

A Study on the Impact of Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility on Korean Consumers' Purchase Intentions toward Luxury Brands

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Abstract: In the context of global economic integration and accelerating consumer upgrading, the luxury goods industry is witnessing intensified competition. Concurrently, the modern consumer exhibits a rising concern for social and environmental issues, compelling luxury brands to integrate corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a strategic component of their brand identity. Korea, a nation that merges traditional Confucian values with contemporary consumerism, provides a distinct market environment in which consumer purchase behavior is simultaneously influenced by “symbolic consumption” and ethical considerations. This study examines the impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on Korean consumers' purchase intentions toward luxury brands. We develop and test a conceptual model that positions CSR perception as an antecedent variable influencing purchase intention, mediated by brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity. Furthermore, we explore how cultural orientation (e.g., collectivist values) and social values (e.g., fairness, environmental concern) moderate the effects of CSR perception on buying decisions. Drawing on an empirical survey of 600 valid responses collected from various Korean cities, the findings confirm that (1) perceived CSR has a significant positive impact on the intention to purchase luxury products; (2) brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity mediate the relationship between CSR perception and purchase intention; and (3) cultural orientation and social values significantly moderate these relationships, such that collectivist-leaning or socially conscious consumers respond more strongly to CSR-driven brand appeals. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the emerging body of literature connecting CSR to consumer behavior in luxury contexts, shedding light on the complex psychological pathways whereby CSR influences consumers' final decisions. Practically, the results highlight the importance of crafting CSR initiatives that resonate with local cultural and social norms in Korea, including philanthropic activities, eco-friendly production, labor welfare, and respect for local traditions. By internalizing these insights, luxury brands can align their high-end image with ethical commitments, ultimately enhancing brand loyalty and market performance.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Luxury Brands; Korean Consumers; Purchase Intention; Brand Trust; Self-Congruity; Cultural Orientation.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The luxury goods sector has grown into a global industry characterized by prestigious brands, high profit margins, and intense competition. Historically, luxury brands have traditionally relied on exclusivity, craftsmanship, and storied heritage to justify premium prices. Yet, the evolving landscape of consumer values and societal expectations is driving many luxury companies to adopt broader social and environmental responsibilities. Indeed, corporate social responsibility (CSR)—once considered tangential or purely philanthropic—has become integral to reputational management and strategic differentiation in the luxury segment.

Concurrently, the Korean luxury market stands out for its confluence of Confucian cultural legacies and modern consumer aspirations. On one hand, Korean society retains deep-rooted respect for hierarchy, collective harmony, and social prestige. On the other, younger Korean consumers are rapidly embracing Western influences, digital media, and global social movements. This duality creates a distinctive environment in which ostentatious or status-oriented consumption persists, but ethical and moral considerations are rapidly gaining ground.

CSR thus enters the Korean luxury brand market at an opportune moment. Brands that can authentically

demonstrate a commitment to charitable causes, fair labor, eco-friendly production, or cultural preservation may earn increased trust and positive brand attitudes, particularly from socially conscious consumers. In a society where group-oriented norms remain significant, the signals transmitted by CSR initiatives could be amplified through peer networks and social media, further reinforcing consumers' willingness to purchase. For luxury brands operating in Korea, the question is whether—and how—CSR can move beyond superficial marketing to deliver real social impact and, in so doing, foster stronger consumer loyalty and brand equity.

1.2. Research Questions

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates the following core questions:

1. How does perceived CSR influence Korean consumers' purchase intentions toward luxury brands, and what psychological mechanisms mediate this influence?
2. Does the perception of CSR operate through intermediaries such as brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity to shape final purchase decisions?
3. How do cultural orientation (e.g., collectivist values) and social values (e.g., environmental consciousness, fairness beliefs) moderate the relationship between CSR perception and consumer purchase intention in Korea?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to generate theoretical insights and practical guidance for luxury brand

managers seeking to leverage CSR for competitive advantage in the Korean market.

1.3. Research Objectives and Significance

1.3.1. Theoretical Significance

Bridging CSR and Luxury Branding: While CSR has been studied extensively in the context of mainstream consumer goods, its application in luxury settings remains relatively underexplored. This study deepens our understanding of how CSR influences consumer judgments in a sector often associated with high prices and ostentation.

