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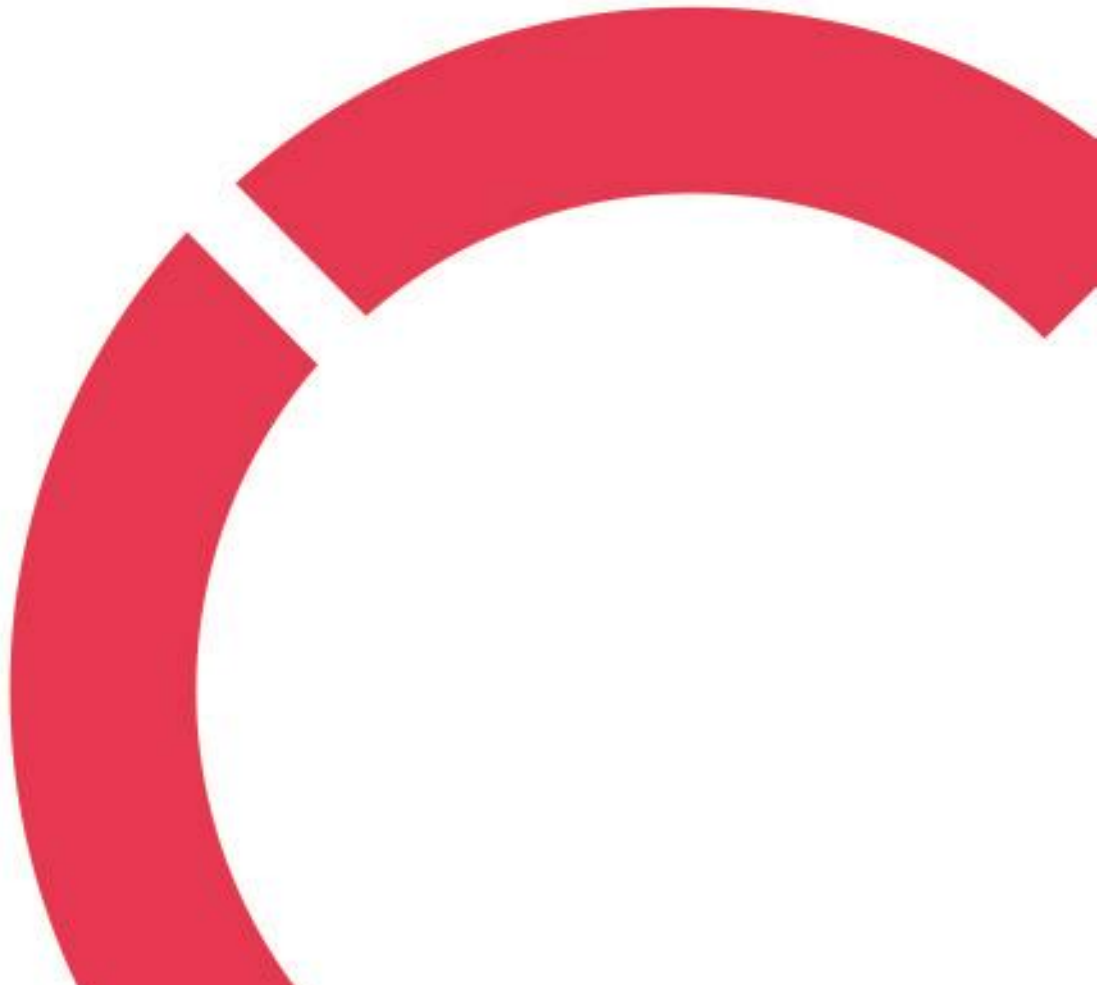
**THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)
INITIATIVES ON BRAND IMAGE: A STUDY OF CONSUMER'S
PERCEPTIONS OF UNILEVER**

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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Name of thesis THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) INITIATIVES ON BRAND IMAGE: A STUDY OF CONSUMER'S PERCEPTIONS OF UNILEVER		
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<p>Unilever's Finnish CSR initiatives were examined for brand image implications in this thesis. To assess how the company's social and environmental actions affect consumer trust, loyalty, and sales. In a sustainable, ethical, and socially responsible market, CSR's sensitive relationship with consumer perception is handled. Carroll's pyramid of CSR theory and CSR and brand image empirical literature were used. Finnish clients were surveyed online on a Likert scale for quantitative research. I studied how consumer perceptions of its CSR efforts, environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community participation, impact brand trust, loyalty, and purchases.</p> <p>Several respondents applauded the company's ethics and sustainability. For instance, 47% strongly felt that Unilever's CSR improved its brand. This suggests most consumers associate the company's CSR with ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability. In the survey, 30% were indifferent to Unilever's brand image and 9% were suspicious, perceiving its CSR actions as marketing rather than social and environmental impact. Good communication and transparency are crucial to CSR operations' authenticity and long-term success, which affect customer trust and engagement.</p> <p>The survey found considerable disparities in consumer CSR opinions by age, gender, education, and job. Younger, more educated clients believed CSR boosted corporate image, but older, less educated ones were suspicious or indifferent. Demographics affect customer CSR sentiments, according to these facts. They recommend targeting certain consumer groups with CSR communications for greatest effect. Unilever's CSR awareness connected with brand satisfaction. Those with more awareness appreciated the company and purchased based on CSR.</p> <p>Compared to existing literature, Carroll's Pyramid of CSR which emphasises social, environmental, and economic responsibilities to improve brand reputation and consumer loyalty, aligned with Unilever's CSR initiatives' positive consumer perception. According to the survey, Unilever struggles to engage hesitant or indifferent clients with CSR. Communication combines transparency, honesty, and long-term social and environmental objectives. How will these outcomes influence Unilever, consumers, investors, and governments? To improve consumer relations and economic success, CSR should reflect local values. This thesis linked CSR and brand image. Authentic CSR that meets consumer needs may increase brand image and loyalty. The results increased theoretical knowledge of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and brand image and provided practical advice for organisations seeking to improve their reputation by being socially and environmentally responsible. Better social and environmental impact studies, cross-cultural comparisons, and long-term CSR research are suggested.</p>		

Key words

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Brand image, Consumer perception, Sustainability, Ethical business practices, Consumer trust, Brand loyalty, Unilever, Finnish market, Social responsibility, Environmental impact, CSR communication strategies, Stakeholder engagement, Carroll's pyramid of CSR.

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1 INTRODUCTION

CSR is increasingly important for international companies like Unilever to maintain the brand image and consumer impressions. Corporate social responsibility is important in brand loyalty, sustainability, and societal effect across cultures and laws. CSR of the company influence the brand image in the transparent, ecologically sustainable, and socially responsible Finnish market that is examined in this thesis. In this chapter, the scope, aims, and application focus of thesis are discussed on how CSR practises affect different factors, for example, brand equity, customer trust, and competitive advantage in a socially aware market. This chapter stresses its growing significance in corporate ethics, consumer behaviour, and brand management for sustainable brand performance.

1.1 Background of study

Companies today consider society and the environment in operations and stakeholder involvement through CSR. Community engagement, environmental sustainability, employee well-being, and ethical sourcing are included (Lho Park & Yu 2019). corporate social responsibility (CSR) boosts brand, sustainability, and social impact. Business ethics help corporations benefit society and businesses know proactive economic, social, and environmental alignment is key to long-term success and competitiveness.

Contemporary business scholars and professionals focus on CSR. Volunteering, environmental stewardship, community involvement, and ethical work practices affect stakeholders and corporate image (Boncz 2015). This highlights the need to examine how corporate social responsibility (CSR) affects brand reputation, particularly for multinational organizations in varied economic, cultural, and legal contexts. Unilever's strong presence in the retail industry and CSR activities are essential to this case study. The company is a British FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) company. Environmental sustainability, community welfare, ethical supply chain management, and philanthropy are the company's CSR goals (Mandina, Maravire & Masere 2014). This study shows the intricate link between CSR and brand reputation by examining its CSR operations and brand image in Finland. Academics and businesspeople are examining how corporate social responsibility (CSR) increases brand reputation

and competitiveness, making this research vital. Rising consumer awareness and business ethics need social and environmental responsibility. They are concerned issues for the business and community (Flick 2015). Since customer expectations have shifted, academic and practical research has explored CSR and brand image (He & Lai 2014). The study is topical and essential since it gives real data on CSR perception in different legal and cultural situations and its implications on brand management.

In the changing global economy, multinational companies like Unilever must combine local needs with worldwide brand identity while adopting CSR. Its plans must be tailored to the cultural, economic, and legal circumstances of corporations' operating nations, complicating matters. The CSR goals and localized techniques hurt brand image and CSR performance worldwide (Hegde 2015). Unilever's nationwide CSR efforts are extensively analysed by Mees-Buss (2014) to understand how they affect consumers' views of the brand. To fill gaps in academic literature, this empirical study analyses how corporate social responsibility (CSR) affects brand image in regulatory and cultural situations from the consumer's perspective. The study attempts to improve CSR for sustainable companies, brand image, and prosperity. Thus, it addresses key corporate responsibility, ethical business, and brand management problems.

1.2 Focus and scope

This study examines the complicated relationship between brand image and corporate social responsibility at Unilever, a worldwide retail behemoth known for its vast operations and imaginative business practices. The company is global giant in the FMCG industry. The company is operated 190 countries all over the world. This study is scoped in Finland and then the outcomes may be generalized worldwide since the company operates in many countries and its CSR activities affect its brand image in challenging scenarios. Because it operates globally, this research investigates CSR ideals and attitudes of the consumers in Finland and then the findings can be generalized worldwide application.

The study will be completed within 22 weeks. This timetable allowed its recent CSR activities and brand effect to be properly assessed. This period is researched to understand current CSR. This keeps results relevant to the corporate dynamics. Its consumers are vital; therefore, this research studies them. This demographic is studied to see how its CSR efforts affect consumer involvement, morale, and perceptions, which are crucial to the brand's image. A focus on consumers as a major community of interest helps measure CSR's external brand impression impacts. The consumers' perspective on CSR is comprehensive (Hegde 2015). Many of its CSR operations' brand reputation consequences are evaluated. Consumer's appeal of corporate social responsibility (CSR)' environmental, social, and governance (ESG) elements are investigated. Its corporate identity and CSR efforts are assessed for brand strength. The research also examines its corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication methods and their impact on consumer sentiment. This thesis contributes to CSR and brand image research by concentrating on big firms like Unilever (Hegde 2015). This research integrates consumer perspectives, examines the strategic implications of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and analyses their effects on brand image in Finland to understand the complex dynamics between CSR and brand image in the modern marketplace as well. This study fills a gap in the literature and offers practical advice for companies seeking to improve their brand image via ethical and effective CSR.

1.3. The motivation for writing this thesis

This thesis examines Unilever's CSR operations and brand reputation owing to its grasp of changing consumer needs and CSR's role in business. This thesis examines how its brand image can be affected by CSR projects' implementation and communication as corporate responsibility goes beyond financial benefit to cover social and environmental issues. This study extends on previous research on CSR and brand image's complicated link. It also highlights knowledge gaps that need more research to understand and manage CSR's strategic consequences. To add to the huge research, this thesis critically evaluates CSR literature on engagement and loyalty of consumers, business reputation, and stakeholder interactions. A study indicated that well-planned CSR boosts brand reputation (Colovic Henneron Huettinger & Kazlauskaite 2019). These studies indicate that CSR may boost brand loyalty and maintain a competitive advantage. An examination of these phenomena, particularly Unilever, has received

the least attention and is the emphasis. Its CSR operations engage employees in numerous fields to affect their worldwide brand image, according to the thesis (Colovic et al 2019). This study is driven by the evolving globalization environment, where consumers, workers, governments, and the international community hold MNCs responsible for CSR. This research will analyse the complex dynamics of CSR implementation, its difficulties and potential for the firms, and its impact on brand perception in Finland. This study aims to improve academic knowledge of CSR. The research will include CSR strategy and communication. This implies these methods may improve brand image. These methods will be evaluated for brand image and consumer perspective. These study CSR and brand image in large companies like Unilever. It shows how CSR initiatives improve firm image via consumer opinions and experiences in Finland, surpassing previous research. A CSR research and operational analysis method for academic debate was established. The CSR research will inform the CSR strategy debate in this thesis. It helps academics, corporations, and politicians' brands and promotes sustainable development using CSR.

1.4 The aim and objectives of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the impact of Unilever's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives on its brand image in Finland, focusing on the perceptions of its consumers.

The research objectives of this thesis are:

1. To measure the impact of Unilever's CSR initiatives on its brand image in Finland.
2. To quantify Finnish consumers' perceptions of Unilever's CSR efforts.
3. To explore the impacts of Unilever's CSR activities on consumer perceptions in Finland.

The research questions of this thesis are:

1. To what extent do Unilever's CSR initiatives enhance its brand image in Finland?
2. How do consumers in Finland rate their perception of Unilever's CSR efforts?

3. What is the impact of Unilever's CSR activities on consumer perceptions of the brand in Finland?

1.5 Overview of the thesis structure

Unilever's brand image and CSR activities are examined in the thesis. The introduction emphasizes that contemporary firms require CSR for brand image. This illustrates how CSR affects consumer perception on the brand image. Contextualizing brand equity and business sustainability data boosts relevance. The introduction presents the issue at the intersection of academic inquiry and business strategy for intellectual and practical appeal. CSR's influence on corporate image in Finnish markets must be recognized.

The theoretical framework chapter covers CSR, brand image, and how social media shapes a corporation. This study critiques academic studies on social responsibility, stakeholder participation, and corporate identity. Its worldwide image and CSR practices are theoretically examined. This chapter presents the thesis's empirical research theory. Comprehensive and rigorous research is offered.

Data and methods outline this study's strategy. The research topic, sophisticated data collecting, and analysis methods for its CSR and branding are reviewed. The method employs only the quantitative data to examine Unilever's corporate social responsibility initiatives' consumer perceptions in Finland. With scientific rigor and careful data source selection, the study illustrates how CSR affects the brand image.

The evidence supports results and Unilever's consumer's CSR scores support it. Methodically analysing data shows how these practices impact brand reputation across cultures. Its CSR policies' efficacy and intricate link with consumer perspectives are shown in this analytical narrative.

The discussion chapter applies the thesis's findings in relation to the reviewed literature. Scholarly analysis of the study's practical and theoretical implications follows. CSR's strategic role in consumer trust and brand image is debated in academia. This section acknowledges the study's shortcomings and suggests further research on brand equity and corporate social responsibility's complex connection.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

CSR has grown from a side project to crucial aspect in this dynamic business environment where the businesses are expected to follow balanced social, environmental, and economic strategy. This chapter discusses its theory, for example, Carroll's CSR pyramid is used. It examines how globalization and changing societal expectations have forced businesses to implement more comprehensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies that align business objectives with ethical, environmental, and philanthropic imperatives to satisfy shareholders, employees, customers, communities, and Carroll's CSR pyramid concept for sustainable business balance people, earth, and profits. The chapter states CSR is becoming more important in business image and customer perceptions in a globalized economy. Case studies like Unilever's ethical sourcing and community welfare show that ethical and environmental concerns increasingly influence customer purchasing. Business-oriented CSR may increase brand loyalty, customer trust, and staff involvement, enhancing competitiveness. These guidelines advise picking like-minded businesses. The sustainability, transparency, and social equality of the country affect CSR that at the end create distinct difficulties and possibilities for corporations. The chapter stresses research gaps and the need to study how foreign firms adapt their CSR to legislation and culture of the country. The chapter also evaluates these strategies' long-term implications on brand loyalty and customer behaviour. This thesis illustrates the complex linkages between CSR, brand image, and consumer perception. It is laid on the groundwork for future research on regional CSR activities in culturally varied markets.

