

The Relationships Between Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Intimacy and Customer Citizenship Behavior in the Restaurant Industry

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Received: 24.06.2022, Accepted: 29.12.2022
DOI Number: 10.5281/zenodo.7513012

Abstract

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has recently become a popular field of study in terms of customer-centric outcomes for contemporary researchers. The development of CSR activities is a strategic factor for improving customer intimacy (CI) and customer citizenship behavior (CCB) in the restaurant industry. The structure that will be formed because of the reflection of CSR activities on customer behaviors is valuable for both the restaurant and the customers. With this perspective, the purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between the CSR, CI, and CCB in İzmir province. This study has obtained empirical evidence from 408 restaurant customers in İzmir province. The structural equation modelling was employed to verify the first three hypotheses using statistical software IBM AMOS 24. The mediating effect was examined by employing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro (Version 3.3). The findings reveal that CSR significantly contributes to CI and CI interacts significantly and positively with CCB. The study also extends the CSR and CCB literature through a novel mediation mechanism of CI.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Intimacy, Customer Citizenship Behavior, Restaurant Customers.

JEL Code: L20, L83, M14, Z31

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1. Introduction

Today, more and more people prefer to eat in restaurants for various reasons, such as the increase in the income of consumers, especially with the concentration of the workforce in cities, people trying to save time, and the increase in the number of women involved in the economy (Albayrak, 2014). This extension has naturally increased the number of restaurant companies and made the competition between businesses strained. According to stakeholder theory, businesses have relations with various actors that have an open and flexible system (Maignan and Ferrel, 2004). According to stakeholder theory, stakeholders who oversee business activities and decisions enable businesses to act responsibly (Maignan and Ferrel, 2004). It is possible to claim that one of the most important stakeholders in the restaurant industry is customers. For this reason, it is known that they can apply pressures that question business behaviour and affect the resource and brand reputation of the business (Aguinis and Glaves, 2012). For restaurant companies that want to survive in this increasingly competitive environment and continue their activities in the future, it has become more important to establish intimate relations with customers based on trust, as well as to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Food and beverage businesses, one of the components of the tourism industry, are responsible for reducing their harmful effects on society and increasing their beneficial effects (Lee et al., 2020). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributes to the development of restaurant image/reputation and customer positive attitude. Therefore, it is not surprising that restaurant businesses focus on implementing and promoting various socially responsible activities such as economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Han et al., 2020; Park, 2019).

CSR is important for ensuring customer satisfaction and loyalty and it is also critical for affecting customers' intention to revisit the business (Lee et al., 2020). CSR activities are as important as providing delicious and quality food for restaurant businesses that serve in an environment of intense competition and rapidly developing conscious consumer profile (Reich et al., 2010). The increasing awareness levels of customers lead to eco-friendly and society-friendly restaurant companies to become more popular (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Severt et al., 2020). This heightened awareness has made social responsibility practices more important for restaurant companies, especially those that want to overcome the negative reputation, reduce to food waste, and create awareness (Brownell and Warner, 2009).

In addition to CSR, intimacy is obtained by positive communication with customers because of the simultaneous nature of production and consumption in restaurants. Businesses try to meet the real needs and expectations of their customers with customer intimacy strategies (Yim, Tse, and Chen, 2008). Customer intimacy is delivered products and services to customers exactly what they want. Customer intimacy is achieved once the company creates a strong bond and trusting relationship. Establish credible relationships and develop customer knowledge with strategic business partners are important to be built to create customer intimacy

(Nora, 2019). Restaurants try their best to look socially and morally responsible. They tend to act actively to maintain their market share and increase their profitability. With the help of CSR practices, restaurants will be able to gain customer intimacy (Batool, Butt and Niazi, 2016).

Customer intimacy (CI) strategy enables businesses to create customer citizenship behaviour (CCB) to provide customer loyalty (Brock and Zhou, 2012; Cristela et al., 2018; Han et al., 2022). CCB provides businesses with a competitive advantage (Groth, 2005; Tung et al., 2017). According to Gong and Yi (2019, 5), CCB is ‘voluntary and discretionary actions by individual customers, which are not directly or explicitly expected or rewarded but may aggregate into higher service quality and promote the effective functioning of service firms.’ CCB is a constructive behaviour that protects business activities and assets in four dimensions such as helping, advocating the business, tolerating inconveniences, and giving feedback (Yi and Gong, 2013; Kim and Choi, 2016). Increasing competition in the restaurant industry has turned corporate social responsibility activities into a competitive tool. For this reason, consumers tend to punish businesses that do not fulfil their responsibilities by choosing businesses that are socially sensitive (Reich, Xu, and McCleary, 2010). When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that the studies examining the relations of CSR, CI, and CCB in the restaurant industry are limited (Inoue and Lee, 2011; Kim and Kim, 2014; Aydın and Erdoğan, 2016).

Therefore, when it comes to restaurant success, it is very important to determine how customers' perceptions of CSR will affect CI and CCB. There is a need for research on the effects of CCB activities of restaurant businesses on their stakeholders (customers) and the reactions of stakeholders to CSR activities. This research is aimed to fill the gap in this field by examining the effects of customers' reactions to CSR activities, one of the important stakeholders of restaurants, on CI and CCB behaviours. In this context, this study aims to examine the relationships between CSR, CI, and CCB in restaurants. The outputs of this study will be important in terms of providing a competitive advantage to restaurants and contributing to the relevant literature. Therefore, this research tries to answer the following questions:

RQ1- What is the relationship between CSR, CI, and CCB in the restaurant industry?

