

Examine the Strategic Role of CSR in Cultivating Customer Satisfaction: Evidence from Restaurant Sector

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Abstract

Background: The study aims to investigate how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences the level of customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry providing empirical evidence on how socially responsible practices shape customer experiences and satisfaction. **Objectives:** The study has two objectives: First, to examine the personal and the group effect of economic, legal, ethical, and environmental CSR dimensions on customer satisfaction among the restaurant consumers. Second, to measure the relative power of each of the CSR dimensions (economic, legal, ethical, and environmental) in driving customer satisfaction results in the restaurant industry. **Methodology:** A quantitative approach was used whereby a questionnaire was administered to customers through structured questionnaires in different restaurants in Lucknow with 369 respondents. The data were discussed with the help of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and multiple regression. **Results:** The research confirms the fact that dimensions of CSR play major role in customer satisfaction. Economic CSR is the most impactful with respect to customer satisfaction, followed by environmental, ethical, and legal CSR. The sample size of the research included 369 respondents, where the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of adequacy of sampling is 0.826 and the test of Bartlett of sphericity is significant ($\lambda^2 = 4206.580$, $df = 105$, $p < .001$). The regression model indicated that it explained 40.7% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = .407$), with the economic CSR being the strongest predictor ($\beta = .281$, $p = .001$) where the environmental CSR ($\beta = .257$, $p = .001$), ethical CSR ($\beta = .168$, $p = .001$), and legal CSR ($\beta = .130$, $p = .012$) come behind it. **Conclusion:** The study has empirically demonstrated that CSR is a strategic source of customer satisfaction in restaurants, which can offer managerial implication of prioritizing CSR activities. CSR as a strategic driver for enhancing customer satisfaction in the restaurant sector context are validated from the study.

Keywords: Environmental CSR, Economic CSR, Legal CSR, Ethical CSR, customer satisfaction

Introduction

Business performance now relies on corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is driven by firms' growing emphasis on ethical and socially responsible practices (Park et al., 2017). Thus, this shift in thinking has created a new dynamic in the hotel industry due to the focus on CSR as a significant benefit to both the customers and the society (Farrington et al., 2017). It implies that customer retention

is equally significant to the company bottom line as patient acquisition (Hwang & Lyu, 2020). With this consideration, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is gaining popularity among stakeholders and organizations to reduce the negative impacts on the environment (Martinez-Conesa et al., 2017). This is why the good image of a company makes it more valuable and distinguishes it in a variety of aspects. Arguing

that the companies need to state CSR benefits in the reports to allow the customers to judge their social responsibility, (Hwang & Lyu, 2020; Lee et al., 2020) suggested that the customer needed to be made aware of the benefits. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been extensively researched in general, and the hotel industry in particular (Bian et al., 2021). Restaurant industry success is not about achieving a profit; therefore, people need to show social responsibility and engage consumers (Kim & Ham, 2016). A high client retention rate is important in the competitive marketplaces so that success is guaranteed in the long-term (Hwang et al., 2020). This is why in order to survive in the current highly competitive business environment and even to outperform the others, most restaurants now focus on CSR and invest large sums of money on it (Farmaki, 2019). The observation of customer attitude, service quality, satisfaction, loyalty, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities can teach marketers a lot about the decision-making and behaviour patterns of customers (Lee et al., 2020; Lo, 2020; Su et al., 2020). It is presumed that this area of CSR requires more profound research as it appears to be underdeveloped (Liu et al., 2022). Therefore, one should consider the effects of the CSR initiative of restaurants on consumer satisfaction.

Firms are increasingly becoming aware of the negative effects of their different business activities on the environment and the society (Kaur et al., 2022). In line with this, CSR activities have been popular and embraced across the globe due to the heightened awareness and commitment of firms to tackle the problem (Singh & Misra, 2021). Restaurant business is not an exception because there is an urgent need to make restaurant business more sustainable, which refers to the issue of food waste, food packaging waste, and the food supply chain (Gossling & Hall, 2022). More and more restaurants are starting to realize their social and environmental consequences (Ferrell et al., 2019). Another contribution of this service to environmental degradation is the disposition of food leftovers in restaurants to landfills (Bridges et al., 2019). Food and packaging waste issues, combined with the intricacy of the food supply chain, have placed much pressure on the restaurant business to adopt sustainable processes (Gossling & Hall, 2022). Consumers will perceive hospitality businesses involved in CSR projects as credible and trustworthy compared to those not involved in such projects, as owning an impression is the most significant aspect of the dining out experience (Bridges et al., 2019). CSR programs are created and promoted by companies in

the restaurant industry due to a mix of the social opinion surrounding it and an institutional pressure (Schubert et al., 2010). Lee et al. (2020) argue that CSR may be advantageous to companies when they may experience challenges peculiar to their industry, including high costs of operation, volatile markets, low profitability, and adverse environmental impacts. This study is relevant to the literature of CSR and addresses one of the most important issues in taking into account the opinions of restaurant visitors. It preconditions the successful advertising practices that promote the growth of a restaurant customer base and popularity.