2.1 Foundations of CSR

Globalization and changing societal norms promote CSR. Companies, not profits, sustain social and environmental systems. Corporate social responsibility begins. Company obligations include shareholders, workers, consumers, suppliers, communities, and the environment. Beyond charity and com-

pliance, CSR covers social, ethical, and environmental issues in business operations (Colovic et al. 2019). Clearly, corporate dominance affects environmental sustainability and social equality. Thus, they must aggressively address these concerns. Complexity of corporate responsibility is explained by several ideas. The Carroll CSR pyramid covers economic, legal, ethical, and humanitarian company responsibility. This theory states that a firm must succeed ethically, philanthropically, and morally (Singh Islam & Ariffin 2014). Business must balance environmental sustainability, social well-being, and economic growth. CSR principles helped companies compete and improve society. Critical operations CSR may help organizations achieve economic, social, and environmental objectives and provide long-term value for stakeholders.

2.1.1 Definition and evolution of CSR

CSR has evolved beyond corporations making occasional gifts or volunteering in the community. Companies value long-term stakeholder engagement and industry growth (Carroll 2016). Corporate social responsibility has grown with social expectations. In addition to profit, stakeholders expect firms to be more accountable and transparent. Businesses must be socially and environmentally responsible (Colovic et al. 2019). Compliance and charity started CSR. Originally, norms and generosity reduced organizational risks. Environmental degradation, unfairness, and ethical transgressions demanded a larger approach. CSR currently addresses economic, social, and environmental aspects in business strategy (Elkington, 2013). Triple bottom line demonstrates strategic side difficulties. This philosophy says corporations should prioritize profit, people, and the environment. Social responsibility and financial performance are linked by IT (Elkington 2013). CSR currently incorporates social, environmental, and economic goals to promote long-term competitiveness and reputation (Colovic et al. 2019). Sustainable practices enhance innovation and economic growth by protecting the environment and building community support.

CSR has grown more important in core company strategy; therefore, researchers have explored how it affects stakeholder perceptions and corporate success (He & Lai 2014). Ethical and sustainable company cultures improve stakeholder relations, brand loyalty, and earnings. Businesses should limit immediate impacts and implement sustainable practices that benefit consumers, employees, suppliers,

and the community. CSR is influenced by stakeholder theory, which maintains that corporate decisions should consider all stakeholders, not just shareholders (Jamali et al. 2014). This approach expands CSR by stating that enterprises must serve all stakeholders for a sustainable and fair global economy (Freeman, 1984). CSR disclosures are more extensive and transparent due to stakeholder theory. This builds stakeholder trust and accountability. Now CSR values shared value. Lho et al.'s (2019) philosophy highlights firms' social good and profit. corporate social responsibility (CSR) promotes ethical business. Business innovation can improve society and businesses (Lu et al. 2020). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved from philanthropy to a holistic, strategic approach incorporated into company activities that recognizes environmental, social, and economic aspects as determinants of global prosperity and competitiveness. Complex global industries will increase strategic CSR integration. Firms must differentiate and benefit society and the environment to compete.

2.1.2 Carroll's pyramid of CSR

Carroll's CSR pyramid stages social responsibility as economic, legal, ethical, and charitable. The pyramid depicts how corporations manage public expectations, profitability, compliance, ethics, and social good. Archie B. Carroll created the 1990s CSR-integrated pyramid model. Pyramid explains social responsibility that satisfies commercial and societal goals (Carroll 1991). The Carroll pyramid begins with economic responsibility. Businesses must earn money, employ people, and please consumers. Profitability boosts company longevity and social responsibility. Carroll values community economic growth and sustainability above shareholder profits. Unilever invests in its workers and communities while making inexpensive, high-quality goods. This method suggests economic duties might accomplish social aims.

Legal responsibility, Carroll's pyramid's second tier, requires corporations to comply. Corporate governance, consumer safety, environmental protection, and labour laws are necessary for social justice. Carroll advises reputable firms to cooperate where businesses must support social order beyond law (Carroll 2016). Unilever reduces carbon emissions and shows sustainability to fulfil Finland's strict environmental regulations. Company compliance decreases litigation and builds stakeholder trust. Social legitimacy and trust increase when legal accountability connects ethical and economic issues.

The third element of the pyramid is ethical duty, which includes values and societal standards beyond legal obligations. Without legislation, corporate ethics requires fair, equal, and respectful stakeholder treatment (Carroll 2016). Carroll encourages firms to choose ethics above legislation via equality, openness, and harm avoidance. Consumer-driven marketplaces with public scrutiny and social action that impact corporate behaviour require ethics. Ethical purchasing and sustainability help Finnish customers evaluate Unilever's CSR. Fair supplier remuneration and ethical supply chains engage socially conscious consumers. Company practices that match societal standards build stakeholder confidence and loyalty.

Business volunteering for society tops Carroll's pyramid where organisational social purpose generates voluntary contributions (Carroll 1991). These programs address non-business social, environmental, community, and charity issues. Carroll believes economic and legal duties show corporate citizenship more than philanthropy. Unilever Finland builds trust via community health, sustainable energy, and local education. This initiative increases the company's social responsibility by attracting ethical and sustainable partners.

Integrated Carroll's pyramid helps firms concentrate and see strata linkages. Carroll values ethics and compassion above business and conformity. Companies should pursue sustained, inclusive development across classes (Carroll 1991). Social standards may reduce company risks and increase shareholder value. Equal rights are sought by culturally and legally problematic multinational Unilever. Because customers value ethics and the environment, Carroll's pyramid helps Finnish firms integrate CSR into strategic planning (Carroll 2016). Carroll's pyramid depicts how public expectations affect corporate aims and practices as CSR advances. Companies must face complex global and local environmental and social challenges. Carroll's flexible but structured approach helps firms satisfy stakeholder expectations in this shifting context. Carroll brands Unilever by combining business, ethics, and compassion.

Carroll's pyramid of CSR outlines firms' complex roles where corporations may meet society's expectations and accomplish sustainable development by tackling economic, legal, ethical, and charitable CSR issues using the pyramid model (Carroll 1991). Carroll's Finnish concepts increased Unilever's brand, image, and social and environmental responsibilities. Carroll's pyramid, an irreversible framework for aligning firm operations with stakeholders' goals, is vital as globalisation and social change continue.

2.2 CSR and brand image

A globalized market with great consumer knowledge of ethical and environmental issues makes CSR and brand image more important to a company's strategic positioning. Buyers care about corporate values, product quality, and price, hence CSR impacts brand image. Unilever's main business CSR supports environmental sustainability, community welfare, and ethical supply chain management to attract ethical customers (Mishra, Sinha, Singh, & Koul 2013). Carroll's pyramid proposes that a company's environmental, charitable, and ethical initiatives boost brand image by demonstrating a commitment to reasons other than profit (Carroll 2016). In congested markets, strategic CSR aligned with corporate values generates consumer trust, loyalty, and emotional ties. Employee pride and purpose alignment strengthen the brand's value proposition and appeal to external and internal stakeholders with effective CSR initiatives. CSR earned Unilever a reputation for ethics and social responsibility. Customers value a company's ethics and social reputation, making it more appealing. Honest CSR is important because consumers select companies that benefit society.

Brand image and CSR are closely linked since CSR activities are increasingly seen as strategic assets that can greatly impact a company's reputation and market perception. This award recognizes modern customers' social, environmental, ethical, and compliance awareness. CSR actions that match an organization's values and reach its target audience increase brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, and staff engagement. These traits determine companies' long-term viability and profitability (Martiskova, Waldhauserova & Skibinski 2022). Consumers trust and like companies that encourage ethical labour, community development, and environmental sustainability through CSR. Due to excellent impressions, customer loyalty and brand support improve brand equity and competitiveness. Recycling, carbon footprint reduction, community health or education, and fair trade can boost a company's reputation. The company is different from unscrupulous competitors. CSR should reflect an organization's values and brand image, not promote it. Overcoming mistrust of such actions is vital (Singh et al. 2014).

This belief holds that customer back brands with similar principles. Therefore, good CSR communication informs and engages stakeholders, fostering social responsibility. Consumers care about electron-

ics, food, fashion, and ethics. Such companies may buy for supply chain transparency and product sustainability. CSR boosts investor and employee happiness beyond consumer perceptions. CSR-focused companies are safer and more ethical, making them better investments. They retain employees who value work and company values. Thus, successful corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies boost the brand's outward image and internal culture, making it a preferred employer, respected, and accountable company (Wu & Wang 2014). The CSR-brand image link is complicated. CSR may promote stakeholder trust, loyalty, and satisfaction, boosting the brand image. When articulated and strategically aligned with its ideals, these activities differentiate the organization and solve social, environmental, and ethical concerns. Business strategy increasingly includes CSR and brand image. This suggests a global business sustainability and social responsibility movement.

2.3 Consumer perception and CSR

As customers become more knowledgeable and discriminating about the ethical and social impact of the companies they support, CSR perception has grown in relevance in business reputation and customer behaviour. Buyers may consider a brand's social and environmental responsibility if they investigate its CSR. Unilever's community welfare, ethical labour, and environmental footprint reduction programs meet social commitments and impact consumers (Wu & Wang, 2014). Positive CSR impressions may improve brand loyalty because customers are more likely to support and promote firms that share their values and want to change the world. Brand CSR may affect customer advocacy and sales, they say. Customers trust and engage with ethical CSR, increasing brand loyalty. CSR may boost a company's social media and other visibility (Widyastuti, Said, Siswono & Firmansyah 2019). To sustain this relationship, CSR message must be honest and true as consumers become more sceptical of symbolic or self-serving actions that affect society and the environment. Unilever's CSR boosts brand loyalty. Brand ethics and resiliency may improve with CSR. Socially responsible organizations are essential due to the intricate relationship between CSR and consumer image.

Understanding how CSR affects buying patterns, brand loyalty, and company image requires customer responses to CSR programs. According to significant research by Kaushal (2016), CSR enhances customer confidence and corporate reputation, affecting consumer decisions across sectors. Consumers

care more about ethics. People judge companies by their social and environmental impact. CSR grows in consumer markets (Kaushal 2016). This shift in consumer behaviour reflects a social and environmental consciousness. Organizations use CSR for marketing, compliance, and image. CSR programs can influence consumer behaviour depending on activity, ideals, and organization honesty. Eco-conscious consumers may welcome a CSR effort to reduce environmental effects with sustainable and renewable materials.

The brand and client loyalty would improve, and social justice-focused consumers regard the company as ethical and accountable. CSR efforts include human rights and fair labour. If consumers assume CSR is about company image rather than social or environmental issues, they may react negatively. An ethical response, or "greenwashing," may undermine the brand. Cultural and socioeconomic elements that shape customer expectations of corporate responsibility affect CSR-consumer behaviour. North America and Europe have stronger environmental and social governance regulations; thus customers are more likely to evaluate company activities and expect more full and transparent CSR. Liberal legislative regimes in emerging nations may affect customer CSR understanding and perception (Mir & Shah, 2018). Multinational CSR programs must reflect market cultures and laws. Global CSR and local relevance are ensured. These companies may optimize CSR's consumer perception benefits. CSR impacts customer behaviour beyond buying decisions, including social media sharing and digital word-of-mouth recommendations. Customers who like a company's CSR will inform others, boosting its reputation and business (Mallik & Sahu 2015). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and their impacts spread quickly on digital platforms and social media, increasing an organization's CSR initiatives. Corporate social responsibility affects customers differently. They are, for example, authentic CSR presentation, customer cultural background, CSR learning and interaction methods, and consumer response complexity. In a changing business climate, companies must understand CSR customer reactions. Knowledge is essential to build CSR efforts that satisfy customers and increase brand reputation and market performance.

2.4 CSR in multinational corporations

MNCs in the dynamic business environment recognize CSR as crucial tool for their brand image. The CSR of the companies in the international market goes beyond local laws to meet each country's cultural, economic, and environmental norms. The companies in the global market must balance global and local CSR rules owing to complexity (Jamali et al. 2024). Suitable methods address regional social, environmental, and stakeholder challenges for the company. Developing cultures in Western markets may value economic empowerment and communal expansion above ethics and sustainability. MNCs create CSR frameworks for fair employment, sustainable resource management, ethical supplier chains, and community participation. CSR reduces regulatory fines and reputational damage and boosts brand image. MNCs' CSR efforts build trust with local governments, customers, and workers worldwide, fostering loyalty and goodwill. Indeed, multinational corporations' CSR is a strategic investment that balances economic and social goals, making them responsible global leaders.

Legal, cultural, and economic differences present CSR challenges and opportunities for multinationals. These conditions require a nuanced strategy to ensure CSR programs are effective and acceptable to the firm. Labor, environmental, and corporate governance rules vary by jurisdiction for transnational enterprises. Local laws must be followed by companies to avoid legal and ethical concerns. The culture impacts CSR activities. Local norms, values, and expectations affect CSR (Widyastuti et al. 2019). Poorer nations may prioritize jobs and economic growth, while Western nations may prioritize environmental sustainability. CSR that conflicts with local priorities may fail. Implementing CSR programs abroad presents logistical, regulatory, and cultural hurdles for multinationals (Naqvi et al. 2013). This requires managing many stakeholders, coordinating large resources, and ensuring consistent communication and processes across all operational domains. Unified CSR programs may struggle to balance global coherence and local relevance due to logistical constraints (Colovic 2019). Hollow or promotional CSR may engender public scepticism or greenwashing. Weak or dishonest CSR activities by large multinationals make them subject to criticism.

Despite these limits, multinational CSR may boost business image and global transformation. CSR programs can help penetrate new markets and promote local confidence, boosting global success. Multinational corporations can gain stakeholder confidence and loyalty by addressing local issues and enhancing the community through CSR. Many sustainability challenges may inspire economically and environmentally feasible goods, services, and processes (He and Lai 2014). Successful CSR programs help multinationals retain workers. Younger generations choose ethical and socially responsible com-

panies. Motivated, engaged, ethical employees boost employer appeal (Jamali et al., 2024). CSR addresses social and environmental issues that could impact the company, improving risk management. The solutions lower risks and increase global resilience (Lho et al. 2019). CSR integration requires global companies to overcome complex laws, cultural hurdles, logistical issues, and public mistrust. It boosts business image, innovation, talent acquisition, and risk minimization. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can assist multinational firms and society by merging local and global ideas and following ethics and community involvement.

2.5 CSR in the Finnish context

Sustainability, equality, and transparency guide Finland's CSR. These beliefs underpin Finnish culture and society, explaining how local CSR activities support multinational firms' worldwide ambitions. Finnish companies are sustainable due to the country's strict environmental laws and focus on ecology. Finnish CSR initiatives must enhance environmental management and resource use. (Mikkilä, Koistinen, Kuokkanen, & Linnanen 2023). These approaches fulfil global and local sustainability standards. Companies may align their Finnish CSR with their global sustainability goals for market consistency. Finnish firms' CSR is affected by social equality. Finnish companies thrive in justice, gender equality, and employee well-being. Employers, workers, and government cooperate in Finland. With this professional climate, Finnish companies' CSR reports emphasize employee welfare and rights (Ivanova-Gongne et al. 2022). Social welfare, workplace diversity and inclusion, and greater labour standards are global CSR trends. Finnish CSR can enhance employee happiness and labour norms for international enterprises. Government trust and transparency affect Finnish CSR. Finnish stakeholders and customers seek business transparency. Finnish corporations now disclose CSR and improve corporate governance due to these restrictions. Their ethics and accountability meet domestic and international corporate governance and transparency standards (Pandey & Pandey 2021). High transparency standards in Finland can help multinational firms improve their global reputation for honesty and trustworthiness by combining CSR with ethical and transparent corporate image aims. Environmental awareness, social welfare, and transparency in Finland influence enterprises' domestic CSR initiatives and help them align their regional and international CSR strategy (Ivanova-Gongne et al. 2022). Finnish and international sustainability, ethical, and corporate transparency movements permit this conver-

gence. Standardize CSR while maintaining local relevance and Finnish CSR model compliance for global firms. This makes CSR projects relevant worldwide and locally, solving complex social issues.

