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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM: DOES CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INFLUENCES INDIAN RETAIL MARKET PURCHASE DECISIONS

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Environmental sustainability, Consumer priority, purchasing decisions, Structural equation modelling, Consumer behaviour.

Abstract

Introduction: This exploratory study investigates the role of environmental sustainability in mediating the relationship between consumer priorities and purchasing decisions in India's retail market. The study tests three hypotheses: (1) consumer priority affects corporate environmental sustainability, (2) environmental sustainability influences purchasing decisions, and (3) consumer priority impacts purchasing decisions.

Methodology: Data were collected from 387 valid responses out of 412 surveys using random sampling. Analysis utilized SPSS Statistics and AMOS 26, incorporating Cronbach's alpha for reliability, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling to evaluate relationships.

Findings: Results indicate that the factor which consumers care about most has a significant influence on their purchasing decisions, which supports Ha3. However, environmental sustainability does not play a bridging role between the factor which consumers care about most and purchasing decisions, and it also does not have a significant direct impact, which leads to the rejection of Ha and Ha1. Consumer priority also does not have a significant impact on corporate environmental sustainability, which leads to the rejection of Ha2.

Implications: The findings indicate that what consumers care about most impacts what they buy. Therefore, companies should concentrate on trust, quality, and accessibility to satisfy consumer preferences. As the impact of environmental sustainability is small, more research is required to understand how sustainability can be incorporated. Future Research: Future research should concentrate on long-term and inside-the-head research to understand the changes in consumer attitudes toward sustainability.

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Introduction:-

The Indian market is quite vibrant. According to the Boston Consulting Group, the retail industry in India is projected to touch \$2 trillion by 2032. There are many buyers and sellers. Buyers have a choice of almost anything, in any quantity. Kumar (2023) observes that consumers in Indian cities have greater purchasing power, and products such as clothing, cosmetics, footwear, watches, beverages, food, and jewelry are in demand for both business and pleasure. In the corporate world, consumers prefer companies and products that align with their values. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities demonstrate a company's commitment to the environment and society, influencing what consumers want. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) discovered that consumers are more likely to patronize companies that practice CSR because they perceive such companies as more trustworthy and responsible. CSR activities may influence buying decisions in several ways. They may increase brand loyalty, encourage customers to pay higher prices, and increase overall satisfaction with a product. Previous studies also indicate that effective communication of CSR activities can increase a company's reputation and result in improved customer behavior, as discovered by Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010).

Corporate Social Responsibility:-

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) originated from a charitable endeavour into a strategic commercial effort that companies employ in order to influence the behaviour of consumers and differentiate their products in the market. Freeman (2010) established stakeholder theory, which states that businesses have a responsibility to all stakeholders, including consumers, employees, suppliers, and the community, in addition to shareholders. This explains why businesses practice CSR. Carroll's (1991) Pyramid of CSR extends the concept of CSR and its impact on customer attitudes, including economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. Studies have demonstrated that CSR has a positive impact on customer behavior, and Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) established that CSR positively impacts customer perceptions when it is integrated with the core business and values of the company, as customers will support businesses that are concerned with social and environmental issues. Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen (2010) also established that CSR positively impacts reputation and customer loyalty, with a strong emphasis on transparency in CSR practices.

Authenticity is important, and Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006) emphasize that CSR practices must not be perceived as insincere or profit-centered. Authentic CSR practices that are integrated into a business's operations will have a greater impact on customers. CSR practices have advantages but also have disadvantages, such as the perception of greenwashing when used as a marketing tool (Laufer, 2003). Furthermore, according to Peloza and Shang (2011), the effectiveness of CSR in influencing customer behaviour might vary depending on the demographic population and the cultural milieu. Consumers, investors, and other stakeholders are more probable to have a positive attitude towards businesses that engage in socially responsible initiatives, such as the preservation of the environment, the development of communities, or ethical sourcing (Aguilera-Caracuel and Guerrero-Villegas, 2018). This favourable view has the potential to result in enhanced brand loyalty, increased consumer happiness, and ultimately, improved brand performance.

Consumer Prioritization and Purchasing Decision:-

Customer order prioritization is a very critical and vital issue for the manufacturing companies as far as their partial capacities are concerned (Akyildiz, B., Kadaifci, C., & Topcu, I. (2015). Multiple research studies have emphasized that the primary concerns of buyers are the price and usage of the goods. Several studies recognize that people take into account the brand name while making purchase decisions. The research done by Besharat, A., Nardini, G., & Mesler, R. M. (2024) when consumers see narrow product types, they are more likely to incorporate both salient and non-salient attributes into their decision. The study conducted by Lee, P. Y., Lusk, K., Miroso, M., & Oey, I. (2015) examines how Chinese consumers prioritize several extrinsic product aspects, such as brand, nutrition content claim, ingredient label, shelf-life, price, and production nation, while making their fruit juice purchase selections. For an organic product concern people give more important for a long product shelf- life of a product.