RQ2- How can customer intimacy mediate the relationship between perceived CSR and CCB?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

The concept of CSR is part of the management disciplines that have emerged in recent years (Wan-Jan, 2006; Ji, Tao and Rim, 2022; Shaturaev, 2022). Discussions on CSR started with the question of whether businesses and their managers have a responsibility to society other than making profits and providing products or services (Keinert, 2008). The role of companies in society has become increasingly important due to the growing environmental and social challenges facing society (Gedik, 2020). Today, with social changes, CSR activities have become an important issue in the business world. Businesses are influenced by social factors and take environmental factors into consideration by making decisions with their legal, moral, and human dimensions (Repka, 2004; Bronn and Vrioni, 2001; Carrol, 1979). Businesses that want to protect their assets and the sustainability of the business in a competitive environment are sensitive to all kinds of needs and wishes of society. It is known that businesses that are constantly in pursuit of profit, while ignoring their compulsory responsibilities, lose their reputation and businesses over time (Carrol, 1979). In addition, by maintaining the balance between business owners and stakeholders, it embraces the responsibilities that it must fulfil with its CSR. CSR is known as the decisions and activities taken for reasons different from the direct economic and technical interests of the enterprises (Davis, 1960: 70). From another point of view, it is expressed as the economic, legal, ethical, and voluntary expectations of the society from the organizations (Carrol, 1979: 500). In stakeholder theory, businesses need to consider the interests of different stakeholders in order to achieve their goals and maintain their existence (Jones and Wicks, 1999). In this theory, it is mentioned that the decisions taken by enterprises may have social effects. For this reason, it will be very valuable for businesses to organize policies that protect the consent of society with their CSR activities and include the demands of all their stakeholders (Van Het Hof and Çabuk, 2009). According to Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, it would not be wrong to mention that stakeholders, defined as groups or individuals, who have an important role in maintaining the goals of the business, are customers of the restaurant industry.

There is no comprehensive consensus in the literature on defining CSR, either from an institutional or academic perspective (Hartmann, 2011). CSR is defined as a concept that encompasses how relationships between national governments, global companies, and citizens are or should be. From another perspective, CSR is defined as the relationship between the local community in which a company is located or operates (Crowther and Aras, 2008). CSR defines the idea that companies are obligated to groups other than their shareholders. The most important point in this definition is that the obligation is voluntary and must not be realized under the influence of any law or union agreement (Jones, 1980). In this context, CSR is the sum of activities undertaken by businesses to enhance social and environmental well-being beyond legal expectations (Büyükyılmaz and Fidan, 2015).

There are some benefits and gains that CSR provides to businesses (Aktan and Börü, 2007). For instance, the sensitivity of businesses to social responsibility has a significant impact on their financial performance. Certain practices of businesses such as displaying a sensitive attitude towards society, taking environmental improvements and environmentally friendly measures, using less energy, and waste management reduce their operating costs and increase their income (Sandhu and Kapoor, 2010). At the same time, they allow businesses to have a positive image and reputation (Weber, 2008; Suarez, 2020).

Furthermore, the participation of companies in social responsibility projects creates a positive effect on employees and increases employee loyalty, attracting a skilled workforce to the company (Aktan and Börü, 2007). Finally, it is stated that CSR practices increase customer loyalty and provide a competitive advantage to businesses (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Weber, 2008). Customers' preference for socially sensitive businesses makes CSR practices an important competitive tool. As a result, companies are placing greater emphasis on CSR activities to ensure that they are not missing out on existing clients and gaining potential clients (Aydın and Erdoğan, 2016). For instance, chain businesses such as McDonald's and Starbucks are working to minimize the amount of food and packaging waste by allocating a significant resource from their budgets (Shim et al., 2021).

2.2 Customer Intimacy

Companies want to establish an intimate relationship with their customers by continuously shaping their products and services according to the wishes of their customers (Treacy and Wiersema, 1993). The term CI was first included in management research by Treacy and Wiersema in 1993. Since that time, it has attracted attention as an increasingly interesting research subject. The concept of CI refers to a close and valuable relational quality of a customer that is shaped based on mutual understanding with a business and/or supplier (Treacy and Wiersema, 1993). Businesses develop close relationships with their customers to provide products or services that meet different needs over time. However, there are approaches such as intimacy theory for more emotionally driven behaviors in modelling the relationship between businesses and customers (Stern, 1997). The concept of intimacy in social psychology is based on the exchange of private and subjective experiences. At the same time, it is seen as a positive relational process that influences existing intimacy perceptions and is differentiated from previous experiences (Waring et al., 1980). CI is defined by Hoffman (2001: 22) as “the ongoing relational process of working with customers to develop and improve the company's product or service offerings to meet individual customer needs”.

Brock and Zhou (2012) define CI as the perception that there is a very close and valuable relationship between the business and the customer in mutual understanding. According to Fickel (1999), CI is a marketing strategy in which businesses strive to get closer to their customers. In another definition, CI is

expressed as trying to exceed customers' expectations and meeting their unique needs by developing permanent relationships with customers (Anderson et al., 2005). Yim et al. (2008) describe CI as the comfort and warm feelings that individuals feel for businesses and the happiness of their experience. The most important factor in creating and developing CI for businesses is the ability to truly understand the needs and preferences of customers (Akçura and Srinivasan, 2005). Another important factor is that businesses improve their knowledge about their customers by establishing reliable relationships with their business partners (Brock and Zhou, 2012). CI is achieved when the business creates a strong and trusting relationship with its customers. When this trust is established, customers are more likely to come back (Nora, 2019). Hoffman (2001) states that the concept of CI is a multidimensional construct. Communication, customer engagement, social interaction, and reconciliation are seen as very important dimensions by businesses that want to create customer intimacy (Hoffman, 2001).

The strategy of CI has some advantages for businesses. Brock and Zhou (2012) stated in their study that CI has a positive effect on customers' re-purchase intentions and customer loyalty. Cochran (2004) stated that customer loyalty, which emerges because of the successful establishment of CI relations, increases the revenues of businesses. On the other hand, Treacy and Wiersema (1993), consider CI as one of the most important strategies that lead businesses to market leadership. In businesses operating in the service industry, where relationships based on trust with customers are very important, CI strategies are extremely important for businesses to continue their activities.

2.3 Customer Citizenship Behavior

The food and beverage industry has a very universal economic value in its physical and economic sense (Pfizer and Krishnaswamy, 2007). The food and beverage industry has a high contribution to the economic development of countries with manufacturing and export values. However, some difficulties arise due to increasing competition conditions (Davis et al., 2018). When evaluated in this context, the relationship between businesses and customers' needs to be strengthened. Businesses want to strengthen their relationships with their customers to gain a competitive advantage. At this point, innovative approaches such as the tendency of customer citizenship behavior are needed (Kandampully, Zhang, and Bilgihan, 2015).

