The Effect of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility on Furniture's Company Brand Trust

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

As access to information on environmental issues grows, consumers are increasingly concerned about the impact that companies have on the environment. As a company that has implemented a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, it needs to pay attention to how its program impacts consumers. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate how environmental CSR affects brand trust, including feasibility and intentions. The concept of environmental CSR in this study will use three dimensions which are environmental CSR, environmental philanthropy, and environmental customer wellbeing. These dimensions are adopted from previous studies that use environmental CSR as its main focus of the study. Hypothesis testing, validity, and reliability were conducted using PLS-SEM as the analysis methods. The results showed that environmental CSR has a positive and significant effect on brand trust.

1. INTRODUCTION

Environmental CSR is an effort to unite environmental concerns in business activities with interaction with stakeholders in philanthropy, community involvement, and environmental welfare (Kim & Chon, 2022; Williamson et al., 2006). This topic is becoming an increasingly prevalent issue in research scope because of the long-term impact it can have on a company or organization. There has also been an increase of 112% in the number of consumers who care more about environmentally friendly products in Indonesia. Furthermore, 9,000 people from Asia Pacific, including Indonesia, who are over 18 years old, are now paying more attention to environmental issues related to their purchases (Nariswari, 2022).

Environmental CSR topics have developed mainly focusing on consumers and even employees as the object. Concerning consumers, the community involvement and customer well-being aspects of environmental CSR positively influence customer loyalty. The philanthropy aspect expressed through donating money for good causes does not produce a connection with customer loyalty because customers do not associate the company's philanthropic nature with individual profits in terms of transactions or purchases (Rashid et al., 2015). Environmental CSR also influences consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions, whereas proactive environmental CSR gets more significant support from consumers and encourages purchasing solid intentions. Even if a company sets higher prices, when the company has proactive CSR practices, this proactive CSR can still compensate the company by gaining support and positive purchasing intentions (Kim, 2017). Apart from customers, the influence of environmental CSR on employees has also been studied. This research studies environmental CSR using the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Responses) framework, where environmental citizenship behavior is expressed as a response. The research results show that implementing environmental CSR strategies will promote employees' environmental citizenship behavior, and employees' positive environmental emotions play a crucial role in promoting the transformation of environmental CSR into employees' environmental citizenship behavior (Yin et al., 2021).

Studies found that environmental certification in the hotel industry, also proves that consumer trust in hotels that have received environmental certification directly influences the extent to which these consumers are willing to take specific actions. On the other hand, the image of corporate social responsibility regarding the environment also influences consumer trust in these hotels (Leaniz et al., 2019). There is a relationship between environmental CSR and consumer trust. The relationship between CSR and brand trust also shows that the focus of company strategy needs to involve CSR strategic planning, especially in the environment and society. This relationship is not solely for achieving short-term profits but also for long-term profits. Companies that implement CSR practices well will gain consumer trust in the brand, thereby creating a CSR association with the organization or company (Tiep Le et al., 2023). Previous studies tend to view environmental CSR as an impulse to encourage consumers to purchase. This research will pay attention to the direct influence of environmental CSR practices on brand trust, which is the affective aspect of consumers' viewing of a brand before entering into purchasing intentions.

Understanding brand trust in the context of environmental CSR is significant because trust is one of the main keys to successful long-term relationships and is the main driver of customer loyalty through interactive relationships (Sung & Lee, 2023). Environmental CSR also has many benefits for companies, including increased loyalty, trust, positive brand attitudes and the fight against negative publicity. From a marketing perspective, environmental CSR programs are essential in building customer sympathy for the brand. This fosters emotional feelings, trust and brand loyalty which ends in purchasing decisions that benefit the company. Environmental CSR programs can also be a profitable investment or bring in referrals from other customers (Sen et al., 2006; Tiep Le et al., 2023). Increasing consumer awareness of environmental issues in companies has also increased the popularity of environmental CSR in Indonesia, as a developing country. It has led large companies to integrate CSR into the core of their business, one of which is IKEA. However, there is little empirical research on CSR in developing countries, especially in marketing (Bura Sifa, 2018; Tiep Le et al., 2023). Apart from that, regarding the research object used, namely IKEA, IKEA is a company from Sweden that is one of the foreign brands in Indonesia. Research related to brand trust is an important concept but has yet to be widely used in research on foreign brands, especially in Indonesia (Han et al., 2023). If research regarding the relationship between environmental CSR and brand trust in the context of the IKEA company is studied in more depth, this could be interesting and also have a good impact on the company's long-term desires. Therefore, this research will investigate the influence of environmental CSR on brand trust among consumers in a foreign furniture retail brand in Indonesia, which is IKEA.