As per the company perspectives, Berander, P., & Andrews, A. (2005) stated that consumer Prioritization is a vital step towards making good decisions concerning product planning for single and multiple releases. Branding play a vital role in the market. It attracts a customer and retain their customer for long period. Those firms that engage in socially responsible performs, such as environmental conservation, community development, or ethical sourcing, often receive favourable attention from consumers, investors, and other stakeholders (Aguilera-Caracuel and Guerrero-Villegas, 2018). This confident awareness can translate into increased brand loyalty, higher customer satisfaction, and ultimately, better brand performance. Consumers are predominantly interested in the perceived

value of a product, which is the trade-off between the perceived benefits and the price paid, as per a study conducted by Zeithaml (1988). This emphasizes that consumers prioritize whether the price they paid is justified by the product's value, rather than the company's profit margins. In 1991, Dodds, W. B., Monroe, K. B., and Grewal, D. wrote about a study that looked at how price, brand, and shop information affected how buyers thought about the quality and value of a product and how ready they were to buy it.

The product attributes that a purchaser considers while making a purchase decision (Parsad, C., Chandra, C. P., & Suman, S. (2019). According to the study by Jamal, A., and Goode, M. (2001), people usually say that they decide what to buy based on how they impression about and know about the quality of the goods. How important certain features are when judging a product may depend on how much you know about the product category, how well you know the brand, and how conscious you are about the brand. The study (Ahmadova, E., & Nabiyeve, A. (2024)) assesses the influence of store attributes, personal factors and situational factors on the impulse buying behavior of millennial consumers in India. The study by Khuan, H., Rahmiyati, N., Mendrofa, K. J., Diwyarthi, N. D. M. S., & Wiarttha, N. G. M. (2024) shows how important product quality, sales promotion, and ease of purchase are in determining what people want to buy. The most important factor is clearly the quality of the product, followed by sales marketing and ease of buy.

Green et al. (1978) found that customers with different methods look at the importance of various characteristics of the product in relation to their purchase behaviour. Afshar, H. K., & Soleimani, G. (2017) has summarised five major criteria considered by the customer for their product purchase. Such as, Willingness to purchase, Product Features, Marketing Method, Performance of manufacturers and customer satisfaction. The five-stage choice process was first described by John Dewey. It is now a well-known idea and the basis of a famous model of how people behave as consumers. Problem Acknowledgment, Information Exploration, Alternate Evaluation, Optimal, and Results are the steps that make up this process. (Bruner, G. C., & Pomazal, R. J., 1988). This study by Ashofteh, I., and Dehghanan, H. (2017) uses Kotler's consumer behaviour ideal to look into how demographic factors affect the position of factors that Iranian consumers use to decide what home appliances to buy (in this case, LG microwaves and vacuum cleaners). The study also explain the five stages of the decision-making process developed by Bettman, J. R., Luce, M. F., & Payne, J. W. (1998).. This include Problem recognition, Information serarch, Alternative Evaluation, buying decision, Post-purchase behaviour.

Most consumers, according to Irmak, Vallen, and Robinson (2011), are not concerned with the profit that a business earns from their purchase. Consumers are more concerned with the value that they receive from the product or service itself. Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) discovered that although some consumers have a positive attitude towards corporate social responsibility (CSR), their attitudes do not affect what they purchase. Consumers' purchasing decisions are only slightly affected because they are not aware of or do not know enough about CSR. The 2017 Cone Communications CSR Study revealed that even with the increasing awareness of CSR, many consumers still do not know enough about specific CSR initiatives. The lack of awareness affects the impact of CSR on their purchasing decisions. Sen, S., and Bhattacharya, C. B. (2001) in their study discovered that the CSR issues a company chooses to emphasize, the quality of their products, and personal characteristics such as the extent to which a consumer is concerned with CSR and their general attitudes towards CSR all influence how consumers react to CSR.

Pomeroy, A., & Dolnicar, S. (2009) discovered that many consumers are not fully aware of a company's CSR initiatives. Effective communication is essential for increasing awareness and influencing consumer perceptions. The authors emphasize the importance of clear and transparent CSR communication to enhance consumer awareness and knowledge. Beckmann, S. C. (2007) explores the relationship between consumer awareness of CSR and their purchasing behavior. The study shows that people are becoming more aware of CSR, but they still don't fully understand it. This makes it hard to say how much CSR affects buying decisions. Schrader, U., & Thøgersen, J. (2011) discusses how consumers' awareness and knowledge of CSR influence their expectations and perceptions of companies. It highlights that even when consumers are aware of CSR, their understanding is often superficial, impacting their ability to make informed decisions. Bhattacharya, C. B., & Sen, S. (2004) argue that higher awareness can lead to stronger consumer-company relationships, although the general level of awareness remains limited.

The research by Deng, X., and Xu, Y. (2017) shows that corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a positive effect on consumers' plans to buy, suggest, and be loyal. It also has a secondary positive effect on consumers' plans to buy.

According to a statement by, people who care a lot about their appearance (vs. people who care a little about their appearance) think that CSR brands are better than non-CSR brands. The research by Marquina Feldman, P., & Vasquez-Parraga, A. Z. (2013) shows that nearly CSR initiatives, like companies' commitments to the environment, and some CA, like product quality, have a big impact on how customers react and how much they are willing to pay for a product. According to the research Tian, Z., Wang, R., & Yang, W. (2011), there is a nonlinear link between consumer demographics and CSR responses; customers that fall into the middle age and income range are more likely to respond favorably to CSR. The study by Rivera, J. J., Bigne, E., & Curras-Perez, R. (2016) found that CSR training and environmental initiatives have a positive direct relationship with customer satisfaction. Conversely, though CSR corporate communication initiatives have a negative direct relationship with customer satisfaction. The study by Green, T., & Peloza, J. (2011) found that CSR can give customers three kinds of value: social, emotional, and practical. Each of these either makes the total value offer for customers better or worse. Also, the value that one type of CSR creates can either make other product features better or worse. A study by Rodrigues, P., and Borges, A. P. (2015) found that consumers' understanding of social responsibility practices and the different ways they see corporate social responsibility (CSR) affect their decision to buy a company's goods.