Based on CCB, it can be perceived by the customer as helping the business and achieving organizational goals without any purchasing pressure (Di et al., 2010). It includes the voluntary affiliates of customers during or after the service (Groth, 2005; Thung, Chen, and Schuckert, 2017). CCB refers to non-rewarded, voluntary, and permissive constructive gestures that encourage the functioning of service companies (Gong and Yi, 2019). CCB assumes many different supporting roles such as helping, defending the business, compensating for business mistakes, and giving feedback (Yi and Gong, 2013; Kim and Choi, 2016). With these behaviors, customers can share information with businesses, make suggestions for

future business plans, and even become a part of the organization (Yi and Gong, 2013). Customers convey information that will improve the process in the long-term plans of the enterprise through the feedback they provide to the employees of the enterprise (Groth, Mertens, and Murphy, 2004). Although feedback from customers is very important for businesses, it is not seen as a necessity in terms of improving business activities (Yi and Gong, 2013). Defending and recommending the business outside of their own interests is an indicator of customer loyalty (Bettencourt, 1997; Groth et al., 2004; Yi and Gong, 2013). Customers completely voluntarily defend their business activities through positive word of mouth. It provides many benefits to businesses such as personal evaluations and increases in customers (Bettencourt, 1997). One behaviour displayed by customers who feel customer closeness is helping and tolerance behaviour. Customers develop empathy to help other customers after their own experiences (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007). Customers are patient in the face of service delivery, equipment shortages, and delays (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000). This tolerance shown by the customer is realized due to the high emotional commitment he has developed towards the business.

When the current studies are examined, CCB is seen as a potential resource that increases corporate efficiency and provides a sustainable competitive advantage in terms of business (Kim and Choi, 2016; Hossain et al., 2020). In this context, it is possible to say that the restaurant industry has a business model that includes a full-service experience (Wijayanti and Rismawati, 2017). In the service sector, customers are seen as part-time employees. Customers who are satisfied with the positive service experience can continue their efforts to benefit the business due to the need for social identity (Donavan et al., 2004; Wijayanti and Rismawati, 2017).

2.4 The Relationships Between Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Intimacy and Customer Citizenship Behavior

Businesses are expected to feel responsible for social problems and to strive for this cause (Jalilvand et al., 2018). These efforts provide a competitive advantage for businesses and also enable sustainable development (Chang and Yeh, 2017; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). In this context, CSR is an innovative concept that increases the reputation of the business, gains the trust of the customer, and develops its resources (Anaza and Zhao, 2013; Flammer and Kacperczyk 2015; Boğan and Sarıışık, 2020). Businesses renew their image with CSR applications, it arouses a sense of intimacy in customers and provides a benefit for that business (Diallo et al., 2011). CSR is seen as a kind of communication effort designed and maintained by the business. It positively affects the images of businesses and provides customer intimacy (Morsing, 2006; Flammer and Kacperczyk 2015; Batool, Butt and Niazi, 2016). Considering the benefits of customer intimacy to businesses, it is seen that emotional commitment is very important in terms of business profitability (IBM, 2004). Among the concepts of customer relationship management, CI is used by practitioners and consultants to strengthen relational

bonds. It reflects different types of relationships from trust and commitment to the business (Doney and Cannon, 1997; Aufreiter et al., 2000; Cruz, 2006). Businesses create a perception of value by displaying sensitive behaviour towards social problems. This gives businesses customer intimacy. Previous studies concluded that CSR provides links such as trust and loyalty and economic gains. It can also be considered a new dimension of relationship marketing (Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol, 2002; Palmatier et al., 2008). CSR activities are implemented to strengthen the business position within the tourism industry (Henderson, 2007; De Grosbois, 2012; Park and Levy, 2014; Ghaderi et al., 2019; Alves and Rodrigues, 2019; Wang, Hu and Zhang, 2020). The concept of CI appears to be an important relational theory in customer relationship management (Han et al., 2022; Martinez-Lira and Raimann, 2022; Oktavia and Indriyani, 2022; Putri, 2022). CSR activities applied in the tourism industry are seen as an important marketing strategy in creating loyalty of consumers, differentiation, and positioning of businesses (Taheri et al., 2019). CI towards the business is likely due to customers' perceptions of the implemented CSR activities of the relevant business (Gao and Mattila, 2014; Kim and Stepchenkova, 2020). The concept of CI appears to be an important relational theory in customer relationship management (Han et al., 2022; Martinez-Lira and Raimann, 2022; Oktavia and Indriyani, 2022; Putri, 2022). In a study examining the CSR perception of restaurant size in terms of consumer responses, it was stated that customers developed a more positive attitude towards small-scale restaurants (Kim and Stepchenkova, 2020). Based on this finding, where the personal values of consumers are very important, it has become obvious that it is very important for businesses to address their individual values such as their customers' motives and needs in CSR activities. In this context, since CSR activities that are implemented effectively are expected to create CI, the research hypothesis created by examining the relevant literature is as follows.

H₁: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on customer intimacy.