Elaborating Mediating and Moderating Variables: The research incorporates brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity as mediators, extending the theoretical lenses beyond simple “CSR–Purchase Intention” pathways. Additionally, by incorporating cultural orientation and social values as moderators, the research spotlights the contextual nuance necessary to explain consumer behaviors in a collectivist yet increasingly individualistic society.

Korean Market Focus: Cross-cultural scholars emphasize that constructs like trust, perceived responsibility, and brand meaning can vary widely across regions. By honing in on Korea, this study contributes to a nuanced, culturally informed view of CSR’s effects on consumer outcomes.

1.3.2. Practical Significance

Refining CSR Strategies: Results can help luxury brands tailor socially responsible initiatives to resonate with Korean consumers’ priorities—be it local philanthropic engagements, sustainable supply chains, or youth education programs.

Enhancing Brand Reputation and Loyalty: Understanding how CSR influences brand trust and brand attitude can guide marketing communication strategies, forging deeper emotional bonds with consumers.

Managing Ethical Dilemmas in Luxury Consumption: Korean consumers increasingly perceive potential moral conflicts in buying expensive goods. By showcasing strong CSR credentials, luxury brands can mitigate consumer guilt and foster “moral licensing,” thereby reinforcing brand loyalty.

1.4. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is organized into nine chapters:

1. Introduction: Overview of research background, objectives, significance, and structure.

2. Literature Review: Comprehensive survey of previous studies on CSR, luxury brand consumption, cultural values, and consumer purchase behaviors.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development: Presentation of the conceptual model and specific hypotheses linking CSR perception, mediators, and moderators.

4. Research Design and Methodology: Detailed explanation of the research methodology, including questionnaire design, sampling, and data collection procedures.

5. Sample Description and Measurement Validation: Presentation of descriptive findings, reliability measures, and validity tests for the measurement scales used.

6. Structural Equation Modeling and Results: Analysis of the hypothesized model, path coefficients, and significance tests, plus relevant discussions.

7. Extended Discussion and Managerial Implications: Further interpretation of key findings, exploration of theoretical perspectives, and strategic implications for practitioners.

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions: Acknowledgment of constraints in the study design and suggestions for future empirical and conceptual work.

9. Conclusion: Summary of major insights, contributions to literature, and final remarks.

2. Literature Review

This chapter reviews pertinent literature to provide a theoretical foundation for the study’s conceptual model. It examines (1) the evolution and dimensions of corporate social responsibility, (2) characteristics of luxury consumption, (3) CSR’s linkage to consumer behavior, and (4) cultural factors in Korea that may shape these relationships.

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

2.1.1. Historical Evolution and Definitions of CSR

Corporate social responsibility has diverse conceptualizations. Early debates framed CSR as business obligations extending beyond profit maximization (Davis, 1973). Carroll’s (1979) seminal four-part model—encompassing economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities—became a foundational lens for understanding the scope of CSR. In more contemporary discourse, scholars emphasize strategic CSR, in which societal challenges can be leveraged for competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Meanwhile, globalization and stakeholder activism further push enterprises to adopt sustainability-driven CSR (Elkington, 1997), balancing people, planet, and profit.

2.1.2. CSR in the Luxury Sector

Although mainstream CSR studies often center on mass-market products, the luxury sector exhibits unique features. High-end consumers typically pay premium prices, expecting not only top-tier quality but also assurance that brand practices are ethically and environmentally acceptable (Kapferer & Michaut-Denizeau, 2020). Luxury houses, historically secretive about sourcing or manufacturing, now face calls for transparency regarding supply chain ethics, artisanal labor welfare, environmental footprints, and philanthropic engagements. CSR in luxury brands may highlight preserving artisanal heritage, supporting endangered crafts, or elevating cultural communities (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). Hence, CSR can be harnessed to reinforce “exclusivity plus responsibility,” presenting a refined brand image that resonates with evolving consumer moral expectations.