Influence Of CSR On Consumer Behavior In The Indian Market:-

Various methods may be used to observe the influence of CSR on customer behavior in the Indian market. The authenticity and relevance of CSR operations are of utmost importance. According to Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006), customers are more inclined to react favourably to CSR initiatives that are viewed as authentic and essential to the company's goal. Authenticity in CSR is crucial in India, as consumers often have an extraordinary level of scepticism towards corporate motivations. CSR is an important consideration for consumers when making purchase decisions because they have a tendency to reward businesses that make positive contributions to the well-being of society. It is becoming increasingly popular to employ CSR programs to influence customers and distinguish product offers. Sustainability-minded customers express concern for environmental and sustainable issues (Milfont, T. L., Duckitt, J., & Cameron, L. D. (2006).) and prioritize the safeguarding of the environment and human well-being. Environmentally concerned customers consistently endorse policies or goods that aim to preserve or enhance sustainability. Customers who demonstrate their ethical convictions in social and environmental matters by purchasing goods they believe will have a beneficial (or less harmful) impact (Lee and Cho 2019; Roberts 1995) A number of different approaches demonstrate how the moderating influence of CSR on customer behaviour may be seen.

Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006) pointed out that customers are sceptical of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that give the impression of being dishonest or are interpreted as marketing gimmicks. Genuine and well-integrated corporate social responsibility activities have a greater potential to favourably affect the behaviour of consumers. It is crucial that the actions of CSR be aligned with the basic values and business practices of the organisation. Consumers are more likely to respond positively to CSR initiatives that are directly tied to the principal activities of the firm (Porter and Kramer, 2006). For instance, a firm in the food sector that focuses on sustainable sourcing procedures is more probable to acquire the confidence and loyalty of consumers than a company that engages in CSR activities that are unrelated to the organization's mission. There are Two issues arose during a preliminary literature review. Primarily, individuals tend to evaluate the price they paid for a purchased item by comparing it to others. Furthermore, they deliberately disregarded the notion of CSR while making their purchase. Is it true? My initial impression is that buyers do not prioritize the involvement of CSR, but rather focus on the overall advantages of the products they purchase as their main consideration.

A large number of studies in the CSR sector have included consumers as sample respondents without considering whether the respondents are truly knowledgeable about or concerned with CSR. The respondent cannot be expected to react effectively in a CSR research if they lack a fundamental understanding or care for basic CSR activities. Ottlewski, L., Rokka, J., & Schouten, J. W. (2024) study provides a theoretical framework that explains the distinctions between platform affordances originated by consumers and those begun by corporations, and highlights the significance of these differences. In India, with its flourishing economy, vigorous marketing competition allows buyers to select products based on their desires and tastes. Moreover, individuals with different income sources exhibit varying buying behaviour (Agrawal, P et, al. (2024)). The study subject we like to explore is the extent to which buyers consider CSR while making purchase decisions. Here, we would like to conduct a sample survey by include people across different categories to determine their primary consideration while making purchase decisions. What is the extent of their comprehension of CSR? How does their comprehension of CSR correlate with their

purchasing decision? Considering the literature mentioned before, this study frames the following hypothesis with a primary objective to know the mediate effect of CSR between Consumer priority and purchasing decision.

Ha: Environment sustainability mediates the relationship between consumer priority and purchasing decision:-

Ha1: Consumer priority has significant effect on corporate environment sustainability

Ha2: Environment sustainability has significant effect on consumer purchasing decision

Ha3: Consumer Priority has significant effect on their purchasing decision

Methodology:-

The present study is exploratory in nature and employs a quantitative research methodology. This exploratory study aimed to understand the role of CSR in moderating consumer prioritization and purchasing decisions in India's dynamic retail market (Fig.1). Over a span of three months in 2024, a total of 412 survey responses were collected through random sampling. A total of 387 questionnaires (93.93%) were included in the analysis, while 25 were rejected due to their responses were incomplete. The gathered data was examined using the SPSS Statistics programme and the SPSS AMOS 26 edition. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the reliability of the scales. The construct validity of the questionnaire was assessed by the application of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The correlation between variables was assessed by using the Pearson correlation coefficient. A structural equation model was employed to ascertain the structural connection between latent variables and evaluate the offered hypotheses. A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale for each CSR variable to capture the level of awareness and importance these factors hold in consumer decision-making in the Indian retail sector (Annexure 1).