CI refers to different relational structures such as feeling close, showing mutual understanding and value perception, apart from the trust and loyalty behaviors that individuals feel toward businesses. Considering the benefits of CI to businesses, it is seen that emotional commitment is very important for the business (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Doney and Cannon, 1997; Cruz, 2006). Individuals who feel intimacy, show citizenship behavior that supports the business by behaving voluntarily and collaboratively. These behaviors are thought to have an important role in the development of the business (Tabrani, Amin, and Nizam, 2018; Shukla and Pattnaik, 2020; Mansour, 2021; Han et al., 2022). On the other hand, CCB can be expressed as the voluntarily possessive and protective behavior of customers towards the business (Gong and Yi, 2019; Erdoğan Aracı and Sezgin, 2020). CCB basically includes components such as customers' willingness to help the business voluntarily, recommending the business by adopting (word of mouth, close friends, on the internet, etc.), tolerating the mistakes of the business, and giving feedback about its organizational structure, products, and services (Podsakoff et al., 2009; Erdoğan Aracı and Sezgin, 2020). When previous studies are examined, there are

many studies examining CCB, which are expressed as voluntary efforts of customers in terms of businesses (Bowen, Schneider, and Kim, 2000; Bettencourt, Gwinner, and Meuter, 2001; Netemeyer, Maxham, and Pullig, 2005; Chan et al., 2017). It is seen that CCB results are very effective during service provision to hotel businesses and service providers (Hossain et al., 2020). Research focusing on the relationship between CI and CCB in the restaurant industry seems to be quite limited (Islam et al., 2019; Hossain et al., 2020). This research evaluates the gaps in the relevant literature and argues that CI is an important determinant of CCB within the restaurant industry. It includes a mechanism that explains the connection between customers' positive emotional connection, attitudes, and behavior about the business. CCB, which is a voluntary behavior by nature, is a constructive behavior aiming to benefit the business (Groth, 2005; Anaza, 2014). It is thought that the emotional trust and loyalty of customers, who are important stakeholders of the restaurant industry, towards businesses, will positively affect their citizenship behaviors. When evaluated in this context, the following H2 main hypothesis and sub-hypotheses have been developed, claiming that customer intimacy is an important determinant of customer citizenship behavior;

H₂: *Customer intimacy has a positive effect on customer citizenship behavior.*

H_{2a}: *Customer intimacy has a positive effect on helping.*

H_{2b}: *Customer intimacy has a positive effect on advocacy.*

H_{2c}: *Customer intimacy has a positive effect on tolerance.*

H_{2d}: *Customer intimacy has a positive effect on feedback.*

In a study examining the effectiveness of CSR activities in the Pakistan restaurant industry concluded that businesses increased their brand reputation and increased their reputation (Batool, Butt and Niazi, 2016). The image of a business being socially virtuous increases their market share and allows their customers to have a more positive approach to the business. Due to high competition, businesses carry out socially sensitive activities, and because of these activities, the trust levels and reputation of such businesses thrive (Bowen, Schneider and Kim, 2000; Bettencourt, Gwinner, and Meuter, 2001; Netemeyer, Maxham and Pullig, 2005; Chan et al., 2017). When the literature is examined, it is seen that the CSR perceptions of the employees are effective on the organizational citizenship behavior, while it is also seen that it allows the development of positive attitudes towards the business in terms of customers (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003; Zhang, Di Fan, and Zhu, 2014). In this context, it is stated that CSR enables businesses to maintain a trust-based relationship with customers (Coulter and Coulter, 2002). Customers' perceptions of CSR enable the creation of CCB such as making constructive suggestions about products/services of businesses, positive word-of-mouth communication, and involvement in business activities (Anderson, Fornell, and Mazvancheryl, 2004). In the hospitality industry, CSR has been seen as one of the important marketing strategies for the business. By creating unique experiences, the products, or services they receive from businesses using CSR activities can cause consumers to have socially responsible feelings (Taheri et al., 2019). At the

same time, CSR activities of accommodation businesses have positive effects on businesses such as customer loyalty, competitive advantage, customer advocacy, and customer trust (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018). CSR, which has an important role in businesses' competitive advantage and sustainable development strategies, is at the center of sustainable living and environmental concerns within service sectors (Chang and Yeh, 2017; Nicolae and Sabina, 2012). In this context, CSR plays a vital role in regulating the social performance of businesses on important issues such as energy and waste management and environmental pollution, especially in restaurant businesses (Jalilvan et al., 2017; Shafiee, Foroudi and Tabaeian, 2021). Studies examining the effects of CSR activities on customers' loyalty, satisfaction, and service quality seem to have the role of strengthening relationships between businesses and stakeholders (customers) (Shafiee and Bazargan, 2018; Chang and Yeh, 2017; Torres et al., 2012). It has become known that studies examining the behavioral results of CSR activities within the tourism industry are gaining importance. It is also known that the interaction between CSR activities and customers and service providers has an impact on customers' loyalty to the business (Yen et al., 2012; Anaza and Zhao, 2013). CSR applications, which are known to be very effective in shaping CCB, consider customers as members of the organization in the service industry and draw attention to the fact that it is a constructive behavior that creates value for businesses (Kelley et al., 1990; Gruen et al., 2000; Kim and Choi, 2016; Choi and Lotz, 2016; Yi and Gong, 2013). It has been observed that customers who are socially supported by businesses develop CCBs (Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2007). Feedback given by customers to a business brings with it helping, defending, and being tolerant (Groth, 2005; Yi and Gong, 2013; Shafiee, Foroudi and Tabaeian, 2021; Tüzün and Devrani, 2011). It is seen that there are deficiencies in the literature on examining the effects of CSR activities on CCB perceptions. In this context, based on the relevant literature, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H₃: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on customer citizenship behavior.

H_{3a}: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on helping.

H_{3b}: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on advocacy.

H_{3c}: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on tolerance.

H_{3d}: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on feedback.

Many studies have identified CSR activities as activities that strengthen the relationship between businesses and stakeholders and have positive effects on corporate performance (Jalilvan et al., 2017; Taheri et al., 2019; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). While the number of research examining the relevance of CSR activities on consumer behavior has increased rapidly by researchers in the related literature, very limited attention has been paid to the restaurant industry to examine the effects of trends such as CCB and CSR on consumer behavior. In a study conducted by Su et al. (2017), CSR activities have been reported to positively affect perceived corporate reputation and customer satisfaction. Perceptions of businesses regarding CSR activities have positive effects in the context of customer relations (Chang and Yeh, 2017; Lee and Heo, 2009). Consumers' support for businesses

that offer social programs indirectly strengthens consumer behavior, including the CCB approach (Levy, 1999; Shafiee and Tabaeian, 2021). It is thought that customer intimacy, which includes relational aspects of reliability such as closeness, mutual understanding, and value perception, which is another important factor that strengthens consumer behavior, will be a leading reason to explain the relationship between CSR and CCB. When evaluated in this context, it is assumed that the CI, which is not noticed at first glance, strengthens the interaction in the relationship between CSR initiatives and CCB tendency. The following hypotheses have been proposed to test the mediating role of CI in the relationship between CSR and CCB:

H₄: Customer intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and customer citizenship behavior.