In culturally diverse markets like Finland, multinationals must balance their global vision with local cultural, legislative, and market realities. Multinationals must create ethical and culturally sensitive global CSR operations. The company's strategy must incorporate indigenous cultures, values, and commercial traditions to achieve this equilibrium. Finland's environmental, social, and transparency standards must guide multinational CSR. This boosts their Finnish market position and success (Aaker 2012). Many CSR rules must be adjusted to local issues that differ from other operational markets. Consumers and government of Finland cherish the environment. National and international enterprises may prioritize energy efficiency, carbon footprint reduction, and local environmental protection. Ramesh et al. (2019) say the company supports Finnish values. Regional operations must be properly incorporated into the company's global CSR structure for consistency. Global sustainability is promoted via local modifications. Multinationals changing methods must consider market limits. Finnish labour, consumer, and environmental regulations are strict. In the country, foreign corporations' worldwide CSR initiatives must surpass these norms. This increases local stakeholder and customer trust (Mishra et al. 2013). This may demand global supply chain activities to comply with regional labour laws or generate products and services that surpass local environmental and safety standards, affecting company behaviour abroad.

Global companies must communicate CSR results and pledges to local stakeholders to adjust strategically. Localize CSR communications to regional values and sensibility. Relevance and power rise (Chouthoy & Kazi 2020). CSR communications could convey accurate and verifiable data about the organization's domestic and international CSR operations because Finland emphasizes trust and openness. Accountability and honest local and consumer communication would result. Relevance requires local stakeholders in CSR plan creation and implementation. Local government, NGOs, communities, and consumer groups may participate. Activities that localize and validate corporate social responsibility (CSR) and strengthen relationships with local stakeholders increase the organization's social legitimacy (Kaushal 2016). Multinationals operating in culturally varied markets like Finland must include local values and goals into their global CSR strategy, meet tight local legislation, successfully distribute CSR efforts locally, and engage stakeholders. Managing these transitions helps multinationals achieve local CSR consistency and meaning. Synergy benefits local and global businesses.

2.6 Assessment and metrics of CSR impact

Many approaches exist to measure and qualitatively assess this influence across industries. These methods indicate how CSR boosts brand reputation and consumer behaviour (Karim & Fayed, 2020). Companies might base CSR on commercial values. Consumer questionnaires assess CSR's brand image. Test customers on how CSR affects brand evaluation. Surveys ask consumers about the company's CSR programs, their sincerity and relevance, and how they affect purchases and brand loyalty. Companies can empirically link CSR to brand impression using survey data. This reveals which CSR strategy parts work, and which need adjusting (Mir & Shah 2018). CSR's brand image influence can be measured by brand loyalty and equity. Companies measure customer brand impressions with brand equity indices. Corporate social responsibility impacts brand loyalty, quality, and awareness, which evaluate the company.

CSR's impact on brand value and business performance can be measured. Consumer focus groups and in-depth interviews provide qualitative CSR data. Companies may understand consumers' views, perspectives, and CSR awareness with this strategy. Customers' emotional and psychological responses to CSR can be explained by qualitative data. The discoveries are deeper and more comprehensive than quantitative methods (Mallik & Sahu 2015). Companies measure CSR views via consumer research, media coverage, and social media. Companies may impact brand and consumer impression by understanding CSR media coverage. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram can highlight corporate social responsibility controversy or success, making this technique valuable in the digital age (Ajzen et al. 2018). CSR's impact on brand image and consumer sentiment can be assessed in several ways. Recent methods include social media analysis, big data analytics, surveys, and brand appraisals. Companies may boost brand awareness and customer loyalty by highlighting their CSR efforts. This prolongs the company's market life.

2.7 Synthesis of literature

Reading the enormous CSR and brand image literature requires empirical and theoretical models on many issues. Here are CSR and brand image's complex theoretical origins. These concepts demonstrate corporations' complicated social, economic, and environmental duties to consumers and society. These variables affect brand image across sectors (Carroll 2016). Carroll's pyramid of CSR influences stakeholders' brand perceptions via economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic phases. This technique shows that ethical, philanthropic, economic, and legal compliance may boost a brand's image among socially responsible and corporately honest customers. Triple bottom line encompasses economic, social, and environmental factors. Effectively conveying these three aspects may increase brand reputation. Buyers now consider a company's social, environmental, and reputational effect (Elkington 2013).

The greatest CSR programs integrate social and environmental activities into business strategy. Harmonization boosts brand image, competitiveness, and social value (Lu, Ren, Zhang, Wang, Shahid & Streimikis 2020). Genuine, impactful CSR boosts brand awareness, reputation, and consumer loyalty (Mandina, Maravire & Masere 2014). CSR affects brand image, according to behavioural theories like Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour. CSR may affect client purchases, say theories. CSR initiatives that reflect customer values may lead to consumer advocacy and support. Companies evaluate external stakeholders' CSR adoption using Triple bottom line. Changing CSR policies may enhance brand awareness and reputation (Elkington 2013). Stakeholder input must guide CSR improvements to suit consumer requirements and global sustainability trends. Empirical and theoretical research show CSR and brand image are complicated. Strategic planning should include economic, social, and environmental CSR to increase brand loyalty and image. Businesses win market share by being ethical.

2.8 Identification of gaps

The vast CSR literature shows how CSR initiatives affect corporate image and customer perceptions. The study aims to boost Finnish CSR and although CSR's effects on customer behaviour and brand

reputation have been extensively studied, Finland's cultural, economic, and regulatory climate has not. Environmental, social, and corporate governance norms have not been examined (Martiskova et al 2022). This study gap requires specialized research on how multinational firms adapt their CSR practices to Finnish society. Carroll's pyramid of CSR provides a solid foundation for understanding corporate social responsibility (CSR), but their application in national contexts, where cultural values can greatly impact CSR initiatives, has received little Finnish CSR research emphasizes equity and sustainability, making it unique. This study may help local stakeholders understand CSR. This study analyses how these theoretical frameworks are utilized in Finland and their culturally consistent effects on consumer attitudes and brand image to close this gap. Few studies compare CSR of Finnish to large foreign enterprises. How business handle CSR and brand image may inform scholarship (Wu and Wang 2014). Case studies and consumer surveys are used, however Finnish consumers' perspectives on CSR programs need a more complete approach. The investigation uses hybrid methods to fill this knowledge gap. It examines how Finnish customers view CSR and how it influences company image and loyalty. Finnish research on CSR's long-term effects on brand image and consumer loyalty is scarce. Short-term benefits dominate CSR studies, leaving long-term implications on brand loyalty and consumer impressions questionable. This project will cover the CSR long-term impact gap using longitudinal data or follow-ups (Wu & Wang 2014). The Finnish environment is understudied compared to CSR, brand image, and customer perceptions. This study examines how local cultural values affect CSR implementation, especially FMGGs, employing a mixed-methods approach for a more complete analysis and analysing CSR's long-term effects. This study is crucial to understanding Finnish CSR due to knowledge gaps.

2.9 Conclusion

This literature review explores the complex theoretical and empirical relationship between brand image and CSR. Carroll's pyramid of CSR explains how CSR improves ethics, business image, and customer interest. These models demonstrate how corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a sideline to a key business strategy that builds brand value. The investigation found a literature shortage on global CSR initiatives in Finland, noted for its progressive environmental and social policies. This research gap requires more detailed studies on how multinational corporations adjust their CSR initiatives to Finland. Regional differences should be examined in Finnish brand loyalty and customer

views. Many studies employ quantitative indicators like surveys and brand performance metrics, but the debate on how corporate social responsibility (CSR) affects brand image shows that qualitative methods are needed to understand customer attitudes and actions. Few longitudinal research examined CSR's long-term effects on brand image and consumer loyalty. This indicates a CSR study direction that could improve comprehension. Finally, this literature review identified key study gaps that must be addressed to effectively quantify CSR's impact on brand image and synthesize data. These deficiencies can be filled by comprehensive methodology and context-specific investigations for academics and practitioners. They can learn how CSR boosts brand and company. This thesis advances academia and provides practical guidance for companies integrating CSR into their main business, especially in culturally diverse Finland.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter analysed Unilever's Finnish brand image and CSR in a systematic fashion. This chapter discussed the study's approach, participant selection, data collecting, and analysis to achieve reliable results. This quantitative study examined consumer perception and CSR's impact on brand image. The study's 75 Finnish customers were selected via stratified sampling, and the online Likert scale survey yields accurate and complete findings. Percentage analysis and graphs and charts would be used in the forthcoming Microsoft Excel research to make outcomes simple to argue for.

3.1 Research design

I followed the quantitative approach to come up with the outcomes of the research objectives. A questionnaire was used to examine Unilever's CSR activities' influence on Finnish consumers' brand impression. The quantitative approach's meticulous measurement of the consumer perception components supported generalisation. This method measured Finnish consumers' brand trust, loyalty, CSR perceptions, and brand perception. Quantitative approaches helped collect data from participants from diverse groups, making research reliable (Gupta & Gupta 2022). Due to their well-defined population administration procedures, quantitative approaches will separate CSR awareness and brand image into elements. This produced a well-structured framework that rapidly lowers data diversity, making pattern and connection discovery easier than in qualitative research. The Likert scale could be used in this survey to acquire quantitative data. Due to its ability to generalise throughout Finland, reductionism was acceptable. The study employed stratified random sampling to examine consumer perceptions of home goods across demographic groups (Flick 2015). Unilever required generalizability to evaluate its CSR initiatives and change macro-level policy. In conclusion, quantitative research promoted credibility, impartiality, and data relevance and value for strategic Unilever management decision making.

3.2 Sampling method

This survey utilised stratified sampling to comprehensively cover the population and assessed Finnish customers' views of Unilever's CSR activities. This research's best probability sampling strategy was stratified sampling, which divided the population by age, gender, income, and education. This tech-

nique guaranteed that every demographic grouping was properly represented in the sample, strengthening population representation (Pandey & Pandey 2021). This study targeted 75 respondents as a sample size that was suitable and big enough to complete statistical operations and had enough variability. The investigation measured more accurately and objectively since stratum groups were homogenous. It decreased sampling bias and variability and helped me uncover demographic consumer perceptions that might affect CSR initiatives. Thus, strata respondents was selected by population share to ensure fair representation. If 30% of the population was 18-30, simple random selection provided 30 persons in this age bracket. Statistics were more reliable, accurate, and comprehensive due to the sample population's proportionality.

This data was collected using Likert scales to assess attitudes, perceptions, and views. Since consumers' perceptions were complex and vary slowly, this method was excellent for quantifying gradients of change to establish the findings (Hegde 2015). Stratified sampling gave a more thorough picture of CSR consumer sentiments.

3.3 Data collection methods

An online survey via Likert scale captured the subtlest changes in consumer opinions of Unilever's CSR for this study. Online surveys were excellent for this research because of their advantages. First, the surveys made it easier to engage respondents and explain the survey goal, improving response rate and data accuracy (Flick 2015). When participants were personally contacted and asked to take the survey, incomplete replies were easier to avoid. This also let participants clarify any survey questions or replies to offer accurate data that represents their opinions.

Likert scales properly evaluated people's attitudes on statements or topics like Unilever's CSR operations, hence the survey employed them. The Likert scale measured consumer sentiment from highly agree to strongly disapprove (Flick 2015). To ensure each stratified sampling sample was correctly represented by subgroups, online provided better survey results. This control prevents systematic sample selection errors and generalisation issues. Online survey gave rapid explanations or queries. It helped catch subtle CSR opinions that the inquiry subsequently explored. Using the survey question-

naire for the online survey and analysing responses using the Likert scale increased data reliability. It boosted statistical strength, extent, and accuracy, making it a good approach for assessing Unilever's CSR activities in Finland and their brand image effects.

3.4 Data analysis method

In Microsoft Excel, percentages and graphs were used to analyse the online survey census. For this study on Unilever CSR and branding in Finland, this method has several benefits. Microsoft Excel is famous for recording, sorting, storing, and analysing large volumes of data (Hegde 2015). Its simple interface made large data management straightforward, which was useful when handling 100 survey responses. Excel's statistical tools, especially percentage analysis, supported survey data processes.

This study benefited from percentage analysis, which simplifies data summary. The study demonstrated the general trend of attitudes and perceptions of Unilever's CSR activities by calculating the percentage of sample respondents who picked each Likert scale answer. This method simplified demographic group analysis, making stratification, age, gender, income, and other patterns and trends easier to see. Based on the calculation, percentage analysis helped stakeholders understand results, especially those inexperienced with analysis schemes. Charts and graphs illustrated the results. The charts might better represent Unilever's CSR statements agree/disagree ratio. These technologies enabled office data presentation and analysis (Boncz 2015). A bar chart displaying the number/percentage of respondents who strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree with 'Unilever's CSR actions strengthened brand image,' swiftly expressed customer attitude. Excel data visualisation took time and is efficient. Excel was ideal for organising and thoroughly integrating data analysis and data visualisation to communicate research results clearly and methodically. This increased the study's analytical rigour and communication, helping Unilever's Finnish strategic management with CSR activities.

3.5 Ethical considerations

To reduce unethical concerns while researching Unilever's CSR initiatives influenced on Finnish brand image, the following were considered. Ethical behaviour required informed permission. Participants were informed of the research's aims, their engagement, and any ramifications, regardless of survey or communication method. I used simple language and ideas that everyone can understand.

Protecting participant confidentiality and identification was vital. The information was collected during the study and was controlled. Methodological standards include data anonymization, which prevented participant identification. Only by replacing participant names with numerical codes in survey questions can this be done. Access to all obtained data should be restricted to position-specific personnel (Flick 2015). I employed privacy concerns related to data and other things. In study, the author didn't violate participant dignity. This included respecting their time and not imposing study. So, participants felt safe expressing their opinions in online survey. Another priority was research technique transparency. The researcher explained research aims, methodologies, and data management. This helped researchers and participants bond, which is essential for study cooperation. Ethics also applied to study results and presentation. Reporting faked results was unethical for me. The study advanced academic and social understanding while protecting participants' rights and humanity.

4 RESULTS

The survey results on Finnish consumers' opinions of Unilever's CSR and brand image are presented in this chapter. How CSR affects customer trust, loyalty, and market distinctiveness is discussed here. The results chapter includes graphs showing survey respondents' ratings of Unilever's CSR initiatives' efficacy, authenticity, and brand relevance. Unilever's CSR acceptability is measured by Finnish consumers' sustainability and social equality values. Customer attitudes and demographic groups' favourable, neutral, and doubtful Unilever CSR reactions are displayed. This thesis is impactful to assessing Unilever's CSR communication strengths and shortcomings and its influence on the brand's reputation and market position in a competitive and socially aware market.

4.1 Analysis of the study

25% of the survey respondents were 25–30 and 31–35, about 27% were 36–44, and only 11% were 18–24. Only 12% of respondents were 45 or older, indicating a smaller senior population. This study's attitudes and beliefs may have reflected early or peak working years since the sample was predominantly younger and middle-aged. How multinational corporations like Unilever's CSR efforts were seen across age groups was explained by the 36–44 age group's purchasing power and household decision-making power. Age affected CSR program success across age groups.