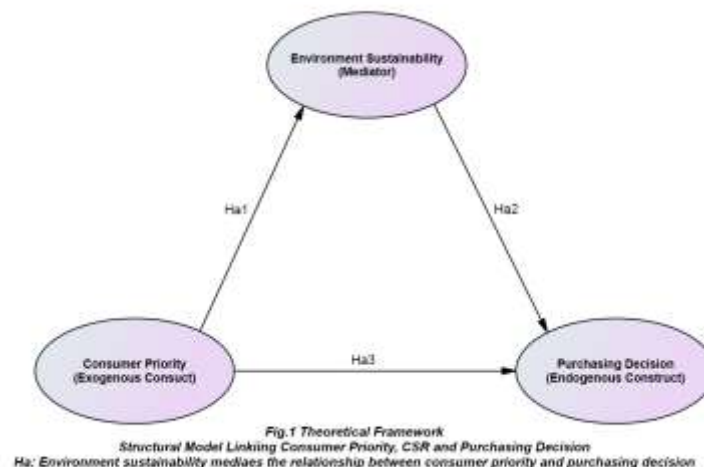


Fig. 1 Theoretical framework

Consumer prioritization, considered an exogenous variable, reflects aspects such as consumer brand trust and reputation (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2001; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), product quality and value for money (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991), social and environmental impact (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010), availability and accessibility (Seiders & Tigert, 1997; Srinivasan, Anderson, & Ponnnavolu, 2002), and price sensitivity and discounts (Monroe, 1973; Blattberg & Neslin, 1990). The five purchasing decision variables in India's dynamic retail market, considered endogenous factors, include price sensitivity (Monroe, 1973; Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 1998), consumer brand loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Oliver, 1999), product quality and durability (Zeithaml, 1988; Garvin, 1987), product availability and convenience (Seiders, Voss, Grewal, & Godfrey, 2005; Bell, Gallino, & Moreno, 2014), and social influence and recommendations (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). CSR variables, considered as moderating factors between consumer prioritization and purchasing decisions, include environmental sustainability practices (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibañez, 2012; Leonidou, Katsikeas, & Morgan, 2013), ethical labor practices (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005; Auger, Devinney, Louviere, & Burke, 2010), community development programs (Husted & Allen, 2007; Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001), transparency and ethical governance (Palazzo &

Richter, 2005; Rawlins, 2008), and philanthropic contributions (Brammer & Millington, 2005; Saiia, Carroll, & Buchholtz, 2003).

Study Population:-

The study surveyed 387 respondents to capture a diverse demographic profile (Table 1). The age distribution indicates a significant representation in the 25-34 (21.71%) and 55-64 (23.51%) age groups, with smaller proportions in the 18-24 (8.27%) and 65 or older (7.49%) groups. Gender-wise, there is a slight male majority at 54.26%, compared to 45.74% female respondents. Educational attainment varies, with the largest group holding a Bachelor's degree (36.95%), followed by Master's degree holders (28.94%), and those with high school diplomas or equivalent (14.99%). Income levels show diversity, with the highest percentage earning ₹2,50,000 - ₹5,00,000 annually (28.17%), and significant groups earning ₹5,00,000 - ₹10,00,000 (20.16%) and ₹10,00,000 - ₹15,00,000 (22.48%). Occupation-wise, 30.49% work in the private industry, 17.57% are self-employed, and 16.28% work in the public sector. This diverse sample provides valuable insights into consumer priorities and purchasing decisions in India's dynamic retail market.

Table 1. Frequency distribution table

Personal and demographic details of sample respondents

Gender	Total	Percentage
Male	210	54.26%
Female	177	45.74%
Total	387	100.00%
Age	Total	Percentage
18-24	32	8.27%
25-34	84	21.71%
35-44	78	20.16%
45-54	73	18.86%
55-64	91	23.51%
65 or older	29	7.49%
Total	387	100.00%
Educational Level	Total	Percentage
High school diploma or equivalent	58	14.99%
Bachelor's degree	143	36.95%
Master's degree	112	28.94%
Doctorate & Professional degree	74	19.12%
Total	387	100.00%
Income level Annual	Total	Percentage
Less than ₹2,50,000	55	14.21%
₹2,50,000 - ₹5,00,000	109	28.17%
₹5,00,000 - ₹10,00,000	78	20.16%
₹10,00,000 - ₹15,00,000	87	22.48%
More than ₹15,00,000	58	14.99%
Total	387	100.00%

Occupation	Total	Percentage
Working in private sector	118	30.49%
Working Public sector	63	16.28%
Self-employed	68	17.57%
Professionals	74	19.12%
Others	64	16.54%
Total	387	100.00%

Data Analysis and Results:-

This exploratory study aimed to understand the role of CSR in moderating consumer prioritization and purchasing decisions in India's dynamic retail market. There are fifteen indicators entered in the model spared over three constraints. Consumer prioritization, considered an exogenous variable, reflects aspects such as consumer brand trust and reputation, product quality and value for money, social and environmental impact, availability and accessibility, and price sensitivity and discounts. The five purchasing decision variables in India's dynamic retail market, considered endogenous factors, include price sensitivity, consumer brand loyalty, product quality and durability, product availability and convenience, and social influence and recommendations. CSR variables, acting as moderating factors between consumer prioritization and purchasing decisions, include environmental sustainability practices, ethical labor practices, community development programs, transparency and ethical governance, and philanthropic contributions.