2.1.3. Dimensions of CSR Perception

Consumers’ perception of CSR often revolves around multiple sub-dimensions:

1. Economic Responsibility: Maintaining profitability, providing fair pricing, and contributing to economic stability.

2. Legal Responsibility: Complying with legal standards, ensuring labor rights, and respecting regulatory frameworks.

3. Ethical Responsibility: Upholding moral norms that exceed legal minimums, such as fair wages, diverse hiring, and equitable supply chain practices.

4. Philanthropic Responsibility: Voluntary contributions to charitable causes, philanthropic events, community uplift, and social programs.

In the luxury context, these dimensions often blend with sustainability initiatives—e.g., using eco-friendly materials or supporting local artisans—thus further differentiating brand offerings.

2.2. Luxury Brand Consumption

2.2.1. Defining Luxury Brands

Luxury brands are characterized by elevated price points, renowned heritage, craftsmanship, aesthetic excellence, and symbolic value (Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2007). Beyond functionality, luxury products serve as status markers, emotional gratifiers, and identity signifiers. Although technology, marketing channels, and consumer expectations evolve, exclusivity remains a core pillar of luxury, reinforcing a brand's prestige and aspirational appeal.

2.2.2. Consumer Motivations for Luxury Goods

Scholars have identified various motives for luxury consumption (Vickers & Renand, 2003):

1. **Conspicuous or Symbolic Consumption:** Signaling wealth, social status, or belonging to elite subcultures.
2. **Emotional or Hedonic Gratification:** Aesthetic pleasure, self-reward, personal indulgence, or seeking unique experiences.
3. **Quality Assurance:** Trust in superior product craftsmanship, durability, and performance.
4. **Cultural Prestige:** Aligning with “timeless” brand heritage, narratives of artisanship, and association with artistic endeavors.

In Korea, historically shaped by Confucian hierarchies and more recently by global consumerism, such motivations can intertwine with concerns about “face,” group identity, and growing ethical consciousness.

2.3. Linking CSR to Consumer Behavior

2.3.1. Theoretical Perspectives on CSR's Influence

Numerous theories illuminate why CSR can affect consumers' brand choice:

Signaling Theory: CSR actions may serve as positive signals of a company's moral integrity and reliability (Spence, 1973). Luxury brands perceived as ethically responsible may be seen as “trustworthy,” reducing uncertainty about the true quality and brand ethics.

Stakeholder Theory: Suggests that businesses can best succeed by addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders, including consumers who demand transparency and accountability (Freeman, 1984).

Attribution Theory: Consumers often assess whether a brand's CSR activities stem from genuine altruism or opportunistic motives. Sincere CSR fosters stronger emotional connections and brand advocacy (Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000).

2.3.2. CSR and Purchase Intention: Direct and Indirect Effects

Empirical findings generally show a positive correlation between CSR perception and consumer responses, ranging from improved brand evaluations to enhanced loyalty (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). For luxury goods, CSR can alleviate the moral conflict occasionally felt by consumers who see luxury as excessive or decadent (Wang, Binh, & Kim, 2019). By highlighting philanthropic or community-support initiatives,

luxury brands reduce potential guilt and enable consumers to view their purchases as morally defensible or even beneficial. Thus, CSR can act as a direct driver of purchase intention. Alternatively, the effect can be indirect, mediated by brand-related constructs—brand trust, brand attitude, or self-congruity (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010).

2.4. Cultural Context: Korean Market and Consumers

2.4.1. Confucian Roots and Modern Transformations

Korea's cultural tapestry is characterized by:

1. **Collectivist Orientation:** Emphasizing group harmony, family ties, and conformity to social norms.
2. **Respect for Hierarchy:** Tradition of vertical structures, influencing how individuals display or interpret social status.
3. **Rapid Globalization:** Youth especially adopt Western consumer values and progressive social ideals.

2.4.2. Impact of Cultural Orientation and Social Values

Collectivism vs. Individualism: Consumers with higher collectivist leanings might respond more strongly to CSR claims that highlight communal benefits or group harmony. Conversely, more individualistic subgroups might emphasize personal brand alignment.

Social and Environmental Consciousness: Generational shifts have made environmental sustainability, fair labor practices, and philanthropic giving more salient. Korean social media can amplify CSR-related brand reputations (both positive and negative).