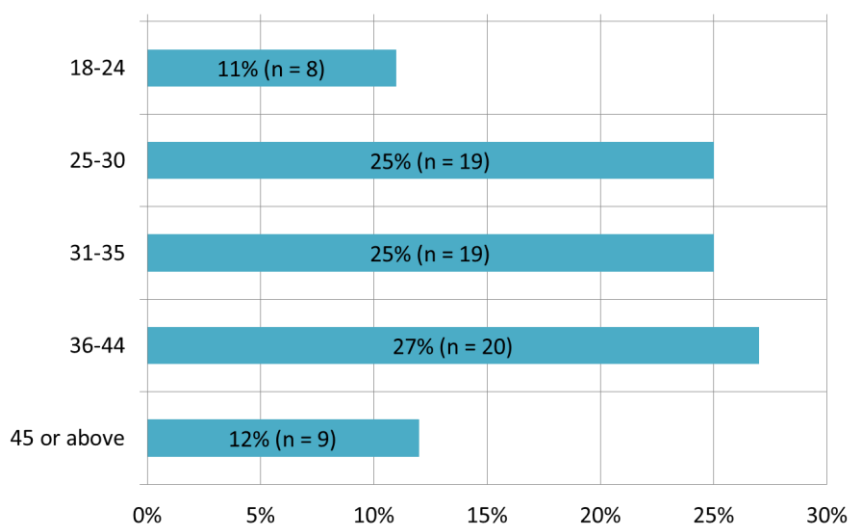


FIGURE 1. Age of the respondents

Life events might affect brand and customer loyalty. Despite their small sample size, 18–24-year-olds may be utilised to research how corporate social responsibility (CSR) affects a new generation of socially and ecologically sensitive consumers. Few seniors over 45 lack engagement or skill. Targeted CSR communication may help the brand's market stability due to older customers' loyalty and purchasing patterns. Unilever's CSR efforts affect brand perception differentially by age, although age dispersion balances this. CSR and brand image goals fluctuate with generations.

Survey gender distribution implies gender identity. Most participants are men (33%) and women (55%). Only 12% were "other," showing the survey's diversity. High female response shows CSR project support, and most home goods customers are women who emphasise ethics, sustainability, and social responsibility. CSR affects brand opinion across genders; however, the smaller proportion of male participants may indicate that female customers are more involved in ethical and social problem surveys and CSR efforts.

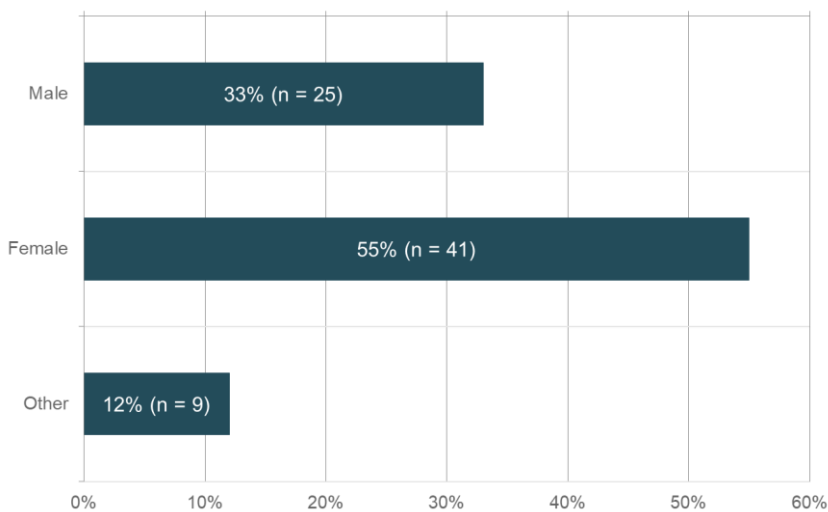


FIGURE 2. Gender

Studying CSR's brand image effect demands gender diversity. Researchers may observe how men, women, and non-binary people support different corporate responsibility components based on their perspectives and sociocultural experiences. Gender distribution demonstrates Unilever's CSR efforts to promote gender equality, fair employment, and inclusive marketing. New CSR initiatives seek client trust and loyalty. A balanced, largely female sample assesses CSR initiatives' gender-diverse customer

involvement. Marketing CSR to males and non-binary clientele is suggested. Gender analysis enhances the study's CSR and brand image expertise.

Survey respondents have different educational level where 27% have PhDs, 41% have Masters. This implies a well-educated sample. 16% have bachelor's degrees, 7% have high school diplomas, and 9%, on the other hand, are others, suggesting vocational or educational experience. Academically, Masters and PhD graduates understand CSR, business ethics, and sustainable development better. Education makes consumers more sceptical and educated, validating respondents' claims assessing CSR authenticity and longevity.

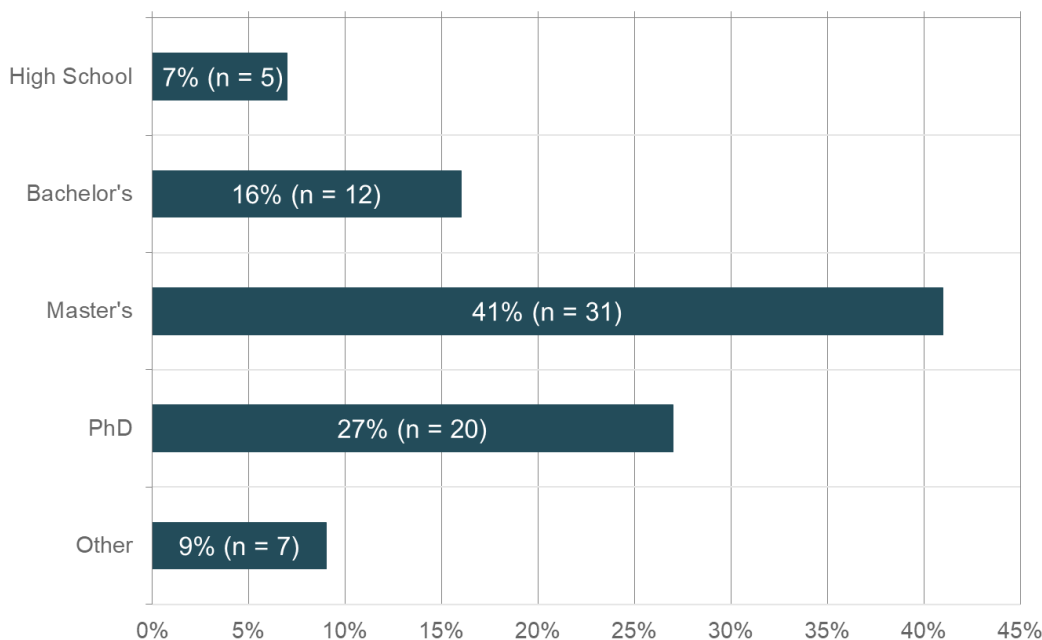


FIGURE 3. Education level

The large number of PhDs suggests most sample members work in research, academia, or speciality. This remark shows analysis and knowledge. But including high school graduates and "other" respondents balances the sample and includes perspectives from a big market group that may not have gone to college. Understanding how different educational levels interpret Unilever's CSR activities is important since social, environmental, and ethical knowledge influences them. Diversity in schooling is vital. Many respondents in the survey have doctorate degrees, therefore findings may criticise CSR programs' worldwide best practices, environmental aims, and business ethics. Lower-educated custom-

ers or those with various educational backgrounds may focus on practical issues like the direct benefits of responsible corporate operations to their well-being and local communities when analysing CSR. This broad educational profile shows how Unilever's CSR actions effect brand perception by representing the viewpoints of highly educated customers who interact with CSR conceptually or internationally and others who concentrate on the actual outcomes of these programs in their everyday lives.

38% were employed, 21% were jobless, 19% were students, 13% were retired and additional other participants are 9%. The survey findings may represent working professionals' attitudes as the sample is mostly employed. Corporate CSR programs may affect different employees and decision-makers. In companies where ethics and sustainability are becoming important, employees are more likely to understand how CSR affects brand reputation and consumer loyalty.

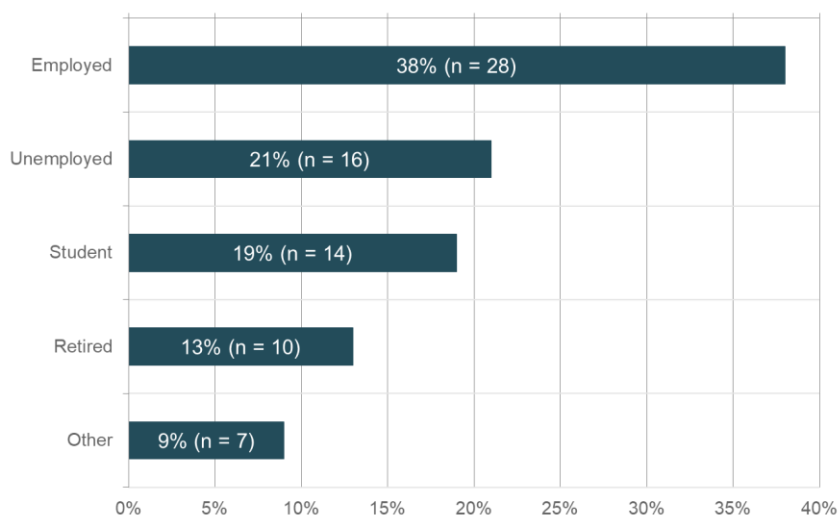


FIGURE 4. Employment Status

Statistics were affected by 21% of unemployed respondents. corporate social responsibility (CSR) may have improved economic growth, job creation, and social good via community aid and welfare. 19% of responders were students, which was notable considering academic curricula's focus on sustainability and social responsibility. This may have affected their business and purchasing ethics. Younger people chose CSR-focused firms and were more socially aware. The 13% of retired respondents indicated CSR influenced brand loyalty. Brands' long-term social and environmental ethics may have been trusted. Finally, "other," including non-traditional workers, distorted data. Part-timers, freelancers, and

non-traditional workers saw CSR and brand image differently. Data from distributed labour covered several social obligations. This illustrated how Unilever's CSR initiatives appealed to ethical and socially conscious entrepreneurs. Their diverse careers provided a wide framework for understanding how corporate social responsibility (CSR) affected brand image across professional and life stages, making the findings more relevant and accessible.

Most of the respondents (43%) earn less than €20,000 and the second biggest group earns between €40,001 and €60,000 and 18% between €20,000 and €40,000. Only 11% make €60,000+. According to this distribution, many sample members earn less than €20,000. Customer preferences may include cost, fair pricing, and corporate socioeconomic impact. CSR may have helped Unilever address economic inequality, community assistance, and fair work. This applies especially if these efforts help the poor. This group defines social welfare as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs that promote environmental sustainability, community welfare, and social justice. However, 28% of middle-income respondents (€40,001–€60,000) regarded CSR a substantial but balanced aspect in their purchases. Brand reputation, product quality, price, and company accountability are considerations.

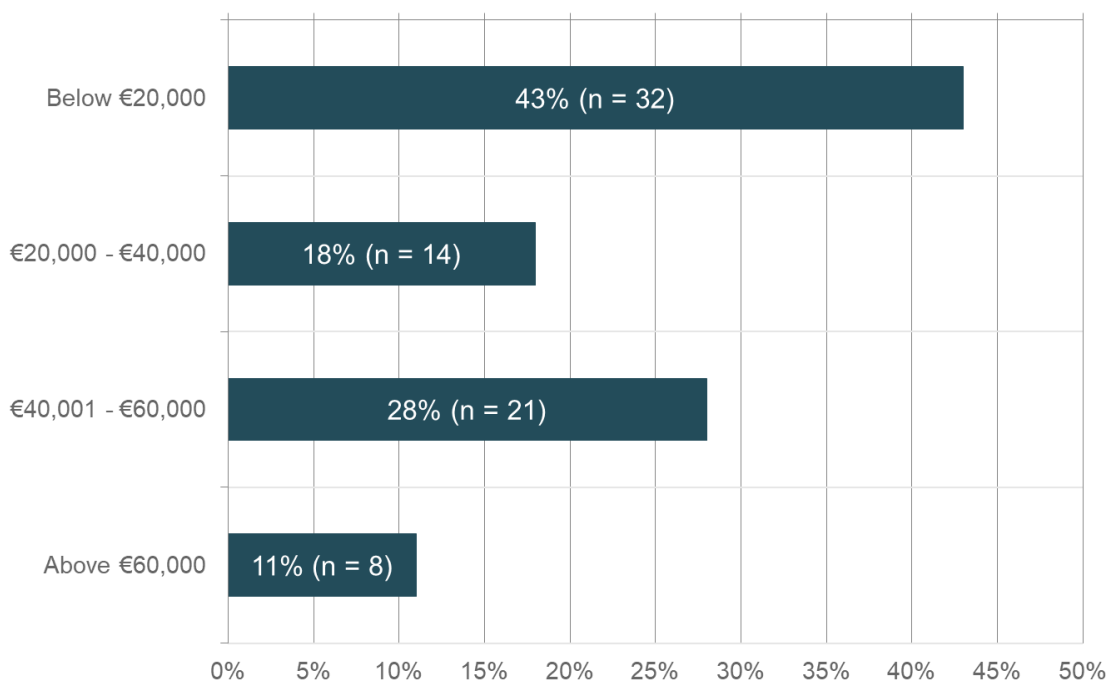


FIGURE 5. Income level

This group prioritises personal gain and societal effect and may choose companies that fulfil high-quality and ethical standards. Economic and ethical issues impact 18% of €20,000–€40,000 lower-middle-income respondents. Low- and middle-income persons may object. Economic value and corporate integrity may affect CSR opinions. Community benefits and social responsibility of CSR initiatives may be assessed. 11% of €60,000 earners evaluate Unilever's CSR activities long-term for corporate responsibility, transparency, and global sustainability. Wealthy people see CSR as a sign of ethics, industrial sustainability, and social development leadership. Modern CSR must address environmental degradation and social inequality. Low- to high-income respondents like CSR. Brand image and customer loyalty are balanced. Customer expectations of immediate community benefits or larger societal contributions vary by economic status, illustrating CSR's impact on varied populations.

The survey had 74 responses to this question, where most respondents (47%, 35) believed Unilever's CSR improved its brand. Many said these initiatives boosted the company's image. Customers may have seen Unilever's ethical, environmental, and social obligations differently if CSR was part of the company identity. Additionally, 30% (22 people) were indifferent, confirming CSR's brand image advantages. Lack of information or influence may have limited efforts.