Reliability analysis:-

The research used Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of the scales in Table 2. Cronbach's alpha is used to determine how well the scales relate to each other. A higher score indicates higher reliability. Consumer priority scale: 5 items, alpha = 0.707. This is acceptable when combined with good enough consistency, indicating that the items are reasonably measuring the same thing. Environmental sustainability scale: 5 items, alpha = 0.746. This is above 0.7, so it is good. Scale of purchasing decision: 5 items, alpha = 0.723. This indicates that the scale has a high level of reliability. In general, all three scales have a good internal consistency and are reliable for further analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpah
Consumer Priority	5	0.707
Environment Sustainability (CSR)	5	0.746
Purchasing Decision	5	0.723

Descriptive Statistics:-

The descriptive statistics (Table 3) provide a brief summary of the data collected for each variable, including the mean, standard deviation, and sample size (N = 387). The mean score for consumer priority is 3.61, with a standard deviation of 0.667. This indicates that, on average, respondents rate their consumer priorities moderately high, with relatively low variability in responses. The mean score for environmental sustainability is 3.56, with a standard deviation of 0.686. This suggests that respondents, on average, consider environmental sustainability to be moderately important in their purchasing decisions, with slightly higher variability compared to consumer priority. The mean score for consumer purchasing decisions is 3.54, with a standard deviation of 0.712. This reflects that respondents tend to rate their purchasing decisions moderately, with a slightly higher variability associated to the other two variables. The mean scores for all three variables are relatively close, ranging from 3.54 to 3.61, signifying that respondents generally perceive these factors with similar levels of importance. The standard deviations are also relatively low, indicating that there is not much variation in the responses. The high reliability coefficients for each scale suggest that the items used in the questionnaire are consistent in measuring their respective constructs. These findings provide a solid foundation for further analysis, such as structural equation modeling, to explore the relationships among these variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Consumer Priority	3.61	.667	387
Environment Sustainability	3.56	.686	387
Purchasing Decision	3.54	.712	387

Pooled CFA Model Fitness Tests:-

The fit statistics obtained from the pooled Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted in AMOS give an indication of how well the model fits the observed data (Table 4). Chi-square divided by the degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) is 1.984, which is within the acceptable limit of 2 to 3, suggesting a good fit and a small difference between the observed and the model-implied covariance matrices, considering the degrees of freedom. RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) is 0.050; an RMSEA value below 0.05 indicates a good fit, suggesting that the model fits the observed data very closely. CFI (Comparative Fit Index) is 0.954; a CFI value of 0.95 or higher indicates a good fit, suggesting a favorable fit compared to an independent baseline model. TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index) is 0.944, which is marginally below the ideal value of 0.95 but is still very close, suggesting an acceptable fit. GFI (Goodness of Fit Index) is 0.944; a GFI of 0.90 or higher indicates a good fit, suggesting that the model fits the observed data very well. AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index) is 0.922. An AGFI value greater than or equal to 0.90 indicates a good fit, further supporting that the model fits the data adequately (Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. 1999; Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. 2011; Dodeen, H. (2004). Overall, these indices collectively indicate that the pooled CFA model has a good fit to the data, suggesting that the hypothesized factor structure is well-supported by the observed data.

Table 4. Pooled CFA model fitness tests

Index	Obtained value	Acceptable range
ChiSq/df	1.984	χ^2/df between 2 and 3: Indicates an acceptable fit.
RMSEA	.050	< 0.05 indicates good fit
CFI	.954	≥ 0.95 indicates good fit.
TLI	.944	≥ 0.95 indicates good fit.
GFI:	.944	≥ 0.90 indicates good fit
AGFI	.922	≥ 0.90 indicates good fit.

Validity measures:-

The validity of the constructs was assessed using (Table5) Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted, Maximum Shared Variance (MSV), and MaxR(H). The CR values for Purchasing Decision (0.787), Consumer Priority (0.754), and Environmental Sustainability (0.769) all exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. Although the AVE values for Consumer Priority (0.433) and Environmental Sustainability (0.454) are slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.50, they are close enough to be considered acceptable, particularly in the context of high CR values. The MSV values are low for all constructs (Purchasing Decision: 0.024, Consumer Priority: 0.024, Environmental Sustainability: 0.004), indicating good discriminant validity as the constructs are different from one another. Furthermore, the MaxR(H) values are all above 0.70, further supporting the consistency of the constructs. The low correlations between constructs (e.g., Purchasing Decision and Consumer Priority: 0.155; Purchasing Decision and Environmental Sustainability: 0.005) confirm good discriminant validity, ensuring that the constructs are measuring different aspects as intended.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis outcomes indicate that the measurement model fits the data well, as evidenced by the fit indices falling within acceptable ranges. The reliability and validity measures further support the robustness of the constructs. The CR values are above 0.70 for all constructs, indicating good internal consistency. Although the AVE values for Consumer Priority and Environment Sustainability are slightly below 0.50, they are still acceptable and supported by high CR values. The low MSV values and low correlations between the constructs suggest good discriminant validity, meaning that the constructs are different from one another (Gefen, D., Straub, D., & Boudreau, M. C. 2000; Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. 1981). The results indicate that the measurement model is both reliable and valid, supporting the use of these constructs in further structural equation modelling.