Ethical Consumption Movements: Civil-society campaigns encourage conscientious consumption, including boycotts of irresponsible brands and preference for those excelling in CSR.

2.5. Summary of Literature Insights

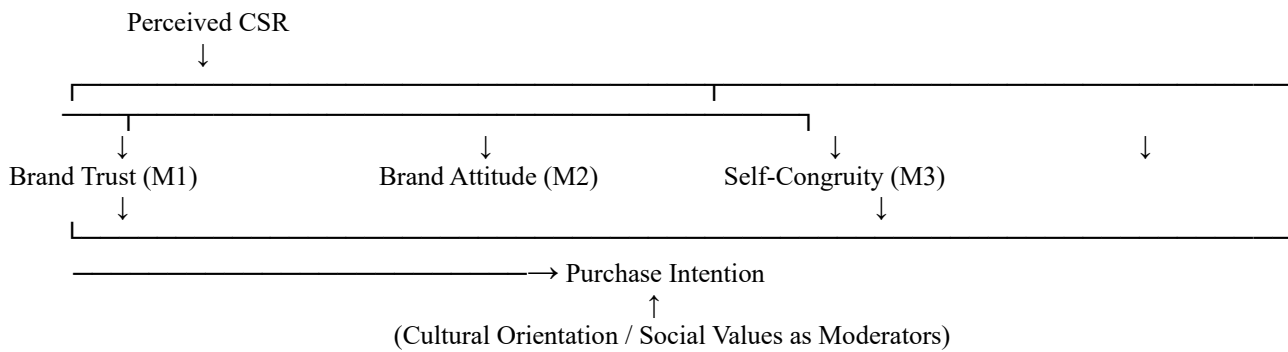
Overall, there is robust evidence that CSR can influence consumer evaluations and behaviors. However, how such effects manifest for high-end luxury brands—and in particular cultural contexts—remains underexplored. This gap motivates the present study to build a model that includes relevant mediators (brand trust, brand attitude, self-congruity) and moderators (cultural orientation, social values), thereby offering a holistic view of CSR's impact in the Korean luxury market.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Building upon the literature, this chapter proposes a conceptual framework linking CSR perception to luxury brand purchase intention, with multiple mediators and moderators reflecting psychological and cultural factors.

3.1. Conceptual Model

Figure 3.1 depicts the hypothesized model:
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3.2. Hypothesis Development

3.2.1. Perceived CSR → Brand Trust, Brand Attitude, Self-Congruity

H1a: Perceived CSR will exert a positive effect on brand trust.

H1b: Perceived CSR will exert a positive effect on brand attitude.

H1c: Perceived CSR will exert a positive effect on self-congruity.

When consumers observe luxury brands engaging in socially responsible activities—such as environmentally friendly sourcing, philanthropic donations, or fair treatment of artisans—they may infer higher organizational integrity, leading to heightened trust (Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). CSR efforts also can reshape emotional reactions, stimulating more favorable brand attitudes (Brown & Dacin, 1997). Moreover, if a consumer's personal ethical standards align with the brand's CSR initiatives, the brand can be seen as consistent with the individual's ideal or social self-image, boosting self-congruity (Sirgy, 1986).

3.2.2. Brand Trust, Brand Attitude, Self-Congruity → Purchase Intention

H2a: Brand trust positively influences luxury brand purchase intention.

H2b: Brand attitude positively influences luxury brand purchase intention.

H2c: Self-congruity positively influences luxury brand purchase intention.

Previous studies show that trust is a pivotal driver in high-involvement categories, including luxury, where risk and cost are perceived to be higher (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Positive attitudes often arise from emotional or cognitive evaluations of the brand and significantly predict buying decisions (Bian & Forsythe, 2012). Similarly, if the brand's image resonates with the consumer's self-concept—particularly in a culturally sensitive market—purchase intention is further strengthened (Han & Hyun, 2013).

3.2.3. Mediation Effects of Brand Trust, Brand Attitude, Self-Congruity

H3a: Brand trust mediates the relationship between CSR perception and purchase intention.

H3b: Brand attitude mediates the relationship between CSR perception and purchase intention.