H1: Environmental CSR has a positive and significant influence on brand trust
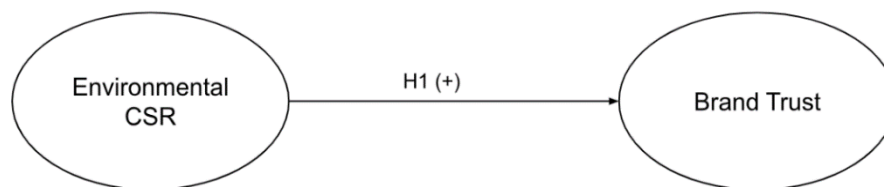
Figure 1. Conceptual Model
Source: Researcher, 2024

2. RESEARCH METHODS

Data analysis method. This research falls into the category of quantitative research, where quantitative research is a technique aimed at measuring data and typically employs various forms of measurement and statistical analysis (Malhotra et al., 2017). The evaluation will employ Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), encompassing testing construct validity in the outer model and structural modeling in the inner model. The Structural Equation Modeling method has been employed in previous research on consumer data in France

(Schill & Godefroit-Winkel, 2022). The outer model includes convergent validity and discriminant validity. Since this research is confirmatory, the loading factor values must exceed 0.7 and have an average variance inflation factor (AVE) greater than 0.5. Furthermore, the second stage, which is conducted to evaluate the model, is the structural model (inner model). The criteria for the components in this inner model are the R-squared values and significance(Hamid & Anwar, 2019).

Data Collection. The object studied is the implementation of environmental CSR in retail brands, namely IKEA. IKEA is a Swedish retail company that provides home and office furniture and equipment. This company already has several retail branches in Indonesia. IKEA has several CSR environmental programs that were initiated as part of its involvement in minimizing negative impacts on the environment, including the Blue Bag Project, Recycling Zone, Use of LED Lights, Use of Solar Panels, Distribution Efficiency, Industrial Waste Management, and Environmentally Friendly Materials for Products. In determining the sample, this research uses a non-probability sampling technique, which relies on the researcher's judgment and is based on specific criteria representing a particular population so that the sample will not have the same opportunity. Then, the non-probability sampling technique used in this research is a type of convenience sampling, namely a technique that encourages researchers to obtain samples that are easy to use. The convenience sampling technique in determining the sample was also used in similar research due to the difficulty in obtaining a representative sampling frame (Rashid et al., 2015). This research uses a survey method by distributing the questionnaires. The questionnaire contains information on respondents who have done transactions in IKEA or visited IKEA Indonesia, including name, age, gender, employment status, and monthly income. In this research, convenience sampling was carried out by distributing online questionnaire form due to the uncertainty of the number of visitor populations, namely visitors or customers from a retail furniture company in Indonesia (Malhotra et al., 2017). Distribution of the questionnaire was carried out around November 2023 to March 2024 in a hybrid manner. Some respondents distributed questionnaires online via social media, such as Instagram and Twitter (X), and some respondents distributed their questionnaires offline at the IKEA branch in Bandung and Jakarta, but they still filled out the questionnaire online.

Variable operationalization. In previous research, the CSR environmental variable acts as a stimulus that influences organisms and responses from the Stimulus-Organism-Responses perspective). Responses from environmental CSR are consumers' attitudes and consumers' emotions acting as aspects of the organism. The environmental CSR dimension as a stimulus turns out to influence consumer emotions positively, which in turn influences consumer attitudes positively (Schill & Godefroit-Winkel, 2022). Those environmental CSR measurement items by Schill & Godefroit-Winkel (2022) show results that influence consumer perceptions, emotions, and attitudes, which in turn influence the relationship between consumers and brands. Therefore, this research will use the environmental CSR dimension from by Schill & Godefroit-Winkel (2022) because this research also has brand trust as a dependent variable, which is related to consumer perceptions as Schill & Godefroit-Winkel (2022) uses consumers' emotions

