and practical strategies under examination (Fatima & Elbanna, 2022).

CSR initiatives are often operationalised through actions that address social and environmental issues, including environmental conservation, community investment, resource preservation, and philanthropic contributions (Nejati et al., 2017). Building on these principles, González-Ramos et al. (2023) categorised CSR into three key dimensions: economic, social, and ecological. The economic dimension pertains to financial performance and responsibilities, emphasising productivity, profit maximisation, and economic wealth preservation. The social

dimension focuses on ethical behaviour, addressing internal (e.g. employees) and external (e.g. communities) stakeholders. The ecological dimension emphasises environmentally responsible actions such as conservation and sustainability initiatives. Together, these dimensions offer a holistic framework for integrating CSR into organisational practices.

Carroll's (1979, 1991) conceptual model remains a foundational framework for CSR, outlining the four dimensions of social responsibility that have been adapted across various sectors and cultural contexts. This model has been applied to the U.S. chain restaurant sector (Lee et al., 2020), Chilean educational sector (Severino-González, 2021), and Vietnamese banking sector (Nguyen et al., 2023). These examples illustrate the model's versatility and relevance in diverse settings, reinforcing its value as a foundational tool for understanding CSR.

The economic dimension, as a core aspect of CSR, highlights the importance of financial responsibility in maintaining competitiveness and ensuring organisational efficiency (Sipilä et al., 2022). Economic stability enables organisations to address broader social and ecological responsibilities (Ramlugun & Raboute, 2015). Visser (2016) underscores the critical role of economic responsibility in shaping stakeholder relationships and sustaining broader economic impacts (Cuesta et al., 2019). These discussions lead to the following hypothesis:

H1a. Economic responsibility is a dimension of perceived CSR.

The legal dimension emphasises compliance with laws governing marketing practices, environmental protection, and labour regulations. This ensures adherence to fundamental principles that facilitate fair and transparent transactions (Al Mubarak et al., 2019). However, legal compliance alone may not address all challenges as laws are often limited in scope and subject to political influence (Carroll & Brown, 1998). Recent regulatory developments in several countries require organisations to report on CSR activities, extending beyond financial metrics to include commitments to stakeholders (Invernizzi et al., 2022). This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1b. Legal responsibility is a dimension of perceived CSR.

Ethical responsibility, the third dimension, extends beyond legal compliance and encompasses broader moral obligations. This involves safeguarding the rights of stakeholders and addressing societal expectations through ethical practices (Ramlugun & Raboute, 2015). Ethical responsibility prioritises integrity and values, fostering trust and loyalty among stakeholders (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2022). Research suggests that consumers value authentic and honest CSR initiatives, thus enhancing their willingness to engage with ethical companies (Sen et al., 2016). Consequently, ethical responsibility forms a competitive advantage for businesses (Bianchi et al., 2019), leading to the following hypothesis:

H1c. Ethical responsibility is a dimension of perceived CSR.

The discretionary dimension focuses on philanthropic activities aimed at improving societal well-being. Companies often engage in initiatives such as donations, volunteering, and awareness campaigns to address pressing social and environmental issues (Ahn, 2020; Ramlugun & Raboute, 2015). These efforts enhance community well-being and align companies with societal values, ultimately strengthening their reputation. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H1d. Discretionary responsibility is a dimension of perceived CSR.

2.2. Concept and dimensions of consumer happiness

In consumer research, happiness is defined as a subjective evaluation of one's life, encompassing both cognitive judgments of satisfaction and affective assessments of mood and

emotions. Although happiness is often linked to well-being, scholars have distinguished between them. Well-being encompasses external factors such as living conditions and employment opportunities, whereas happiness is a subjective assessment that focuses on the pleasure derived from achieving a standard of living (Cropanzano & Wright, 2001; Sariçam, 2015). Happiness includes two primary components: the affective component, which is related to the experience of pleasure, and the cognitive component, which evaluates the attainment of personal desires and goals (Sariçam, 2015).