Customer satisfaction is one of the key metrics that can be used to measure the performance of a company. Companies that engage in CSR programs tend to make consumers happier by demonstrating their concern with the welfare of society. Nonetheless, little is known about the perceptions of CSR among customers and what to measure it (Guzzo et al., 2020). Companies can immensely benefit through the enhancement of its relationships with consumers through social responsibilities practices. Through CSR, companies can increase the level of consumer happiness, trust, and loyalty (Mohamed et al., 2022). Studies of the previous times indicate that CSR and customer satisfaction are twin. This may appear to be the case since consumers tend to be more satisfied with the manner in which they interact with the company upon realizing that the company takes social responsibility in its operations.

The role of economic responsibility of a firm cannot be overestimated. Increasing wealth and prosperity of the economy is the main responsibility of a company in the concept of economic responsibility as discussed by Carroll (1991). This includes efficient resource utilization, profitable business, and viable financial methods. As Purwaningwulan and Alfarisi (2022) argue, the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is where a company attempts to conduct its business in a manner that is non-hazardous to the society or the environment. Company profitability and market responsiveness are a necessity and, it is thus important to corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 2016). Thus, to be socially responsible, enterprises should be economically sustainable (Ibrahim, 2017). A company's capacity to stay in business, ride off economic storms, and contribute to the economy is directly correlated to its financial health and profitability. Secondly, being fiscally responsible may increase happiness in the workplace and devotion from

customers. When companies put CSR first, it builds trust with consumers, which in turn increases loyalty, according to research by Puspita and Kartini (2022). Thirdly, companies that prioritize social and environmental responsibility have a more engaged and enthusiastic workforce (Azimi et al., 2023) overall. Finally, being financially responsible means doing what is right in terms of laws and ethics. Businesses that can pay their bills on time and operate ethically not only satisfy the law, but also gain a reputation for honesty and reliability in the marketplace (Carroll, 2016).

H1: There is a significant and positive influence of Economic CSR on customer satisfaction.

The term “legal responsibility” describes the body of rules and laws that businesses must follow as a matter of course. Indeed, a social compact is established whereby companies are obligated to pursue economic goals in compliance with the law (Ghaderi et al., 2019). A more responsible and ethical business is one that has a reputation for adhering to legal CSR. The level of trust and happiness among customers might rise as a result. In addition, people are more likely to do business with companies that they see as contributing to a better world. Companies that engage in legal CSR are more likely to draw in and keep consumers who are searching for brands that align with their own beliefs (Islam et al., 2021). A company’s anticipated behavior inside the legal system is directly related to its amount of legal responsibility. Carroll (1991) postulated a pyramid structure for CSR, with legal duty at the second level. A responsible business is one that plays by the rules of a level playing field (Carroll, 2016). Organizational trust will be positively impacted by adherence to legal CSR. According to Ghaderi et al. (2019), when employees trust their company, it boosts their work satisfaction, which in turn influences customer orientation. Satisfying customers requires legal CSR.

H2: There is a significant and positive influence of Legal CSR on customer satisfaction.

A company’s pledge to act ethically and responsibly toward society and the environment is known as ethical corporate social responsibility (Klaysung et al., 2022). Ethical need is to have a just, impartial, and precise attitude to work (Sindhu et al., 2017). The implementation of such activities demonstrates the organizational compliance with the professional ethics and societal norms (Lee et al., 2020).

Ethical responsibility, as one of the segments of its broader societal responsibility, according to the how Carroll model of responsibility (1991) is defined, is the commitment of the organization, through moral behaviour and principled decision-making. It involves what is right, fair and by social standards and beliefs. The ethical corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities of a company positively influence the opinions of the consumers towards its goods and services, which, subsequently, positively affect consumer happiness (Liang & Wu, 2022) and consumer confidence and enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty with the participating companies (Islam et al., 2021).