and consumers' attitudes as influences on the environmental CSR dimension. This research measures environmental CSR with dimensions from research that uses environmental CSR indicators, which refer to eliminating waste and emissions, maximizing energy efficiency and productivity, and minimizing processes that can affect the use of natural resources (Schill & Godefroit-Winkel, 2022). Furthermore, other dimensions were adapted from previous research, which used the dimensions of environmental philanthropy and environmental customer well-being (Rashid et al., 2015). These three aspects are also related to the environmental CSR programs of this furniture company, such as the Industrial Waste Management program, Recycling Zone, and Energy Efficiency by Using LED Lights, Solar Panels, and Distribution Efficiency, distribution of sales donations for water waste projects, as well as product provision - environmentally friendly products accompanied by complete information for consumers by this company. The brand trust variable will be measured using the dimensions of brand trust (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), fiability, and intentionality (Huang, 2017). In other words, this fiability dimension is related to consumers' impressions of how a brand can produce consumer satisfaction and confidence in fulfilling its value promises. The values mentioned here can refer to the company's efforts to realize its environmental CSR commitments for consumers, who are one of its stakeholders. The intentionality dimension is related to a brand's efforts to show its responsibility and concern for consumers, including in difficult conditions in the future. The next dimension is the brand trust dimension, the average consumer's desire to trust a brand's ability to fulfill its function. This dimension refers to indicators that a brand produces for consumers: Trust, Reliability, Honesty, and Security.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study employs a questionnaire as a survey method to test the concept model and develop the hypotheses. The questionnaire was then distributed to 242 samples of the customers with characteristics presented in Table 1. The findings suggest that most samples are female, and a significant portion falls within the 18-25 age range. Additionally, many of the samples are students and private employees. The results show that most respondents agree with the impact of environmental CSR practices on the environment, including combating climate change, preserving the environment, recycling waste, and reducing pollution. Furthermore, 44% of the respondents strongly agree that this company's donations are made for environmental purposes, and 47% strongly agree that the Swedish's furniture company in Indonesia has created products using environmentally friendly materials. These findings also indicate that most respondents strongly agree with environmental philanthropy and customer well-being indicators. Regarding the brand trust variable, most respondents positively responded to this company's environmental CSR practices. These findings suggest that many individuals are already aware of environmental CSR, recognize its importance, and support the environmental CSR practices implemented by this company. These findings are also supported by previous research findings, which state that the role of brand trust in the context of CSR towards the environment is

significant because trust is one of the primary keys to successful long-term relationships and is the main driver of customer loyalty through interactive relationships (Sung & Lee, 2023).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

		Frequency	**Source**
Gender	Female	209	86.4%
	Male	33	13.6%
Age	<18	2	0.8%
	18 - 25	129	53.3%
	26 - 33	89	36.8%
	>33	22	9.1%
Monthly Income	<Rp1.000.000,00	43	17.8%
	Rp1.001.000,00 – Rp6.000.000,00	89	36.8%
	Rp6.000.001,00 – Rp10.000.000,00	79	32.6%
	>Rp10.000.000,00	31	12.8%
Occupation	Student	115	47.5%
	Public Servant	15	6.2%
	Private employee	66	27.3%
	Entrepreneur	36	14.9%
	Others	10	4%

Source: Research Data (2024)

Figure 2 shows the research construct model, with two latent variables, which are environmental CSR as independent variable and brand trust as dependent variable with each three dimensions and four indicators in each variable. This research construct is reflective, where the way the indicators are measured is influenced by latent variables. This construct

model was then run using Smart PLS software, the results of which will be explained in Tables 2, 3, and 4.
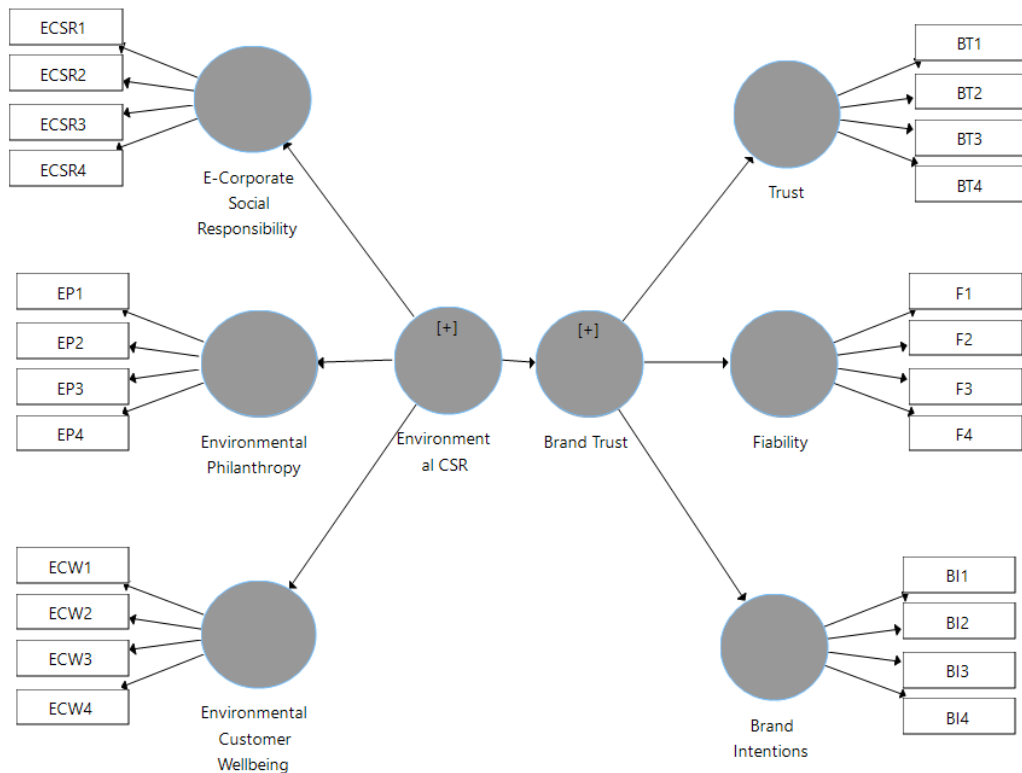
Figure 2. Research Construct Model