Table 5. Validity Master

Latent constructs	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Purchasing Decision	Consumer Priority	Environment Sustainability
Purchasing Decision	0.787	0.471	0.024	0.861	0.686		
Consumer Priority	0.754	0.433	0.024	0.836	0.155	0.658	
Environment Sustainability –CSR	0.769	0.454	0.004	0.850	0.005	0.067	0.673

Standardized Regression factor loading:-

The standardized factor loadings (Table 6) indicate that most items within the constructs of Consumer Priority, Purchasing Decision, and Environment Sustainability significantly contribute to their respective constructs, as reflected by their high loadings and acceptable scale reliabilities of 0.707, 0.746, and 0.723, respectively. Specifically, Trust Level (0.818) and Accessibility Impact (0.745) strongly contribute to Consumer Priority, while Price Impact (0.838) and Product Availability Role (0.776) are significant for Purchasing Decision, and Environment Sustainable Preference (0.823) and Environment Sustainable Recommend (0.778) for Environment Sustainability. However, items such as Discounts Promotions (0.017) in Consumer Priority, Recommendations Impact (0.064) in Purchasing Decision, and Environment Sustainable Lifestyle (0.015) in Environment Sustainability show negligible factor loadings, indicating they do not significantly represent their constructs. This suggests that while the overall measurement model is robust, certain items may need to be revised or removed for more accurate future assessments.

Table 6. Standardized Factor Loading of items

Construct	Items	Factor Scoring	Scale Reliability
Consumer Priority	Trust Level	.818	.707
	Product Quality Significance	.733	
	Social Responsibility Value	.637	
	Accessibility Impact	.745	
	Discounts Promotions	.017	
Purchasing Decision	Price Impact	.838	.746
	Brand Loyalty	.771	
	Product Durability Impact	.673	
	Product Availability Role	.776	
	Recommendations Impact	.064	
Environment Sustainability	Environment Sustainable preference	.823	.723
	Environment Sustainable Recommend	.778	
	Environment Sustainable Influence	.650	
	Environment Sustainable Transparency	.750	
	Environment Sustainable Lifestyle	.015	

Structural Model Fitness Tests:-

Since the following items such as Discounts Promotions (0.017) in Consumer Priority, Recommendations Impact (0.064) in Purchasing Decision, and Environment Sustainable Lifestyle (0.015) in Environment Sustainability show negligible factor loadings, indicating they do not significantly represent their constructs. Upon examining the structural model fitness tests, it is strong that the model's fit improved after removing items with negligible factor loadings (Table 7). Before the removal, the ChiSq/df was 2.144, indicating an acceptable fit within the range of 2 to 3. The RMSEA value was 0.054, slightly above the threshold for a good fit. The CFI and TLI values were 0.946 and 0.935, respectively, just below the ideal threshold of 0.95. The GFI and AGFI values were 0.939 and 0.917, respectively, both within the acceptable range.

Table 7. Structural model fitness tests

Index	Before Removing negligible factor	After Removing negligible factor	Acceptable range
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	loadings items	loadings items	
ChiSq/df	2.144	2.102	χ^2/df between 2 and 3: Indicates an acceptable fit.
RMSEA	.054	.053	< 0.05 indicates good fit
CFI	.946	.969	≥ 0.95 indicates good fit.
TLI	.935	.960	≥ 0.95 indicates good fit.
GFI:	.939	.956	≥ 0.90 indicates good fit
AGFI	.917	.932	≥ 0.90 indicates good fit.

After removing the items with negligible factor loadings, the ChiSq/df improved to 2.102, still within the acceptable range. The RMSEA value slightly decreased to 0.053, indicating a marginally better fit. Notably, the CFI and TLI values increased to 0.969 and 0.960, respectively, surpassing the 0.95 threshold and indicating a good fit. The GFI and AGFI values also improved to 0.956 and 0.932, respectively, further confirming the model's improved fit. In summary, the removal of items with negligible factor loadings resulted in a better-fitting structural model, as evidenced by the improved values of ChiSq/df, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, GFI, and AGFI. This underscores the importance of ensuring that all included items significantly contribute to their respective constructs for achieving an optimal model fit.

Interpretation of Standardized Regression Weights and Path Significance:-

The analysis of standardized regression weights reveals the significance and impact of various paths (Fig 2) between the constructs of Consumer Priority, Environment Sustainability, and Purchasing Decision:

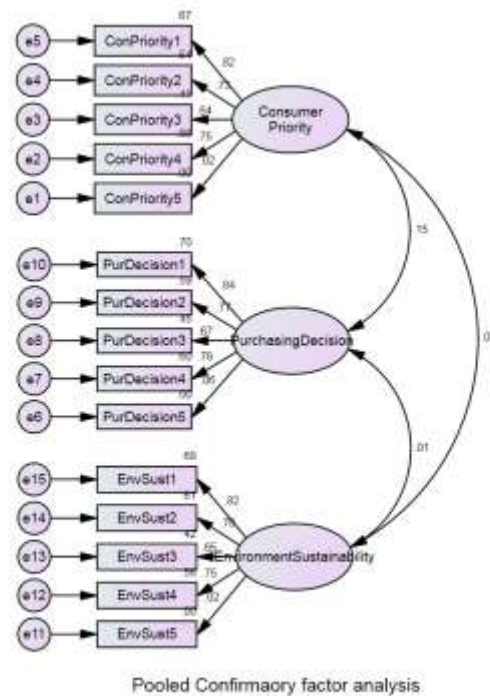


Fig 2 path coefficient between the constructs

Path 1: The path coefficient of 0.067 indicates a weak positive relationship between Consumer Priority and Environment Sustainability. However, the p-value of 0.265 is greater than 0.05, suggesting that this relationship is not statistically significant. This implies that Consumer Priority does not have a significant consequence on their consideration of Environment Sustainability.