Consumer happiness is often analysed through the lens of subjective well-being, hedonism, and eudaimonism (Dhiman & Kumar, 2023). Subjective well-being emphasises hedonic pleasure, which is defined as a general evaluation of life's quality and pleasantness (Sirgy, 2012). Research has demonstrated that specific life domains, including shopping and consumer behaviour, contribute to overall life satisfaction. For example, impulsive buying can evoke pleasure and excitement, creating a positive correlation between happiness and purchase intention (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Olsen et al., 2022). Meanwhile, eudaimonic perspectives emphasise purpose and fulfilment, distinguishing happiness derived from meaningful and goal-oriented activities (Schmitt et al., 2015).

The coexistence of hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions is well-documented in the literature. Scholars advocate for an integrated approach that reflects the multidimensionality of happiness, emphasising both immediate pleasure and deeper meaning (Dodge et al., 2012; Seligman, 2002). Seligman's Authentic Happiness Theory identifies three orientations to happiness: pleasure, meaning, and engagement. This framework has been effectively applied in consumer contexts such as fashion retail in Spain (Cuesta et al., 2022), travel blogs in China (Hu et al., 2024), and the restaurant sector in Croatia (Aziz et al., 2023).

This study adopted Seligman's framework to examine consumer happiness, distinguishing between hedonic (pleasure-focused) and eudaimonic (meaning- and engagement-focused) dimensions. This multidimensional perspective leads to the following hypotheses:

H2a: Eudaimonic happiness is a significant component of consumer happiness.

H2b: Hedonic happiness is a significant component of consumer happiness.

The relationship between CSR and consumer happiness can be explained through the perceptions of fairness and justice fostered by CSR practices (Espasandín-Bustelo et al., 2021). Initiatives that demonstrate non-discriminatory practices and improvements in societal well-being are particularly effective in enhancing consumer happiness (Díaz-Carrion et al., 2019). As consumers increasingly expect meaningful CSR engagement, companies committed to authentic and impactful CSR practices are perceived as contributing to consumer well-being, leading to greater happiness (Mu et al., 2023). CSR initiatives influence both the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions, fostering emotional connections with brands and enhancing loyalty (Pansari & Kumar, 2017; Yoshida et al., 2021).

Empirical evidence from diverse contexts, including studies in Australia (Chia et al., 2020), China (Mu et al., 2023), and Turkey (Tosun & Tavşan, 2023), supports the positive influence of CSR on consumer happiness. These findings lead to the following hypothesis:

H3. Perceived CSR influences consumer happiness.

2.3 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is a critical driver of consumer decision-making, reflecting the likelihood that a consumer will buy a specific product or service. It is influenced by behavioural, attitudinal, and perceptual factors, making it a key predictor of purchasing behaviour (Shah et

al., 2012; Spognardi et al., 2021). Understanding purchase intention is essential for analysing consumer preferences and tailoring marketing strategies to meet consumer expectations.

In e-commerce, purchase intention is shaped by factors, such as trust, corporate reputation, and ethical practices. Companies that engage in socially responsible activities often experience enhanced trust and loyalty, which directly influence purchase behaviour (Cuesta et al., 2024; Gallego et al., 2016). For instance, consumers associate CSR initiatives with superior product quality and ethical conduct, fostering positive attitudes towards the brand and higher purchase intentions (Gupta & Wadera, 2021; Mulaessa et al., 2017).

Duffet's (2015) purchase intention scale has been widely utilised across different markets, including the fashion industry in Spain (Cuesta et al., 2023), e-commerce platforms in the UK (Shaouf et al., 2016), and aesthetic services in Jordan (AlFarraj et al., 2021). This scale's versatility highlights its relevance for examining both digital and traditional consumer behaviours.

The influence of CSR on purchase intention has been extensively documented, with studies showing that consumers are more likely to purchase products from companies with strong CSR commitments (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021). CSR initiatives enhance product evaluations, foster brand loyalty, and increase the likelihood of repeat purchases. These considerations lead to the following hypothesis:

H4. Perceived CSR positively influences purchase intention.

Although the research linking happiness and purchase intention is limited, emerging studies suggest that consumer happiness significantly affects purchasing behaviour. Happiness, encompassing both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects, serves as a non-rational driver of purchase intention, reflecting consumers' pursuit of fulfilment and pleasure (Dutta, 2023; Shanmugavel, 2023). Firms can leverage this insight by designing marketing campaigns that align with consumers' psychological desires and emphasise their products' hedonic and eudaimonic benefits (Nim et al., 2022).