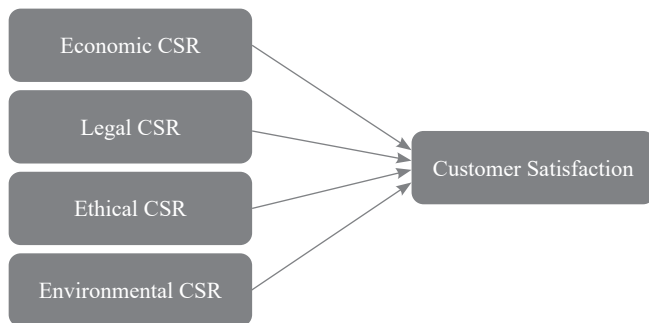
H3: Ethical CSR has a significant and a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

Environmental CSR is an unmentioned concept in the framework of Carroll (1991), which initiates a huge debate regarding the alteration of corporate responsibilities in the course of time. Aspects of the environment also enhance the framework and make it more implementable in real economic situations on the ground, prevailing social needs, and resolving of environmental issues. Besides cementing the framework as a comprehensive and visionary organizational guide in turbulent environment of CSR, the extension is useful in reinforcing the existing elements. Consequently, the corporate social responsibility (CSR) in environment plays a critical role. Some of the many initiatives that constitute this umbrella include carbon emission decrease, conserve resources and marketing of environmentally friendly goods and services. Businesses that embrace environmental CSR have a number of benefits. This makes them better in the eyes of customers, workers, investors, and communities (Azimi et al., 2023). People prefer companies being environmentally friendly and aligned to their individual values regarding sustainability (Cristobal-Cipriano et al., 2022). Secondly, environmental CSR can make organizations stand out among their competitors (Perez & Del Bosque, 2015). consumer happiness can be shaped by the rigorous way organizations deal with the issues related to the environmental aspect of CSR (Shi, 2020). Customers have a shared obligation to safeguard the environment, which is why they tend to have good impressions of organizations that prioritize sustainable operations (Cristobal-Cipriano et al., 2022). In a similar vein, Kaur et al. (2022) emphasised that social and environmental activities may help restaurants gain an edge in the market by boosting customer satisfaction and trust.

H4: There is a significant and positive influence of Environmental CSR on customer satisfaction.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



The research is relevant because it fills a serious gap in the existing literature since it focuses on the multidimensionality of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the restaurant industry, where previous studies have mostly involved solitary dimensions of CSR instead of their combined impact. It offers a thorough insight into the simultaneous functioning of economic, legal, ethical, and environmental responsibilities to influence the perception of consumers within the service-based environment.

Objectives:

- To examine the personal and the group effect of economic, legal, ethical, and environmental CSR dimensions on customer satisfaction among the restaurant consumers.
- To measure the relative power of each of the CSR dimensions (economic, legal, ethical, and environmental) in driving customer satisfaction results in the restaurant industry.

Methodology

Research Design: The sample of respondents was adults aged 18 (and above) years and living in Lucknow. Eligibility was based on previous exposure to short form video content (short videos and reels) related to tourism destinations.

Locale: The research was done in the capital city of the state of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow, India. Noted for its culinary history and increasingly dynamic contemporary foodservice scene, Lucknow is a dynamic and competitive urban setting for the restaurant industry. The heterogeneity of the city's demographic composition as well as the rising consumer

awareness of social and environmental responsibilities serve as a relevant background to study the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on customer satisfaction. All the respondents were chosen from the Lucknow residents or visitors who had recently dined at local restaurants, thus making sure that the insights taken are closely contextualized in terms of the specific market milieu of the city.

Sampling Design: The objective of sampling design was purposive sampling to recruit the participants who are the patrons of various restaurant establishments in Lucknow. This method ensured that the respondents had both recent and direct experiential knowledge as customers; thus, providing an empirical and valid knowledge about the relationship between CSR initiatives and customer satisfaction.

Tools and Technique: Data were collected using a structured questionnaire which was distributed using an electronic channel to the potential respondents at Lucknow. To ensure the validity of the measurement, all the items for the scale were taken from the scales that are well documented in previous literature (Table 1). A pilot study with 34 respondents was conducted with the questionnaire to evaluate the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire; the successive improvements led to the administration of the main survey. The final data set included 369 valid and complete responses and these were then put through analysis.