H_{4a}: Customer intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and helping.

H_{4b}: Customer intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and advocacy.

H_{4c}: Customer intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and tolerance.

H_{4d}: Customer intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and feedback.

In this research, it is assumed that there is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility, customer citizenship behaviour, and customer intimacy. In addition, it is claimed that customer intimacy has a mediating role in the relationship between corporate social responsibility and customer citizenship behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1 The Aim of the Research

The main purpose of this current study was to analyze the relationships between corporate social responsibility, customer intimacy and the basic dimensions which constitute the customer citizenship behavior on restaurant customers in Izmir province. And also, this paper aims to examine the mediating role of customer intimacy (CI) in the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and customer citizenship behavior (CCB). The model tested in this study states that corporate social responsibility promotes customer intimacy (H₁) and customer intimacy and CSR relates positively to customer citizenship behavior (H₂ and H₃) respectively. Furthermore, customer intimacy is the mediator between corporate social responsibility and customer citizenship behavior (H₄). The proposed study model is exhibited in Figure 1.

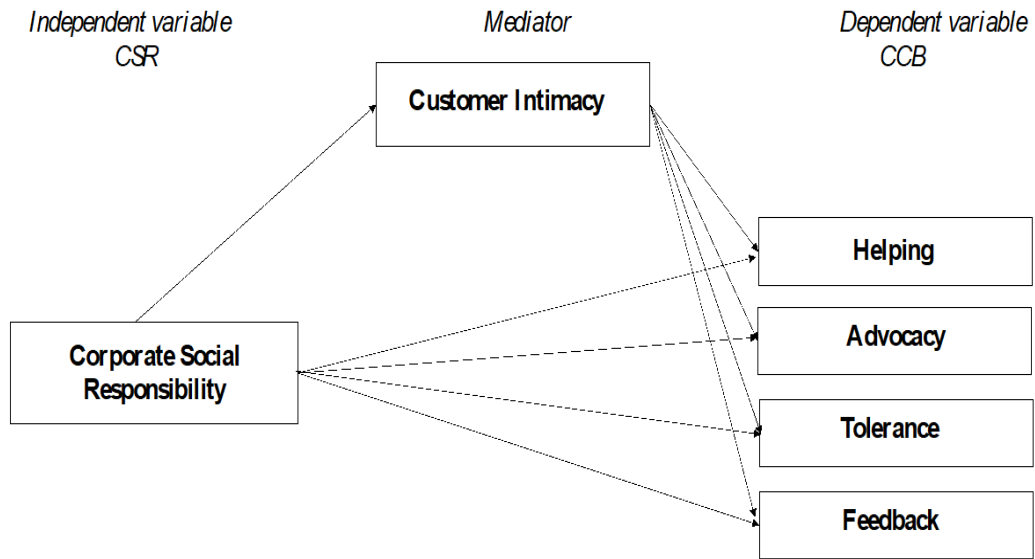


Figure 1. Proposed research model

3.2 Sampling

This study included consumers who currently reside in the Izmir city which is the third biggest city of Turkey and visited a casual dining, quick service, first class restaurant and hotel restaurants at some time over the past three months. Due to the difficulties in determining the number of restaurant customers, the exact number of the universe could not be determined. Therefore, the sample was selected from the universe. Some researchers state that the sample size should be ten times greater than the number of variables used in the study (Hair et al. 2011; Kline, 2011). Since the number of observed variables used in the study is 22, the number of 220, which is ten times the observed variables, is determined as the lowest sample size. In this context, 408 customers were obtained by applying the convenience sampling method which is one of the non-probability sampling methods, all responses were collected in February and March of 2022 with an online questionnaire form.

3.3 Data Collection

In the preparation for the questions in the questionnaire, many studies in the relevant literature were examined. Table 2 shows a complete list of all items. The dimensions of CCB are measured by developing 13 items, that measure the helping, advocacy, tolerance and feedback dimensions of CCB, by Yi and Gong (2013) and adapting to Turkish by Erdoğan Aracı and Sezgin (2020). The measurement of CSR relies on six items adapted from Brown and Dacin (1997), Kapoor and Sandhu (2010). Finally, for measuring customer intimacy, the three-item scale from Shukla and Pattnaik (2020) was adapted. And some demographic questions in survey research were asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the

participants in the survey. A 5-Point of Likert Type was used for the scale questions that make up the questionnaire form. (1:strongly disagree - 5:strongly agree)

3.4 Data Analysis

This research employed the statistical software SPSS 21 for descriptive statistics and AMOS to examine the proposed model. Before examining the hypotheses of a developed theoretical model, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to analyze the validity of the factor structure of the measurement variables. AMOS is a powerful statistical tool that is generally used for conducting confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) (Nachtigall et al., 2003). In addition, VIF and t values were calculated to determine whether there is a multicollinearity issues. Since the VIF values of the independent variables in the model were not greater than 10 and the t values were not less than 0.10, it was decided that there was no strong multicollinearity between the variables (Johnson, 2003).

4. Findings

4.1 Respondents' Characteristics

Table 1 exhibits the research sample characteristics. Gender was relatively and equally represented (females=52.7% and males=47.3%). It is seen that 67.4% of the respondents are married, 42.4% of them are in the 39-52 age range, and 46.8% have postgraduate degree. Regarding monthly personal income, 61.5% of respondents earn more than 8500 TL per month. And 40.7% of the respondents visit a restaurant once a month. Lastly more than half of the respondents evaluated items depending on casual dining.