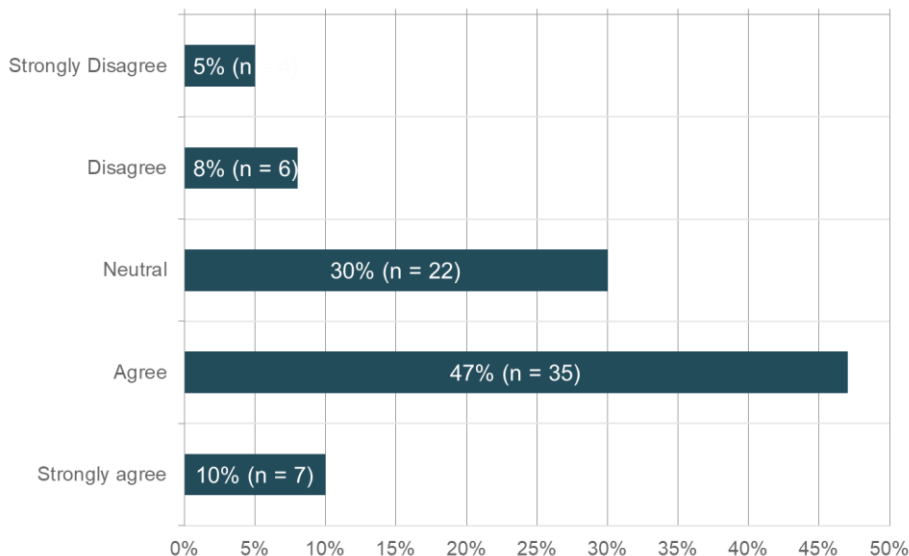


FIGURE 6. Improvement in the overall brand image through CSR activities

This neutrality helped Unilever explain its CSR activities' value and benefits to customers. 10% (7 people) strongly felt CSR affected the brand image, supporting Unilever's CSR efforts. This small but noteworthy group may have been more loyal and trustworthy of the company since they supported its social and environmental efforts and brand notion. 4-5% strongly disagreed, and 6-8% disagreed. This implied some respondents didn't think CSR hurt brand image or was pointless. They may have challenged Unilever's CSR programs' legality or implementation, making it harder to sell them to customers. The survey suggested neutral and critical respondents may have required more persuasive and clear information on Unilever's ethical benefits to society.

Figure 6 shows whether Unilever's CSR affects social responsibility. I take opinions from 75 respondents. 40% (30 agreed), 27% (20 strongly agreed). Unilever's CSR damages its social responsibility image, say 67%. Customers who buy ethical enterprises benefit from sustainability, ethical business practices, and community service. Nearly two-thirds believe CSR improves brand image. After this answer, customers see Unilever's social responsibility differently. Consumers are puzzled about Unilever's CSR activities, as 24% (18 respondents) are indifferent. This neutrality may be due to unfamiliarity with the company's CSR activities or misunderstanding their effect.

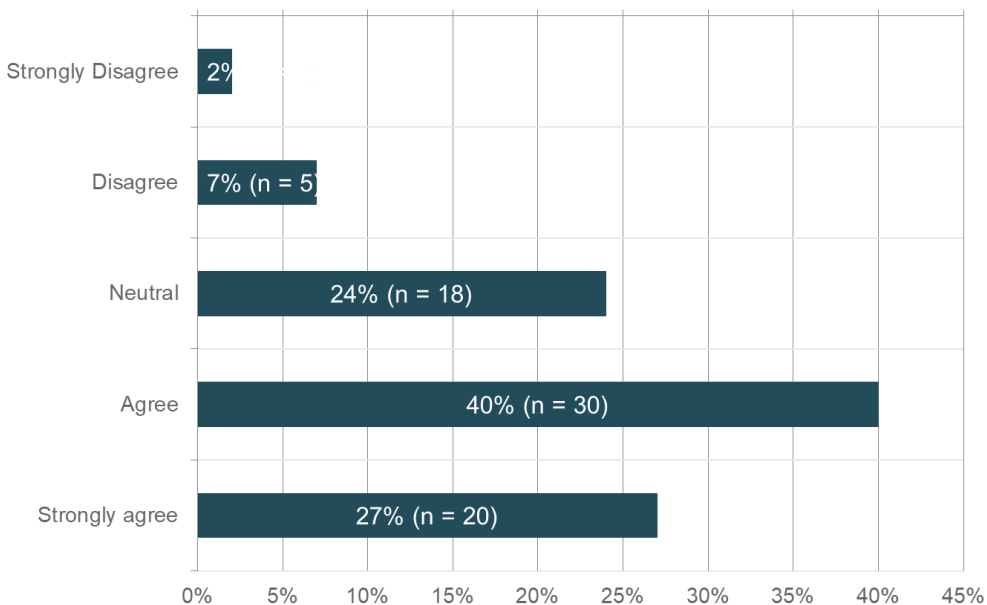


FIGURE 7. Viewing the company as socially responsible due to CSR initiatives

These respondents may have valued product quality and cost above CSR or wanted Unilever's CSR affirmed. Unilever may have increased autonomous group communication. This may have explained Finnish CSR's social and environmental advantages. A large minority opposed Unilever's CSR efforts, as 7% (5 respondents) and 2% (2 respondents) strongly disagreed. They may have found the company's CSR shallow or marketing-driven. More consistent, honest, and effective evidence may have been needed to modify these respondents' views of Unilever's efforts. Most respondents thought Unilever's CSR boosted social responsibility. The neutral group may have been influenced by wider participation, while the smaller but important sceptics may have needed further proof of the company's long-term ethical commitment.

75 people were asked whether Unilever's CSR improved brand image. 44% (33 respondents) thought Unilever's CSR built brand trust. Additionally, 17% (13 respondents) strongly agreed, and CSR impacted 61% of respondents' company reputation. Most consumers supported Unilever's social and environmental goals by trusting their ethics and social commitments. The data demonstrated that Unilever's CSR was crucial to customer confidence. However, 27% (20 people) were ambivalent, suggesting many consumers might not have believed CSR affected brand confidence. Apathy may have indicated that they didn't understand or engage in Unilever's CSR efforts or trusted the company more for product quality or cost than ethics. Communication about Unilever's CSR effect and relevance may have encouraged them.

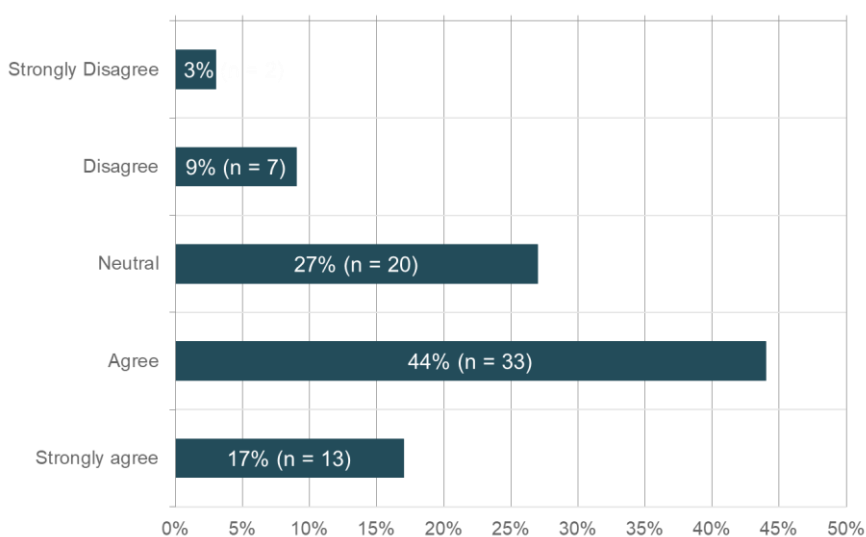


FIGURE 8. Enhanced trust in the brand through commitment to CSR

9% (7 respondents) disagreed, and 3% (2 people) strongly disagreed because they distrusted Unilever's CSR intentions. Unilever had to demonstrate its CSR activities' authenticity and long-term benefit to this demographic, which might have seen them as marketing rather than social betterment. These respondents may have needed more proof of Unilever's CSR's social and environmental benefits to trust them. Most felt CSR promoted customer trust, and engaging indifferent and doubtful clients might have helped to do it.

Data revealed that 75 respondents said Unilever's CSR affected product purchasing. 47% (35 respondents) strongly thought Unilever's CSR influenced their purchases. The strong positive response showed that practical factors, not theoretical CSR concerns, affected consumer market behavior. Moreover, two-thirds of participants bought Unilever's goods because of CSR, showing ethical factors in consumer decision-making. Sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community involvement may have appealed.

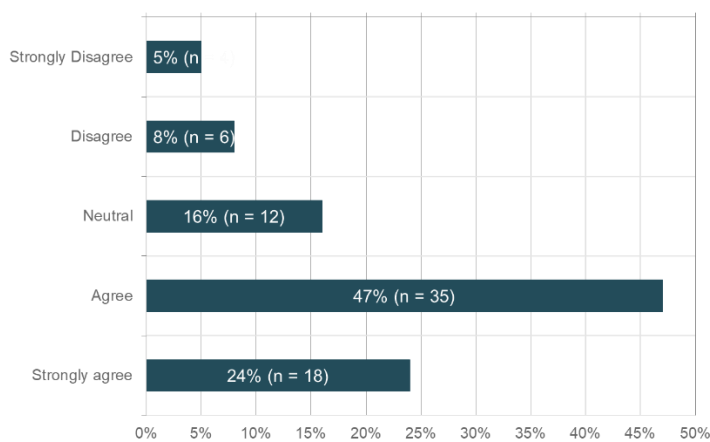


FIGURE 9. Positive influence on purchasing decisions through CSR initiatives

They may believe their purchases help society and the environment, reinforcing brand loyalty. However, 16% (12 respondents) are neutral, indicating CSR does not affect purchasing. Apathy towards Unilever's CSR activities or product quality, affordability, or convenience may explain this. Customers' purchasing may not be affected by CSR. Unilever's CSR advantages may need verification. Compared to 8% (6 respondents), 5% (4 respondents) strongly disagreed, indicating a critical minority that is either neutral to CSR or distrustful of its impact on buying habits. These buyers may see corporate social

responsibility (CSR) as a marketing strategy rather than the company's ideals. Unilever must demonstrate CSR. Clearer and stronger corporate CSR examples help. Many say CSR influences purchases and CSR's impact on consumer behaviour and brand loyalty will increase by engaging neutral and critical customers.

Below were 75 participants' Unilever CSR values alignment opinions. 35% (26 respondents) and 15% (11 respondents) agreed, and 50% said Unilever's CSR reflected their values. Consumers liked the company's ethics, sustainability, and community involvement. Customers that trusted and supported an ethical firm bought more, building brand loyalty. Values-driven markets depended on CSR for consumer trust and brand image. Half supported Unilever's CSR, and Unilever's CSR activities were unknown or uninteresting to 29% (22 people). Indifference may have been owing to Unilever's uncertain CSR effect.

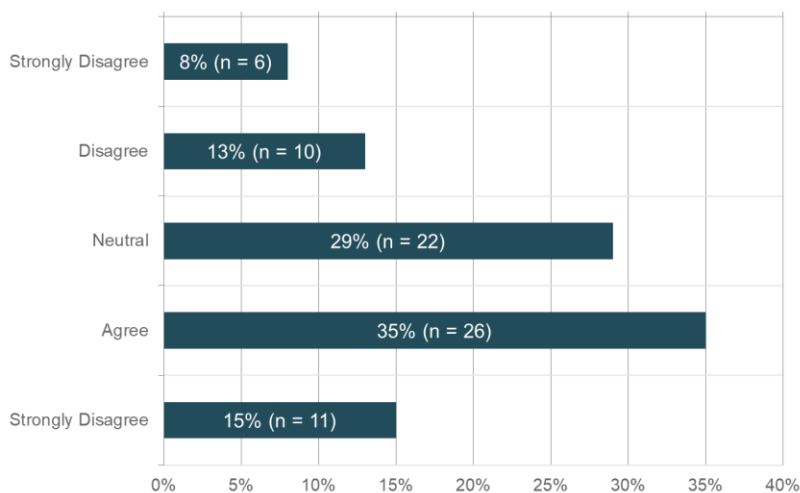


FIGURE 10. Alignment of CSR activities with personal values

Quality, price, and convenience, not CSR, may have influenced purchases. Unilever could have improved CSR communication with this impartial panel. Its social and ethical values may have attracted customers. 13% (10 respondents) and 8% (6 respondents) disagreed, demonstrating a large minority disputed Unilever's CSR. Environment, fair employment, and social justice may have seemed weak, inauthentic, or irrelevant to the corporate. This group may have needed further proof that Unilever's CSR helped society and the environment. Half said Unilever's CSR fit their beliefs, and direct market-

ing and demonstration of the company's long-term impact and ethics may have reassured hesitant customers.

The figure displays that 41 (55%) like Unilever's CSR. Another 11% (8 respondents) strongly agreed, suggesting 66% knew about these programs. Most sample members recognise Unilever's CSR, or social and environmental responsibility. CSR benefits from consumer ethics and due to its strong values, these clients are more likely to buy and recommend the company. Most highlighted were Unilever's CSR activities, suggesting CSR affects brand ethics and reputation.

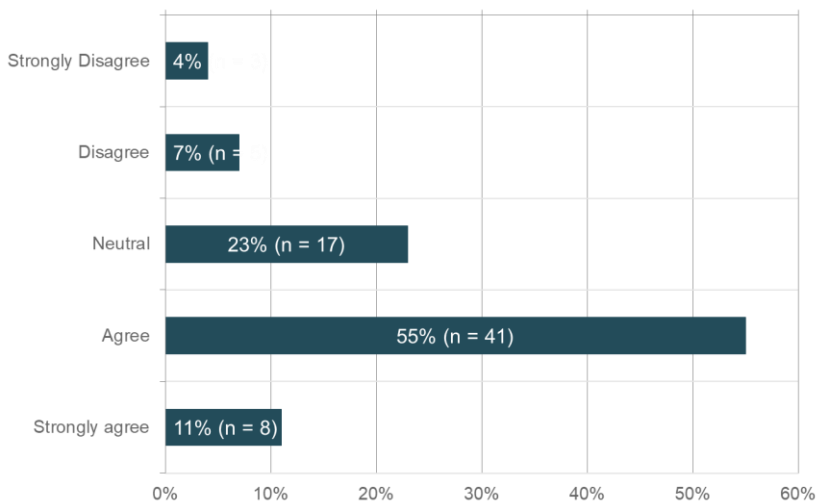


FIGURE 11. Awareness of CSR efforts in Finland

It was neutral for 23% (17 people). Most sample members don't know about Unilever's CSR or don't respect it enough to raise awareness. Neutral responders may know CSR but not its behaviour. Unilever may increase customer engagement by demonstrating its CSR's impact and compliance. Company CSR transparency, exposure, and accessibility may impact neutral respondents' positive and engaged awareness. 7% (5 respondents) and 4% (3 respondents) questioned Unilever's CSR transparency. Critical stakeholders may not know or understand the company's CSR initiatives. Unilever believes CSR insincerity may hurt their brand. Unilever may require additional details to prove its CSR programs' effect and longevity. It would demonstrate its value to the pickiest consumers. Most respondents knew of Unilever's Finnish CSR efforts, but neutral and sceptical respondents say it could do more to edu-

cate and involve customers. Communicating with these gaps via CSR may boost Unilever's brand image and customer trust.

The chart shows 74 respondents' thoughts on Unilever's CSR's social and environmental effect. 42% (31 respondents) and 24% (18 respondents) strongly agreed that Unilever's CSR helps social and environmental concerns. Most customers within 66% trust the company's ethical, environmental, and community support. This group supports Unilever because it combines its CSR operations with ecologically and socially conscientious clientele, boosting its social responsibility brand image. These respondents may link Unilever with corporate responsibility, impacting purchases and brand trust. Consumers choose ethical and sustainable firms. 24% (18 people) are ambivalent, showing majority of the sample dislikes Unilever's CSR. Due to lack of direct engagement with Unilever's CSR activities or material, respondents may have had a neutral attitude.