Path 2: The path coefficient of -0.006 indicates a negligible and slightly negative relationship between consumer's care about Environment Sustainability while making their Purchasing Decision. The very high p-value of 0.923 indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant. Thus, Environment Sustainability does not have a significant impact on Purchasing Decision.

Path 3: The path coefficient of 0.155 indicates a moderate positive relationship between Consumer Priority and Purchasing Decision. The p-value of 0.010 is less than 0.05, indicating that this relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that Consumer Priority has a significant result on Purchasing Decision.

Hypotheses Interpretation:-

Ha: Environment sustainability mediates the association between consumer priority and purchasing decision (Fig 3; Table 8): Given the non-significant paths between Consumer Priority and Environment Sustainability ($p = 0.265$) and between Environment Sustainability and Purchasing Decision ($p = 0.923$), there is no indication to support the mediation effect of Environment Sustainability in the relationship between Consumer Priority and Purchasing Decision.

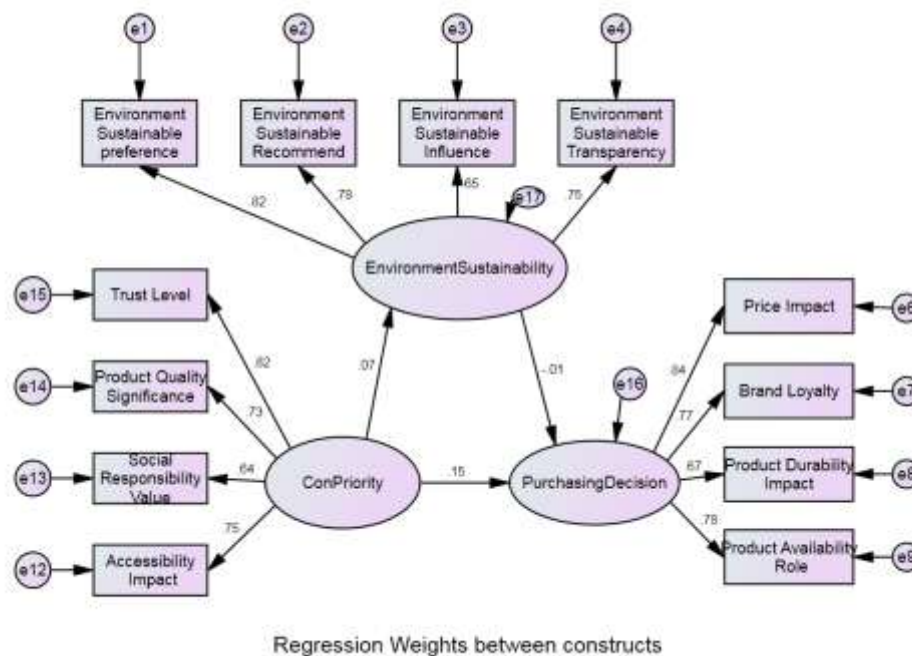


Fig 3 Regression weights between constructs

Table 8. Hypothesis statement

Hypothesis statement of Path analysis	Estimate	P-Value	Result of Hypothesis
Ha1: Consumer priority has significant effect on corporate environment sustainability	.067	.265	Not supported
Ha2: Environment sustainability has significant effect on consumer purchasing decision	-.006	.923	Not supported
Ha3: Consumer Priority has significant effect on their purchasing decision	.155	.010	Supported

Ha1: Environment sustainability has a significant consequence on consumer purchasing decision: The relationship between Environment Sustainability and Purchasing Decision is not significant ($p = 0.923$). Therefore, Ha1 is not supported.

Ha2: Consumer priority has a significant result on corporate environment sustainability: The relationship between Consumer Priority and Environment Sustainability is not significant ($p = 0.265$). Therefore, Ha2 is not supported.

Ha3: Consumer Priority has a significant outcome on their purchasing decision: The relationship between Consumer Priority and Purchasing Decision is significant ($p = 0.010$). Therefore, Ha3 is supported.

The analysis demonstrates that Consumer Priority significantly influences Purchasing Decision, supporting the direct effect hypothesis (Ha3). However, the proposed mediation role of Environment Sustainability (Ha) and its direct effects on Purchasing Decision (Ha1) and from Consumer Priority to Environment Sustainability (Ha2) are not supported due to non-significant p-values. This suggests that while Consumer Priority is an important determinant of Purchasing Decision, Environment Sustainability does not play a significant mediating or direct role in this context.

Standardized Total Effects:-

The standardized total effects table (Table 9) illustrates the overall impact of Consumer Priority and Environment Sustainability on the variables within the model, particularly focusing on Environment Sustainability and Purchasing Decision.

Table 9. Standardized Total Effects

	Consumer Priority	Environment Sustainability	Purchasing Decision
Environment Sustainability	.067	.000	.000
Purchasing Decision	.154	-.006	.000

Effect on Environment Sustainability:

Consumer Priority to Environment Sustainability: The total effect is 0.067, indicating a weak positive impact of Consumer Priority on Environment Sustainability. This implies that as Consumer Priority increases, Environment Sustainability slightly increases as well. However, this effect is weak and, as noted in previous analyses, not statistically significant.