These considerations lead to the following hypothesis:

H5. Consumer happiness positively influences purchase intention.

3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA

3.1 Survey Design

The survey instrument was developed in Spanish, using the previously validated scales outlined in Tab. 2. Certain items were adapted to suit the research context, while maintaining the integrity of the original constructs. This process was facilitated by bilingual academic fluency in English and Spanish, which ensured that the intended meaning of the items was preserved. Any ambiguities encountered during the translation process were resolved through collaborative discussions (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003). The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('completely disagree') to 5 ('completely agree').

To ensure the relevance and applicability of the survey items, a focus group was formed in March 2022. The group comprised nine participants, including three professionals from fashion retail companies, three frequent consumers of fashion products, and three researchers specialising in fashion retail. The primary objective was to refine the questionnaire to align it with the specific characteristics of the Spanish fashion market. The experts in the focus group evaluated the clarity and appropriateness of the items and addressed any challenges related to their adaptation. Where necessary, alternative scales with comparable objectives were examined to prevent the exclusion of valuable constructs.

Following the focus group discussion, the questionnaire was finalised. CSR perception was assessed using a 17-item scale adapted from Ramlugun and Raboute (2015), consumer happiness was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Fu and Wang (2021), and purchase intention was evaluated with a four-item scale by Duffet (2015). Reliability and validity assessments, detailed in subsequent sections, confirmed the robustness of these scales. Based on these analyses, the final questionnaire included 16 items for CSR, eight items for consumer happiness, and three items for purchase intention, ensuring consistency and reliability.

3.2 Sample Size and Composition

This study focuses on fashion consumers in Spain, encompassing individuals shopping through both physical retail outlets and e-commerce platforms. Participants were recruited through online survey distribution, with the questionnaire accessible via mobile devices through Google Docs. Survey administrators initially contacted the participants to explain the study's purpose and objectives. To mitigate common method bias, the survey was distributed in multiple waves, ensuring a representative sample of the Spanish population aged 16–64 (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Data were collected from May to August 2022.

Overall, 1,296 valid responses were obtained, with most participants residing in Madrid. Questionnaires with incomplete data or inconsistencies were excluded from analysis. The sample size exceeded the minimum threshold required for structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, providing a robust foundation for the statistical evaluation of the study. Survey responses were gathered from customers of prominent fashion retailers in Spain, including fast-fashion brands. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and SmartPLS software (Ringle et al., 2022).

The sample composition reflected a diverse demographic profile. Of the participants, 45% were male and 55% were female. The age distribution comprised 9% aged 15–19, 44% aged 20–39, 30% aged 40–54, and 17% aged 55–64. Regarding educational attainment, 9% of the participants had completed elementary education, 34% had completed secondary education, and 57% had attained tertiary education (Tab. 1).

Tab. 1 – Sample information. Source: own research

Gender	%	Total 1,296
Male	45.3	587
Female	54.7	709
Age	%	Total 1,296
16–19	9.0	116
20–39	44.3	574
40–54	30.3	392
55–64	16,5	214
Level of studies	%	Total 1,296
Primary education	9.3	121
Secondary education	33.8	438
Tertiary education	56.9	737

3.3 Measurement Model: Reliability and Validity

The evaluation of latent variable measurements and the relationships between variables is a cornerstone of SEM, which is valued for its ability to test comprehensive theoretical frameworks (Rigdon, 1998). SEM simultaneously analyses the structural (path model) and measurement (factor model) components within a unified framework. This study employs partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM), a method particularly suited to non-normally distributed data and the inclusion of multiple variables in the model. Unlike

covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM does not require normality assumptions, making it robust when working with non-normal data distributions. Given this study's sample size and model complexity, PLS-SEM effectively accommodates the simultaneous analysis of direct and indirect relationships, integration of theoretical models, and assessment of predictive power (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012).