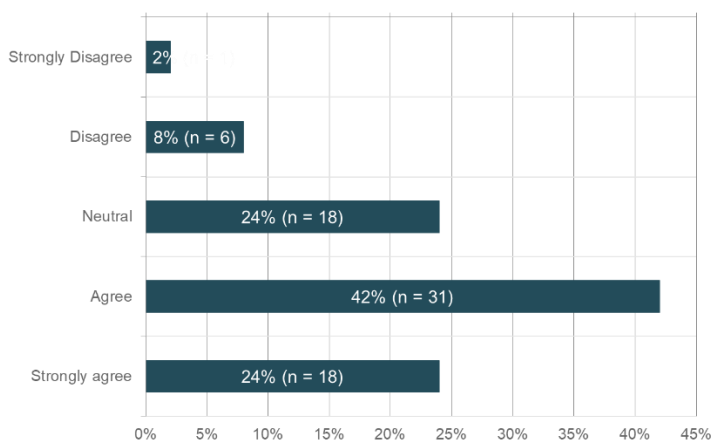


FIGURE 12. Belief in the genuine social and environmental impact of Unilever's CSR activities

These clients may be aware of the company's CSR efforts yet sceptical of their results. Unilever may enhance CSR with this group. Business influence may be shown via case studies and quantitative effects. Unilever can improve CSR by closing neutral respondents' awareness-conviction gap. 8% (6 respondents) and 2% (2 respondents) strongly disagreed that Unilever's CSR works. This tiny but essential segment may see the company's social and environmental efforts as marketing rather than reform. Some answers need proof or communication. Unilever may share longer-term CSR results. This group highlights how huge corporations like Unilever struggle to preserve consumer trust, especially

among CSR sceptics. Unilever must publish its CSR efforts and satisfy sceptics. Most respondents believe Unilever's CSR benefits society and the environment. Indifferent and doubtful replies demonstrate the need for more communication, transparency, and engagement to help customers benefit from CSR initiatives.

Unilever's CSR in Finland was evaluated by 74 respondents. Unilever communicates CSR aims effectively, say 47% (35 respondents). 22% (16 strongly agreed) that the organisation communicates CSR aims well. This majority demonstrates Unilever's social and environmental efforts educated customers. This high level of agreement shows that Unilever has effectively communicated its Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives to clients, helping them understand the company's ethical values and social and environmental concerns.

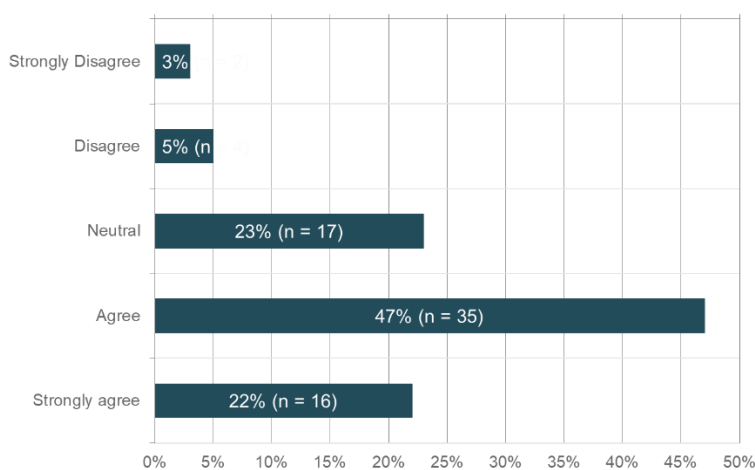


FIGURE 13. Unilever effectively communicates its CSR initiatives to Finnish consumers

CSR must communicate well to build brand loyalty. Brand liking increases with CSR. CSR and communication improve Unilever Finland's brand. Over 25% feel Unilever's message is uninteresting or misleading. Unilever's message is widespread but might be better. Customer communication may be more impartial at Unilever. It needs to customise CSR material to highlight customer-relevant actions or effects. 5% (4 respondents) and 3% (2 respondents) strongly disagreed, demonstrating Unilever's CSR message was unpopular. This minority may distinguish hardness from words. The responders may not get Unilever's message. To address this large group's concerns, Unilever should clarify its CSR messaging. Social and environmental awareness will grow among project customers. Clearer,

more thorough, and regular CSR results updates may help the organisation improve its CSR communication strategy by eliminating the perception gap for hesitant customers. Most respondents believe Unilever promotes CSR to Finnish customers. Critical and neutral responses suggest changing the company's marketing to reach all demographics and add social responsibility.

Chart shows 72 participants' views on Unilever's CSR authenticity or marketing. 30 respondents (42%), trust Unilever's CSR. 14% (10 respondents) highly agreed, so 56% trust the company's CSR. Most believe Unilever's CSR is motivated by social and environmental challenges, not marketing. Genuineness demonstrates customers Unilever's ethics are based on values, not incentives. Authentic CSR may increase brand loyalty, trust, and advocacy via referrals and repeat purchases. Genuineness helps Unilever connect its brand image with ethical efforts that attract CSR and sustainable customers. 29% (21 people) neutral and 30% distrust Unilever CSR. Apathy may indicate that these customers don't know enough about Unilever's CSR initiatives or haven't seen enough effect to evaluate.

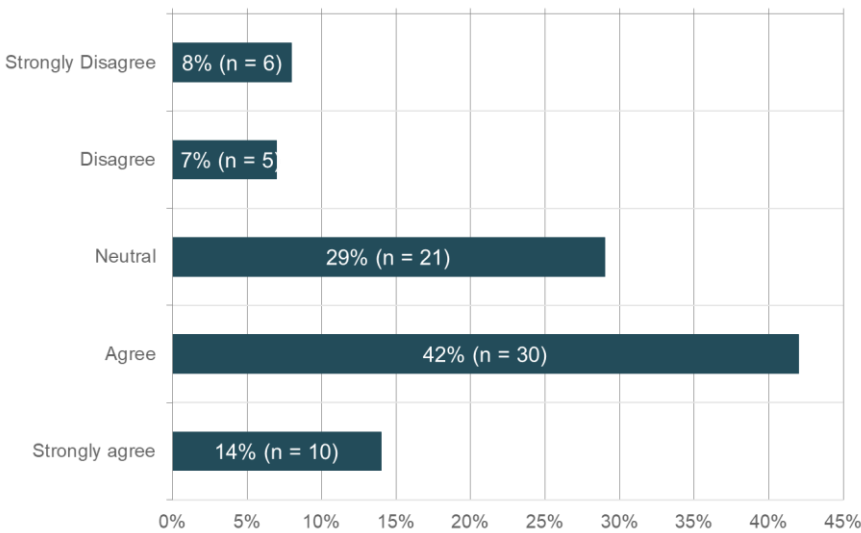


FIGURE 14. Unilever’s CSR initiatives viewed as authentic and not just a marketing strategy

These folks may support Unilever's long-term CSR goals but desire more participation, transparency, and communication. Unilever's CSR may boost customer involvement by helping society or the environment. It will distinguish marketing-driven firms. Accessible Unilever CSR updates may improve neutral respondents' ethics. 7% (5 respondents) and 8% (6 respondents) strongly disapproved with Unilever's CSR efforts. These people may see the company's efforts as a PR stunt rather than a genuine

effort to help society or the environment. Unilever's weak CSR or mistrust of massive firms may cause this criticism. These critics must be convinced that Unilever's CSR is based on company principles, not profit. Open communication may help Unilever demonstrate its ethical and environmental ideals to these big clients. It shows case studies, firm effect, or long-term CSR results. Most believe Unilever's CSR and on the other hand critical minority and large neutral group emphasise openness and long-term effects. The company's social responsibility enhances customer trust.

73 participants assess Unilever's CSR sustainability. 12% (9 strongly agreed) believed Unilever's CSR was sustainable. This suggests 55% of respondents favour Unilever's sustainability. Over half said Unilever's CSR was ethical for long-term environmental and social impacts. Unilever's strong sustainability program response implies people value the company's long-term sustainability, which may boost brand loyalty and confidence. These customers may regard Unilever as an ethical company that prioritises global well-being and future generations above profits with a consistent and sustainable brand. This shows how CSR affects Finnish consumers and Unilever's brand. Over 30% (20 people) were apathetic, opposing Unilever's long-term sustainability goals. Neutral consumers may not know enough about Unilever's CSR or advantages to make a long-term decision. Neutral customers may help Unilever evaluate its sustainability-driven CSR.

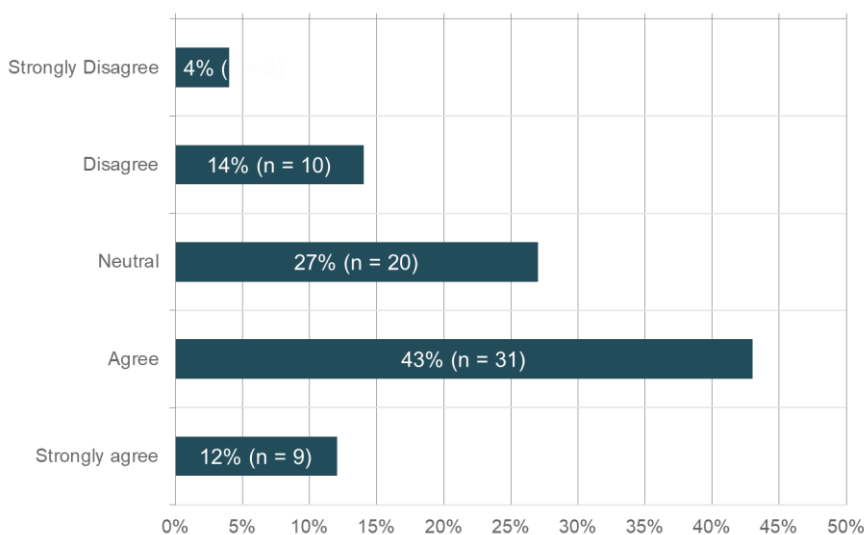


FIGURE 15. Unilever's CSR activities reflect a long-term commitment to sustainability

Research, consumer interaction, and long-term impact case studies may help. More openness and evidence of Unilever's CSR initiatives aiding society and the environment may transform this unbiased group's sustainable approach. 14% (10 respondents) and 4% (3 respondents) strongly disagreed, challenging Unilever's CSR longevity. These respondents may see the company's CSR initiatives as short-term marketing rather than global problem-solving. Important respondents may want to confirm Unilever's sustainability initiatives' real-world effect and tenacity. Tight transparency may help them. This might include extended sustainability reports, third-party confirmation, or long-term CSR accomplishments. Unilever may show this suspicious group how its sustainability activities fulfil global standards and help society and the environment. Most think Unilever's CSR is sustainable, and the significant proportion of indifferent and sceptical replies suggests the corporation should better convey its long-term consequences. Transparency, long-term commitment, and unbiased and critical consumers may improve Unilever's sustainable development brand.

The chart below shows 75 participants' Unilever CSR and ethical viewpoints. 42% (31 respondents) thought Unilever's CSR improves ethics. Additionally, 20% (15 responders) strongly agreed. Unilever's CSR impacts ethics, say 62%. This implies the company's CSR motivates customers. Unilever's CSR is seen as sustainable, fair, and community-minded by customers. Ethics and CSR boost brand loyalty and loyal consumers promote brands and goodwill. Ethical CSR may boost Unilever in Finland and over a quarter (18 respondents) doubted Unilever's ethics and CSR. Not comprehending ethics in its CSR activities may render Unilever neutral.

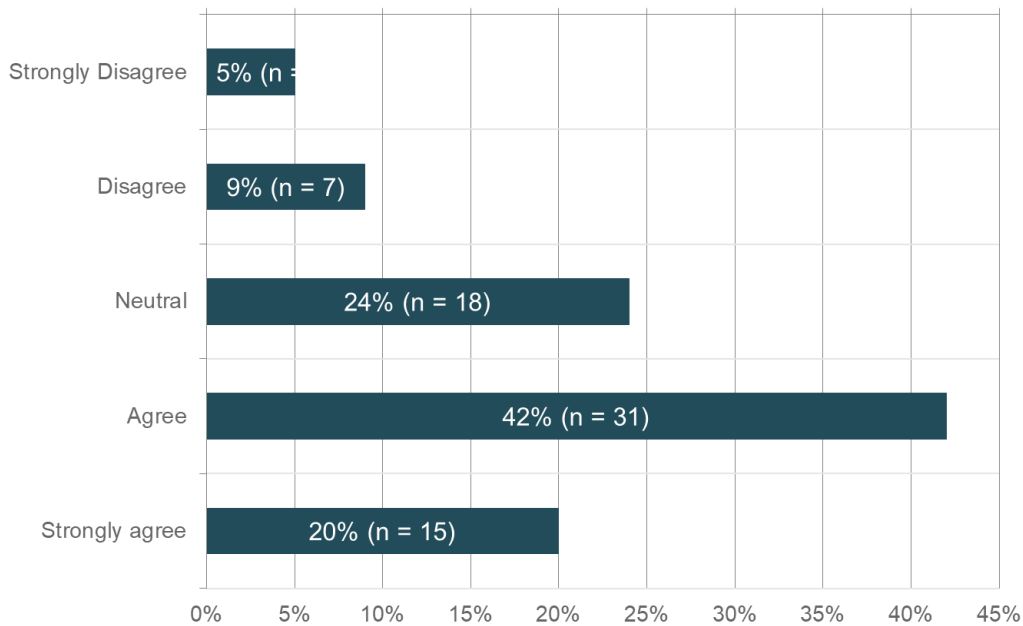


FIGURE 16. Unilever's CSR initiatives influence perception of the brand's ethical values

Integrating these reactions into branding and marketing will make Unilever's CSR ethical and reach more people. Unilever's CSR's short- and long-term ethics may sway neutrals. 9% (7 respondents) disagreed and 5% (4 respondents) strongly disagreed, showing a small but considerable proportion of customers distrust Unilever's CSR ethics. These people may dispute Unilever's ethics or CSR. Unilever may need to be more honest with this crucial group, using real-life examples to link its CSR activities to ethical and long-term social responsibility goals. Additional proof that the company's CSR is ethical rather than commercial is needed. Complete reporting, third-party endorsements, and ethical cooperation may help this suspicious group accept Unilever's CSR. Most said Unilever's CSR enhances ethics. Neutral and sceptical customers want Unilever's ethics and CSR. Closing these gaps might make Unilever an ethical market leader and garner customer loyalty.

Here are 75 participants' opinions on whether Unilever's CSR boosts brand impression. It was suggested by 37% (28 respondents) and agreed by 21% (16 respondents). 58% like Unilever CSR and it is found that over half of Unilever's customers regard its ethics, sustainability, and CSR. These people think Unilever's CSR is important for their brand, loyalty, trust, and purchases. In current markets when customers are increasingly conscious of a company's social and environmental effect, CSR affects customer sentiment. The cooperation may boost Unilever's brand and customer loyalty. 28% (21 people) were indifferent, showing many are unsure about Unilever's CSR's brand opinion impact.

