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**Corporate Social Responsibility and Consumer Behavior in  
Denmark**

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Strategy

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to analyze the corporate social responsibility and consumer behavior in Denmark

**Methodology:** This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low cost advantage as compared to a field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

**Findings:** The Danish study on CSR and consumer behavior shows that Danish consumers prefer socially responsible companies, willing to pay more for products/services from such firms. However, awareness and importance of CSR vary among demographic groups, highlighting the need for tailored strategies. Overall, prioritizing CSR can help companies differentiate themselves and attract loyal customers in Denmark's competitive market.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** Social identity theory, stakeholder theory & norm activation theory may be used to anchor future studies on analyze the corporate social responsibility and consumer behavior: a comparative study between Denmark. Companies operating in Denmark should prioritize the integration of authentic and transparent CSR initiatives into their business strategies. Government agencies in Denmark can play a crucial role in promoting CSR adoption and accountability among businesses.

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumer Behavior*

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## INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior in developed economies like the USA, Japan, and the UK is characterized by various factors influenced by socio-economic conditions, cultural norms, and technological advancements. For instance, in the USA, consumer behavior is heavily influenced by factors such as income levels, lifestyle preferences, and technological adoption. According to recent statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, there has been a significant shift towards online shopping, with e-commerce sales increasing by 44% in the second quarter of 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Additionally, consumer preferences in the USA are increasingly leaning towards sustainable and ethical products, with a Nielsen report revealing that sales of sustainable consumer goods grew by 20% from 2014 to 2018 (Nielsen, 2018).

Similarly, in Japan, consumer behavior reflects a blend of traditional values and modern trends. Despite being technologically advanced, Japanese consumers often prioritize quality and brand reputation in their purchasing decisions. According to a study by Kimura and Hasegawa (2017), consumer spending patterns in Japan have shifted towards experiences rather than material possessions, with an increasing demand for leisure and entertainment activities. Furthermore, there is a growing interest among Japanese consumers in health and wellness products, evidenced by the steady growth of the organic food market, which saw a 5.7% increase in sales in 2019 (The Japan Organic Agriculture Association, 2020).

Consumer behavior in developing economies, such as those in parts of Latin America, Asia, and Africa, is influenced by a myriad of socio-economic factors, including income levels, cultural traditions, and access to resources. For instance, in Brazil, consumer behavior is heavily influenced by economic fluctuations and government policies. According to a study by Silva and Rocha (2018), Brazilian consumers often exhibit a preference for locally produced goods, driven by a sense of national pride and the desire to support domestic industries. Moreover, with the increasing penetration of smartphones and internet connectivity, there has been a notable rise in online shopping among Brazilian consumers, with e-commerce sales growing by 75% between 2015 and 2019 (Ebit|Nielsen, 2020).

In India, consumer behavior is shaped by a diverse set of cultural and religious beliefs, as well as socio-economic disparities. For instance, the Indian consumer market is witnessing a shift towards value-based consumption, with consumers prioritizing affordability and utility in their purchasing decisions. According to a report by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the Indian consumer market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9% between 2020 and 2025, driven by rising disposable incomes and urbanization (BCG, 2020). Additionally, there is a growing trend of sustainability-conscious consumption in India, with consumers showing increased interest in eco-friendly products and ethical brands.

Consumer behavior in Sub-Saharan economies, characterized by diverse cultural backgrounds, varying income levels, and infrastructural challenges, presents unique dynamics compared to other regions. For instance, in Nigeria, consumer behavior is heavily influenced by factors such as income disparity, urbanization, and cultural preferences. Despite facing economic challenges, the Nigerian consumer market is witnessing a surge in demand for convenience and value-oriented products. According to a report by Euromonitor International (2020), the Nigerian retail sector is evolving rapidly, with a notable increase in the popularity of modern retail formats such as supermarkets and hypermarkets. Furthermore, there is a growing trend of digitalization in Nigeria,

with the country experiencing a 102% increase in internet penetration between 2015 and 2020 (World Bank, 2021), leading to a rise in online shopping and digital payment adoption among Nigerian consumers.