H3c: Self-congruity mediates the relationship between CSR perception and purchase intention.

By satisfying the conditions of partial or full mediation, each mediator captures a distinct mechanism through which CSR exerts an influence on consumer decision-making. For example, CSR may establish trust by demonstrating consistent ethical standards, or it may create a positive brand attitude by conveying brand warmth and goodwill, or it may

generate a sense of “moral synergy” with one's self-image.

3.2.4. Moderation by Cultural Orientation and Social Values

H4: Cultural orientation and social values will moderate the impact of perceived CSR on purchase intention (directly or via mediators). Specifically, consumers high in collectivist orientation or strong ethical concerns will exhibit a stronger positive effect of CSR on purchase intention than those low in these dimensions.

This hypothesis recognizes that not every consumer weighs CSR equally. Some might ignore or remain skeptical of brand social responsibility claims. Conversely, those who value communal welfare or hold strong beliefs about sustainability will be more attuned to CSR messaging and more likely to incorporate brand virtue into their buying decisions (Mohr & Webb, 2005).

4. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological steps taken to empirically test the conceptual framework. It elaborates on the questionnaire design, sampling procedures, data collection approach, and analytical techniques.

4.1. Overall Research Strategy

A quantitative survey was chosen due to its suitability for measuring latent constructs (CSR perception, brand trust, brand attitude, self-congruity, purchase intention) and evaluating structural relationships. Additionally, we integrated a small-scale pre-survey to refine the questionnaire, ensuring cultural and linguistic appropriateness for Korean respondents.

4.2. Measurement and Questionnaire Design

4.2.1. Construct Operationalization

1. Perceived CSR

Adapted from Carroll's (1979) four-dimensional model: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities, plus ecological sustainability dimensions from later frameworks (Turker, 2009).

Example items: “I believe this brand invests in environmentally friendly materials”; “I think this brand treats its employees and suppliers ethically.”

2. Brand Trust

Measured using a 5-item scale reflecting reliability, honesty, and confidence in the brand's future behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Example item: “I feel I can rely on this luxury brand to be consistently high-quality.”

3. Brand Attitude

A 5-item semantic differential scale capturing overall affective and cognitive evaluation (Mitchell & Olson, 1981).

Example item: “My feelings toward this brand are very positive/negative.”

4. Self-Congruity

An 8-item scale reflecting whether the brand’s perceived image aligns with consumers’ actual, ideal, or social self-image (Sirgy, 1986).

Example item: “Purchasing from this brand is consistent with the type of person I aspire to be.”

5. Purchase Intention

A 4-item scale drawing from theory of planned behavior and prior luxury consumption research (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Example item: “I intend to purchase products from this luxury brand in the near future.”

6. Cultural Orientation and Social Values

Comprising items related to collectivism, group harmony, environmental concern, and fairness beliefs (Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1992).

Example item: “I am deeply concerned about companies’ contributions to societal welfare.”

All items applied a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree,” 7 = “strongly agree”). The questionnaire was drafted in English, then translated and back-translated to Korean to ensure linguistic consistency.

4.2.2. Pre-Survey and Pilot Testing

A pilot survey was conducted among 40 Korean graduate students who had purchased or considered purchasing luxury goods. Participants provided feedback on item clarity, phrasing, and cultural relevance. Minor revisions were made, such as adjusting the wording of philanthropic responsibilities to better reflect typical Korean charitable norms (e.g., supporting local orphanages, providing arts sponsorship).

4.3. Sampling

4.3.1. Target Population

The target population included Korean consumers aged 20 and above who either have purchased at least one luxury product in the past 12 months or plan to purchase one in the coming year. Emphasis was on major urban centers—Seoul, Busan, Daegu, Incheon—where the luxury goods market is most active.

4.3.2. Sampling Techniques and Data Collection

Two channels were used:

1. Offline Intercept Surveys: Conducted in department stores and high-end shopping districts (e.g., Myeongdong in Seoul, Shinsegae in Busan). Trained survey assistants recruited shoppers who indicated a genuine interest in or prior experience with luxury goods.

2. Online Surveys: Posted on Korean online communities (Naver, KakaoTalk group chats) focused on fashion or lifestyle, supplemented by targeted social media ads. Minor monetary or gift card incentives were provided to improve response rates.