Source: Research Data (2024)

Further, **Table 2** shows that some dimensions of variable X have composite reliability, and AVE values which are more significant than the cutoff points of 0.7 and 0.5. However, when tested with the Fornell-Larcker method, all dimensions also remain valid. With Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria, the discriminant validity method states that the construct has more variance with its indicators compared to other constructs. Therefore, to carry out a discriminant validity test, the AVE of each construct must be higher than the highest squared correlation with other constructs (Hair et al., 2014). The results of the discriminant validity test using the Fornell and Larcker criteria show that the square root of the AVE is more significant than the correlation coefficient between two independent constructs (see Table 5). All dimensions are also considered reliable, with Cronbach Alpha values shown in Table 3 & 4 exceeding 0.7.

Table 2. The Evaluation of The Measurement Model of Variable X

Code	Items	LF (>0.7)
	Dimension 1: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility	
EC1	*The environmental CSR of the company can combat climate change.*	0.753
EC2	*The environmental CSR of the company can preserve the environment.*	0.687
EC3	*The environmental CSR of the company can properly recycle waste.*	0.676
EC4	*The environmental CSR of the company can reduce pollution.*	0.652
	Environmental CSR (X, Environmental CSR: AVE = 0.744, CR = 0.786, α = 0.638)	
	Dimension 2: Environmental Philanthropy	
EP1	The company generously organizes donations for the environment.	0.643
EP2	Company donations are beneficial for the environment.	0.706
EP3	Company donations raise consumer awareness of the environment.	0.709
EP4	Company donations can invite a positive public response.	0.695
	Environmental CSR (X, Environmental Philanthropy: AVE = 0.654, CR = 0.783, α = 0.63)	
	Dimension 3: Environmental Customer Wellbeing	
ECW1	The product materials are environmentally friendly for consumers.	0.721
ECW2	The company has provided complete information about its environmentally friendly product materials.	0.714
ECW3	The company has ensured the safety of its environmentally friendly products.	0.829
ECW4	The environmentally friendly products produced by the company can have a positive impact on the environment.	0.667
	Environmental CSR (X, Environmental Customer Wellbeing: AVE = 0.767, CR = 0.824, α = 0.714)	

Source: Research Result using PLS 4 application (2024)

In addition, **Table 3** also shows that some dimensions of variable Y have composite reliability, and AVE values which are more significant than the cutoff points of 0.7 and 0.5.

Table 3. The Evaluation of The Measurement Model of Variable Y

	Dimension 1: Brand Trust	
BT1	I believe in this brand	0.773
BT2	I rely on this brand	0.789
BT3	This is an honest brand	0.768
BT4	I feel safe when purchasing this brand because I know it will not let me down	0.765
	Brand Trust (Y, Brand Trust: AVE = 0.806, CR = 0.856, α = 0.776)	
	Dimension 2: Fiability	
F1	This is a brand name that meets my expectations	0.772
F2	I feel confident with this brand name	0.734
F3	This brand has never disappointed me	0.761
F4	This brand guarantees satisfaction	0.828
	Brand Trust (Y, Fiability: AVE = 0.849, CR = 0.857, α = 0.777)	
	Dimension 3: Brand Intentions	
BI1	This brand will be honest and sincere in dealing with my problems	0.794
BI2	I can rely on IKEA to resolve any issues with the product	0.837
BI3	IKEA will make every effort to satisfy me if a problem occurs	0.801
BI4	IKEA will be responsible to me for any problems that occur with the product	0.757
	Brand Trust (Y, Brand Intentions: AVE = 0.797, CR = 0.923, α = 0.909)	