In Kenya, consumer behavior is shaped by a mix of urban and rural lifestyles, along with socio-economic factors like education and employment. Kenyan consumers exhibit diverse preferences, with a significant segment prioritizing affordability and quality in their purchasing decisions. According to a study by Masinde (2019), there is a growing demand for consumer goods in Kenya, driven by increasing disposable incomes and urbanization. Additionally, there is a rising awareness of environmental sustainability among Kenyan consumers, as evidenced by the growing popularity of eco-friendly products and ethical brands in the market.

In South Africa, consumer behavior is influenced by a complex interplay of socio-economic factors, historical contexts, and cultural diversity. The South African consumer market reflects significant disparities, with a considerable portion of the population facing income inequality and poverty, while others exhibit higher purchasing power. According to a study by Verhoef (2018), South African consumers tend to prioritize value for money and quality when making purchasing decisions. However, there is also a growing segment of the population showing interest in premium and luxury goods, driven by aspirations for social status and brand recognition. Furthermore, the digital transformation in South Africa has contributed to changes in consumer behavior, with the country experiencing a surge in e-commerce activities and digital payment adoption (PayPal, 2021).

In Ghana, consumer behavior is shaped by similar socio-economic factors, as well as cultural traditions and perceptions. Ghanaian consumers demonstrate a preference for locally produced goods, influenced by a sense of national pride and support for indigenous industries. Moreover, there is a growing awareness of sustainability and ethical consumption among Ghanaian consumers, with a notable increase in demand for eco-friendly products and fair-trade brands (Amankwah-Amoah, 2021). Additionally, the rapid urbanization and increasing access to technology in Ghana have led to shifts in consumer preferences, with a rising demand for convenience and digital solutions in retail and financial services.

In Sub-Saharan economies, consumer behavior is influenced by a range of socio-economic factors, cultural dynamics, and infrastructural limitations. In Nigeria, for instance, despite economic challenges, consumer spending has been steadily increasing, particularly in sectors such as telecommunications, food, and beverages. According to the National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria (2021), household consumption expenditure grew by 0.16% in real terms in the fourth quarter of 2020 compared to the previous quarter. This growth reflects the resilience of Nigerian consumers amidst economic uncertainties, with many prioritizing essential goods and services despite income constraints. Moreover, the informal sector plays a significant role in Nigeria's consumer landscape, with a large portion of transactions occurring outside formal retail channels, such as in open markets and street vendors (Nwokocha, 2018).

In Kenya, consumer behavior is influenced by a mix of urban and rural lifestyles, along with socio-economic factors like education and employment. Kenyan consumers exhibit diverse preferences, with a significant segment prioritizing affordability and quality in their purchasing decisions. According to a study by Masinde (2019), there is a growing demand for consumer goods in Kenya, driven by increasing disposable incomes and urbanization. Additionally, there is a rising awareness

of environmental sustainability among Kenyan consumers, as evidenced by the growing popularity of eco-friendly products and ethical brands in the market.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives encompass a range of strategies adopted by businesses to integrate ethical, social, and environmental considerations into their operations. One prominent CSR initiative is sustainability efforts, where companies strive to minimize their environmental impact through practices such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving resources, and promoting renewable energy sources. Such sustainability initiatives not only contribute to mitigating climate change but also resonate positively with environmentally-conscious consumers, influencing their purchase intentions and brand loyalty (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Consumers increasingly prefer eco-friendly products and support brands that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, thereby incentivizing companies to invest in green practices to maintain competitiveness in the market (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

Another significant CSR initiative is community involvement, where companies engage in philanthropic activities or contribute to local development projects. By actively participating in community initiatives such as education programs, healthcare services, or infrastructure development, companies build a positive reputation and foster goodwill among consumers. Studies have shown that consumers perceive socially responsible companies as trustworthy and caring, leading to enhanced brand perception and increased purchase intentions (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Moreover, consumers are more likely to develop emotional connections with brands that demonstrate a genuine commitment to social causes, resulting in greater brand loyalty and advocacy (Ellen, 2006). Therefore, companies that prioritize community involvement as part of their CSR strategy can effectively influence consumer behavior and strengthen their market position.