Table 1
Measurement Instruments

Constructs	No of Items	Source
Economic CSR	3	(Haron et al., 2020)
Legal CSR	3	
Ethical CSR	3	
Environmental CSR	3	
Customer Satisfaction	3	(Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Leninkumar, 2017; Servera-Francés and Piqueras-Tomás, 2019)

Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis: To test hypotheses, inter-variable relationship exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analyses were used to identify factors and their relative strength towards customer satisfaction with in restaurant sector.

Results and Discussion

Respondents Profile: A total of 369 valid response was collected from restaurant patrons at Lucknow. The demographical characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2. The sample consisted of 56 percent females and 44 percent males. Most respondents (62% of them) were in the 18-30 years of age bracket, suggesting that there was a significant representation of younger, urban consumers. In relation to education, more than half of them (52%) have a Bachelor's degree, which can be considered for a relatively educated sample. As regards frequency of eating outside, a plurality of respondents (48%) reported 2-3 visits to restaurants per month, implying that they are regular users of the local food service market.

Table 2
Respondent Profile

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	207	56
	Male	162	44
Age (in years)	18-30	229	62
	31-45	105	28
	> 45 years	35	10
Education	Higher	74	20
	Secondary or less		
	Graduate	192	52
	Post Graduate or above	103	28
Dining Frequency	Once in a month or less	110	30
	2-3 times a month	177	48
	Once a week or more	82	22

Reliability and Validity: The data was appropriate for factor analysis, which measured using principal component analysis showed a Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test value of 0.826 (Table 3). The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 4206.580$; $DF=105$; $p<0.001$) and revealed that relationships between variables were sufficiently to be involved in a PCA. All items of measurement showed factor loadings exceeding 0.50, which was the acceptable criteria recommended by (Hair et al., 2010). All constructs also revealed Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.70,

reflecting good reliability and internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003) values indicated in (Table 4).

Table 3
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.826
	Approx. Chi-Square	4206.580
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	105
	Sig.	.000

Source: Analysis Output

Table 4
Factor Loading and Cronbach Alpha

Construct	Items	Factor Loading
Economic CSR (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.866)		
	It is important for this restaurant to be committed to being as profitable as possible.	0.893
	It is important for this restaurant to maintain a strong competitive position.	0.879
	It is important for this restaurant to be defined as one that is consistently profitable	0.873
Legal CSR (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.941)		
	It is important for this restaurant to perform in a manner consistent with the expectations of government and law.	0.890
	It is important for this restaurant to be defined as one that fulfils its legal obligations.	0.873
	It is important for this restaurant to provide goods and services that at least meet minimal legal requirements.	0.867
Ethical CSR (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.799)		
	It is important for this restaurant to perform in a manner consistent with expectations of societal mores and ethical.	0.865
	It is important for this restaurant to prevent ethical norms from being compromised to achieve corporate goals.	0.861
	It is important for this restaurant to be defined as good corporate citizenship and known as who does is expected morally or ethically.	0.783

Environmental CSR (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.942)		
	It is important for this restaurant to perform in a manner consistent with protecting the environment.	0.868
	It is important for this restaurant to offer environmentally friendly products/ services.	0.747
	It is important for this restaurant to make every effort to protect and preserve the environment.	0.623
Customer Satisfaction (Cronbach's Alpha: 0.834)		
	My choice to buy from this restaurant was a wise one.	0.763
	Based on my experience with this restaurant, I am very satisfied with this company	0.800
	This restaurant has never disappointed me so far.	0.773

Source: Analysis Output

As Table-5 shows, there is evidence that the model is statistically successful at predicting consumer satisfaction towards different components of CSR in restaurant sector. The R-squared value 0.407 indicates that the model explains a substantial amount of variance. Concretely, the result of this R-squared test means that 40.7% variability in the dependent (Y) can be covered by the independent (X), indicating a good enough explanatory power of our model.

Table 5
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.638	.407	.400	3.78721

Predictors: (Constants), Economic CSR, Ethical CSR, Legal CSR, and Environmental CSR.

To evaluate the fit of the regression model in Table-6, a quantitative assessment was performed for the fit of the model to data. The results suggest that consumer satisfaction towards different components of CSR in restaurant sector is predicted quite well by the set of independent variables. F-statistic $F(4,341) = 57.760$, $p < 0.05$ indicates that the dependent variables significantly influence the dependent variable. Therefore, the regression model fits the data rather well and is suitable for describing the phenomena observed.