Source: Research Result using PLS 4 application (2024)

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

		BRAND IN-TENTIONS	BRAND TRUST	E-CSR	E-CUSTOMER WELLBEING	E-PHILAN-THROPY	FIABILITY
1.	BRAND INTEN-TIONS	0.798					
2.	BRAND TRUST	0.678	0.774				
3.	E-CSR	0.611	0.587	0.693			
4.	E-CUSTOMER WELLBEING	0.622	0.624	0.644	0.735		
5.	E-PHILANTHROPY	0.567	0.574	0.559	0.545	0.689	
6.	FIABILITY	0.735	0.765	0.586	0.628	0.577	0.775

Source: Research Result using PLS 4 application (2024)

Table 5. The Effects of The Structural

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Results
BRAND TRUST -> BRAND INTEN-TIONS	0.893	0.892	0.016	55.036	0.000	Supported
BRAND TRUST -> BT	0.898	0.897	0.016	55.299	0.000	Supported
BRAND TRUST -> FIABILITY	0.922	0.922	0.011	80.83	0.000	Supported
ENVIRONMENTAL CSR -> BRAND TRUST	0.78	0.78	0.035	22.505	0.000	Supported
ENVIRONMENTAL CSR -> ECSR	0.862	0.864	0.02	43.545	0.000	Supported
ENVIRONMENTAL CSR -> E-CUS-TOMER WELLBE-ING	0.876	0.876	0.026	34.141	0.000	Supported
ENVIRONMENTAL CSR -> E-PHILAN-THROPY	0.809	0.81	0.031	25.762	0.000	Supported

Source: Research Result using PLS 4 application (2024)

Based on **Table 5**, all variables positively and significantly influence their respective dimensions. This indicates that these dimensions can measure each variable. Furthermore, there is a significance value smaller than the alpha level of 5%, which is 0.000 (Hamid & Anwar, 2019). The results show that the relationship between the endogenous variables, which are environmental

CSR and brand trust, also has a significance value smaller than the 5% alpha level, which is 0.001. Therefore, environmental CSR has a significant favorable influence on brand trust.

Based on the hypothesis testing (H1) results, environmental CSR has a positive and significant effect on brand trust. A company with positive environmental CSR practices can create brand trust, especially in the scope of the retail industry. This result aligns with previous research (Leaniz et al., 2019) regarding environmentally certified hotels, which states that corporate social responsibility related to the environment in the context of environmental CSR image influences consumer trust. Furthermore, previous research states that the relationship between CSR and brand trust is supported and can strengthen the importance of investing in business aspects to increase brand trust. From this perspective, not only employees but also customers will have a positive influence on the company's CSR actions (Tiep Le et al., 2023). Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices can be a crucial step for a brand to increase customer trust in the brand. This brand trust will then increase customer intention through word of mouth and support for the brand (Limbu et al., 2020). Therefore, this result can be an insight for a company to strengthen its environmental CSR as a strategic marketing practice that produces a good impact on the company's sustainability and, the environment in the long term.

4. CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The analysis results show that the Swedish furniture company in Indonesia has implemented an environmental corporate social responsibility program. From this program, customers have trust in the company. This research examines how the influence of environmental CSR in the retail furniture company affects consumer trust in the brand. Several previous studies used brand trust to mediate the relationship between variables. At the same time, this research shows a direct positive influence between environmental CSR and brand trust in the context of furniture retail companies. Using the brand trust variable as a dependent variable indicates an opportunity for the company to gain long-term profits because the success of environmental CSR practices can generate consumer trust in the company. In the end, consumers will associate environmental CSR with the company. The author has concluded the study based on the analysis and discussion of research data. Based on the results of R-Square testing and measurements using Partial Least Square (PLS), the independent variable (Environmental CSR) has a significant favorable influence on the dependent variable (Brand Trust).

Several things have yet to be discussed in this research due to time constraints and phenomena that have yet to be discovered. First, the variables used in this research are only limited to environmental CSR as independent variables and brand trust as dependent variables. As brand trust is used to discover how environmental CSR affects the aspect of consumers' viewing of a brand, future research can expand by adding variables to explore how environmental CSR affects intentions to purchase. Furthermore, the industry discussed in this research is related to retail, so it is possible to expand its discussion to other sectors, such as fashion and beauty.

Future research can also make the sample distributions more specified based on occupation, education, or average monthly income.

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