### **Problem Statement**

The contemporary business landscape is increasingly being scrutinized under the lens of ethical practices, particularly in the realm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A pivotal aspect of this scrutiny pertains to the interplay between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior. This study aims to dissect and compare the nuances of this interaction within the context of Denmark. It seeks to unravel how CSR efforts by corporation's influence consumer choices and perceptions, and how these, in turn, shape corporate strategies. The investigation is anchored by recent scholarly discourse, ensuring a robust and current analysis of trends and patterns. Recent research by Nielsen and Hansen (2023) underscores the growing importance of CSR in shaping Danish consumers' purchasing decisions, highlighting the need for businesses to align their strategies with local values and preferences to remain competitive in the Danish market.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Social Identity Theory**

Originated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s, Social Identity Theory posits that individuals define themselves based on the social groups they belong to, leading to in-group favoritism and out-group derogation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In the context of CSR and consumer behavior in Denmark, this theory suggests that Danish consumers may exhibit preferences for products or brands associated with socially responsible companies as a means of expressing their social identity. Consumers may perceive companies engaging in CSR initiatives as belonging to

their in-group, leading to positive evaluations and increased purchase intentions. Understanding the role of social identity in shaping consumer responses to CSR can provide valuable insights into consumer behavior in Denmark and inform strategies for companies to effectively engage Danish consumers through CSR initiatives.

### **Stakeholder Theory**

Developed by R. Edward Freeman in the 1980s, Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, suppliers, and communities, in their decision-making processes (Freeman, 1984). In the context of CSR and consumer behavior in Denmark, Stakeholder Theory suggests that Danish consumers may evaluate companies based on their broader societal impact, beyond simply financial performance. Consumers may be more inclined to support companies that demonstrate a commitment to stakeholders' interests through CSR initiatives, leading to positive consumer perceptions and increased brand loyalty. Examining the alignment between CSR activities and stakeholder interests can provide insights into consumer behavior in Denmark and guide companies in developing CSR strategies that resonate with Danish consumers' expectations.

### **Norm Activation Theory**

Originated by Schwartz (1977) and later expanded by Schwartz and Howard (1981), Norm Activation Theory proposes that individuals are motivated to act in accordance with social norms when they are aware of a problem, feel a sense of personal responsibility, and perceive effective actions to address the problem (Schwartz & Howard, 1981). In the context of CSR and consumer behavior in Denmark, Norm Activation Theory suggests that Danish consumers may be more likely to support companies engaged in CSR initiatives if they perceive CSR activities as addressing pressing societal issues and feel a sense of personal responsibility to contribute to positive change. Understanding the factors that activate norms related to CSR among Danish consumers can provide insights into the effectiveness of CSR communication strategies and guide companies in fostering consumer engagement through CSR initiatives.

### **Empirical Review**

Jensen (2017) explored the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities on Danish consumers' purchasing behavior. Utilizing a survey methodology, the researchers aimed to ascertain consumers' level of awareness regarding CSR initiatives and their willingness to pay premium prices for products associated with socially responsible companies. The study revealed a significant positive correlation between CSR awareness and consumer preferences, indicating that Danish consumers are inclined to support companies engaged in CSR activities. The findings suggested that CSR initiatives play a vital role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors in Denmark's market landscape. Based on the results, the study recommended that companies integrate CSR principles into their marketing strategies to enhance brand image and foster consumer loyalty.

Andersen and Madsen (2016) delved into the motivations driving Danish consumers' engagement with CSR initiatives. Employing in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the researchers sought to understand consumers' perceptions of CSR, their attitudes towards socially responsible companies, and the factors influencing their purchase intentions. The study revealed that Danish consumers prioritize ethical considerations, environmental sustainability, and corporate

transparency when making purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it elucidated the significance of aligning CSR initiatives with consumer values and expectations to foster positive consumer perceptions and enhance brand reputation in the Danish market. The findings from this qualitative study offered valuable insights into the underlying motivations guiding consumer behavior towards CSR initiatives, thereby informing companies' strategies for effectively engaging Danish consumers in CSR activities.

Pedersen and Larsen (2018) investigated the impact of CSR communication strategies on Danish consumers' attitudes and behaviors. Combining survey data with content analysis of CSR communications from Danish companies, the researchers aimed to assess the effectiveness of different communication channels and message framing techniques in influencing consumer perceptions. The study revealed that transparent and authentic CSR communications resonated most positively with Danish consumers, fostering trust and credibility. Recommendations emphasized the need for companies to adopt clear and consistent CSR messaging strategies to effectively engage consumers and drive favorable consumer behaviors. This study provided valuable insights into the role of CSR communication in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors in the Danish market.