Table 6
ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	3313.800	4	828.450	57.760	.000
Residual	4819.233	336	14.343		
Total	8133.032	340			

Dependent Variable: Consumer Satisfaction Towards Different Components of CSR in Restaurant Sector. Predictors: (Constant), Economic CSR, Ethical CSR, Legal CSR, and Environmental CSR.

Table 7
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.308	.726		3.181	.002
Ethical CSR	.178	.051	.168	3.495	.001
Economic CSR	.285	.051	.281	5.571	.000
Environmental CSR	.234	.046	.257	5.051	.000
Legal CSR	.117	.047	.130	2.522	.012

Dependent Variable: Consumer Satisfaction Towards Different Components of CSR in Restaurant Sector.

Source: Analysis Output

As shown in Table-7, the p-values for Economic CSR, Ethical CSR, Legal CSR, and Environmental CSR are substantially lower than the accepted alpha level of 0.05. These results indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Consequently, the high level of correlation supports the acceptance of all four proposed hypotheses (H1–H4). It is also observed that the strongest influence exists between economic CSR and Consumer Satisfaction in Restaurant Sector followed by environmental CSR, ethical CSR, and legal CSR.

In the first objective, which included investigating how the four dimensions of CSR affected customer satisfaction, all four dimensions of CSR showed statistically significant positive correlation with customer satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). These results confound all 4 hypotheses (H1-H4) since it was confirmed that the economic, legal, ethical and environmental CSR have positive impacts on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry.

The results indicated that economic CSR has the greatest impact on customer satisfaction ($\beta = .281$, $p < .001$), indicating that the customers in the restaurant industry value the economic qualities of the business-like competitive pricing, profitability that is strong enough to sustain the business and repeated quality of service over other CSR dimensions. This economic responsibility is in line with the underlying assumption of the CSR pyramid by Carroll (1991) in which economic responsibility is at the bottom, with other responsibilities having been built on top. When there is a high frequency of transactional service experiences as is the case in restaurants, customers might feel that economic CSR is directly related to the fundamental value they get back.

The second strongest predictor was environmental CSR ($\beta = .257$, $p < .001$) as the consumer awareness about the environment is rising, and the sustainable practices become more and more essential in the hospitality industry. Customers seem to appreciate restaurants that have a sense of responsibility in the environment through efforts like reduction of waste, use of energy, and eco-friendly packaging. This finding aligns with the literature on green consumerism arguing that the environmental practices are relevant differentiators, especially when the consumer market considers the environment to be an important factor (Swimberghe & Wooldridge, 2014).

There was also a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and ethical CSR ($\beta = .168$, $p = .001$). The practices found in this dimension include honest marketing, fair treatment to employees as well as transparent business operations. The high impact of ethical CSR justifies the stakeholder theory that implies, customers reward the organizations that follow ethical standards and show being good corporate citizens and by such methods, they understand that the organization is characterized by integrity, which increases trust and satisfaction.

The legal CSR ($\beta = .130$, $p = .012$) has a weak impact but it was statistically significant among the four dimensions. This observation comes out as a result of the nature of legal responsibilities, which in most cases are perceived by customers as minimalist expectations, as opposed to other determinant factors. Business activities require compliance with food safety laws, labor legislation and cleanliness standards, and the customers can assume such compliance (Hanaysha, 2017). However, this important positive impact

confirms the existence of a positive role of legal CSR in increasing satisfaction, which is probably achieved through reducing the perceived risk and establishing background trust.

With respect to the second objective which is to analyze the relative strength of CSR dimensions to predict customer satisfaction, the standardized beta coefficients present a definite ranking on relative significance. The findings made a hierarchical ranking with the most influential one being economic CSR ($\beta = .281$), and the least but still important being environmental CSR ($\beta = .257$), ethical CSR ($\beta = .168$) and legal CSR ($\beta = .130$). Such hierarchy shows special subtleties of the priorities of customers in the restaurant industry. The prevalence of the economic CSR implies that the satisfaction of the customers is directly related to the perceived value, reasonable prices, and the financial feasibility of the restaurant, building on the earlier studies by showing that perceived economic value proposition is still dominant in high-frequency service cases such as restaurants.

The relatively good rank of the environmental CSR, second only to the economic CSR is significant, and it indicates that the issues of environmental responsibility are not a niche anymore, but a mainstream expectation among the customers of restaurants. The observation is consistent with other existing literature on sustainable consumption and means that restaurants can achieve competitive advantage through apparent commitment to environmental practices (Siu et al., 2014). The lesser yet important impacts of ethical and legal CSR indicate that such responsibilities work as hygiene factors in the restaurant setting; their presence is perceived to be part and parcel of the restaurant scenario and may positively influence the satisfaction, yet they might not be key differentiators unless they are not present or broken.