The advantages of PLS-SEM include its flexibility and suitability for complex exploratory research. However, it has some limitations. Potential challenges include the risk of model overfitting, reliance on subjective decisions in model specifications, and sensitivity to input data quality. Additionally, this method assumes linear relationships among variables, which may not fully reflect the complexity of real-world phenomena. Recognising and addressing these limitations is essential for contextualising the findings and providing a balanced interpretation of the study's validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2011).

PLS-SEM integrates multiple regression techniques, enabling efficient analysis of relationships between variables in exploratory research (Hair et al., 2011). Recent advancements, such as confirmatory composite analysis (CCA), have provided robust procedures for validating measurement models. Henseler et al. (2014) proposed using CCA within PLS-SEM to validate measurement theory, and the term partial least squares confirmatory composite analysis (PLS-CCA) has been introduced to formalise these practices (Hubona et al., 2021). The PLS-CCA validation process in this study included four key steps.

1. Measurement model assessment: The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated to confirm the measurement model's quality.
2. Structural model evaluation: Relationships between constructs were analysed by examining path coefficients and the model's explanatory power.
3. Model fit and predictive performance: The model's goodness-of-fit and predictive capabilities were assessed to ensure robust findings.
4. Robustness checks: Sensitivity analyses were conducted to verify the stability of results under various assumptions and conditions.

A threshold of 0.700 for item loadings is commonly used to ensure adequate construct reliability (Tab. 2). In this study, all item loadings exceeded 0.75, except for one item in the CSR construct and one in the hedonic happiness construct, which still met acceptable reliability standards (Hair et al., 2011). Furthermore, all items demonstrated stronger loadings on their intended constructs than on the others, reinforcing the validity and reliability of the reflective measures used in the model.

Tab. 2 – Scales, factor loading, reliability, and validity. Source: own research

Factor Loadings		Sources of Adoption
Economic CSR RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.79, Composite reliability: 0.80, AVE: 0.62		
This brand puts a lot of effort into understanding customer needs.	0.83	Podnar and Golob (2007); Perez and Bosque (2014); Ramlugun and Raboute (2015)
This brand emphasizes maximizing customer benefits	0.88	
This brand pays individual attention to the customer	0.80	
Legal CSR RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.86, Composite reliability: 0.86, AVE: 0.78		
This brand maintains an adequate safety measure in its production and sale.	0.85	Podnar and Golob (2007); Ramlugun and Raboute (2015); Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009)
This brand respects the rules and follows the law.	0.90	
This brand is transparent in its legal certificates	0.90	
Ethical CSR RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.85, Composite reliability: 0.86, AVE: 0.70		
This brand knows what is right or wrong when manufacturing/supplying its products/services.	0.84	Podnar and Golob (2007); Ramlugun and Raboute (2015)
This brand is committed to well-defined ethical principles	0.87	
This brand treats its employees fairly	0.85	

This brand is concerned about serving elderly and differently abled customers	0.78	
Philanthropic CSR RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.90, Composite reliability: 0.90, AVE: 0.67		
This brand tries to make donations or social causes	0.79	Podnar and Golob (2007); Ramlugun and Raboute (2015)
This brand tries to recycle its waste properly	0.83	
This brand tries to improve the quality of life of those in need	0.81	
This brand tries to take into account social aspects in order to improve its management	0.84	
This brand tries to sponsor educational or cultural activities	0.80	
This brand tries to sponsor activities in favor of the environment.	0.83	
Hedonic Happiness RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.88, Composite reliability: 0.89, AVE: 0.74		
I enjoyed purchasing this brand's product	0.89	Fu y Wang (2021)
I am excited to purchase this brand's product	0.87	
Purchasing this brand's product relieves my stress	0.83	
Purchasing this brand's product involves me with the brand	0.90	
Eudaimonic Happiness RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.90, Composite reliability: 0.90, AVE: 0.76		
Purchasing this fashion item makes me feel that my efforts at work or school are worthwhile	0.89	Fu y Wang (2021)
Being able to purchase this brand's product makes me feel like I am a lucky person	0.88	
Purchasing this brand makes me feel that I benefit other people	0.77	
Being able to purchase this brand's product makes me feel like it is worthwhile to work hard	0.89	
Purchase Intention RVM: Cronbach's alpha: 0.90, Composite reliability: 0.91, AVE: 0.83		
I want to buy products of this brand	0.91	Duffett (2015)
I am likely to buy products of this brand	0.90	
I plan/plan to buy products of this brand	0.92	

Note: RVM = Reliability and validity measures.