A total of 800 questionnaires were administered; after data cleaning, 600 usable responses were retained.

4.4. Analytical Procedures

1. Descriptive Statistics: Examined the demographic profile, consumption habits, and any anomalies or missing values.

2. Measurement Model: Conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess reliability and validity (Hair et al., 2010).

3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): Used AMOS or

Mplus to test the hypothesized relationships. Overall model fit was examined through χ^2/df , RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR.

4. Mediation Analysis: Utilized bootstrapping (5,000 samples) to investigate the indirect effects.

5. Moderation Analysis: Conducted multi-group SEM or regression-based moderation to see if cultural and social values change the strength of relationships among constructs.

5. Sample Description and Measurement Validation

This chapter documents the demographic makeup of the sample and validates the psychometric properties of the scales.

5.1. Sample Description

Among the 600 respondents:

Gender: 54% female, 46% male.

Age Distribution: 25–35 years (52%), 36–45 years (28%), above 45 (15%), and under 25 (5%).

Educational Level: 72% hold a bachelor’s or higher degree, suggesting relatively well-educated participants typical of the Korean luxury consumer base.

Monthly Income: 51% earn between 2–5 million KRW, 25% earn above 5 million KRW, and 24% below 2 million KRW.

Purchase Frequency: 31% buy luxury goods at least once every six months, 25% once or twice a year, 19% once per quarter, and the remainder with more sporadic patterns.

This distribution indicates a predominantly middle- to upper-middle income group, frequent engagements with luxury brand consumption, and a fairly balanced gender representation.

5.2. Reliability Testing

Cronbach’s α and composite reliability (CR) values for each construct are summarized below (illustrative only):

CSR Perception ($\alpha = 0.93$, CR = 0.94)

Brand Trust ($\alpha = 0.88$, CR = 0.90)

Brand Attitude ($\alpha = 0.89$, CR = 0.91)

Self-Congruity ($\alpha = 0.90$, CR = 0.92)

Purchase Intention ($\alpha = 0.87$, CR = 0.89)

Cultural/Social Values ($\alpha = 0.85$ –0.91, CR = 0.86–0.92)

All exceed the recommended thresholds of 0.70 for α and 0.60 for CR, confirming excellent internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

5.3. Validity Testing

5.3.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

An initial EFA with principal component extraction supported the a priori five-factor structure (CSR, brand trust, brand attitude, self-congruity, purchase intention). No items exhibited cross-loadings above 0.40, indicating clear factor separations.

5.3.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

A CFA was run to confirm the measurement model’s structure. Fit indices suggested good data-model alignment:

$\chi^2/df = 2.42$

RMSEA = 0.051

CFI = 0.928

TLI = 0.915

SRMR = 0.047

Convergent validity was confirmed as all factor loadings exceeded 0.60 ($p < 0.001$), and average variance extracted (AVE) was above 0.50. Discriminant validity was verified by

comparing the square roots of AVEs with inter-construct correlations (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

5.4. Summary

The findings indicate that the sample adequately represents Korean luxury brand consumers, and the multi-dimensional measurement model demonstrates robust reliability and validity. The stage is thus set for structural equation modeling in Chapter 6, where the hypothesized relationships are tested.

6. Structural Equation Modeling and Results

This chapter presents the SEM results, including overall model fit and hypothesis testing. Mediation and moderation analyses are also performed to reveal deeper insights.

6.1. Model Fit Assessment

After constructing the structural paths in AMOS, the final model indicates adequate fit:

$\chi^2/df = 2.50$
RMSEA = 0.054
CFI = 0.920
TLI = 0.907
SRMR = 0.050

Though fit indices are slightly stricter than those in the measurement model, they remain within acceptable thresholds (Hair et al., 2010).

6.2. Hypothesis Testing

6.2.1. Direct Effects of CSR on Mediators (H1a, H1b, H1c)

CSR → Brand Trust: $\beta = 0.49$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H1a.

CSR → Brand Attitude: $\beta = 0.45$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H1b.

CSR → Self-Congruity: $\beta = 0.41$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H1c.