Table 1. Sample characteristics (N=408)

| Particulars | Categories | N | % |
|------------------|---------------------|-----|------|
| Gender | Female | 215 | 52.7 |
| | Male | 193 | 47.3 |
| Marital Status | Single | 133 | 32.6 |
| | Married | 275 | 67.4 |
| Age Group | 18-24 Years | 41 | 10.5 |
| | 25-38 Years | 113 | 27.7 |
| | 39-52 Years | 173 | 42.4 |
| | 53 Years and above | 81 | 19.4 |
| Education Status | Primary School | 7 | 1.7 |
| | High School | 41 | 10.5 |
| | Associate Degree | 41 | 10.5 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 128 | 31.4 |
| | Postgraduate Degree | 191 | 46.8 |

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----|------|
| Monthly Income | 4500 TL or less | 63 | 15.4 |
| | 4501-5500 TL | 26 | 6.4 |
| | 5501-6500 TL | 18 | 4.4 |
| | 6501-7500 TL | 23 | 5.6 |
| | 7501-8500 TL | 27 | 6.6 |
| | More than 8500 TL | 251 | 61.5 |
| Visiting Restaurant | Once a month | 166 | 40.7 |
| | Once a week | 148 | 36.3 |
| | Three or Four times a week | 78 | 19.1 |
| | More than four times a month | 16 | 3.9 |
| Type of Restaurant in Which Customer Experienced | Casual Dining | 215 | 52.7 |
| | Quick Service | 69 | 16.9 |
| | First Class Restaurant | 117 | 28.7 |
| | Hotel Restaurant | 7 | 1.7 |

Source: All tables derive authors' calculations

4.2 Testing of the Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is executed to see how the research model in Figure 1 fit with the data collected from the samples. Therefore, in order to determine the construct validity of the research model, goodness of fit values was examined. Specifically, the Chi-Square Fit Test (χ^2/df) value is 2.511, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value is 0.90, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value is 0.95, Normed Fit Index (NFI) value is 0.913, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) is 0.95, The Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) is 0.06 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value is 0.061. In summary, as shown Table 2, the data collected from the sample of restaurant customers are well-fit with the proposed research model (Byrne, 2011).

Validity and Reliability Analysis

The reliability issue has been addressed by using Cronbach's Alpha. The cut-off criteria suggested by Hair et al. (2009) and Nunnally (1978) have been used, where a value higher than 0.70 indicates a sufficient level of reliability. The coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) obtained because of the general reliability analysis from the CCB scale was calculated as .891 (helping .837; advocacy .918; tolerance .815; feedback .736). The value of Cronbach's Alpha for CSR is .854 and for customer intimacy is .854. As presented in Table 2, it was determined that the reliability levels of the scales used were high. (> .70).

The confirmatory factor analysis was performed to verify the instrument and the convergent and discriminant validity for the constructs of the study. As shown in Table 2, Factor loads, composite reliability (CR), the average variance extracted (AVE) values confirm convergent validity. According to the results, the factor loading for most items is higher than 0.50. The values obtained in the study are

higher than the recommended threshold value of 0.50. (Hair et al., 1998). The value of CR for each variable is between 0.77 and 0.91 and above accepted value of 0.70 and the value of AVE for each variable is between 0.50 and 0.79 and are above the accepted value of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis (summary of the measurement model)

| Variables and Items | Factor Loadings | Item Means | SD | AVE | CR |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ($\alpha = .854$) | | | | 0.51 | 0.85 |
| This restaurant abides by ethical rules | .657 | 3.24 | 0.96 | | |
| This restaurant meets its legal obligations | .640 | 3.09 | 0.95 | | |
| This restaurant shows its commitment to society by improving the welfare of the communities in which it operates | .517 | 2.76 | 0.98 | | |
| This restaurant protects the environment. | .705 | 3.94 | 0.75 | | |
| This restaurant meets customers' expectations | .816 | 3.73 | 0.86 | | |
| This restaurant directs part of its budget to donations to social causes | .823 | 3.75 | 0.82 | | |
| Customer Intimacy (CI) ($\alpha = .874$) | | | | 0.66 | 0.85 |
| I always enjoy my experience with this restaurant | .811 | 3.43 | 0.94 | | |
| I experience great happiness when visiting this restaurant | .826 | 3.73 | 0.88 | | |
| I attach much value to this restaurant | .802 | 3.67 | 0.87 | | |
| Customer Citizenship Behaviour (CCB) ($\alpha = .891$) | | | | | |
| Helping ($\alpha = .837$) | | | | 0.54 | 0.82 |
| I help other customers if they seem to have problems. | .827 | 3.57 | 0.96 | | |
| I teach other customers to use the service correctly. I give advice to other customers. | .834 | 3.39 | 0.98 | | |
| I assist other customers if they need my help. | .683 | 3.33 | 1.02 | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|
| I give advice to other customers | .585 | 3.35 | 1.08 | | |
| Advocacy ($\alpha = .918$) | | | | 0.79 | 0.91 |
| I recommended this restaurant to others. | .837 | 3.87 | 0.85 | | |
| I encouraged friends and relatives to go this restaurant | .937 | 3.89 | 0.87 | | |
| I said positive things about this restaurant to others. | .893 | 3.88 | 0.88 | | |
| Tolerance ($\alpha = .815$) | | | | 0.60 | 0.81 |
| If the employee makes a mistake during service delivery, I would be willing to be patient. | .788 | 3.25 | 0.98 | | |
| If service is not delivered as expected, I would be willing to put up with it. | .836 | 3.11 | 0.99 | | |
| If I have to wait longer than I normally expected to receive the service, I would be willing to adapt. | .701 | 3.42 | 0.96 | | |
| Feedback ($\alpha = .736$) | | | | 0.53 | 0.77 |
| When I experience a problem, I let the employee know about it. | .726 | 3.54 | 1.04 | | |
| If I have a useful idea on how to improve service, I let the employee know. | .797 | 4.07 | 0.83 | | |
| When I receive good service from the employee, I comment about it. | .654 | 3.90 | 0.87 | | |
| Model fit indexes: | | | | | |
| $\chi^2 = 487.188$, $df = 194$, $p = 0.000$; $\chi^2 / df = 2.51$ GFI = 0.90 > 0.85; CFI = 0.95 > 0.90; NFI = 0.91 > 0.90; IFI = 0.95 > 0.90; RMSEA = 0.06 < 0.08 | | | | | |