The internal consistency of the measurement model was evaluated using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha. Both metrics exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.80, indicating acceptable reliability for basic research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). CR is a robust measure of reliability in PLS-SEM, ensuring that the constructs adequately capture the underlying theoretical framework. Additionally, discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio, a preferred approach in PLS-SEM because of its precision in detecting validity concerns. Bootstrap routines with 5,000 samples were conducted, yielding HTMT values below the recommended threshold of 0.90 for all constructs, thereby confirming discriminant validity.

Controlling for common method variance (CMV) is a critical consideration in survey-based research to ensure the integrity of findings. Podsakoff et al. (2003) suggested multiple procedural remedies to mitigate CMV, including the collection of data from different sources, psychological separation of measurements, anonymity of participants, and carefully worded scale items. This study employed these procedural safeguards and further assessed common method bias using the full collinearity approach proposed by Kock (2015). Variance inflation factor (VIF) values were calculated, with values below the threshold of 3.3, indicating that the model is free from significant common method bias (Hair et al., 2017; Kock, 2015).

Although most items recorded VIF values below 3.3, two items—one from the hedonic consumer happiness construct and one from the purchase intention construct—did not meet this

criterion. These exceptions were noted; however, the overall model demonstrated robust performance, providing confidence in the validity and reliability of the findings.

4 RESULTS

CSR and consumer happiness were modelled as reflective second-order constructs to capture their multidimensional nature. The analysis confirmed the robustness of the measurement model and demonstrated high reliability and validity for the latent variables. The second-order construct loadings are presented in Tab. 1 and 3. The results indicate that the observed variables strongly represent their respective dimensions, with all loadings meeting or exceeding the recommended threshold values (Tab. 1).

This study proposed positive relationships between CSR and its dimensions as well as between consumer happiness and its dimensions, as outlined in H1 and H2, along with their respective sub-hypotheses. These results provide strong empirical support for our hypotheses. All relationships were positive (Fig. 2) and statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. These findings fully support H1 and H2, thus affirming the validity of the proposed theoretical framework.