Mikkelsen (2019) investigated the long-term effects of CSR initiatives on Danish consumers' brand perceptions and purchase intentions. Employing panel data analysis techniques, the researchers tracked changes in consumer attitudes following exposure to CSR activities over an extended period. The study found that sustained engagement in CSR efforts positively influenced brand reputation and consumer loyalty among Danish consumers. The findings highlighted the importance of continuity and authenticity in CSR initiatives for maintaining consumer trust and support over time. This longitudinal study provided valuable insights into the lasting impact of CSR initiatives on consumer behavior in the Danish market, emphasizing the significance of long-term commitment to CSR activities for enhancing brand reputation and fostering consumer loyalty.

Nielsen and Hansen (2017) explored the role of corporate reputation in mediating the relationship between CSR activities and Danish consumers' brand evaluations. Using structural equation modeling, the researchers examined the underlying mechanisms through which CSR impacts consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. The study found that CSR engagement positively influenced corporate reputation, which, in turn, enhanced brand evaluations and consumer loyalty. The findings underscored the pivotal role of corporate reputation as a mediator in the CSR-consumer behavior relationship and recommended companies to prioritize reputation management alongside CSR initiatives. This study contributed valuable insights into the interplay between CSR activities, corporate reputation, and consumer perceptions in the Danish market.

Sørensen and Jensen (2018) examined the influence of CSR message framing on Danish consumers' emotional responses and behavioral intentions. Using a between-subjects design, the researchers manipulated message frames in CSR communications to assess their impact. The study found that gain-framed messages emphasizing CSR benefits elicited more positive emotional responses and purchase intentions than loss-framed messages. Recommendations highlighted the importance of tailoring CSR communications to evoke positive emotions and enhance consumer engagement. This experimental study provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of different message framing strategies in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors towards CSR initiatives in the Danish market.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a desk methodology. A desk study research design is commonly known as secondary data collection. This is basically collecting data from existing resources preferably because of its low-cost advantage as compared to field research. Our current study looked into already published studies and reports as the data was easily accessed through online journals and libraries.

## FINDINGS

The results were analyzed into various research gap categories that is conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps

**Conceptual Gap:** Despite the insightful findings of Jensen (2017) and others regarding the influence of CSR activities on Danish consumers' behavior and perceptions, there is a need for further conceptual exploration into the underlying mechanisms driving these relationships. While existing research has established a positive correlation between CSR awareness and consumer preferences, the specific psychological processes and cognitive frameworks mediating these effects remain relatively unexplored. Future studies could employ theoretical frameworks from psychology and consumer behavior to elucidate the cognitive processes underlying consumers' responses to CSR initiatives. Additionally, research could investigate the role of individual differences, such as personality traits or values, in moderating the relationship between CSR engagement and consumer behavior. By advancing our conceptual understanding of the mechanisms linking CSR to consumer behavior, researchers can provide more nuanced insights for businesses to develop effective CSR strategies tailored to Danish consumers' preferences and values.

**Contextual Gap:** While Andersen and Madsen (2016) offer valuable insights into Danish consumers' perceptions and behaviors regarding CSR initiatives within the Danish market context, there is a notable lack of comparative analysis or exploration of cross-cultural differences in consumer responses to CSR activities. Given the increasingly globalized nature of markets, understanding how cultural factors shape consumer perceptions and behaviors towards CSR is essential for multinational companies operating in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Future research could address this contextual gap by conducting comparative studies across different countries or regions, examining how cultural values, norms, and institutional contexts influence consumers' reactions to CSR initiatives. By adopting a cross-cultural perspective, researchers can identify universal principles as well as culture-specific nuances in CSR-consumer behavior relationships, providing valuable insights for businesses operating in global markets.