Effect on Purchasing Decision: Consumer Priority to Purchasing Decision:

The total effect is 0.154, indicating a moderate positive impact. This suggests that Consumer Priority has a noticeable influence on Purchasing Decision, where higher Consumer Priority leads to a higher likelihood of formation a purchasing decision. This effect is significant, reinforcing the importance of Consumer Priority in persuading consumer behavior.

Environment Sustainability to Purchasing Decision:

The total effect is -0.006, indicating a negligible and slightly negative impact. This effect is not statistically significant, implying that Environment Sustainability does not have a meaningful influence on Purchasing Decision within this model. The standardized total effects reveal that Consumer Priority is a significant determinant of Purchasing Decision, with a moderate positive total effect (0.154). This highlights that consumers who prioritize certain factors are probably to make purchasing decisions accordingly. Conversely, Environment Sustainability shows a minimal total effect on Purchasing Decision (-0.006), suggesting it does not play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions in this context. Additionally, the weak total effect of Consumer Priority on Environment Sustainability (0.067) confirms that while there is a positive association, it is not strong enough to be considered significant. Overall, these findings emphasize the pivotal role of Consumer Priority in driving purchasing decisions, while Environment Sustainability appears to have a limited impact in this model.

Discussions:-

The findings from this study provide insightful revelations regarding the relations amongst Consumer Priority, Environment Sustainability, and Purchasing Decision in India's dynamic retail market. The reliability analysis shows that the constructs have acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 for Consumer Priority, Environment Sustainability, and Purchasing Decision. Descriptive statistics indicate that all constructs have mean values above the midpoint, suggesting a generally positive inclination towards these factors among consumers. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis and structural model fitness tests reveal that the model fits the data well, particularly after removing items with negligible factor loadings. The improved fit indices (ChiSq/df, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, GFI, and AGFI) after item removal demonstrate a robust measurement model. This refinement process emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all items significantly contribute to their respective constructs for an optimal model fit (Byrne, 2016).

In terms of standardized regression weights, Consumer Priority shows a significant positive effect on Purchasing Decision, with a path coefficient of 0.155 ($p = 0.010$). This finding favours the hypothesis that Consumer Priority significantly influences purchasing decisions (Zeithaml, 1988; Grewal et al., 1998). However, the paths from Consumer Priority to Environment Sustainability (0.067, $p = 0.265$) and from Environment Sustainability to Purchasing Decision (-0.006, $p = 0.923$) are not statistically significant. Consequently, the mediation hypothesis, suggesting that Environment Sustainability mediates the relationship among Consumer Priority and Purchasing Decision, is not supported (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Additionally, Environment Sustainability does not have a significant direct effect on Purchasing Decision, nor does Consumer Priority significantly influence Environment Sustainability.

The standardized total effects further emphasize these relationships. Consumer Priority has a moderate positive total effect on Purchasing Decision (0.154), reinforcing its pivotal role in consumer behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Conversely, Environment Sustainability's total effect on Purchasing Decision is negligible (-0.006), indicating it does not meaningfully impact purchasing decisions in this context (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012). The weak total effect of Consumer Priority on Environment Sustainability (0.067) confirms the limited influence of consumer priorities on their perceptions of corporate environmental practices (Du et al., 2010).

Conclusion:-

Overall, the study highlights that while Consumer Priority is a significant driver of purchasing decisions, Environment Sustainability does not play a substantial role in moderating this relationship. These findings suggest that Indian consumers prioritize factors such as trust, product quality, and accessibility when making purchasing decisions (Dodds et al., 1991; Seiders & Tigert, 1997), while environmental sustainability, although important, does not significantly influence their purchasing behavior in this model. This insight is crucial for businesses aiming to align their strategies with consumer priorities, indicating a need to focus on enhancing consumer trust and product quality to drive purchasing decisions (Aaker, 1996).

Managerial Implication:-

The outcomes of this investigation offer several important managerial implications for businesses operating in India's dynamic retail market. The significant influence of Consumer Priority on Purchasing Decision underscores the necessity for retailers and marketers to prioritize consumer preferences and values in their strategic planning and operational execution. Enhancing brand trust and reputation (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), focusing on product quality and value for money (Zeithaml, 1988; Dodds et al., 1991), and optimizing accessibility and convenience (Seiders & Tigert, 1997) are crucial strategies. Although Environment Sustainability did not significantly impact purchasing decisions, ongoing efforts in social and environmental responsibility remain essential for long-term brand image (Du et al., 2010). Competitive pricing strategies and attractive discount promotions should be employed to drive purchases (Monroe, 1973; Blattberg & Neslin, 1990). Leveraging consumer insights through continuous data gathering and analysis, and fostering brand loyalty through well-designed loyalty programs (Aaker, 1996; Oliver, 1999; Alghizzawi, et al., 2024), will further align business strategies with consumer priorities, enhancing market position, customer satisfaction, and sales growth.

Scope for Future research:-

Future research should explore the influence of CSR on consumer behavior across different regions and industries, considering evolving consumer attitudes towards sustainability. Longitudinal studies could assess changes over time, while qualitative research might uncover deeper insights into consumer motivations and perceptions regarding CSR initiatives.

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