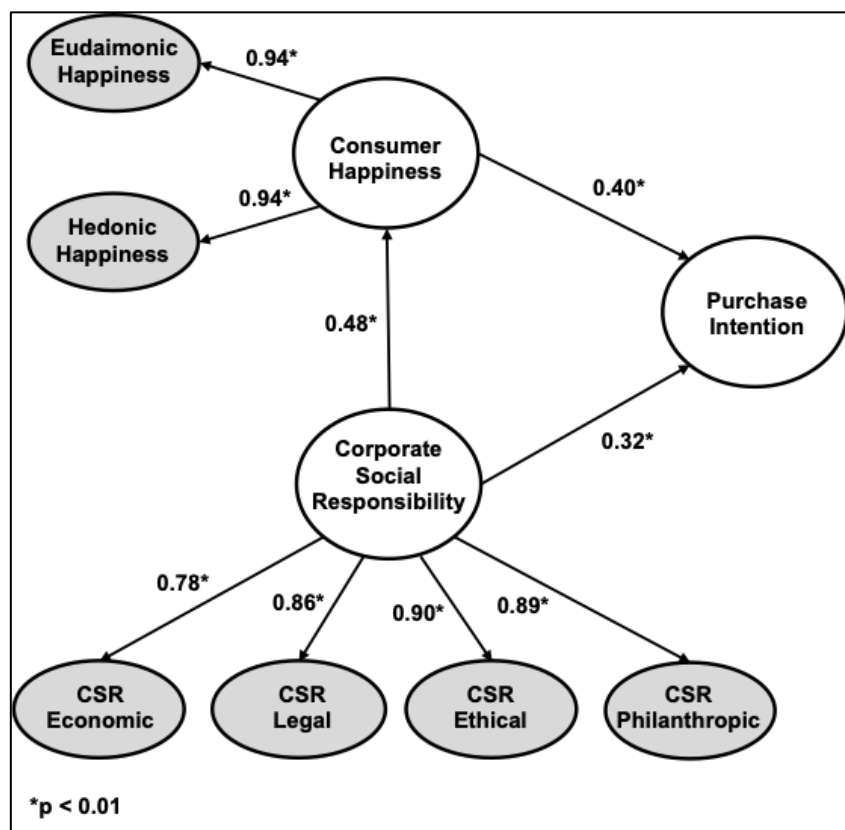


Fig. 2 – Results of the model. Source: own research

The findings reveal significant positive relationships between CSR, consumer happiness, and purchase intention, with all hypothesised relationships being supported by the data. CSR positively influences consumer happiness ($b = 0.48, p < 0.001$) and purchase intention ($b = 0.32, p < 0.001$), providing strong empirical support for H3 and H4. Additionally, consumer happiness positively affects purchase intention ($b = 0.40, p < 0.001$), confirming H5.

To provide deeper insights, the analysis examined the direct, total, and indirect effects between these variables. The total effect of CSR on purchase intention ($.52$) demonstrates a strong and positive coefficient, primarily mediated by consumer happiness. These results emphasise

the pivotal role of consumer happiness in enhancing the relationship between CSR and purchase intention, underscoring its significance in the proposed theoretical framework.

The model's predictive capacity was assessed using the coefficient of determination (R^2) values. Consumer happiness ($R^2 = 0.514$) and purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.286$) exhibited high levels of predictive accuracy, which is consistent with Cohen's (1992) criteria. To evaluate the out-of-sample predictive power, this study employed PLSpredict in SmartPLS with 10 repetitions and 10 folds. The resulting (Q^2) values for consumer happiness ($Q^2 = 0.23$) and purchase intention ($Q^2 = 0.24$) exceeded zero, indicating satisfactory predictive relevance for the endogenous variables in the model (Hair et al., 2017).

Tab. 3 – Total effects. Source: own research

Relation	Total effect	R^2
CSR→PI	0.51	0.51
CSR→CN	0.48	0.29
CH→PI	0.40	-

As outlined in the research questions, this study examined the direct effects of CSR on purchase intention, as well as the mediating role of consumer happiness in these relationships. To achieve this, CSR and consumer happiness were conceptualised and analysed as multidimensional constructs. The results confirm that all proposed hypotheses are statistically significant, providing robust support for the theoretical model (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4 – Summary. Source: own research

Path	Hypothesis	Conclusion
CSR→CSR dimensions	Hypothesis 1 _(abcd) . Corporate Social Responsibility is a multidimensional variable.	Significant
CH→CH dimensions	Hypothesis 2 _(ab) . Consumer Happiness is a multidimensional variable	Significant
CSR→CH	H3. Perceived CSR influences on consumer happiness.	Significant
CSR→PI	H4. Perceived CSR influences on purchase intention.	Significant
CH→PI	H5. Consumer happiness influences purchase intention.	Significant

5 DISCUSSION

This study confirms the established connection between CSR and consumer behaviour, advancing the academic conversation by introducing consumer happiness as a pivotal mediating variable. The findings demonstrate that CSR initiatives positively affect consumer purchase intentions by fostering consumer happiness, an emotional response rooted in the perceived alignment between corporate actions and societal values. This emotional dimension bridges a significant gap in the literature, which has traditionally emphasised direct behavioural outcomes such as purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Chia et al., 2023; Tosun & Tavşan, 2023).

These results highlight the critical role of consumer happiness in amplifying the effectiveness of CSR strategies. Whereas previous studies link happiness to consumer engagement (Bastos & Brucks, 2017; Duan, 2020; Nicolao et al., 2009), this study extends these findings by demonstrating that CSR initiatives enhance this connection. When consumers perceive CSR efforts as genuine and aligned with their values, they form stronger emotional bonds with the brand. This emotional connection not only fosters happiness but also leads to increased purchase intentions, underscoring the dual role of CSR in addressing both emotional and behavioural expectations (Cuesta et al., 2023; Nickerson et al., 2022).