Results confirm that perceiving a luxury brand as socially responsible elevates trust in the brand, fosters more favorable brand evaluations, and enhances the consumer's sense of identity alignment with the brand.

6.2.2. Effects of Mediators on Purchase Intention (H2a, H2b, H2c)

Brand Trust → Purchase Intention: $\beta = 0.38$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H2a.

Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention: $\beta = 0.43$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H2b.

Self-Congruity → Purchase Intention: $\beta = 0.37$ ($p < 0.001$), supporting H2c.

Brand trust has a moderate influence, brand attitude shows a slightly stronger effect, and self-congruity also substantially drives intention to buy from a given luxury label.

6.2.3. Mediation Effects (H3a, H3b, H3c)

Using the Bootstrap method (5,000 resamples), indirect effects are significant for all three mediators:

1. CSR → Brand Trust → Purchase Intention: Indirect effect is 0.19 (95% CI: [0.13, 0.26]).

2. CSR → Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention: Indirect effect is 0.20 (95% CI: [0.14, 0.28]).

3. CSR → Self-Congruity → Purchase Intention: Indirect effect is 0.15 (95% CI: [0.09, 0.22]).

All confidence intervals exclude zero. Moreover, the direct effect of CSR on purchase intention remains significant, indicating partial mediation. Thus, H3a, H3b, and H3c are

supported.

6.3. Moderation Analysis (H4)

6.3.1. Cultural Orientation

We employed multi-group SEM by dividing respondents into two groups—high vs. low collectivist orientation—based on a median split of collectivism scores. For the high-collectivism group, the standardized coefficient for CSR → Purchase Intention is notably stronger ($\beta = 0.34$) than for the low-collectivism group ($\beta = 0.21$). A chi-square difference test confirms the difference is significant ($p < 0.05$), supporting the moderation effect implied by H4.

6.3.2. Social Values

A separate interaction analysis used hierarchical regression, incorporating the interaction term (CSR × social values). Results reveal a positive interaction ($\beta = 0.12$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that consumers with higher ethical and environmental concerns exhibit a more pronounced response to CSR. Thus, H4 is further validated: social values intensify the positive link between CSR and purchase intention.

7. Extended Discussion and Managerial Implications

In this chapter, we delve deeper into interpreting the empirical findings, linking them to prior theoretical perspectives, and articulating actionable recommendations for luxury brand managers.

7.1. Extended Discussion

7.1.1. Moral Licensing in Luxury Purchases

A recurring theme in consumer psychology is that individuals seek to balance indulgence with moral self-perception (Merritt, Effron, & Monin, 2010). Our results underscore how CSR fosters a form of “moral licensing”: consumers rationalize luxury consumption by pointing to the brand's charitable or environmental contributions. Consequently, they feel less guilt and stronger justification for purchasing high-end items, aligning with prior observations in cause-related marketing (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

7.1.2. Interplay of Multiple Mediators

We found that brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity each partially mediate CSR's effect, suggesting parallel (rather than strictly sequential) psychological pathways. While brand trust captures the cognitive dimension—“the brand is competent and ethical”—brand attitude encompasses the affective dimension—“I feel good about this brand”—and self-congruity embodies the identity dimension—“this brand fits who I am or want to be.” In practice, a brand's CSR campaign that effectively addresses these three psychological layers may maximize its impact on consumer decision-making.

7.1.3. Cultural and Social Value Dynamics

The moderation findings highlight how collectivist cultural roots in Korea heighten sensitivity to CSR, consistent with prior East Asian consumer behavior studies (Hofstede, 2001). Meanwhile, strong social or environmental values further accentuate CSR's importance. This synergy suggests that an evolving moral consciousness among young Koreans, informed by global climate activism and local community awareness, fosters brand responsiveness to ethical positions.

7.2. Managerial Implications

7.2.1. Tailoring CSR to Local Culture

Luxury brands should localize CSR initiatives to align with Korean cultural sensibilities:

Community Engagement: Partnerships with Korean charities addressing education, welfare for seniors, or cultural heritage preservation can resonate deeply, given collectivist norms valuing social harmony and intergenerational respect.