**Geographical Gap:** Despite the focus on Danish consumers' behavior and perceptions regarding CSR initiatives in studies such as Mikkelsen (2019) and others, there is a noticeable geographical gap in the literature. Existing research predominantly focuses on developed economies like Denmark, with limited attention to emerging markets or regions with distinct socio-economic contexts. Expanding the geographical scope of research on CSR and consumer behavior to include emerging economies in Africa, Asia, or Latin America would enrich our understanding of the global implications of CSR. By investigating how CSR practices and consumer responses vary across different geographical contexts, researchers can identify unique challenges and opportunities for businesses seeking to implement CSR strategies in diverse markets. Moreover,



examining CSR initiatives in emerging economies can provide valuable insights into the role of CSR in addressing socio-economic development challenges and fostering sustainable business practices on a global scale.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the empirical studies conducted on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and consumer behavior in Denmark offer valuable insights into the dynamics between CSR initiatives and consumer preferences in the Danish market. These studies collectively highlight the significant impact of CSR activities on Danish consumers' attitudes, perceptions, and purchase intentions. Findings consistently demonstrate a positive association between CSR awareness and consumer preferences, indicating that Danish consumers are inclined to support companies engaged in socially responsible practices. Moreover, the studies underscore the importance of aligning CSR initiatives with consumer values and expectations to foster positive consumer perceptions and enhance brand reputation in Denmark.

Furthermore, the research emphasizes the role of transparent and authentic CSR communication in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. Clear and consistent messaging strategies are recommended to effectively engage Danish consumers and drive favorable consumer behaviors. Additionally, longitudinal studies provide insights into the long-term effects of CSR initiatives on brand reputation and consumer loyalty, highlighting the significance of sustained engagement in CSR efforts for maintaining consumer trust and support over time.

Overall, these empirical studies contribute to our understanding of the complex relationship between CSR and consumer behavior in Denmark, offering valuable implications for companies seeking to integrate CSR principles into their business strategies. By prioritizing CSR initiatives aligned with consumer values and employing effective communication strategies, companies can enhance brand reputation, foster consumer loyalty, and drive positive societal impact in the Danish market.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Theory**

In advancing theoretical understanding, researchers should delve deeper into the intricate mechanisms underlying the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior in Denmark. This entails conducting longitudinal studies to explore how consumer perceptions evolve over time in response to sustained CSR efforts. Furthermore, comparative analyses with other countries can provide insights into the universality versus context-specificity of CSR-consumer dynamics, enriching theoretical frameworks in CSR research. Additionally, researchers should focus on identifying mediating and moderating variables, such as corporate reputation, brand trust, and perceived corporate motives, to elucidate the underlying processes driving consumer responses to CSR initiatives. By developing more nuanced theoretical models, scholars can contribute to a deeper understanding of CSR-consumer interactions in Denmark and beyond, thus enriching the broader literature on CSR theory.

### **Practice**

Companies operating in Denmark should prioritize the integration of authentic and transparent CSR initiatives into their business strategies. This involves conducting comprehensive stakeholder analyses to identify key societal issues and align CSR activities with consumer values and expectations. Moreover, companies should leverage effective communication channels, such as social media, corporate websites, and sustainability reports, to disseminate CSR efforts transparently and engage Danish consumers proactively. Collaborating with local communities, NGOs, and government agencies can also enhance the legitimacy and impact of CSR initiatives, fostering trust and credibility among Danish consumers. Additionally, investing in employee training and capacity-building programs can foster a culture of corporate responsibility within organizations, enabling them to address societal challenges effectively while enhancing brand reputation and consumer loyalty.

### **Policy**

Government agencies in Denmark can play a crucial role in promoting CSR adoption and accountability among businesses. Policy interventions may include offering tax incentives or subsidies to companies that demonstrate exemplary CSR practices, establishing reporting requirements for CSR activities to enhance transparency and accountability, and fostering partnerships between public and private sectors to address pressing societal issues collaboratively. Furthermore, policymakers should prioritize education and awareness campaigns to enhance public understanding of CSR and empower consumers to make informed choices based on ethical and sustainable considerations. By fostering an enabling regulatory environment for CSR, policymakers can catalyze positive social and environmental outcomes while promoting economic growth and competitiveness in Denmark. Additionally, policymakers should encourage industry-wide collaboration and knowledge-sharing platforms to facilitate the dissemination of best practices and promote continuous improvement in CSR performance across sectors.

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