5.1 Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the understanding of how CSR influences consumer behaviour by integrating consumer happiness as a mediating variable. Although prior research has confirmed that happiness drives consumer engagement in purchases (Bastos & Brucks, 2017; Nicolao et al., 2009), this study demonstrates that happiness serves as both an emotional outcome and a mechanism for purchase intention. These findings refine existing CSR models by incorporating emotional and psychological dimensions into decision-making processes, offering a more comprehensive framework for understanding CSR's impact (Chia et al., 2023; Markus & Schwartz, 2010; Mogilner et al., 2012).

A significant theoretical contribution of this study is that it extends the CSR literature to include consumer happiness as an integral dimension. Whereas previous studies have focused on the impact of CSR on employees' well-being (Kıymalıoğlu & Yetkin Özbük, 2024), this study shifts the focus to consumers, emphasising the role of perceived ethical alignment in fostering happiness. By demonstrating that happiness mediates the relationship between CSR and purchase intention, the findings add depth to traditional behaviour-focused CSR models and align with emerging theories on the emotional drivers of consumer behaviour (Bruhn & Schnebelen, 2017; Mu et al., 2023).

This study also provides new empirical evidence from Spain, a context in which sustainability and social responsibility are highly valued, particularly in the fashion sector. Previous studies have predominantly focused on regions such as India (Gupta & Wadera, 2021), China (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021), and Germany (Mäncher et al., 2023). By examining the Spanish market, this study enhances the cross-cultural understanding of CSR's effects and introduces consumer happiness as a critical mediating variable in culturally specific contexts.

5.2 Practical Implications

For practitioners, these findings emphasise the strategic importance of embedding CSR into core business operations to foster consumer happiness and drive purchase intentions. Companies can begin by allocating a portion of annual profits (e.g., 1%–2%) to impactful CSR initiatives, such as infrastructure development or educational programs tailored to community needs (Gupta & Wadera, 2021). Partnering with credible organisations can enhance the effectiveness of these efforts and ensure alignment with consumer expectations (Cuesta et al., 2023).

Tailoring CSR activities to specific consumer segments is essential for maximising engagement. Younger demographics may prioritise climate-focused initiatives, whereas older consumers may value healthcare or community support programs (Mäncher et al., 2023). Using segmentation data, companies can design CSR strategies that resonate with target audiences and foster stronger emotional connections.

Furthermore, transparent communication is equally important. Businesses should leverage digital platforms, such as social media and corporate reports, to share updates on CSR efforts and demonstrate their authenticity. Highlighting real-life impacts through testimonials and success stories can build trust and enhance emotional engagement (Smith & Huang, 2023).

Finally, businesses should monitor the emotional impact of their CSR initiatives by incorporating metrics such as consumer happiness surveys or sentiment analysis. These insights can help refine CSR strategies, ensuring that they meet both societal and emotional expectations, while boosting brand loyalty and purchase intentions.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although this study provides valuable insights, its findings are limited to the Spanish fashion sector and may not be generalisable to other industries or cultural contexts. Future research

should extend this model to diverse geographic regions and industry sectors by employing qualitative and quantitative methodologies to capture nuanced consumer perspectives.

Further exploration of specific CSR dimensions—economic, social, and environmental—could provide a deeper understanding of their unique effects on consumer happiness. Additionally, longitudinal studies could reveal the long-term impact of CSR initiatives on consumer emotions and behaviour. Expanding the model to include additional emotional or psychological variables may also provide new insights into the interplay between CSR and consumer decision-making.

6 CONCLUSION

This study underscores the strategic significance of CSR in shaping consumer behaviour by demonstrating its dual impact on emotional and behavioural outcomes. By incorporating consumer happiness as a mediating variable, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of how CSR influences purchase intentions and strengthens consumer-brand relationships.

Practically, the findings encourage businesses to adopt CSR strategies that align with ethical values and societal expectations, while fostering positive consumer emotions. Transparency, segmentation, and continuous evaluation are key to maximising the effectiveness of CSR initiatives. From a theoretical standpoint, the integration of happiness into CSR models broadens the scope of existing frameworks, paving the way for future research on the emotional dimensions of consumer behaviour.

By aligning CSR efforts with consumer happiness and societal values, businesses can achieve meaningful impacts that extend beyond economic benefits, thus contributing to a more sustainable and emotionally resonant marketplace.

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