As shown in Table 3, The discriminant validity of the designed model of the study should be examined by comparing the square root of the AVE with the correlations between that construct and others within the scope of the whole model. The discriminant validity is established because the AVE of a particular construct exceeds correlations between it and the others. Within the framework of the relevant model, it was revealed that discriminant validity was correct for all constructs. (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

Table 3. Discriminant validity

| Construct | AVE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) | 0.51 | 0.70 | | | | | |
| Customer Intimacy (CI) | 0.66 | 0.719 | 0.812 | | | | |
| Helping | 0.54 | 0.455 | 0.488 | 0.734 | | | |
| Advocacy | 0.79 | 0.648 | 0.791 | 0.519 | 0.888 | | |
| Tolerance | 0.60 | 0.502 | 0.495 | 0.468 | 0.481 | 0.774 | |
| Feedback | 0.53 | 0.415 | 0.497 | 0.473 | 0.564 | 0.296 | 0.728 |

Note: Diagonal values represent the AVE between the constructs. Other values are the correlations between the constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was analyzed, and hypotheses were tested using path analysis. The structural model exhibited good fit to the data ($\chi^2/df=2.412$, GFI=0.90, NFI=0.92, IFI=0.95, CFI=0.95, RMSEA=0.06). “Figure 2” displays the standardized path coefficient and path significance. Table 4 lists the structural parameter estimates, and the hypothesis testing results.

Table 4. Empirical results: SEM model

| <i>Hypotheses</i> | Standardized estimate | t-value | Sig. | <i>Hypotheses</i> |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------|------|-------------------|
| CSR → CI | 0.85 | 12.354 | .000 | H ₁₊ |
| CI → Helping | 0.68 | 126.986 | .000 | H _{2a+} |
| CI → Advocacy | 1.07 | 677.039 | .000 | H _{2b+} |
| CI → Tolerance | 0.48 | 132.114 | .000 | H _{2c+} |
| CI → Feedback | 0.86 | 132.867 | .000 | H _{2d+} |
| CSR → Helping | -0.10 | 106.214 | .393 | H _{3a-} |
| CSR → Advocacy | -0.18 | 293.930 | .062 | H _{3b-} |
| CSR → Tolerance | -0.15 | 136.613 | .210 | H _{3c-} |
| CSR → Feedback | -0.23 | 84.352 | .062 | H _{3d-} |

Table 4 shows the outcomes of testing hypotheses by using the structural equation modelling approach. Hypothesis 1 predicted that CSR significantly influences CI, ($\beta=0.85$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H₁. Hypothesis 2 predicted that CI interacts significantly and positively with helping ($\beta=0.68$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_{2a}, advocacy ($\beta=1.07$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_{2b}, tolerance ($\beta=0.48$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_{2c} and feedback ($\beta=0.86$, $p < 0.05$), supporting H_{2d}. All direct

relationships are significant at 0.05 level but CSR and all dimensions of CCB relationships are not significant so H_{3a,b,c,d} has been rejected.

Mediation Analyses

In mediation analysis, the first issue to be investigated is whether the independent variable (X) (usually an experimental manipulation) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Y) in the equation (Baron and Kenny, 1986). But there need not be a significant zero-order effect of X on Y (*path c*) to establish mediation. But in this condition, if the direct effect C is not significant in equation, we have indirect-only mediation (Zhao et. al., 2010). Therefore Model no. 4, from Hayes' Model templates, using PROCESS macro in SPSS (Preacher and Hayes, 2004) were conducted to evaluate indirect effect of customer intimacy on paths from CSR to helping (H_{4a}), advocacy (H_{4b}), tolerance (H_{4c}) and feedback (H_{4d}). Preacher and Hayes (2004) argued that mediational (M) analysis based on formal significance tests of indirect effect *ab* (X→M and M→Y *paths ab*), (Sobel, 1982) is more powerful than the stepwise procedure of Baron and Kenny (1986). Besides useful results from Sobel 's approach (Sobel, 1982), a tenuous assumption underlying this approach is a normal distribution of *ab* which is mostly known to be nonnormal even if the variables constituting *ab* are normally distributed (Edwards and Lambert, 2007). Therefore, the mediating effect was examined by employing Model 4 of the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013) to overcome the issue of power problems arising due to nonnormal sampling distributions of an indirect effect (MacKinnon et al., 2004).

Table 5: Indirect effect of customer intimacy on paths from corporate social responsibility to helping

| Mediator | Effect | Boot SE | Bootstrapped at 95% Confidence Interval around both limits (Lower Limit and Upper Limit) | |
|-------------------|--------|---------|--|-----------|
| | | | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
| Customer Intimacy | .33 | .06 | .81 | .37 |

Dependent Variable: Helping

Table 5 depicts the indirect effect of corporate social responsibility on helping through its effect on customer intimacy. As a result of the Process Macro (Model-4) regression analysis, the indirect effect was $\beta=0.33$ and the lower and upper confidence concluded that the range is 0.81-0.37. According to Preacher and Hayes (2004), the lower and upper confidence intervals obtained in the resampling (Bootstrap) method should not contain zero. That is, both the lower and upper confidence intervals must be either positive or negative. According to the result, it was concluded that customer intimacy mediated the relationship between corporate social responsibility and helping, supporting H_{4a}.

Table 6: Indirect effect of customer intimacy on paths from corporate social responsibility to advocacy

| Mediator | Effect | Boot SE | Bootstrapped at 95% Confidence Interval around both limits (Lower Limit and Upper Limit) | |
|-------------------|--------|---------|--|-----------|
| | | | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
| Customer Intimacy | .57 | .05 | .47 | .67 |

Dependent Variable: Advocacy

Table 6 describes the indirect effect of corporate social responsibility on advocacy through its effect on customer intimacy. As a result of the Process Macro (Model 4) analysis, the indirect effect was $\beta=0.57$ and the lower and upper confidence concluded that the range is 0.47-0.67. According to the result, it was concluded that customer intimacy mediated the relationship between corporate social responsibility and advocacy, supporting H_{4b}.