All these findings agree with a combined implementation of the CSR pyramid by Carroll in the restaurant industry (Pérez & Del Bosque, 2015). Although the pyramid formatualizes the responsibilities that pertain to the economy as core, the current findings show that the customers do not value responsibilities in a strictly hierarchical way. Rather, the four dimensions work concurrently, with the most impact on satisfaction being on the economic and environmental responsibilities.

The results of the conducted study confirm the idea that all four dimensions of CSR have a positive impact on customer satisfaction in the restaurant industry, which is corroborated by the CSR literature on the whole that confirms that responsible business practices have a positive impact on customer satisfaction (Ghaderi et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2020). The findings can be used to support the stakeholder theory since it proves that the customers, who are one of the stakeholder respond positively whenever organizations meet several dimensions of responsibility at the same time. Instead of considering CSR as an opportunity cost between profit-making and social welfare, the customers seem to appreciate and favor organizations that effectively incorporate economic, legal, ethical and environmental issues in their business.

The findings also increase the CSR pyramid developed by Carroll to the restaurant industry. Although the pyramid was initially developed as the hierarchical model, the current results indicate that in the service-based environment, all four dimensions become simultaneously applicable, and economic and environmental dimensions prove to be salient (Farmaki, 2019). This situational fit is part of the shaping up of the CSR theory in the literature of hospitality and services marketing. In addition, the results substantiate social exchange theory which assumes that when customers are pleased with and have positive attitudes towards the organizational behavior; they tend to reciprocate it. The study supports the idea that CSR investments are valued as means of reciprocity by showing that each of the CSR dimensions alone leads to a level of satisfaction.

Regarding services marketing, the results of the study put CSR as a non-core service attribute that has a significant positive impact on perceived value and emotional attachment (Liu et al., 2024). In the case of restaurants where the essential service characteristics, like the quality of food, the speed of service, and the atmosphere, tend to be analogous among the competitors, CSR practices provide a valuable source of differentiation and connection establishment.

Conclusion

This study was planned with the objective of empirically examining the strategic dimension of multidimensional Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a determinant of customer satisfaction within the competitive market context of restaurant sector with a special focus on urban market of Lucknow, India. The empirical evidence is conclusive that

CSR is not a monolithic construct but a multifaceted strategic lever and each of its principle dimensions - economic, environmental, ethical, and legal - exert a statistically significant positive influence on customer satisfaction. The analysis also establishes a distinct hierarchy of impact that demonstrates that economic CSR, such as perceived value, fair pricing and local economic contribution, is the most salient factor. In this case, environmental, ethical and legal CSR follow each other respectively. This pecking order implies that, despite the growing sensitization of customers towards restaurant as a responsible corporate citizen, by obeying laws, upholding ethics, and minimizing negative effects on the environment, the underlying calculus of customer satisfaction remains deeply entrenched in traditional economical value deal (Singh et al., 2024). The research, therefore, adds to the literature by taking a step further to establish a relationship between CSR and satisfaction; it is a granular model in the context that it categorizes the relative importance of the dimensions of CSR in the service experience. To the practitioners, such findings are of massive strategic importance. They propose that CSR initiatives should not be developed as a stand-alone project, but should be developed as an interlocking pyramid with economic trust forming the base on which a layer of ethical credibility, environmental responsibility and legal conduct can be overlaid to establish a greater loyalty and attain a sustainable competitive advantage in an ever-conscious market place.

However, despite proving an undeniably positive and significant relationship between economic, legal, ethical, and environmental CSR and customer satisfaction among restaurants, the study is not without limitations. First, the results are only applicable to a small sample size within one geographic area, and therefore may not be generalizable to other segments of restaurant types or regions. Second, responses are measured using self-reported customer perceptions that could be biased by personal disposition and economic conditions. Third, this is a cross-sectional study and the responses are taken within one point in time it does not reflect long-term attitude changes of customers. Researchers can choose to longitudinally study the effect of CSR activities on customer satisfaction. Industry and country comparisons may yield more generalizable conclusions. To have deeper insights of CSR impacts; mediating and moderating variables like Brand image, trust and, customer loyalty can be considered in subsequent studies.

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