Environmental Stewardship: Considering the rising environmental awareness in Korea, focusing on sustainable raw materials (e.g., organic textiles, ethically sourced leather) can reinforce brand trust among younger consumers.

Art & Culture Sponsorships: Showcasing and preserving traditional Korean arts (e.g., hanbok design collaborations, sponsorship of cultural exhibitions) ties brand prestige to local identity.

7.2.2. Strengthening the Triad of Trust, Attitude, and Self-Congruity

Enhancing Transparency: Disclose CSR activities in detail, from supply chain audits to philanthropic outcomes. Greater transparency fosters consumer trust in brand sincerity.

Emotional and Symbolic Resonance: CSR messaging should evoke emotional appeals. Using storytelling and visual narratives can foster brand warmth, thereby elevating brand attitude.

Identity Reinforcement: Emphasize how CSR aligns with aspirational lifestyles and moral values, helping consumers see a clear link between wearing or using the brand and being “a conscientious citizen.”

7.2.3. Communicating CSR Effectively

Omnichannel Communication: Integrate CSR narratives across social media, in-store experiences, official brand websites, and offline media. Provide consistent and engaging content to ensure consumers recognize the brand’s social commitments.

Influencer Collaborations: Partner with figures who possess strong ethical reputations or philanthropic track records, further reinforcing the brand’s CSR values.

Long-Term Initiatives: Go beyond ad-hoc events. Sustained programs, followed by periodic updates on social media, can nurture consumer trust and loyalty over time.

8. Limitations and Future Research Directions

8.1. Study Limitations

1. **Sample Representation:** While the sample covers major Korean cities, rural or lesser-developed regions are underrepresented. Future research might investigate whether the observed effects hold in smaller cities or among lower-income consumers.

2. **Cross-Sectional Design:** Data capture consumers’ attitudes at a single point in time. Longitudinal or experimental designs could better illuminate temporal changes or causal inferences regarding CSR perception and brand loyalty.

3. **Granularity of CSR Dimensions:** Although we incorporated multiple facets (economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic), deeper inquiries into specific aspects—such as carbon footprint reduction or artisan wage fairness—might clarify how distinct CSR activities shape consumer perceptions in the luxury sector.

8.2. Future Research Directions

1. **Comparative Cross-Cultural Studies:** Investigating the same model in other East Asian markets (e.g., Japan, Greater China) or Western markets (e.g., France, the United States) could reveal cultural commonalities and differences.

2. **Extended Mediation Mechanisms:** Incorporating additional mediators such as perceived authenticity, brand prestige, or consumer guilt could further unravel the interplay between moral and hedonic drivers in luxury consumption.

3. **CSR Communication Modes:** Experimental research testing varied communication styles (e.g., emotional narrative vs. data-centric) can offer insights on how best to convey CSR efforts to different segments.

9. Conclusion

This study set out to determine how Korean consumers’ perceptions of corporate social responsibility shape their purchase intentions toward luxury brands. Empirical findings indicate that CSR perception exerts a significant positive impact on purchase intention, mediated by brand trust, brand attitude, and self-congruity. These mediators represent distinct psychological pathways—cognitive, affective, and identity-based—that collectively amplify the effect of CSR. Moreover, cultural orientation and social values moderate this relationship, underscoring that consumers who embrace collectivist or ethical ideals respond even more favorably to socially responsible luxury brands.

From a theoretical standpoint, the research enriches the limited scholarship on CSR-luxury brand intersections, highlighting the importance of psychosocial constructs and cultural factors. In terms of practice, luxury brands striving to succeed in Korea should develop culturally attuned CSR strategies—blending philanthropic endeavors, environmental stewardship, transparent operations, and local community engagement. Such efforts not only cultivate consumer trust and positive brand attitudes but also align with Korean consumers’ self-concept and moral aspirations.

As consumers globally demand greater ethical accountability, the integration of CSR into a luxury brand’s core identity will likely become a decisive factor for long-term success. Brands that genuinely invest in socially beneficial initiatives and communicate these commitments effectively can mitigate moral conflicts, enhance brand loyalty, and reinforce a premium positioning that resonates with an increasingly conscientious clientele—particularly in culturally unique environments like Korea.

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