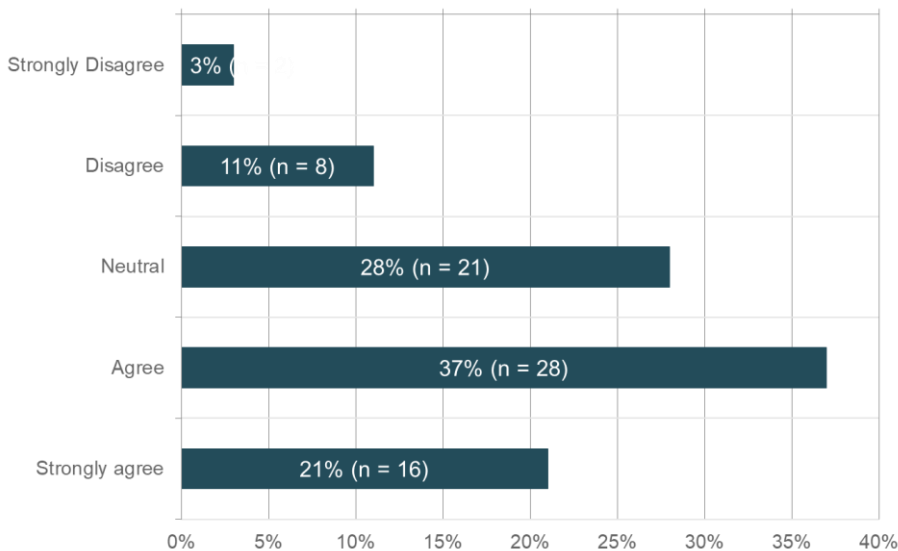


FIGURE 17. Feeling more positive about Unilever as a brand because of its CSR activities

Neutrality may be due to CSR program ignorance or efficacy ambiguity. Neutral shoppers may choose this brand's quality or price above ethics. Communicating CSR outcomes may help Unilever engage customers. Highlighting Unilever's social and environmental advantages may convince indifferent responders. However, 11% (8 respondents) disagreed and 3% (2 respondents) strongly disagreed, showing that a smaller but substantial percentage of customers doubt Unilever's CSR actions will hurt their brand. These people may see the company's CSR efforts as shallow or designed to boost its image rather than aid society or the environment. To reassure respondents, Unilever may need more CSR disclosure. This approach should show project advantages over time. Most responders like Unilever CSR. Openness and communication may attract indifferent or wary customers, boosting business image.

A statistic shows 75 participants' Unilever CSR and brand loyalty opinions. Many (45%, 34) thought Unilever's CSR enhances brand endorsement. 19% (14 respondents) strongly agreed, therefore 64% of people think CSR initiatives boost Unilever advocacy. This majority illustrates that CSR is crucial to a brand's identity and generates loyalty and positive ratings. Unilever's CSR programs are authentic and substantial enough to promote to friends and family since brands are a show of trust in the company's principles, goods, and impact. Good CSR and consumer advocacy relate Unilever's social, environmental, and ethical challenges. Brand ethics and conscience improve. However, 28% (21 respondents) were indifferent and its CSR may not be known to consumers or thought to effect brand endorsement. Neutral respondents may suggest Unilever for quality, pricing, or experience, not CSR.

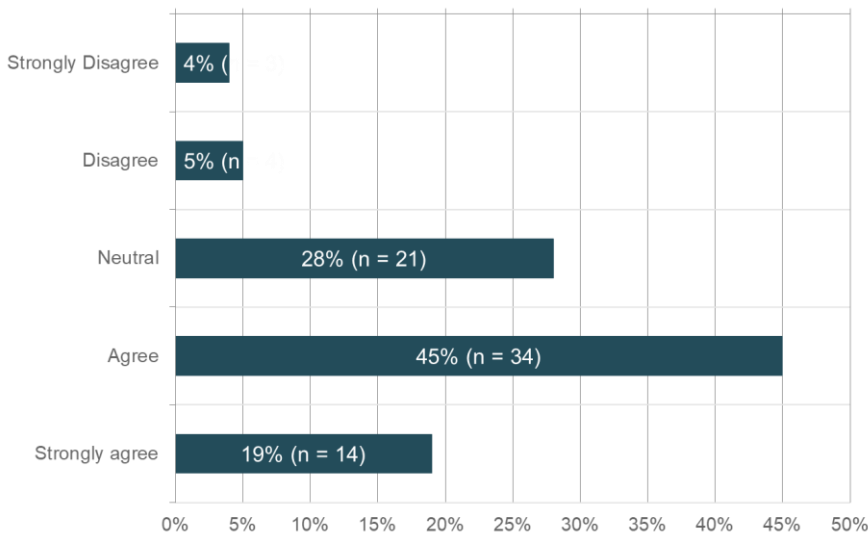


FIGURE 18. Unilever's CSR efforts increase likelihood to recommend the brand to others

By stressing its CSR's social and environmental benefits, Unilever's unbiased approach engages customers. CSR may convince neutral customers of Unilever's social responsibilities. 5% (4 disagreed) and 4% (3 strongly disagreed). Most people don't believe Unilever's CSR enhances brand approval. These individuals may see Unilever's CSR as marketing and ignore its social and environmental implications. Unilever may need to increase CSR communication with key responders to avoid seeming theatrical. This industry may benefit from third-party endorsements or long-term CSR reviews. Most consumers feel Unilever's CSR boosts brand loyalty. Open communication may engage neutral and critical customers, ensuring all consumer groups approve Unilever's CSR. Addressing these issues may help Unilever build a responsible brand that attracts loyal customers and promotes network marketing.

The figure 19 in the chart shows 74 respondents' views on Unilever's CSR enhancing product loyalty. Unilever's CSR increases product loyalty, say 46% (34 respondents). Since 19% (14 respondents) strongly agreed, 65% believe CSR increases product loyalty. Most people connect with Unilever's CSR and real CSR keeps customers since they believe their goods are ethical and socially responsible. Strong correlations between CSR and loyalty imply customers choose green and ethical companies. This implies Unilever's CSR increases loyalty and competitive market customer behaviour and retention may be affected by ethical brand distinctiveness. However, 26% (19 people) were indifferent, demonstrating many are unaware of Unilever's CSR programs' direct influence on product loyalty.

Indifference may be due to a lack of understanding of Unilever's CSR initiatives or the belief that they do not affect loyalty.

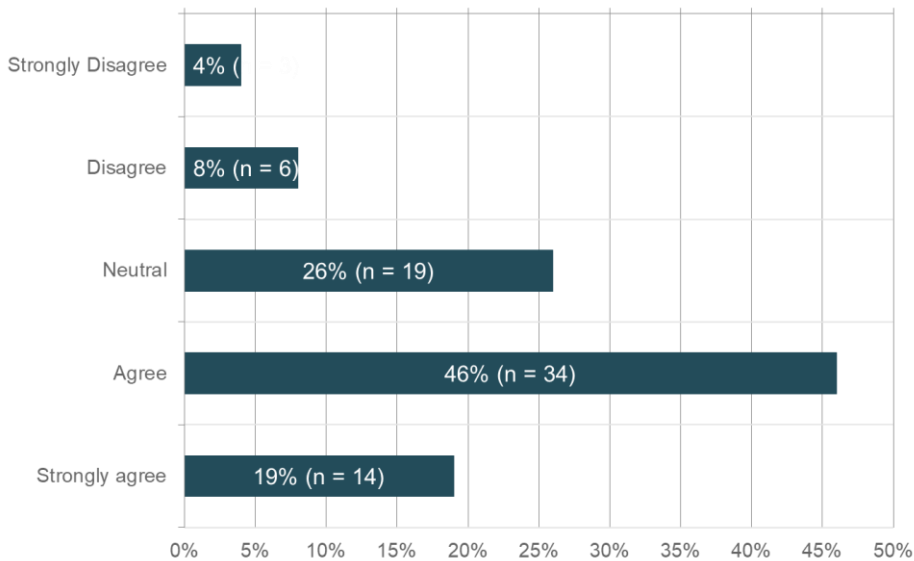


FIGURE 19. Unilever's CSR activities create more loyalty to its products

Neutral shoppers may prioritise brand, price, and convenience above CSR. CSR's results from Unilever may increase brand loyalty and optimism among neutral respondents. A small but significant number of customers do not believe Unilever's CSR influences product loyalty. 8% (6 respondents) disagree, and 4% (3 respondents) strongly disagree. These consumers may see Unilever's CSR as marketing or unrelated to their purchases. Unilever may need to be more honest and effective in its CSR communication to reach this large minority without becoming theatrical. Third-party validation or independent evaluations may comfort this sceptical sector by demonstrating CSR's long-term advantages. Most responders said Unilever's CSR boosts product loyalty. Better communication and openness may attract indifferent and distrustful customers, ensuring Unilever's CSR initiatives are accepted by everybody. Addressing these concerns may make Unilever more responsible and customer-friendly.

The chart shows 74 respondents' opinions Unilever's CSR initiatives differentiating the brand from. 58% (43 respondents) thought Unilever's CSR sets them apart and CSR distinguishes Unilever for 66%, including 8% (6 strongly agreed). This majority promotes Unilever's CSR leadership for commercial positioning. Consumers see CSR firms as more ethical, sustainable, and socially sensitive than rivals. Brand loyalty, trust, and long-term engagement may increase. CSR efforts may influence con-

sumer choice for ecologically and socially good enterprises in a market with numerous similar quality and price products. Over 25% were unaware of Unilever's CSR efforts, with 26% (19 people) neutral.

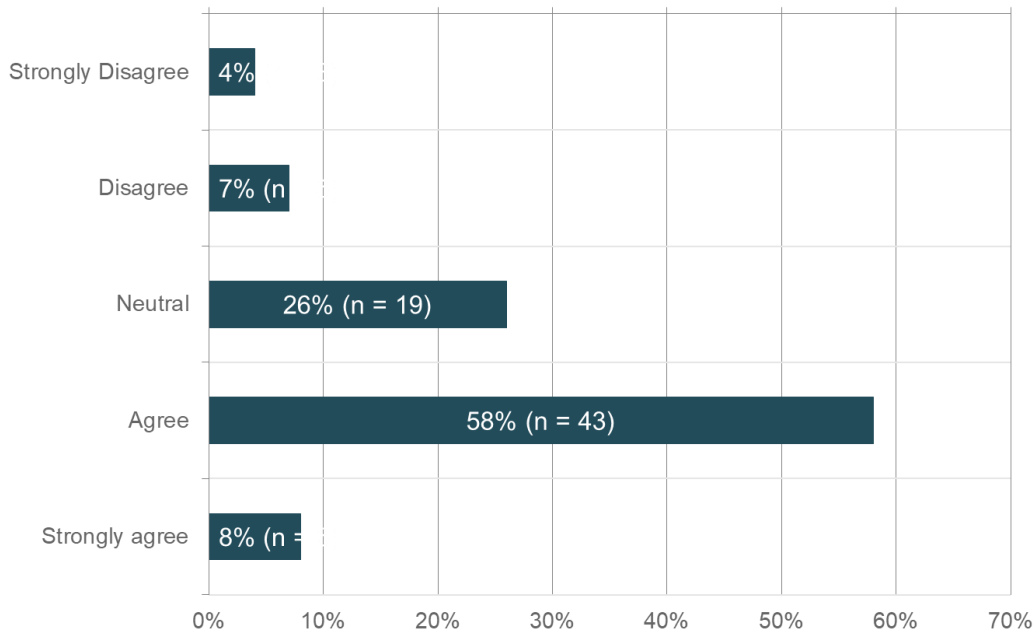


FIGURE 20. Unilever's CSR initiatives differentiate the brand from others in the market

Unilever's CSR may be overlooked owing to ignorance or the notion that many companies undertake it. Unilever can reach neutral customers by emphasising CSR's market-beating achievements. Innovative, effective, and long-term CSR advantages may persuade neutral respondents of Unilever's social and environmental leadership 7% (5 respondents) and 4% (3 firmly disagreed) of customers do not think Unilever's CSR actions are distinctive. They may see Unilever's CSR as industry standard or critique it in a saturated market. CSR communication from Unilever may need to be more accessible and evidence-based to engage sceptics. This strategy should show how its social and environmental responsibilities outperform rivals. Addressing this crucial minority's concerns and publicising its CSR initiatives may help Unilever stand out as a brand that leads with unique and relevant actions. CSR distinguished Unilever, according to most and its CSR efforts may attract neutral and suspicious customers, benefitting all consumer categories.

4.2 Key findings

This research indicates that Unilever's CSR initiatives in Finland substantially impact its brand image and its consumers' brand perceptions and behaviours. The survey with 75 participants revealed CSR improves Unilever's image in Finland. A minority on the other hand doubts these programs' scope. 65% thought Unilever's CSR improves brand image. 37% and 21% strongly agreed CSR boosts Unilever's brand. This supports the investigation's main objective of measuring Unilever's Finnish brand image post-CSR. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) impacts consumer opinion. Research demonstrates Unilever's CSR boosts Finnish brand loyalty. 46% and 19% strongly agreed Unilever's CSR increases product loyalty. This reveals 65% of consumers believe CSR increases Unilever product loyalty. Brand image, purchasing patterns, and long-term corporate relationships are affected by CSR. Due to its CSR, 45% would recommend Unilever, 19% highly as well. The 64% indicates Unilever's CSR actions increase consumer advocacy and loyalty. Customers refer friends and relatives to the firm, improving its image.

Unilever's CSR is extraordinary to 58% strongly agree. Of the respondents, 66% value CSR and in a competitive market where buyers seek ethical and socially responsible goods, CSR is crucial. Unilever leads corporate ethics and sustainability in a similar-quality and cost market due to its CSR activities. However, 26% of the respondents were indifferent, showing that although many customers acknowledge the advantages of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), a substantial minority are either ignorant of Unilever's CSR activities or do not consider them when comparing firms. Unilever may demonstrate its CSR initiatives' advantages and uniqueness to this unbiased committee.

The survey distorts Finnish consumers' Unilever CSR views. Many remarks are encouraging, yet others are sceptical. 42% and 14% strongly believed Unilever's CSR was not marketing. 56% of consumers trust the company's CSR. However, 29% were indifferent, 15% suspicious, 8% strongly disagreed, and 7% disagreed. This perplexing reaction suggests that many consumers enjoy Unilever's CSR initiatives but don't understand its goals. Unilever must be more open about its CSR efforts, particularly long-term social and environmental implications, to maintain customer confidence. 43% and 12% thought Unilever's CSR prioritises sustainability. Thus, 55% believe Unilever prioritises sustainability. However, 27% were indifferent, 18% suspicious, 14% disagreed, and 4% strongly opposed. This im-

plies that most consumers support Unilever's environmental initiatives but question its CSR. Unilever must update customers on sustainability and long-term aims.

The survey examined Unilever's CSR impact on Finnish consumers where 42% of 66% agree and 20% strongly agree Unilever's CSR influences ethics. CSR impacts customer brand ethics. However, 24% were indifferent and 14% suspicious. Unilever must improve communication to show consumers how its CSR activities reflect company values. This thesis shows how Unilever's CSR fits Finland's cultural, economic, and legal context, filling research gaps. Research shows that consumers appreciate the company's efforts but want to know how they fit Finland. The study addresses the paucity of long-term research on CSR, brand loyalty, and consumer attitudes, particularly in Finland, where environmental and social responsibility are cultural norms. Since consumer decision-making increasingly focusses on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), longitudinal research is needed to understand how CSR influences customer perceptions and brand loyalty. This study tackles these gaps to better understand how multinational corporations like Unilever manage CSR in Finland and how it influences consumer sentiment and brand loyalty.

4.3 Conclusion

This thesis reveals that Unilever's CSR actions significantly affect Finnish consumers' brand opinions, trust, loyalty, and image. According to study, CSR affects consumer views by age, gender, education, career, and income. Positives and negatives of Unilever's CSR approach to engage Finnish consumers and develop brand loyalty. Finnish clients' ethical and sustainable business expectations must meet Unilever's CSR. Over 65% believed Unilever's CSR helped their brand. 58% stated Unilever's CSR is market-leading in sustainability and social responsibility. Positive feedback shows how CSR surpasses customer expectations in socially conscious Finland. Most (65%) thought Unilever's CSR boosted brand loyalty where authentic and practical CSR initiatives increase consumer loyalty, brand endorsement, and repeat purchases. Over 25% were resistant, underlining the need for increased communication and outreach to demonstrate Unilever's CSR's practical benefits and legitimacy.