Table 7: Indirect effect of customer intimacy on paths from corporate social responsibility to tolerance

| Mediator | Effect | Boot SE | Bootstrapped at 95% Confidence Interval around both limits (Lower Limit and Upper Limit) | |
|-------------------|--------|---------|--|-----------|
| | | | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
| Customer Intimacy | .27 | .06 | .15 | .38 |

Dependent Variable: Tolerance

Table 7 illustrates the indirect effect of corporate social responsibility on tolerance through its effect on customer intimacy. As a result of the Process Macro (Model-4) analysis, the indirect effect was $\beta=0.27$ and the lower and upper confidence concluded that the range is 0.15-0.38. According to the result, it was concluded that customer intimacy mediated the relationship between corporate social responsibility and tolerance, supporting H_{4c}.

Table 8: Indirect effect of customer intimacy on paths from corporate social responsibility to feedback

| Mediator | Effect | Boot SE | Bootstrapped at 95% Confidence Interval around both limits (Lower Limit and Upper Limit) | |
|-------------------|--------|---------|--|-----------|
| | | | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
| Customer Intimacy | .31 | .06 | .19 | .42 |

Dependent Variable: Feedback

Table 8 demonstrates the indirect effect of corporate social responsibility on feedback through its effect on customer intimacy. As a result of the Process Macro (Model-4) analysis, the indirect effect was $\beta=0.31$ and the lower and upper confidence concluded that the range is 0.19-0.42. According to the result, it was concluded that customer intimacy mediated the relationship between corporate social responsibility and feedback, supporting H_{4d}.

5. Conclusions

The present study contributes to evaluating the impacts of CSR and its implementation in the restaurant industry on CI and CCB. In add, it reveals CI as a mediator of the variables. This study has developed a conceptual framework that captures the mediating role of CI with regards to the effect of CSR on CCB. When the literature is examined, there are many studies examining the effect of CSR on CCB. However, there is no study examining the mediating role of CI with regards to the effect of CSR on CCB in restaurant businesses. In this context, it is thought that the results of the research will contribute to the literature.

First of all, when we examine the effect of CSR on CI in line with the purpose of the research, it has been determined that CSR has a positive effect on CI. According to this conclusion, it is possible to say that CSR activities carried out in restaurant operations cause customers to feel warm and sincere feelings for that restaurant. Ensuring that customers are involved in CSR activities will increase CI and loyalty. In support of this result, Lee, and Hoe, (2009) and Lee et al. (2020) stated that CSR activities have significant effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty in their studies in restaurant businesses. In addition to customer satisfaction and loyalty, when we consider the positive effect of CSR activities carried out in restaurant businesses on repurchase intention (Tong and Wong, 2014), restaurant businesses should give more importance to CSR activities for a stronger financial structure. Secondly, when we examine the effect of CI on CCB, it has been found that CI has a positive effect on CCB. This result is like the result of Han et al. (2022)'s study on restaurant businesses. Considering that the feeling of intimacy in restaurant services is a bridge toward citizenship behavior for customers (Kim and Park, 2020), it is possible to say that close relations with customers in restaurant

operations are an important factor in creating CCB. In addition, among the findings of this study, it was determined that CI positively affects all sub-dimensions of CCB (i.e., helping, advocacy, tolerance, and feedback). From this point of view, it is possible to say that restaurants try to go beyond their expectations by establishing close relations with their customers, causing customers to feel helpful and tolerant towards that restaurant. In addition, the sense of intimacy that customers see from restaurants leads customers to advocate for the restaurant and give feedback. For this reason, restaurant businesses should provide training to all their employees in order to establish sincere relations with their customers.

Another important finding of the study is that CSR does not have a positive effect on CCB and its sub-dimensions. Unlike the findings of this study, a study by Kim et al. (2020) on restaurant businesses, concluded that CSR has a positive effect on all sub-dimensions of CCB. The reason for this is that the restaurant customers participating in this research are not affected by the social responsibility activities of the restaurant businesses to the extent to help, advocate, feedback, and tolerate the business. But one of the most important findings of the study is that CI mediates the effects of CSR on the four dimensions of CCB. Although examining the relationship between different variables, Tabrani et al. (2018)'s study revealed that CI plays a mediating role in the relationship between trust and customer loyalty. This indicates how necessary the CI strategies implemented in businesses are for CSR activities to be effective on CCB.

Practically, the restaurant industry can get lots of benefits from the findings of this research. As it is evident that restaurants, which are involved in building strong perceptions about their CSR activities, are expected to grow their customer's intimacy. The development of CSR activities is considered a strategic tool for improving customers' intimacy in the restaurant industry. Restaurant services are mainly based on intimacy. Customers will not go to a restaurant where they cannot see a sense of intimacy. CI is vital to the success of the restaurant industry, which is racing against time, as it causes customers to be more tolerant and helpful. In addition, thanks to the CI strategies created, the restaurant will be able to get feedback more easily from its customers when it needs it. Positive or negative feedback from customers will enable restaurant businesses to provide better service in the future.

Thus, by communicating and implementing CSR activities, the restaurant can signal its entire willingness to behave in customers' interest and deliver even other unexpected values. Therefore, the restaurant will go beyond its real food and beverage service providers role and become valuable sincere partners, who are highly interested in the customers' needs. Thus, they will develop more customized services, and this will reinforce customers' intimacy and their citizenship behavior. This research was conducted for customers in Izmir who prefer their food and beverage business preferences on time constraints and includes regional data. Researchers who want to study this subject are recommended to conduct research that includes other restaurants and covers wider regions, to obtain more general and

comprehensive results. The study was also limited to the restaurant industry. It focuses on a single industry (food and beverage ind.), therefore precluding the generalization of findings to other industries (Ochieng, 2009). Future research suggests the sample should include other industries (e.g. accommodation, travel, entertainment) to increase the generalization. Also, in the model of CSR on CCB, different mediators such as customer value, brand image, and customer experience can be examined.

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