Demographics show CSR customer feedback where ethics-conscious 18-24-year-olds shopped sustainably. Elders studied CSR's long-term social and environmental impacts. Women gave more to CSR

than men, displaying ethics and social concern. The respondents with PhDs and Masters were more suspicious of CSR promises, affecting consumer perceptions. Unilever CSR must educate and engage customers. Thesis emphasises CSR authenticity. 29% were neutral and 15% were sceptical, claiming Unilever's CSR was more marketing than social responsibility. This distrust shows Unilever's challenge to prove CSR's long-term social and environmental advantages. Finnish clients demand sustainable, verifiable, and transparent Unilever CSR results due to their high environmental and ethical standards. This thesis shows CSR impacts consumer behaviour. Practical and ethical factors influence consumer decisions, and two-thirds indicated Unilever's CSR affected their purchases. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) creates brand trust. Without CSR, companies risk losing confidence and market share. 28% were indifferent, suggesting Unilever could relate CSR to consumers' lives. Many Finnish consumers believe Unilever's CSR improves long-term sustainability, while some disagree. Around 14% of respondents questioned Unilever's sustainability goals, encouraging the company to be more transparent and provide results. CSR influences Finnish brand image, trust, and loyalty, thesis finds. Consumers like Unilever's social and environmental endeavours. Unilever's CSR must improve via honest communication, targeted engagement, and ethical and culturally appropriate results for Finnish consumers. By eliminating these gaps and creating consumer trust and loyalty, Unilever may thrive in social responsibility.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The thesis's last chapter, "Discussion and Conclusion," synthesizes and analyses CSR solutions in a competitive, ethical, and socially engaged market. This thesis examined Finnish customers' perspectives on Unilever's CSR and brand influence. This chapter discusses Unilever's CSR, customer trust, loyalty, buying trends, and social responsibility. Communication and program authenticity affect varied populations and opinions. CSR substantially impacts brand reputation, market distinctiveness, and consumer advocacy. Consumer cynicism, apathy, and results-driven demand are blockers. Carroll's Pyramid of CSR highlights Unilever's strategy to balancing economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic aims in Finland's cultural, economic, and environmental dynamics. Based on these viewpoints, the debate examines Unilever's CSR policies' flaws and proposes ways to fulfill customer expectations, build trust and loyalty, and expand its worldwide sustainable business leadership. The discussion will inform stakeholder involvement, social responsibility-integrated brand management research, and firm operations.

5.1 Summary of the findings

Finnish consumers dispute Unilever's CSR and brand image in this survey. The thesis evaluates how CSR affects customer trust, loyalty, purchasing behaviour, and Unilever's social responsibility. Good CSR that fits consumer values and is conveyed well may boost brand image and customer satisfaction. According to the findings, Unilever might improve its corporate social responsibility (CSR) to reduce scepticism and apathy, especially among certain demographic groups. Modern CSR theories are used to examine this data to understand Finnish CSR and brand image. High percentage of Finnish customers see Unilever's CSR as useful. 10% of Unilever's customers said CSR improved the brand image. 30% supported CSR but doubted its effect. Cynicism regarding Unilever's CSR was 9% and CSR "greenwashing" as social responsibility rather than business may impact this sector. The study also indicated that customer awareness strongly influences brand perceptions. 55% knew Unilever's Finnish CSR, 11% strongly agreed. Unilever's CSR made 66% think it was socially responsible, boosting brand reputation. Good CSR program impressions need consumer understanding (He & Lai, 2014). 23% were unclear about Unilever's CSR, 11% strongly disapproved. Many may not realise the compa-

ny's social and environmental responsibility. To make CSR relevant and reach more people, Unilever must increase communication.

Public opinion on CSR varies where over 60% of younger customers, especially 25–35-year-olds, thought CSR boosted corporate image. Over 45% were neutral, although 25% said Unilever's CSR improved brand views. Global sustainability and ethical shopping may make younger consumers more eco- and socially conscious. Women purchase with CSR in mind compared to 33% of men, 55% of women said Unilever's CSR improved business image. Gender inequality requires CSR to address men and women. Women who buy home products may respect ethics and environment. Education affected consumer CSR perceptions as well where PhDs and masters liked Unilever's CSR. For instance, 41% said the company's CSR reflected their ideals. Higher education is associated to excellent CSR attitudes, implying that educated customers are more environmentally conscious and question business behaviour, in favour of ethical company practises. Lower-educated respondents were more pessimistic or indifferent, maybe due to a lack of CSR participation or a focus on product quality and pricing above social responsibility.

The study shows Unilever's CSR affects customer trust and purchasing. 61% of respondents were confident in Unilever's CSR efforts, indicating they may boost customer loyalty and trust. CSR did not boost brand trust, since 27% were indifferent while not feeling hostility towards the firm. Additionally, 47% said Unilever's CSR helped them buy, 16% were neutral, and 13% strongly disagreed. These studies show that although CSR may increase consumer involvement and loyalty, a considerable portion of the public ignores CSR while shopping or doubts its impact on product quality or cost. 56% believed in Unilever's CSR efforts, 29% were neutral, and 15% strongly disagreed. Corporate social responsibility is hard to sell to customers. According to this thesis, Unilever requires clear and frequent CSR communication to explain its long-term social and environmental impacts. The discussion chapter says Unilever's CSR boosts its Finnish brand. Company communication and interaction with indifferent or unsure audiences may improve. By strengthening CSR transparency, authenticity, and accessibility, Unilever can lead ethical and sustainable business in Finland and beyond. Consumer confidence, loyalty, and spending will grow. CSR and brand image theory are pushed in this study to help academics and practitioners understand consumer CSR.

5.2 Comparison with existing literature

Based on CSR and brand image literature, this study explored how CSR influences customer perception, trust, and brand loyalty. Based on literature study and practical research, it shows how Unilever's CSR initiatives in Finland fit, develop, or vary from academic views. Carroll's Pyramid of CSR, and empirical brand image research are compared on CSR's practical effects. Corporate responsibility is economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Carroll 2016). This survey found that 47% of respondents felt Unilever's CSR improves its brand image, supporting Carroll's claim that a holistic approach to all four areas helps firms. Unilever's CSR promotes sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community welfare, supporting Carroll's pyramid's ethical and charitable levels. Socially and ecologically responsible businesses may increase customer trust. Although the economic and legal parts of CSR are well-documented, ethical and altruistic aspects sometimes face consumer cynicism or disinterest. 30% of respondents regarded CSR's influence on corporate image neutral, confirming Carroll's contention that legal and economic obligations are necessary but insufficient for customer satisfaction.

According to the literature review, Elkington's (2013) Triple bottom line balances economic, social, and environmental performance for long-term sustainability within Carroll's pyramid of CSR. Unilever was seen as socially responsible by 66% of respondents, confirming Elkington's thesis that corporations that connect their aims with social and environmental principles may increase brand loyalty. The social and environmental Triple bottom line benefits from Unilever's ethics and sustainability. However, 23% were suspicious, raising questions about Unilever's ability to convey its CSR initiatives' practical advantages, a well explored topic. This suggests that the Triple Bottom Line is genuine but requires improved communication to reconcile corporate and consumer interests.

Unilever's CSR activities enhanced customer trust, validating the framework's claim that social good can boost business. 61% thought Unilever's CSR boosts brand image. Sustainability and community involvement in Finland increase Unilever's market position, social welfare, and value. The CSV structure is fine, but communicating shared value activities to all consumer groups, especially those who are suspicious or disinterested in CSR, like 27% of respondents who were sceptical about trust, may be difficult. Results are confirmed by CSR and brand image studies. According to He & Lai (2014), CSR

may boost brand loyalty and trust when customers know about ethical business practices. This research confirms He & Lai's (2014) conclusion that CSR has become an important factor in consumer behaviour, particularly in morally sensitive nations like Finland, since 47% of respondents said Unilever's CSR initiatives affected their purchases. The findings of the study concern about 16% indifferent and 13% contesting CSR enhanced purchase choices. Some claim CSR boosts brand loyalty, others disagree. For legitimacy and profit, companies must improve CSR communication.

(Martiskova et al 2022) found that linking company operations to social values may boost brand perceptions. According to the study, 56% of respondents saw Unilever's CSR as legitimate rather than a marketing gimmick. The study found that 29% of respondents were indifferent and 15% were sceptical about Unilever's CSR efforts, highlighting the challenges of customer distrust. Since people distrust corporations without long-term environmental and social goals, CSR communication must be honest and consistent. This research contextualises CSR within cultural and legal settings. This survey indicated 55% of respondents identified Unilever's Finnish CSR, enhancing brand trust. Social justice and sustainability companies must localise their CSR. According to Panday and Pandey (2021), failing to adapt global CSR initiatives to local conditions may cause corporate goals to diverge from customer expectations. This study shows that Unilever's global CSR activities operate in Finland, but more localised communication and engagement are needed to reach all consumer segments.

The results support CSR and brand image literature by suggesting CSR may increase customer trust, loyalty, and purchase. Carroll's pyramid, Triple bottom line, and Creating shared value demonstrate CSR's brand reputation benefits. A research study reveals CSR affects customer behaviour. This study and the literature emphasise the need to improve communication with doubtful or indifferent clients and tailor CSR initiatives to local cultural and regulatory environments to reach target groups. This research shows CSR boosts brand image over literature. How well organisations convey authenticity and long-term benefits to more discriminating and socially sensitive clients influences their performance.

5.3 Practical implications for different stakeholders

The thesis found that Unilever's CSR and reputation influence Finnish stakeholders differently. Global CSR activities of Unilever, especially those supporting Finnish consumers' ethics and ecology, are crucial. Clear, honest, and relevant CSR programmes that address environmental and ethical business practises are needed since many respondents identify Unilever's CSR actions with its brand image (Carroll 2016). Given some respondents' neutrality, Unilever must communicate more about its CSR operations and their long-term social and environmental benefits. The survey found that Finnish customers, especially younger and more educated ones, are growing more conscious of corporations' social and environmental obligations. CSR initiatives affect customers' purchases and brand loyalty, since CSR awareness and brand trust were substantially correlated in this research. According to Social Identity Theory (He & Lai 2014), customers will reward ethical enterprises. Research shows that many customers are unaware of or apathetic to CSR, making education and involvement essential. Stores and consumer advocacy groups may link CSR to customer education. This may encourage ethical and informed consumption.

Profitability and longevity suffer for Unilever, especially stockholders and investors. CSR improves brand image, trust, and consumer loyalty, boosting market share and income (Elkington 2013). ESG investors may consider Unilever's CSR operations crucial to its long-term profitability in Finland, where consumers are more socially and environmentally conscious. Unilever's CSR investment improves its brand and attracts ethical investors. Finnish authorities and politicians should promote corporate CSR, says the study. Most consumers found CSR beneficial, supporting business social and environmental efforts. Company governance, consumer protection, and environmental efforts may utilise data. This may assist governments establish laws or give incentives for CSR, aligning company interests with national environmental and social equity goals. Since consumers want more sustainable, ethical, and transparent business operations, NGOs and other advocacy groups may use the data to push corporations to meet greater corporate responsibility criteria. This study impacts global corporations, consumers, investors, governments, and advocacy organisations. In the end, these stakeholders must help corporations like Unilever integrate CSR into their business strategy to create a more ethical and sustainable market that balances corporate success with social well-being.

5.4 Future direction

CSR and brand image provide research and information opportunities as socially conscious and sustainability-driven markets modify consumer expectations. This study only scrapes client attitudes; future research must examine CSR's long-term effects on brand loyalty and consumer behaviour. Longitudinal research may illustrate how CSR affects consumer trust, buying decisions, and brand loyalty (Carroll 2016). This will address a literature vacuum by giving long-term information on CSR's impact on customer behaviour to help companies assess their CSR efforts. CSR research in other cultures and regions may be interesting as this study only examined Finnish customers. Comparative CSR perception studies in different nations may help us understand how cultural values, social conventions, and economic realities affect consumer CSR attitudes (Pandey & Pandey 2023). This data may help Unilever tailor its CSR strategy to local conditions. Cross-cultural research implies that marketing and engaging varied customer groups may boost global CSR effectiveness. Future studies may examine how digital and social media affect CSR customer attitude. Consumer engagement and trust are affected by corporate social responsibility information on digital platforms (He & Lai 2014). Consumer responses to digital CSR marketing like environmental sustainability vs. social justice may be studied. Digital CSR communication will enhance, and CSR's social and environmental impact could be measured better via study. Carroll's pyramid of CSR and the Triple bottom line are significant theoretical models, but businesses require more data-driven CSR evaluation methods (Elkington 2013). Academic research would flourish, and corporations would learn how to improve CSR for social, environmental, and economic reasons, enhancing brand image and consumer loyalty.

5.5 Conclusion

CSR programs boost customer attitudes, trust, and loyalty, especially in sustainable and socially responsible markets like Finland, according to research. The study indicated that many felt Unilever's CSR benefits their brand. Unilever may boost CSR and communication by addressing apathy or scepticism. CSR is ethical and strategic for competitive companies, says this argument. Younger, more educated customers prefer Unilever's ethics, sustainability, and community participation. Customer-focused CSR may increase brand loyalty. Evidence shows CSR sceptics are hard to persuade, and transparency and company conduct are the key to CSR success. Some findings affect Unilever and others. CSR matters for firms that handle local social and environmental challenges, as this company

illustrates. CSR is fast influencing consumer spending, especially among demographic groups that value ethical and sustainable company operations, according to the survey. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) builds customer trust, brand loyalty, and long-term economic success for investors and governments. This thesis addressed how Unilever may use CSR to strengthen its brand image and attract socially conscious consumers. Although encouraging, studies show that reluctant or disinterested customers need more connection. CSR is growing more important; therefore, businesses must match customer expectations.

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APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

• Section 1: Demographic Information

1. Age

1. 18-24
2. 25-34
3. 35-44
4. 45-54
5. 55 and above

2. Gender

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

3. Education Level

1. High School
2. Bachelor's
3. Master's
4. PhD

5. Other

4. Employment Status

1. Employed
2. Unemployed
3. Student
4. Retired
5. Other

5. Income Level

1. Below €20,000
2. €20,000 - €40,000
3. €40,001 - €60,000
4. Above €60,000

• Section 2: Impact of CSR Initiatives on Brand Image

6. Unilever's CSR activities improve its overall brand image in Finland.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

7. Unilever's CSR initiatives make me view the company as a socially responsible organization.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral

4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

8. I believe Unilever's commitment to CSR enhances my trust in the brand.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

9. Unilever's CSR initiatives positively influence my decision to purchase its products.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

10. I consider Unilever's CSR activities to be aligned with my personal values.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

• Section 3: Consumer Perceptions of Unilever's CSR Efforts

11. I am aware of Unilever's CSR efforts in Finland.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

12. I believe Unilever's CSR activities have a genuine social and environmental impact.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

13. Unilever effectively communicates its CSR initiatives to Finnish consumers.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

14. I feel that Unilever's CSR initiatives are authentic and not just a marketing strategy.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

15. I believe that Unilever's CSR activities reflect its long-term commitment to sustainability.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

- **Section 4: Impact of CSR on Consumer Perceptions**

16. Unilever's CSR initiatives influence my perception of the brand's ethical values.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

17. I feel more positive about Unilever as a brand because of its CSR activities.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

18. Unilever's CSR efforts make me more likely to recommend the brand to others.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

19. The company's CSR activities make me more loyal to Unilever's products.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

20. I believe that Unilever's CSR initiatives differentiate it from other brands in the market.

1. Strongly Disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree