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**Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on
Customer Satisfaction and the Organisational
Attractiveness of the Clothing Industry in the UK**

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DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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STATEMENT 1

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Abstract

This research examines the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness within the UK clothing industry. Given the industry's prevalent issues of unsustainable practices, such as poor working conditions, labour exploitation, and environmental degradation, many organisations have embraced CSR initiatives to address these challenges. However, there is a lack of research that explores how CSR practices specifically influence customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness, employing a well-developed theoretical framework. To bridge this gap, this study adopts a qualitative approach, conducting 22 semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews. The data analysis utilises NVIVO 2, employing thematic analysis to identify and explore key themes and patterns within the data. The analysis reveals four main themes in this research: the types of CSR activities, challenges/barriers to organisations, providing organisational attractiveness, and ensuring customer satisfaction. The types of CSR activities encompass philanthropic-, ethical-, legal-, economic-, and environmental-based practices. Challenges/barriers include managerial, organisational, legal, and production-related factors. Providing organisational attractiveness highlights adopting positive consumer orientation and consideration for the external environment to the organisation. Lastly, ensuring customer satisfaction includes institutional pressure mechanisms, responsibility focus, and community focus as sub-themes. Building upon these themes, this research proposes a conceptual framework that outlines a three-stage plan to address the knowledge gap on how CSR influences customer satisfaction and the attractiveness of businesses in the UK clothing industry. These stages involve promoting CSR activities, identifying obstacles, and proposing solutions. Thus, this research contributes to the CSR literature by elucidating the mechanisms through which customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness are achieved.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, customer satisfaction, organisational attractiveness, UK clothing industry, qualitative data, sustainability.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The globalisation of the economy has transformed the competition for consumers' attention in different industries, with companies and industries seeking to differentiate their products and services to gain competitive advantage (Levitt, 2019). However, in the fashion industry, standardisation is a critical factor as it has led to unsustainable actions by focusing on low-cost production at maximum speed (Foroohar, 2020). Despite being one of the largest industries in the world and the fourth-largest in Europe after housing, food, and transport, the fashion industry is plagued by accusations of unsafe workplaces, low salaries, and violations of workers' rights (Fashion United, 2020). Moreover, its low environmental performance and excessive use of natural resources have resulted in negative impacts on sustainable development (Brito et al., 2020).

The fashion industry plays a crucial role in the global economy, employing around 3384 million people, or 46% of the world's population of 7.2607 billion people. However, the accusations related to the industry's conduct are often linked to its ecological footprint, which is a consequence of mass production, labour abuse, and the marketing methods used in recent years that have formed a throwaway culture (Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir, 2019). This culture has resulted in a global disposal problem, with every second a truckload of textiles going to landfill or being incinerated, and new clothes being discarded when they fall out of fashion, or even before. Despite increased consumer awareness regarding social and environmental impacts, the fashion industry still negatively affects customers' sustainable future (Brito et al., 2020).

There is a growing pressure on the fashion industry to implement strategies addressing environmental and social issues. However, the evidence shows that the industry is still not taking corporate social responsibility (CSR) seriously, as few companies to date have hired CSR experts (Brito et al., 2020). Given the industry's mindset and low-price policy, it is still feasible to produce by the lowest-cost methods possible, which has led to consumerism becoming a growing problem. To address this issue, there is a need for explicit policies regarding pricing and production space, as well as for collaboration between fashion companies, suppliers, and other stakeholders, to produce environmentally friendly products (Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir, 2019).

The adoption of formal CSR and sustainability practices within the fashion sector would ultimately create added value for industry stakeholders. The fashion industry must face the “negative aspects of the life-cycle of their products” by planning for the future and conducting their business differently. This includes addressing the increasing scarcity and rising cost of energy, water, waste, and disposal, as well as workers’ rights when decisions are made regarding factory closures (Preuss and Perschke, 2020). Companies change their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions for various reasons, such as protecting and improving their reputation, reducing stakeholder pressure, creating new markets, and gaining competitive advantage (Ghosh and Shah, 2021). However, it is uncertain whether these actually lead to real improvements, as this will depend on the nature of the actions taken.

To encourage desirable behaviour, fashion designers need to add more value to eco-friendly clothing designs without damaging style or brand identity, particularly for consumers who use clothes as a means of self-expression or as status symbols (Fahimnia et al., 2019). Consumer awareness of sustainability issues can be increased through education and raising their awareness, utilising marketing communication or social media, as the communication structure regarding CSR needs a new approach (Moore et al., 2018). Fashion companies need to customise their marketing methods to increase consumer awareness of sustainable products, whether they are domestically or globally focused.

1.2 Problem statement

CSR has been defined in various ways, and it is closely related to the concept of corporate sustainability. According to Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir (2019), corporate sustainability is a policy framework that addresses and implements a high-level UN development policy, while CSR is best understood as an emerging global legal norm focused on businesses, encompassing social and environmental obligations, drawn from international soft law instruments. Preuss and Perschke (2020) explain that CSR refers to self-regulatory acts performed by international businesses to mitigate negative economic, environmental, and social impacts on society. The implementation of these self-regulatory CSR policies and practices are based on international norms and standards.

The fashion industry is characterised by rapid changes, high volatility, low predictability, and a short product lifecycle (Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir, 2019). To maximise their profit margin, fashion companies often outsource production to developing countries, which raises concerns about the working conditions of employees and the use of chemicals in manufacturing countries (Cobbing and Vicaire,

2021). The volume of clothing consumption and disposal can also lead to sustainability issues, which may position the fashion industry as an important contributor to global environmental and social issues (Costa et al., 2020). In a survey conducted by Moore et al. (2018) on social responsibility, 74 members of the International Textile and Fashion Association generally agreed that working conditions, child labour, consumerism, and environmental degradation are important CSR issues to be addressed.

Despite the increased interest in sustainability and CSR practices in the fashion industry, there is a lack of research on the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry (Cobbing and Vicaire, 2021). While there is information about the CSR activities of UK clothing brands on their official websites and in newspaper articles (Degbey and Pelto, 2021), there is no specific research paper that discusses the industry's CSR practices related to industry attractiveness and customer satisfaction. Therefore, there is a gap in the detailed analysis of the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry, indicating the need for further investigation in this area. The lack of research on the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry is an important gap that needs to be addressed. Understanding the impact of CSR on these two factors is crucial to companies making informed decisions regarding their CSR policies and practices. In today's business world, where sustainability and social responsibility are becoming increasingly important, companies need to know how their CSR activities can affect customer satisfaction and their own organisational attractiveness.

Moreover, the fashion industry is a significant contributor to global environmental and social issues, and its impact on such has been the subject of extensive research. However, research on the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness is scarce, particularly in the UK clothing industry. As such, addressing this gap in research can provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of CSR policies and practices in the UK clothing industry, ultimately helping companies make better decisions about their CSR strategies.

1.3 Aim and Objectives

The *aim* of this study is to identify the impact of corporate social responsibility on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the clothing industry of UK and provide guidelines and suggestions

for the UK clothing industry on how they might improve their CSR activities to improve customer satisfaction and organisational structure. The *Objectives* of this study are:

1. To analyse the current CSR practices of UK clothing companies.
2. To identify the challenges and barriers that firms in the UK clothing industry face in implementing effective CSR practices.
3. To investigate the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in UK clothing companies.
4. To provide recommendations to the firms to use CSR more effectively.

1.4 Research Questions

- a) What are the key challenges faced by the UK clothing industry in implementing CSR practices that positively impact customer satisfaction and enhance industry attractiveness?
- b) How have CSR practices evolved in the UK clothing industry, and what factors have influenced their adoption?
- c) To what extent do CSR practices impact customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry, and what are the underlying mechanisms through which this occurs?

1.5 Research Structure

Chapter 1- Introduction: In this section, the researcher aims to provide an overview of CSR strategies and their impact on customer satisfaction and industry attractiveness. Various theories have been analysed to gain a comprehensive understanding of CSR strategies.

Chapter 2- Literature Review: This section aims to provide a comprehensive and contrasting perspective on CSR strategies. The researcher examines the impact of CSR strategies on enhancing customer satisfaction and industry attractiveness in the UK clothing industry.

Chapter 3- Research Methodology: This section will analyse the precise process of data collection. It is crucial for the researcher to comprehend suitable methods for data collection to gain a comprehensive understanding of the study.

Chapter 4- Data Analysis: The researcher will conduct a comprehensive analysis of qualitative data employing a range of analytical methods. The analysis of qualitative data will be performed through the implementation of the thematic analysis technique.

Chapter 5- Discussions and Findings: This chapter provides a discussion of the findings of this study, focusing on research aim and objectives.

Chapter 6- Conclusion, Recommendations, and Contribution: This chapter presents the research conclusion and recommendations for the UK clothing sector. It will also outline the academic contribution, theoretical contribution, and contribution to knowledge and theories of this study.

Chapter 2: Critical Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR is a process of self-regulation which helps to reflect on a business accountability and dedication for developing the well-being of the society and communities. Fatima and Elbanna (2023) stated that CSR develops an important role in defining the company's stakeholder's degree for identifying the organisational process. Moreover, CSR strategies have been developed in organisations by observing non-financial performance indicators like customer's perceptions, and impact of environmental and social aspects. However, the communications related to CSR under assessment have been targeted at the external stakeholders of the company. On the other hand, Singh and Misra (2021) highlighted that CSR and its effect on organisational performance have acquired important global research attention over the past few years. Similarly, if a company needs to implement the CSR process with sustainability, it is essential to know its impact on overall organisational performance.

Furthermore, the role of CSR can be observed as it positively impacts a company's performance by increasing the corporate reputation for various stakeholders. Moreover, CSR evolved from the voluntary options from individual organisations for its mandatory regulators at the national, regional and international levels. However, multiple organisations always prefer to go beyond the lawful requirements which help them to modify their business models as per trade operations. Similarly, Fukuda and Ouchida (2020) explained that CSR helped to reduce the emissions for time-consuming emission tariffs. On the other hand, CSR even helps to enhance social well-being and has the effect of increasing emissions, which have been used while environmental factors are negatively impacted. However, operational CSR processes are frequently oriented towards improving the business performance or efficiency. CSR factors help to decrease the carbon footprint and enhance the energy efficiency.

For ensuring the authenticity of CSR practices, an organisation needs to look at its values, core issues and business mission for initiating the operations. Singh and Misra (2021) argued that the relationship between a firm's performance and CSR vary as per the reputation of the company in question. Moreover, in the clothing industry, CSR factors help to decrease GHG emissions, water consumption, and reduce pollution. Similarly, CSR strategies are even focused on offsetting the adverse environmental impact by developing funding research in an organisation. However, ElAlfy et al. (2020)

addressed that the implementation of CSR with a global concept is applied in an organisation with various economic, legal, environment and political contexts. Moreover, the dedication of implementing CSR practices and including them in a business process are situated in a shared desire for confirming the company's long-term survival and success. On the other hand, CSR factors and initiatives are related to an organisation in managing both its current and future investors.

Besides this, initiatives related to CSR can help to enhance employee satisfaction and engagement, which help to drive employee retention. On the other hand, CSR initiatives can help to attract possible workers who have effective personal convictions which can satisfy the organisational process. Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir (2020) opined that the long-term advantages of formal sustainability and CSR practices in the fashion industry help to add value for the industry stakeholders. The CSR strategies can help to conceptualise the production process by becoming more environmentally friendly by decreasing the material and energy costs of a company's customers.

2.1.1 Conceptualisation of CSR

CSR has become a widespread practice among companies globally. This concept refers to the responsibilities that corporations have towards society and the environment, beyond their economic objectives (Mulligan, 2017). By engaging in CSR activities, companies not only benefit society but also enhance their brand image. The scope of CSR encompasses a wide range of issues, such as the quality of life, economic and financial concerns, and policies (Ghalib and Agupusi, 2017; Agata et al., 2017).

Based on the study of Ghalib and Agupusi (2017), CSR involves a set of commitments and strategies aimed at promoting the welfare of society, the environment, and living beings on earth. The benefits of CSR extend beyond the financial realm, as they also foster a safe, sound, and positive workplace environment. The contributions of CSR activities to society are multifaceted and include, among other things, assisting those in need, combating social injustice, and promoting ethical values (Mulligan, 2017). Moreover, CSR can raise awareness among people about issues such as the importance of fighting for their rights, using eco-friendly products, and preventing infectious diseases like coronavirus, AIDS, and malaria (Mulligan, 2017).

CSR activities can also enhance fairness and foster positive relationships among employees, regardless of the size of the organisation or the number of employees. Consequently, many governments encourage companies to engage in CSR, as it is not only beneficial for the companies but also for society (Agata et

al., 2017). The spread of positivity resulting from CSR activities can lead to a better and more developed life for the public and the community. The clothing industry in the UK is a good example of a sector where many companies have embraced CSR activities (Bayoud et al., 2017). Several high-end and large clothing brands in the UK have been dedicated to the practice of CSR for many years, sharing a fair proportion of their profits with society (Mulligan, 2017). The concept of CSR has gained momentum among corporations worldwide as it involves a commitment to promoting the welfare of society and the environment.

In contemporary business practices, it is essential for companies to extend their focus beyond the boundaries of their organisation and consider the impact of their actions on society at large (Ashok et al., 2020). CSR practices are widely regarded as a means to achieve this objective, whereby companies can contribute to addressing the societal needs and improving the well-being of the community. The clothing industry in the UK serves as a notable example of how CSR activities can help address the gaps in society. Several UK-based clothing companies engage in CSR practices across various developing and underdeveloped countries, thereby fulfilling their commitment to the triple bottom line theory that emphasises the importance of people, planet, and profits (Agata et al., 2017).

Notably, the relationship between CSR and the triple bottom line theory is widely recognised, with the former serving as a means to achieve the latter. A study highlights the contribution of companies towards societal welfare and advocates the mandatory adoption of CSR practices by companies that hold significant financial and brand positions, given the adverse impact of industrial production on the environment (Mulligan, 2017). CSR practices are therefore seen as a way to enhance both the economic and environmental conditions of the country, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the betterment of society.

The ethical nature of CSR practices is recognised by legal experts who can provide step-by-step guidance to companies. Promoting CSR practices on a larger scale is essential to inspire and motivate other stakeholders to adopt similar practices, thereby facilitating the removal of the cultural diversities and associated problems that commonly arise in a workplace (Agata et al., 2017). Given the diverse workforce in many organisations, maintaining respect and harmony is critical for business sustainability, and CSR activities can help achieve this objective (Bayoud et al., 2017).

Notably, people are increasingly aware of the adverse effects of unethical business practices, and the advantages of CSR practices are widely recognised, particularly in the clothing industry (Ashok et al., 2020). CSR is now regarded as a management tool that promotes transparency, good relationships between the company, customers, and the workforce, and good ethical practices and morality in society (Mulligan, 2017). CSR practices are essential to stay dutiful and lawful in the society in which companies operate and serve as a bridge between ethical and social management issues. While CSR activities are often viewed as responsibilities towards the society, they also contribute to building strong bonds between employees and customers, thus enhancing flexibility between companies and the public (Bayoud et al., 2017). Several CSR practices also focus on maintaining the safety and health of people living in society, which customers can connect to (Agata et al., 2017).

The promotion of human rights and the implementation of socially responsible business practices are vital to ensuring that businesses and organisations operate ethically and make a positive difference to society. In support of this, Khan (2016) has identified numerous companies that respect and comply with the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights, which outlines fair and justified policies for international labour practices. The main objective of the UN Declaration is to ensure that companies uphold fundamental principles and rights in the workplace (Agata et al., 2017), thereby fostering increased participation in charitable works and promoting social, legal, educational, and environmental projects.

It is widely recognised that companies with strong brand positions in the market value CSR and actively engage in such practices (Bayoud et al., 2017). By demonstrating the positive impact of CSR, these companies have shown that such activities can contribute to addressing societal problems. However, if the belief in the positive effects of CSR is not held by those engaged in its practice, the projects may fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Those who are fully committed to and believe in the importance of CSR are considered accountable for promoting good ethical practices (Khan, 2016), which raises awareness and fosters a culture of ethical behaviour.

The UK clothing industry provides a notable example of how businesses can participate in and promote CSR activities in unique ways (Agata et al., 2017). By implementing flexible work settings and practices, both communities and stakeholders can benefit from such initiatives. However, it is important that leaders and decision makers do not devalue CSR activities once they are underway, as this can undermine the purpose and impact of the project. Furthermore, the accountability of those involved in

CSR is critical to ensuring its effective implementation and benefits of the initiative (Ashok et al., 2020).

In addition to promoting ethical practices, CSR activities also serve important functions related to business ethics, regulation laws, business laws, and governmental laws. While some critics argue that CSR is primarily rooted in philanthropy, it is noteworthy that such practices and cultures can be easily adopted by both employees and decision makers (Khan, 2016). Ultimately, the benefits of CSR initiatives depend on the commitment and accountability of those involved, as well as a belief in the positive impact of such practices on society.

To improve the well-being of individuals in society, many companies engage in CSR activities that aim to address specific social issues and meet the needs of the community. For instance, some clothing businesses have recently started using natural dyes instead of artificial colours, while others use eco-friendly packaging materials in place of plastic. Such CSR activities not only help companies to increase revenue but also enable them to contribute to the betterment of society. Although CSR initiatives by individual companies cannot wholly transform the economic conditions of a country, they have proven to be beneficial to its populace (Bayoud et al., 2017; Khan, 2016).

Leaders who place an emphasis on CSR and actively participate in such initiatives not only encourage their employees to engage in activities that benefit society but also create a positive work environment that fosters ethical behaviour (Ashok et al., 2020). Leaders who practice CSR serve as role models for their employees, motivating them to act ethically and morally. Individuals working in CSR departments of companies tend to avoid engaging in unethical activities and corruption, thereby promoting adherence to policies and laws that benefit society (Khan, 2016). Such actions can encourage other companies to engage in CSR activities and follow rules and regulations correctly.

Maintaining safety and security in the workplace is crucial for managers, and engaging employees in CSR activities can foster a sense of solidarity and harmony among them. If some employees violate rules and engage in unethical practices, it can pollute the workplace environment and harm relationships and harmony among coworkers. Legal experts can help companies where employees disobey rules and engage in unethical practices by enforcing the law, as not abiding by the law can lead to negative consequences, especially for individuals with significant responsibilities (Khan, 2016).

Prior to engaging in CSR activities, business leaders must learn how to properly implement and manage them in order to achieve the desired outcomes (Ashok et al., 2020). This requires a comprehensive understanding of the benefits associated with various types of CSR initiatives. Developing a strong brand image is a challenging task, and unethical practices or missteps can easily tarnish a company's reputation (Agata et al., 2017). Companies that engage in CSR initiatives often establish a positive reputation, which can be used to build relationships with stakeholders both within and without the organisation. Along with fulfilling responsibilities, reputation management is also critical to maintaining a positive image of the organisation (Ashok et al., 2020). Failure to fulfil responsibilities can damage the reputation of the company. As Khan (2016) noted, maintaining a positive reputation and brand image is crucial, and many corporate leaders encourage their teams to engage in CSR activities. A negative reputation can cause a company to lose credibility with its customers. For example, there have been rumours in recent years that some companies heavily promote their CSR activities but are not actually engaged in them. Using false means to maintain positive relationships with customers and generate profits is considered unethical. Simply increasing product or service sales is not sufficient to establish a long-term relationship with one's customers. By engaging in CSR activities, companies can demonstrate their commitment to society, thereby fostering a positive and lasting relationship with their customers (Ashok et al., 2020). CSR activities also help to maintain a positive brand image over the long term. Improved social conditions can contribute to the economic development of a country, which can in turn help companies to expand their business (Agata et al., 2017). The more supportive and flexible a government is in terms of business development, the more opportunities there will be for companies to engage in CSR activities. According to Khan (2016), there is a strong connection between CSR initiatives and government regulations. The government encourages people and organisations to work together to improve the economic conditions of the country. In conclusion, the benefits of CSR activities are vast and significant, as demonstrated by the discussions presented in this study (Agata et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Understanding Instrumental vs. Normative CSR

The theory of instrumental CSR introduced by the renowned economist Milton Friedman remains highly regarded in academia and is often employed to elucidate the concept of instrumental CSR. Friedman actively sought to promote this theory and advocate its adoption among individuals (Goworek et al., 2020). He attributed significant importance to elucidating the liberal doctrine underlying CSR. According to Friedman, corporate social responsibilities contribute to the enhancement of stakeholder

value and facilitate the cultivation of ethical practices (Goworek et al., 2020). Moreover, he emphasised the need for organisations to comply with government regulations, asserting that effective management entails the assumption of responsibilities assigned to individuals within the organisation and the subsequent increase in revenue generation. Mathur (2020) suggests that instrumental CSR activities are primarily concerned with the short-term improvement of businesses, thereby nurturing a mutually beneficial relationship between companies and stakeholders. This approach underscores the significance of ensuring the proper fulfilment of obligations in business practices (Goworek et al., 2020). Consequently, decisions that yield profitability assume paramount importance, with shareholder preferences taking precedence within the framework of instrumental CSR. While planning for instrumental CSR, it is imperative to integrate necessary measures that align with profit generation (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Successful execution of CSR initiatives relies on the allocation and utilisation of appropriate resources, thereby enabling sustained and active engagement in such endeavours. Initially, CSR was often mistaken for philanthropy by many societies; however, subsequent research has demonstrated that CSR encompasses a broader scope of activities than mere philanthropy (Axevedo and Barros, 2017), the latter primarily focusing on addressing specific areas of concern, highlighting a clear distinction to CSR. Although CSR initiatives may originate from addressing a particular societal issue, they tend to expand into a diverse range of activities associated with social betterment (Goworek et al., 2020). The benefits derived from CSR permeate throughout the entire nation, making them conducive to long-term development, while philanthropy primarily provides short-term advantages (Goworek et al., 2020). Khan (2016) posits that CSR not only meets the immediate needs of society but also facilitates the sustainability of the assisted individuals in serving on a long-term basis.

According to Mathur (2020), there is a growing trend among companies to engage in CSR activities. By actively participating in CSR initiatives, companies can contribute to addressing specific societal needs over an extended period of time (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). For instance, a significant majority of companies, more than 90%, were involved in health and safety initiatives between 2013, demonstrating their commitment to this particular area (Bayoud et al., 2017). Furthermore, approximately 82% of companies made efforts to promote art and culture in their respective countries, thereby contributing to their enhancement (Goworek et al., 2020). It is worth noting that some companies initially focused on a single area of CSR and subsequently expanded their efforts to encompass multiple areas. For example, certain companies witnessed an increase in the proportion of their CSR activities dedicated to health and

safety, from 20% to over 35% (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). However, it is important to acknowledge that some business organisations may heavily emphasise cultural initiatives and art, particularly when attempting to mitigate the negative impacts of their mistakes, which could potentially harm their reputation (Goworek et al., 2020). These actions by companies are often undertaken to create an impression of being genuine followers of CSR principles.

According to Diacon (2017), numerous researchers are actively striving to develop and implement CSR practices within organisations. Due to the various approaches to implementing CSR, empirical data holds significant importance in this field. The normative CSR approach appears to be a feasible option. Diacon (2017) asserts that legitimising this conduct among all individuals is necessary (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Companies that effectively utilise empirical data can sustain their CSR efforts with relative ease, thereby reaping the benefits of CSR. Diacon (2017) further suggests that individuals' decision-making abilities and their sense of fulfilling societal responsibilities are enhanced when participating in CSR activities conducted by businesses.

Choosing the most suitable theory for developing CSR activities is of utmost importance for businesses. Diacon (2017) emphasises the significance of considering normative CSR, given that the working culture of every business varies. The research, planning, and implementation of CSR activities will yield no substantial benefits if the chosen theory fails to align with the fundamental principles and requirements of the business. In such cases, employing normative theory can lead to positive outcomes, fostering rational decision-making processes and enhancing companies' images (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). There are various approaches to CSR activities, including stakeholder theory, CS performance theory, and capitalism, among others. Some companies adopt social teaching as a means to practice theoretical CSR, resulting in benefits for both society, the environment, and the company (Axevedo and Barros, 2017).

2.1.3 Involvement of Stakeholders in Organisational CSR

According to Freeman (2017), stakeholders play a crucial role and exert significant influence within businesses, particularly in the clothing industry. The realm of CSR is greatly influenced by these stakeholders, who encompass customers, employees, suppliers, investors, and other relevant parties (Freeman, 2017). The involvement of stakeholders, whether direct or indirect, is integral to the overall operations and decision-making processes of companies, including their CSR initiatives (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Stakeholders typically encompass individuals who have contributed their dedicated

efforts, expertise, knowledge, professional skills, integrity, and loyalty over many years. Hence, CSR is often referred to as corporate social performance (CSP) (Bayoud et al., 2017). The mission and workflow of a company cannot be accomplished without the active engagement of stakeholders. In contemporary times, the failure of a company, especially large corporations, to engage in corporate social responsibilities can lead to a missed opportunity for generating comprehensive positive impacts (Freeman, 2017).

Freeman (2017) defines organisational stakeholders as shareholders, leaders, founders, government entities, and other individuals. This highlights the fact that the company's main interests and concerns extend beyond those of the higher authorities alone. By involving other shareholders in the decision-making process, aside from the designated decision makers, their engagement and interest in the business can be enhanced (Freeman, 2017). It is imperative to inform significant shareholders about CSR practices before implementation to foster healthy, long-term relationships with them (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Managing stakeholders assumes a pivotal role in securing and effectively managing the essential resources within a company. Therefore, many companies prioritise stakeholder theory to ensure the successful execution of CSR practices. A study indicates that adopting stakeholder theory is a strategic approach for efficient business operations (Bayoud et al., 2017). The influence of stakeholders on a business is both internal and external. A comprehensive understanding of stakeholder-related factors and their effective utilisation for business improvement can be achieved through a thorough examination of relevant theories (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016).

Conducting thorough research on stakeholders and gaining a deep understanding of their characteristics and preferences is crucial in effectively managing them (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). It is important to note that some stakeholders may not maintain a long-term presence within a business, potentially leading to their replacement. Consequently, all companies must serve their stakeholders and solicit feedback, as this represents a vital aspect of stakeholder management (Bayoud et al., 2017). While it may not always be feasible to fulfil all stakeholder needs and demands, prioritising those that align with the company's best interests is necessary for overall company advancement. Therefore, Freeman (2017) advises the careful development of strategies to handle stakeholders.

According to Freeman (2017), proper allocation of necessary resources within a business is crucial for effective stakeholder management. These resources encompass both internal and external aspects of the company. Insufficient resource allocation can lead to detrimental consequences for the organisation,

including adverse impacts on projects undertaken as part of CSR initiatives (Freeman, 2017). Implementing the stakeholder theory enables more efficient management practices in this regard. The stakeholder theory has been in practice since the 1970s (Axevedo and Barros, 2017), and it continues to be highly regarded and valuable for managing stakeholder relationships in business contexts. Effectively utilising corporate social performance within an organisation can lead to significant success for the company. Engaging in corporate social responsibilities not only benefits society, but it also positively influences the relationships and influence of stakeholders within the company (Bayoud et al., 2017).

2.1.4 The Clothing Industry and CSR Activities

The fast-growing global fashion industry holds significant economic importance, with a market value exceeding 3 trillion US dollars. It commands a market share of approximately 4%, equivalent to a value of 385.7 billion dollars (Smith, 2020). The rise of fast fashion has been remarkable, with a turnover of 1.8 trillion US dollars in 2015, projected to increase by 17% to reach 2.1 trillion US dollars by 2025. The origins of sustainable fashion can be traced back to the eighteenth century, where the first documented instances of its practice emerged. An exemplar of this can be found in the redesigned men's waistcoats that served as the foundation for the creation of embroidered women's vests. Such an artifact is currently exhibited at the Fashion Institute of Technology's Museum in the United States (Gordon and Hill, 2018). This historical precedent illustrates the enduring nature of reusing and recycling within the fashion industry. An additional notable example from the late 1960s involves the introduction of a fabric called "paper wear", which was crafted from nonwoven fibres rather than actual paper (Gordon and Hill, 2018). This innovation marked a crucial step in the evolution toward reusing fabrics within the fashion sector. Subsequent progress was made in the 1970s with the development of fabric derived from recycled plastic bottles, commonly referred to as fleece material (Gordon and Hill, 2018).

Despite the existence of exemplars in sustainable fashion, the scholarly community continues to seek solutions for promoting greater environmental responsibility and addressing the social consequences stemming from the day-to-day operations of the fashion industry (Gordon and Hill, 2018). However, due to the industry's prevailing focus on promptly delivering new and trendy products to stores on a biweekly basis, combined with its ongoing reliance on a cost-effective and low-priced business model, the cost of acquiring a plain white T-shirt often pales in comparison to that of purchasing a cup of coffee at a café (Thorisdottir and Johannsdottir, 2021). Numerous avenues can be explored to underscore sustainability within the fashion industry, such as placing increased emphasis on transparent reporting of

production processes. Fashion designers operate under constant pressure as they have to contend with challenges related to transportation distances, traceability, and waste during the design phase. Consequently, it becomes arduous to determine whether time constraints or a lack of interest are responsible for the omission of these factors from the design process (Black, 2017). Consequently, it is crucial to consider sustainability as an opportunity to foster advancements in the future of responsible fashion (Black, 2017).

The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) holds the distinction of being the predominant framework employed for the purpose of offering guidance on the disclosure of CSR performance. In order to cater to specific industries, the GRI has developed specialised supplements, one of which is the Apparel and Footwear Sector Supplement (AFSS). The AFSS functions by furnishing a concise definition of CSR reporting, describing it as a systematic approach encompassing the measurement, disclosure, and accountability of an organisation's performance, all directed towards the objective of achieving sustainable development. By adopting this comprehensive approach, the AFSS strives to present an equitable and rational portrayal of the sustainability performance of the reporting organisation, encompassing both positive and negative contributions (Woo and Jin, 2020).

The apparel and textile industry can employ the ISO 26000 standard as a robust framework to address CSR concerns. The ISO 26000 standard delineates CSR into seven fundamental themes, namely "organisational governance", "human rights", "labour practices", "the environment", "fair operating practices", "consumer issues", and "community involvement and development". Each theme encompasses a range of associated issues, thereby providing a comprehensive scope for CSR considerations. For instance, within the domain of the environment, the ISO 26000 standard encompasses aspects such as pollution prevention, sustainable resource utilisation, and preservation of the natural environment.

The ISO 26000 standard assumes the role of a guiding document, facilitating organisations in their endeavours to operate in a socially responsible manner and make substantive contributions to the welfare and advancement of society. A fundamental tenet of the ISO 26000 standard is the recognition of stakeholder engagement as a pivotal element of social responsibility. This entails establishing meaningful and inclusive interactions with stakeholders, including employees, customers, affected communities, and the general public. Additionally, the ISO 26000 standard focuses on the significance

of CSR in fostering sustainable development, emphasising the responsibility of companies and other organisations in driving positive change and progress (Ghosh and Shah, 2021).

2.1.5 CSR and the UK Clothing Industry

According to Mares (2016), the fast-forward clothing industry is characterised by high unpredictability, short lifecycles, and increased consumer demand. Consequently, the ability to respond quickly within the clothing industry has become highly important. The growing production demands of retail companies, particularly in countries like the UK, have intensified the pressure for rapid production (Bross, 2020). One prominent example in the UK is the clothing brand ZARA, which manufactures its products in underdeveloped and developing countries such as Bangladesh and India to reduce production costs (Zara, 2020). This choice of production location is driven by the availability of cheap labour and lower operational costs, which are also observed in numerous garment manufacturing companies within the UK (Bross, 2020).

The development and increased consumption within the clothing industry have both direct and indirect effects. Consequently, many companies are now placing greater emphasis on CSR and seeking guidance from legal experts to ensure ethical business practices (Bross, 2020). Companies committed to CSR strive to source clothes from factories that uphold workers' legal rights and provide a hygienic and safe workplace environment. For instance, Burberry, a UK-based clothing company, has set the goal of "revaluing waste" and has made significant investments toward achieving this objective (Bross, 2020). Several other clothing companies in the UK are also actively promoting awareness of waste reduction, reuse, and recycling (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

In order to mitigate environmental pollution, waste, and the use of harmful chemicals, the clothing industry in the UK has undertaken various initiatives to raise awareness (Bayoud et al., 2017). A growing number of companies have shown interest in eco-friendly suppliers and are transitioning from, for instance, plastic bags to alternative options such as paper bags, jute bags, or biodegradable bags (Bross, 2020). Tesco, a prominent company in the UK, has replaced regular plastic bags with biodegradable ones for packaging all of their products, including items of clothing (Bross, 2020). Additionally, several small online clothing brands in the UK have embraced eco-friendly packaging alternatives instead of plastics (Bayoud et al., 2017).

Online companies like Watson and Wolfe, ADKN, and Arsayo in the UK have positioned themselves as providers of eco-friendly products (Bross, 2020). For instance, Watson and Wolfe employ recycled materials in the production of their core products, while ADKN exclusively offers animal-free products (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). Another notable brand, the Bearded Vegan Clothing Store, utilises pure organic cotton and naturally dyed fabrics to circumvent the effects of the use of harmful chemicals on the environment (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). Furthermore, an American clothing company has developed a unique fabric that requires 100% less water during the manufacturing process compared to conventional fabrics. A select few UK companies have seized the opportunity to incorporate this fabric into their clothing production (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

According to the findings of Bross (2020), numerous companies within the clothing industry actively engage in various social activities as a means of fostering connections and rapport with members of society. Many of these brands, which currently implement or have previously undertaken such social initiatives, promote their CSR endeavours through various media channels, particularly on their official websites (Bross, 2020). A conceptual framework presented by Goworek (2020) demonstrated a notable impact of CSR on both customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness. The wide array of social activities undertaken by many companies in the industry includes donating clothes to underprivileged individuals, providing free meals, sanitary systems, shelter, medical services, supporting charities, and advocating human rights, among other initiatives (Bross, 2020). In the context of the UK clothing industry, numerous companies have actively embraced and implemented CSR activities (Bayoud et al., 2017), which ultimately exert a significant influence on a global scale.

Several prominent high-end clothing brands in the UK have consistently dedicated a portion of their profits to engaging in CSR for several years. For instance, the UK-based clothing brand Clark places paramount importance on ensuring the safety and health of its employees (Clark, 2020). The company actively trains its employees to carry out their work in a manner that safeguards their well-being. Additionally, some companies provide free counselling services for their employees (Bayoud et al., 2017). Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, certain organisations went beyond their traditional boundaries by altering their slogans, logos, promotional strategies, motivating employees, ensuring workplace satisfaction, maintaining hygiene standards, adjusting working policies and hours, and more (Agata et al., 2020). While some companies offered additional financial and mental support to employees facing challenging circumstances due to virus-related issues, others regrettably resorted to layoffs during this

period (Agta et al., 2020). Asos, for instance, donates to charities focused on providing free textile education, assisting victims of natural disasters, and offering other training programmes relevant to the clothing industry (Asos, 2020). Moreover, certain companies collaborate with NGOs and other social organisations to provide funds for various projects (Bross, 2020).

Prominent clothing brands like H&M maintain a global presence, including at multiple locations within the UK (H&M, 2021). These companies have spearheaded several environmentally friendly innovations (Księżak, 2016). Notably, H&M and other brands have developed water-based substitutes and introduced vegan-based leather products, effectively replacing the use of polyurethane (Księżak, 2016). Furthermore, H&M actively promotes its “Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals” project to encourage other clothing brands within the industry (Księżak, 2016). In addition, brands such as H&M reward customers who contribute their used clothing to collection points, subsequently recycling these garments. These companies claim to achieve zero waste in their processes. Remarkably, research indicates that 7600 tons of old clothing is equivalent to nearly 37 million T-shirts (Księżak, 2016).

2.1.6 Shortcomings of the Clothing Industry in its CSR Practices

The clothing industry is currently subjected to increasingly stringent regulations concerning environmental protection and higher labour costs (Tudor, 2018). Consequently, the apparel/textile sector in Europe has been compelled to engage in innovation activities, both in terms of process improvement and the production of high-quality products. Conversely, the relocation of apparel/textile industry capacities to less developed regions has yielded several positive social outcomes. The expansion of this industry has contributed to the economic revitalisation of developing countries by generating numerous job opportunities that do not require specialised knowledge or skills. Particularly noteworthy is the significant employment of individuals from marginalised social groups, particularly women, who would face considerable difficulty securing employment in the absence of the apparel/textile industry in rural areas of these countries (Dabija et al., 2017). This is of particular importance given that approximately 70% of the 26.5 million employees in the global apparel/textile sector are women. It is also worth noting that language barriers do not significantly hinder participation in the production processes of the apparel/textile industry, facilitating the employment of migrant labour. Consequently, developing countries account for three-quarters of global apparel exports, representing approximately 50% of textile exports (Perry and Towers, 2019).

The issue of mass production and consumerism has given rise to challenges in resource sustainability, as new garments are discarded once they no longer meet customers' expectations or perceived value (Claudio, 2018; Cobbing and Vicaire, 2020). To address this disposal problem, the European Commission has developed a framework aimed at promoting sustainable practices such as "eco-design and other measures", which increase consumer awareness of sustainable products and facilitate access to "re-use and repair services." These initiatives align with circularity principles by enhancing transparency in the global production process and implementing improved programmes for the reuse, recycling, and sorting of fashion items (Shen et al., 2018).

Regarding the imperative of raising consumer awareness of sustainable products, Benedetto (2017) suggests that visual merchandisers should design store layouts with sustainability in mind or, alternatively, sustainable products should be prominently displayed in stores to boost their sales. Additionally, informative labels detailing the environmental impacts of products should be developed. By implementing these suggestions, company managers could differentiate their firms and gain competitive advantage, particularly those companies leading the way in sustainability efforts. To accomplish this, companies must have access to market research data that sheds light on the motivations driving consumers' preference for sustainable fashion (Benedetto, 2017).

In context of CSR practices, the attainment of the desired objectives of an activity is contingent upon active community participation; thus, lack of community engagement hinders the achievement of these goals (Bross, 2020). Consequently, it becomes imperative for the community to comprehend the benefits associated with participation in order to sustain their interest (Ashok et al., 2017). Moreover, the lack of transparency exhibited by local implementing agencies in terms of programme information, fund allocation, and audit-related matters serves as evidence of the company's negligence (Singh, 2016). Should the selected CSR theory fail to align with the fundamental principles and requirements of the business, the entire process of researching, planning, and implementing CSR activities becomes futile (Bayoud et al., 2017). However, the application of normative theory in such instances can yield positive outcomes (Rahman et al., 2018). Hence, it is crucial to discern which theory is most suitable for a business to effectively develop its CSR initiatives (Bayoud et al., 2017). Given the heterogeneity in the working cultures of different businesses, the consideration of normative CSR becomes pivotal (Diacon, 2017). The absence of transparency severely undermines the development of trust between society and the company, which serves as a driving force for the success of any CSR project (Ashok et al., 2017).

Some companies have reported a lack of organised non-governmental organisations in rural and remote areas to ensure successful implementation of CSR (Singh, 2016). To maintain a competitive edge, clothing companies should adopt a serious approach towards their CSR activities, as the production process in the clothing industry often involves the extraction of harmful chemicals and generates substantial waste (Hyun et al., 2016). A study has revealed a significant impact of a clothing company's attractiveness on its brand equity (Hyun et al., 2016). The attractiveness of an organisation is influenced by various dimensions of CSR, including environmental activities, diversity initiatives, employee relations, product sustainability, and community engagement (Bayoud et al., 2017). Analysis of the existing literature has also identified several research gaps (Hyun et al., 2016). The media plays a pivotal role in amplifying CSR initiatives by disseminating positive stories that benefit society, an act that is often encouraged and supported by the government (Singh, 2016). However, this emphasis on event-based programmes often leads companies to neglect the grassroots level of interventions (Singh, 2016).

2.1.7 Shortcomings the UK Clothing Industry are Hindering CSR Practices

According to Goworek (2020), insufficient information is provided regarding the cost structure and financial management and regulation of CSR activities in the UK clothing industry. It is crucial to establish a robust agreement for the medium- or long-term goals of CSR projects to ensure uninterrupted progress, considering various internal and external factors such as organisational politics (Agata et al., 2020). Research focusing specifically on the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness within the UK clothing industry is limited (Goworek, 2020).

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous clothing companies in the UK extended financial and emotional support to help individuals cope with the challenging circumstances and recover from their losses (Agata et al., 2020). However, certain clothing companies have temporarily ceased their operations due to the pandemic, resulting in significant job losses (Agata et al., 2020). Furthermore, several CSR projects have been halted by companies in order to address the novel challenges of and adjustments required by the pandemic (Agata et al., 2020).

Bayoud et al. (2017) assert that environmental responsibility encompasses ethical, social, philanthropic, and economic dimensions. Organisations that foster trust, embrace employee ideas, demonstrate flexibility, and that promote engagement and performance tend to attract a larger talent pool (Agata et al., 2020). The lack of clear guidelines for CSR activities often hinders the smooth workflow required to

successfully accomplish projects. Insufficient management of financial resources is frequently cited as a significant obstacle to the successful completion of CSR initiatives (Singh, 2016).

The clothing industry is currently facing continuous modifications, which can be stated as low predictability and high volatility. Feng and Ngai (2020) stated that clothing industries are paying considerable attention to reducing their environmental impact. Some companies have started to initiate sustainable endeavours related to the production process and business strategies for protecting the climate. The volume of consumption of clothing and use of clothes disposal has developed certain sustainability problems. However, the sustainable development process of some clothing companies has focused on manufacturing methods. For instance, the CSR practices related to the environment can be implemented by waste and sustainable resources and properly managing water consumption. Moreover, labour issues can be considered a major challenge to the UK clothing industry, which is related to CSR practices in the UK fashion industry.

Besides, application of CSR practices in the UK fashion industry is related to evaluation, monitoring, product development, and test marketing. Feng and Ngai (2020) stated that in properly engaging in CSR practices, certain labour issues such as unsafe working conditions, long working hours and safety issues have arisen. Similarly, the UK clothing industry is facing challenges due to the lack of a clear framework with which to implement and handle CSR endeavours. However, companies can take action to develop a clear CSR framework by aligning the priorities and expectations of stakeholders. Que et al. (2019) highlighted that the clothing industry is facing the first challenge of CSR, which can impact the overall discrete choice experiments related to CSR. On the other hand, the clothing industry is facing challenges regarding a certain lack of accountability and transparency related to CSR initiatives.

CSR standards help to invest in a favourable relationship within the bounds of corporate financial performance and CSR practices. Feng and Ngai (2020) opined that the greatest fashion brands in the UK have dedicated themselves to adhering to the ethical codes of CSR. However, the implementation of CSR does not generally involve the factors of CSR as the companies' present practices and policies for company stakeholders, which are extremely important. Similarly, there can be a certain lack of transparency in relation to CSR when fulfilling the company's objectives, which can negatively affect trust and loyalty. Dmytriiev et al. (2021) stated that in the UK fashion industry, the stakeholder and CSR theories have been limited to some extent, which has illustrated the primary perspectives of

organisational leaders. Moreover, the UK fashion industry faces challenges related to CSR practices as there is insufficient governmental regulation and legislation to act as guidance.

2.1.8 CSR Practices in the Clothing Industry and Customer Buying Preferences

The global consumption of clothing has taken a consistently upward trajectory, particularly due to the emergence of fast fashion. In the mid-1990s, the average number of garments purchased per capita was 29 in the United States, while in China it was estimated to be merely two per capita (American Apparel Manufacturers Association, 2020). By 2017, the global sales of apparel had soared to a staggering US \$1 trillion, with developed nations contributing two-thirds of the sales and Asia accounting for almost a quarter (Allwood et al., 2020). The escalating rates of apparel consumption have been particularly noteworthy in developing nations such as India and China owing to the continuous growth of these countries' middle classes. In an interview, the European Union Commissioner for Climate Action (Eco Textile News, 2021) acknowledged that the planet will soon see an increase in the number of middle-class individuals to three billion, leading to a surge in the consumption of commodities, including clothing. Consequently, there is an urgent need for the paradigm of clean and green fashion to transition from the periphery to the mainstream. Notably, China has emerged as one of the fastest growing emerging markets, ranking third in terms of apparel consumption in 2017, with a spending of US \$84 billion, preceded by Japan (US \$100 billion) and the US (US \$232 billion) (Kerschner and Huq, 2019). It is estimated that the average person today possesses four times more clothes than individuals in the 1980s, marking the highest clothing ownership in history (Siegle, 2019).

The global shift in manufacturing to developing countries has yielded positive economic growth in these regions. Between 2000 and 2010, the share of apparel exports from developing nations rose from 18.3% to 37%, with 80% of the world's apparel exports being directed towards developed economies. Apparel and textiles collectively account for 2.4% and 1.7% of the world's merchandise trade, respectively, with North America importing 3.4% of its apparel from the global apparel trade. China has led the way in apparel and textile exports for the past 15 years, emerging as the largest textile exporter in 2010 (WTO, 2020). Bangladesh and India are also notable examples, with Bangladesh witnessing a substantial rise from zero exports in 1980 to a 4.5% share of global clothing exports in 2010, and India experiencing an increase from 1.7% in 1980 to 4.2% in 2010 (WTO, 2020). While developing economies have observed a growth in apparel exports between 1980 and 2010, developed economies have encountered a decline in apparel exports and a simultaneous increase in apparel imports during the same period (WTO, 2020).

Apparel consumption behaviours encompass the acquisition, use, and disposal of clothing products, as defined by Winakor (2019). While the consumer's engagement primarily occurs during the acquisition phase, the impact on a garment's lifecycle is observed during its use and disposal phases. Although these actions may seem localised, they are interconnected within a global chain, ultimately contributing to the overall momentum of the system. Consequently, conducting research on apparel consumption behaviours is of utmost significance in developing sustainable practices within the fashion industry. The link between these behaviours of over-consumption, fast fashion, and hasty disposal contradicts the principles of sustainability. It was only in the early 2000s that academic research began to shed light on the salient aspects of this phenomenon of over-consumption (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2019).

Research on apparel consumption behaviours and environmental attitudes has yielded three significant findings. Firstly, there exists a deficiency in understanding the adverse environmental consequences associated with apparel products and production, which directly impacts consumption behaviours. Secondly, there is a lack of awareness regarding the negative environmental impacts during the consumer use phase, particularly laundering. Finally, the rise of fast fashion has fostered a throwaway mindset (Morgan and Birtwistle, 2019). While attitudes generally serve as reliable behavioural predictors, when it comes to environmentally friendly apparel consumption consumers exhibit a relatively neutral stance regarding their environmental attitudes towards clothing (Butler and Francis, 2017). Butler and Francis (2017) propose a definition of environmentally friendly apparel consumption that incorporates the evaluation of environmental impacts during the acquisition process, such as considering the choice between purchasing an organic cotton T-shirt versus a conventional cotton T-shirt due to the negative environmental impacts associated with the latter.

It has been discovered that environmental attitudes do not exert any real influence when competing against factors such as fit, style, and price (Joergens, 2016). Environmentally friendly products are typically more expensive than their conventional counterparts and suffer from limitations in terms of availability, style, size, colour, and accessibility within the realm of clothing (Connell, 2019). In a study by Joergens (2016) involving young adults aged 18-26 from Germany and England, participants displayed limited knowledge regarding environmental and labour rights issues in the apparel production process. The study revealed that participants would still purchase garments from companies engaged in unethical practices if they found the product visually appealing. However, participants did not feel adequately informed about the ethical behaviours of apparel brands, and negative publicity surrounding

a brand would influence their purchasing decisions. This is corroborated by studies indicating that Nike's shares plummeted by nearly 50% following widely publicised sweatshop scandals in the 1990s (Rock, 2017). Consequently, it can be inferred that aesthetic qualities and personal desire outweigh environmental and ethical concerns (Gam, 2018). Many consumers perceive ethical issues as the responsibility of the corporate sector and the government (Joergens, 2016).

Environmentally friendly apparel initially emerged in the early 1990s but faced criticism for offering subpar quality products at premium prices (Nakano, 2017). As a result, this introduction of environmentally friendly apparel was disregarded as yet another fashion trend. However, over the past decade, the emergence of an “eco-fashion” or “sustainable fashion” movement (Goworek, 2018) suggests that this is indeed a lasting movement rather than a transient fashion trend. Environmentally friendly (fashionable) apparel refers to clothing whose manufacturer has considered the environmental and social impacts throughout the entire lifecycle of their garments. Although no industry standard exists for terms such as “ethical”, “green”, or “eco”, their widespread usage lends credibility to the growing number of brands aiming to capture the mainstream market with environmentally friendly and fashionable apparel (Joergens, 2016).

Sustainability remains a developing aspect of the industry and currently occupies a relatively small market share; however, there is evidence of consumer engagement in environmentally friendly apparel acquisition (Connell, 2019). Ultimately, with the widespread adoption of CSR principles and increased consumer engagement, sustainability ideals could become a common aspect of apparel design and development in the fashion industry. Nonetheless, it is crucial for professionals in the apparel industry to gain an understanding of what consumers perceive to be environmentally and ethically sound apparel (Connell, 2019).

2.1.9 How the UK Clothing Companies are Perceived by Customers from a CSR Perspective

Barbopoulos and Johansson (2017) have identified the direct and indirect impacts of CSR on customer satisfaction in the UK clothing industry. Customer satisfaction is considered an outcome of CSR, whereby customers expect ethical conduct from the UK clothing industry to avoid harmful practices and engage in fair business practices (Ashok et al., 2020). A survey conducted in the UK revealed that customers believe that companies that adhere to the law are more likely to take CSR and ethical practices seriously (Ashok et al., 2020). Developed countries like England often maintain a legal

infrastructure to support CSR as a foundation for business growth (Hyun et al., 2017). Researchers examining customer performance across various locations in the UK have considered both company reputation and CSR (Rahman et al., 2018).

Empirical studies have identified various possibilities and found that customer satisfaction leads to positive word of mouth promotion (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Companies that successfully generate positive word of mouth tend to experience greater brand acceptance in the public domain (Bayoud et al., 2017). Therefore, it is crucial for UK clothing companies to ensure customer satisfaction does not shift towards dissatisfaction (Bayoud et al., 2017). Brands that have engaged in unethical activities and received media coverage for such have lost many loyal customers (Shin et al., 2017). Consequently, adopting good ethical practices results in increased customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth within the market.

The Polyanna principle, explored through research on various small and large UK clothing brands, reveals that highly satisfied customers tend to provide positive feedback about all aspects of the clothing brand as a whole (Rahman et al., 2018). Another study indicates that the attractiveness of clothing companies significantly impacts brand equity, with managers playing a vital role in decision making and promotion strategies to attract target customers (Rahman et al., 2018).

CSR activities address a range of global issues, including environmental, social, and economic concerns (Bayoud et al., 2017). Therefore, CSR is considered a commendable ethical practice in business ethics as it facilitates positive business growth and customer satisfaction (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Additionally, people can seek guidance from legal experts on how to perform CSR activities, further enhancing brand preference (Rahman et al., 2018). Mulligan (2017) suggests that promoting ethical practices like CSR on a larger scale motivates others to participate in such activities (Bayoud et al., 2017).

Many retail and clothing manufacturing companies in the UK focus heavily on the principles of reducing, reusing, and recycling to promote environmental sustainability in their operations (Bande et al., 2019). The way products or services are presented to customers can greatly influence their purchasing decisions (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Consequently, by promoting CSR, companies establish a positive brand image in the UK market (Bayoud et al., 2017). Carol (2019) argues that CSR activities extend beyond environmental and societal contributions to include respect and honour for

individuals both within and outside the organisation (Bayoud et al., 2017). Thus, organisations practicing CSR are perceived as more attractive and respectable by the public (Rahman et al., 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Studies on Creating Customer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction rate in a clothing industry can be improved by the application of equity theory. According to the view of Fetais et al., (2023), *equity theory* has been used in the clothing industry to analyse the consistency that is experienced by consumers while engaging with the organisation. In a clothing industry, it is essential that consumer needs and requirements are evaluated periodically so that changing consumer inclination towards products can be understood. On the other hand, Shaaban et al., (2023) stated that to improve the understanding of customer satisfaction rate, the EKB *model* can be more effective, as it is typically better with regard to improving decision-making factors to understand consumer buying behaviour in changing market scenarios. The application of this theory can be effective in understanding consumer beliefs and attitudes towards products and services provided by the clothing industry. As stated by Özer et al., (2022), *dissonance theory* helps to understand the psychological discomfort that is experienced by a consumer when receiving a low-end product while expecting a high-quality one. A customer that is expecting a high-end product receives a lower quality product experiences cognitive dissonance and this theoretical application can help organisations to understand the challenges of the customer.

In addition to this, it is essential to evaluate consumer experiences, which can be improved by the application of theory on CSR practices of the clothing industry. As stated by Gómez-Rico et al., (2022), the application of *communication theory* can be effective in terms of evaluating the factors that are creating a challenge in understanding consumer behaviour. Integrating with communication theory, any existing CSR practices of the clothing industry can be strategically improved, and this can add significant value to drawing upon consumer response on product performance. On the other hand, Sudari et al. (2019) stated that *contrast theory* can be more effective in terms of consumer expectation from an organisation. This can be used to improve CSR practices and bring adequate changes so that relative and positive impacts on product performances can be achieved. Theoretical application helps to create an in-depth understanding of factors that can have particular effects on an organisation's practices and helps them to identify positive approaches that can add value to organisational development.

Following this, value percept theory is found to be applicable in terms of improving the understanding of a failed product and value perception among consumers. According to Chen et al. (2022), *value*

perception theory compares the actual and ideal values of the product in the attempt to evaluate product quality within the clothing industry. This can help clothing industry stakeholders to focus on identifying practices that can add significant value in terms of improving product performance among consumers. On the other hand, stakeholder theory is effective in terms of creating an analytic position where a correlation between organisation, product, and consumer can be created. This can be effective in terms of improving consumer satisfaction rates (Islam et al., 2021). Therefore, it becomes essential that a broad consumer perception analysis is carried out by the application of theoretical aspects so that organisation performance and consumer satisfaction rates can be increased.

2.2.1 Conceptualisation of “Customer”

According to Khan (2016), customers can be defined as individuals or groups who engage in the purchase of goods and services from sellers. The range of products and services that customers may acquire is extensive, and not restricted to specific sources. Furthermore, Diacon (2017) describes customers as individuals or groups who purchase assets from businesses for their intended use. As a result, understanding customer behaviour has become increasingly significant due to the heightened competition within the market for products and services. This understanding is crucial to ensuring acceptance and purchase of these offerings by customers (Morales et al., 2017). The establishment of a customer behaviour department is intended to examine and manage the behaviour of customers during the process of purchasing a product or service (Morales et al., 2017). Consequently, it is essential to explore the three key factors that influence consumer behaviour, which are outlined below:

Personal factor

The behavioural aspects of customer purchasing decisions, which are shaped by individual characteristics, are commonly referred to as personal factors (Diacon, 2017). Personal factors are subject to variation from person to person, primarily due to differences in identity, perception, and attitude (Diacon, 2017). Understanding and analysing customer preferences and buying behaviour necessitate the consideration of a number of personal factors, including age, income, occupation, and lifestyle. Extensive research suggests that age significantly influences an individual's buying behaviour (Morales et al., 2017). This relationship stems from the fact that age often dictates the lifestyle individuals lead. As people age, their product usage patterns may change, with preferences shifting towards products and

services that align better with their lifestyles. For instance, studies reveal that children exhibit a higher inclination towards purchasing chocolates compared to adults (Morales et al., 2017).

Income levels also play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' lifestyles and overall buying patterns (Bayoud et al., 2017). Higher income individuals possess greater purchasing power than those with lower incomes, allowing them more freedom to acquire non-essential items. Conversely, individuals with limited incomes focus primarily on purchasing those essential items necessary for their livelihoods (Diacon, 2017). Furthermore, people's lifestyles heavily influence their consumption patterns (Khan, 2016). For instance, individuals adhering to a vegetarian diet are unlikely to purchase non-vegetarian food products.

Consumer behavioural analysis can be conducted by identifying the personal factors that have more pronounced effects on influencing various perceptions. In the clothing industry it is essential that personal factor evaluation of consumers is conducted so that influential behaviour of the consumers can be understood. Consumer's demographic features, own perceptions, and culture are responsible for drawing positive or negative influence regarding a particular product (Afzali and Kim., 2021). Clothing industry practices are primarily affected due to the influence of personal factors such as economic stability and personal perceptions impacting consumer behaviour. On the other hand, Musova et al., (2021) stated that value added products and product quality in clothing industry practices are influential factors in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour. This can be further influenced by the demographic or cultural aspects identified among the range of consumers in the clothing industry.

Furthermore, customer conceptualisation is essential in the clothing industry, which can be developed by understanding self-interest or driving forces such as difficulties or barriers experienced by a consumer. Consumer behaviour can be affected due to economic or financial barriers that can result in impacts on a product's sales rate (Wai et al., 2019). Evaluating the economic background of a targeted customer group can help clothing organisations develop specific product ranges that can meet consumer demand without creating a toll on those same consumers. This can result in increasing product performances and can help the clothing industry to develop a strong consumer base. However, Xu et al. (2022) stated that consumers' personal factors can also be influenced by a country's economic status, and this can result in a certain impact on industrial growth practices. Thus, it is essential that consumer conceptualisations are adopted so that positive influential practices can be drawn by clothing organisations. Therefore, conceptualisation of customers is important to drawing positive clothing

industry guidelines, resulting in improved organisational performances.

Psychological factors

Psychological factors that are responsible for consumer behaviour can be identified as motivation, attitude, belief system, learning, and personal perceptions. Psychological factor evaluation can help a clothing industry to understand the concept of consumer psychology and adopt practices that can influence consumer behaviour in a positive manner (Youn et al., 2021). This can result in improving the clothing industry practices and develop a set of CSR practices that can draw positive motivation from among consumers. For instance, Levi's have reduced water usage by 96% in creating one pair of jeans and are working to source 100% sustainable cotton and old used jeans to create a new product range (Bbc.com, 2020). These sustainable practices can be further promoted within clothing industry practices so that a positive psychological effect among the consumers can be created. On the other hand, Siraj et al. (2023) stated that conducting regulatory compliance analysis by the clothing industry can help to improve consumer-specific standards and policies. This can be effective in terms of analysing the psychological factors that are drawing positive or negative impact on organisations due to consumer behaviour.

The customer's buying behaviour is influenced by various psychological factors including belief, motivation, learning, and perception (Diacon, 2017). Motivation, as an internal factor, is of particular importance for marketers seeking to understand how to stimulate target customers' purchase decisions (Diacon, 2017). The manner in which products or services are promoted to customers can have a profound impact on their motivation to purchase or otherwise (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Consequently, the information customers acquire about a product and the knowledge they gain about its features and benefits play a crucial role in their ultimate decision to purchase (Morales et al., 2017).

Furthermore, clothing organisations can create various segments based on the consumer personality such as lifestyle, essentials, and behavioural interests. Categorising products in accordance with the consumer can help to improve the consumer behaviour monitoring system (Sheoran and Kumar, 2022). However, lack of effective CSR practices within the clothing industry could lead to challenges in understanding consumer behaviour and the development of approaches to improve organisational productivity. On the other hand, Masud et al. (2019) stated that triple bottom line theory can help to create a sustainable CSR framework to create positive alignment between organisation and consumer

perceptions. Psychological factors that influence consumer behaviour can be highlighted, and detailed guidelines can be developed so that the desired organisational growth can be achieved. Therefore, it is essential that the concept of consumerism and its impact on organisational practices are evaluated, which will lead towards the identification of practices to improve organisational productivity.

Social factors

Social factors in consumer behaviour can lead to the creation of significant motivation and perception, due to which it is important that the clothing industry evaluates its understanding of the impact caused by social factors. According to Rosário and Raimundo (2021), adopting effective marketing practices by an industry can result in the creation of a considerable influence on the social factor of a targeted consumer segment. Consumer buying behaviour can be influenced and improved by the adoption of a range of dedicated practices. The 5Ps of marketing need to be implemented in accordance with extensive market analysis so that influential strategies can be developed. The clothing industry could significantly benefit from this strategy as it helps to improve the price and product in accordance with place. On the other hand, Abrar et al. (2019) stated that social factor analysis can also be carried out by conducting consumer analysis, which can help in improving an organisation's consumer-centred practices. Consumer behaviour analysis via the application of this strategy helps to draw positive conclusions and engage with strategies so that CSR practices can be improved.

Social factors exert significant influence on an individual's purchasing behaviour (Morales et al., 2017). Among these factors, culture, language, religion, nationality, and social class play crucial roles. Culture encompasses the shared beliefs, values, and norms observed by individuals of the same heritage (Bande et al., 2019). The culture of the United Kingdom, for instance, has been shaped by the historical influence of the British Empire, and its linguistic expression, characterised by a simpler form of English, reflects the speech patterns prevalent during that era (Morales et al., 2017). Culture permeates various aspects of people's lives, influencing their interactions, clothing choices, grooming practices, and self-presentation (Diacon, 2017). It is imperative to comprehend local customs as certain periods prompt increased spending compared to others. For instance, in the UK, it is customary to purchase flowers on Valentine's Day and chocolates and sweets on Halloween (Bande et al., 2019). Another influential social factor is religion, which holds relevance for marketing strategies. For example, individuals adhering to Islam often prefer modest attire, favouring covered and long dresses. This aspect necessitates careful consideration when marketing products in regions with such target demographics (Diacon, 2017).

Social factors in consumer behaviour can be associated with referenced groups, or the role and status in society a consumer segment belongs to. As per the view of Jung et al. (2020), creating a positive influence on social groups of consumers is important in order to have a lasting impression and establish lasting bonds with consumers. Engaging with extensive management approaches, the clothing industry is able to engage and interact with customers effectively and this can result in an improved organisational productivity system. On the other hand, Mason et al. (2021) stated that to have a positive impact on consumers it is important that social factor analysis is carried out by evaluating the physical needs of targeted consumer segments. Physical needs such as comfortability, safety and practicality can result in increasing the understanding of consumer behaviour in the clothing industry. Thus, consumer behaviour on social factor analysis can help to improve the existing CSR factors of the clothing industry and to identify a set of practices that can add significant value in improving organisational performances.

2.2.2 Customer Behaviour as a Key Concept

There are two distinct categories of human needs: basic needs, and acquired needs. Basic needs encompass essential elements such as food, shelter, and clothing (Diacon, 2017). Acquired needs, on the other hand, comprise more psychological and social aspects, including self-esteem, interpersonal

relationships, and one's sense of belonging within the family and society. An individual's specific needs significantly influence their purchasing behaviour (Bande et al., 2019). Marketers are responsible for identifying the most effective strategies to address the needs of their target customers. However, it is crucial for marketers to acknowledge that not all products can satisfy the particular needs of all customers (Morales et al., 2017). Psychological needs, such as status, power, and esteem, are fulfilled by products and services that differ in quality and expectations from those addressing basic needs (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). By studying Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a comprehensive understanding of the various stages of needs and their fulfilment can be achieved (Agata et al., 2020).

Cognitive dissonance theory, developed by Leon Festinger in 1957 (Bande et al., 2019), explores the contradictory nature of an individual's thoughts and behaviours and how cognitive dissonance can be resolved. This theory revolutionised psychologists' interpretation of the decision-making process among humans (Diacon, 2017). It examines the thoughts, feelings, and values involved in decision making, acknowledging that individuals may hold differing and even conflicting cognitions (Bayoud et al., 2017). To reconcile cognitive dissonance, adjustments must be made to certain cognitions. A practical starting point for initiating these adjustments is to evaluate the available options at hand (Diacon, 2017).

Customer perceived value encompasses the total monetary expenditure incurred by customers in acquiring a product or service, as well as the benefits derived from its use (Bande et al., 2019). Marketing endeavours are increasingly focused on fostering customer relationships rather than solely concentrating on sales transactions (Morales et al., 2017). Customer perceived value can be comprehended in terms of the total customer benefit and the total customer cost, as illustrated below:

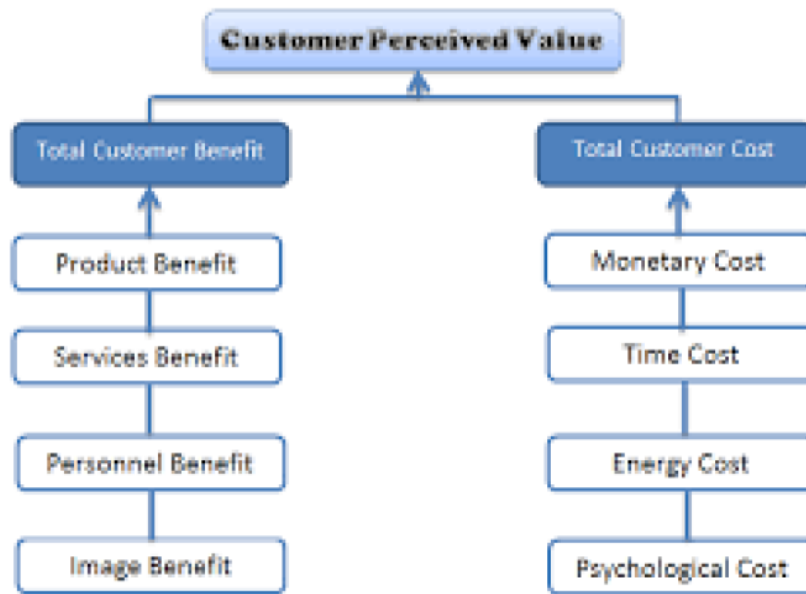


Figure 1 : Customer perceived value

Source: Bande et al. (2019)

Total customer benefit refers to the psychological and economic advantages derived from the utilisation of products and services in relation to the monetary value expended (Bande et al., 2019). The concept encompasses various dimensions, including product benefit, which pertains to the utility derived from the actual usage of the products or services. When a product effectively fulfils its intended purpose, customers are inclined to return to the store to make subsequent purchases. For instance, Gucci, a renowned clothing brand, maintains its customer base due to its consistent delivery of faultless, high-quality, and fashionable garments (Morales et al., 2017).

In addition to product benefit, total customer benefit comprises services benefit, personnel benefit, and image benefit. Services benefit refers to the advantages gained from the supplementary services provided by the company, such as after-sales support or customer assistance. Personnel benefit relates to the positive interactions and experiences customers have with the company's staff, which can enhance their overall satisfaction. Image benefit encompasses the prestige, reputation, and brand value associated with a particular product or service, which can contribute to customer satisfaction. On the other hand, total customer cost encompasses the different costs incurred during the consumption process, including monetary cost, time cost, energy cost, and psychological cost (Bayoud et al., 2017). Monetary cost refers to the financial expenditure required to acquire the product or service. Time cost quantifies the

amount of time invested by customers in the purchasing process. Notably, with the advent of online shopping, customers can save significant time by receiving products directly at their doorstep (Bande et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Enhancing Customer Satisfaction in the Context of the Carroll CSR Model

In the contemporary business environment, globalisation has extensive impacts in terms of influencing the organisation with regard to adopting CSR practices in order to create a better organisational representation. Basically, the factor of customer satisfaction has been almost entirely based upon level of trust as well as communication affected by organisational practices and their proactive initiatives. Zhang et al. (2020) claimed that in order to build a better level of trust and relationship with customers, organisations have the responsibility to make proactive efforts to create value for them and in fulfilling their needs. Moreover, the authors have also explained that strategic CSR practices have also been effective in enhancing marketing efforts by including an organisational role in sustainability development. However, maintaining CSR standards and their essence by organisations has consisted of certain key activities such as environmental protection, putting value into the economy, providing employment, and fulfilling all stakeholders' requirements (Stuss et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be considered that organisational CSR practices have been highly significant in increasing the level of trust across customers and stakeholders alike.

CSR practices involve organisational initiatives in terms of enhancing organisational effectiveness for imposing significant efforts in building social and economic value across operating countries as well as stakeholders. Islam et al. (2021) have examined that customers have been recognised as the one of the most important bases of stakeholders, and their psychological needs can be enhanced by proactive impacts via CSR practices, which can ensure customer loyalty. Mainly, the performance of an organisation in protecting environmental sustainability and strengthening social infrastructure has the potential to create better psychological perspectives. The majority of global MNCs are maximising their contributions in terms of developing their sustainability standards and building better brand representations across the competitive global environment. However, Jermsittiparsert et al. (2019) have argued that improvement of consumer perception and their buying behaviour can be intensified through an organisational role in philanthropic and ethical activities, which has been directly correlated with a

socially sensible organisation. Therefore, it can be considered that organisational practices that rely upon effective CSR activities are effective in improving the customer satisfaction in a better manner.

Additionally, practical organisational examples have also been effective in reviewing the relationship between CSR practices and customer satisfaction in a better way. For instance, a leading multinational organisation, Unilever, and its governance board have committed to their corporate responsibilities focusing on the sustainability agenda regarding environmental protection and social development by providing more than €1 billion of funds (Unilever.com, 2023). This example can provide better justification regarding the relationship between corporate social responsibilities and levels of trust among customers. Furthermore, organisations have also been maintaining an adequate level of transparency and clear disclosure of their sustainability contributions in order to gain sufficient levels of trust within their target customers. On the other hand, Gatti et al. (2019) have highlighted a contradictory concept of “greenwashing” in which organisations have been engaged in showcasing false presentations of their inadequate CSR efforts in order to gain customers’ trust. In contrast with ethical responsibilities, these particular activities, like false marketing by organisations, represent unethical deeds which are not acceptable to customers. Therefore, it can be reviewed that in terms of facilitating the connection between CSR practices and customer satisfaction, ethical responsibilities are considered prime elements.

Application of Carroll’s CSR Pyramid model

The understanding of these aforementioned aspects can be improved by aligning a theoretical framework within this research area, where “*Carroll’s CSR Pyramid*” can be positively applied in this case.

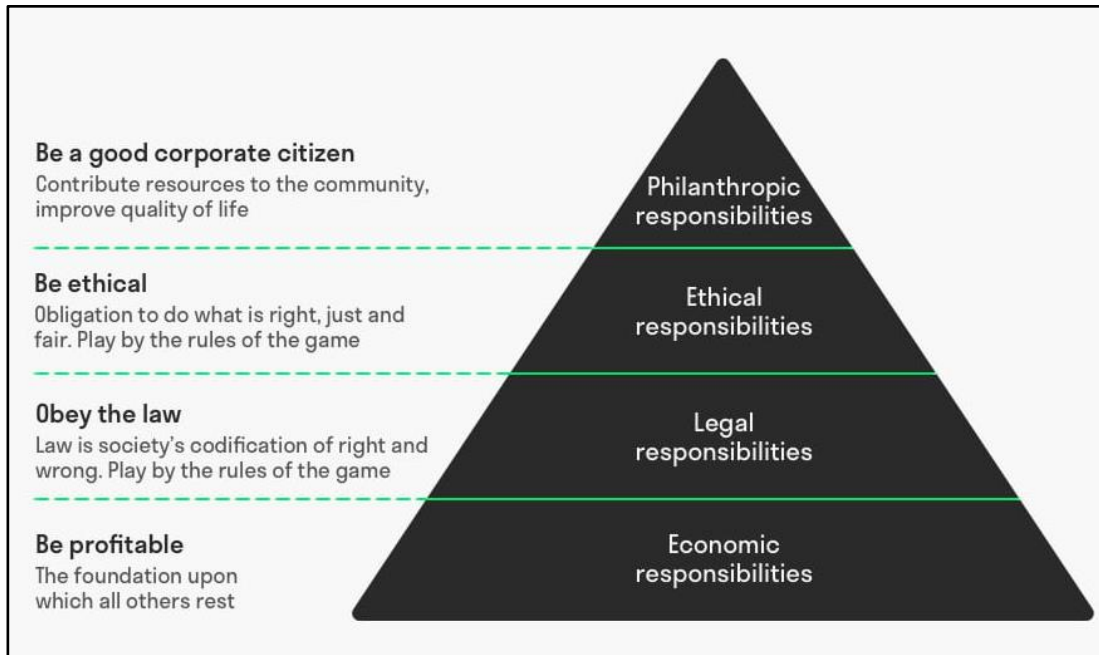


Figure 2.2.3: Carroll's CSR Pyramid

(Source: Inspired by Nurunnabi et al., 2020)

As highlighted in Figure 2.2.3, the theoretical framework of Carroll's CSR Pyramid refers to four major expectations including the "*philanthropic*", "*ethical*", "*legal*", and "*economic*" responsibilities provided by contemporary society. Chufama et al. (2021) have opined that Carroll's CSR pyramid can be applied by taking an overview of organisational contributions for the purposes of being profitable, compliant with laws, ethical, and philanthropic. Moreover, it has also been observed that the organisational dimensions in gaining value towards economic development and performing ethical business activities have the potential to gain customer satisfaction. However, based on the underlying concepts of Carroll's pyramid, the organisations associated with the B2C business model have been obliged to fulfil social responsibilities by providing economic opportunities to society (Sarkar et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has also been considered the role of organisations to maintain the legislative requirements of the operational regions and to maintain legitimacy with customers. Therefore, it has been reviewed that global organisations have been obliged to maintain an appropriate balance between increasing profitability and their corporate responsibilities towards society.

Application of this theoretical framework have also provided knowledgeable insights in terms of adding value to fundamental development in economic structure and social factors. Cai and Choi (2020) have explored that the majority of leading organisations, especially those within the clothing industry, have

become more concerned on focusing on the major SDG goals coined by the United Nations. Moreover, after the global COVID-19 pandemic, it has become necessary for global organisations to make extensive efforts to address the ongoing sustainability issues across society and global environmental landscape through strategic CSR practices. However, Heras-Saizarbitoria et al. (2022), have argued that the majority of clothing organisations have the fundamental responsibility to maintain ethical codes by driving positive impacts on the social community, to ensure sustainable product development, and to revalue natural environmental effectiveness. Consequently, customers can understand the reliability of the organisation and a positive image can be created, according to their mental perspectives, of better customer satisfaction. Therefore, it can be observed that adding value to factors such as environmental, social, and governance structures that can help an organisation to develop better customer satisfaction through utilising Carroll's CSR theoretical framework.

For instance, a multinational organisation in the clothing industry, Burberry, has committed to contributing towards sustainability development by directly focusing on major SDG goals by addressing social, environmental, and ethical issues (Burberryplc.com, 2023). This organisation has also committed, through a distinct framework, to sustainability practices and increasing the usage of natural resources to protect the planet from textile wastage, leading to increased consumer engagement. As a result, this organisation has, as of FY2022, experienced an 18% increase in global retail sales through extensive contributions in terms of sustainable product development and increased CSR practices (Globaldata.com, 2023). Thus, it can be considered that strategic CSR practices and sustainable development have been extremely important in terms of increased levels of satisfaction among customers.

2.2.4 Customer Research

The customer's level of satisfaction can be improved by conducting customer research properly (Freeman, 2017). Despite the potential costliness associated with customer research, it has consistently yielded favourable outcomes, leading many companies to allocate significant investments towards consumer research (Bayoud et al., 2017). As an integral part of market research, customer research enables the study of target customers' buying behaviour, preferences, and perceptions of the brand, thus facilitating the augmentation of levels of customer satisfaction (Bayoud et al., 2017). Numerous types of customer research exist, each providing valuable insights that are crucial to companies. Consequently, through consumer research, companies can gain psychological insights into their target customers,

enabling more effective interaction (Freeman, 2017). Moreover, customer research allows for the identification of customer segments, behaviours, and needs, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of customers (Bayoud et al., 2017). This understanding, derived from research findings, empowers brands to make modifications to their products and services, thereby expanding their business operations (Bayoud et al., 2017).

These various forms of customer research include primary, secondary, qualitative, and quantitative research (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). It is crucial for companies to comprehend customers' sentiments regarding their products and services, underscoring the importance of customer research (Freeman, 2017). Furthermore, observing customers' pre- and post-purchase behaviours is essential in this regard (Bayoud et al., 2017). Through customer research, companies can enhance customer satisfaction and bolster product sales. Valuable changes can be implemented as a result of customer research, such as modifications to packaging, physical evidence, communication approaches, and overall customer experience (Bayoud et al., 2017).

2.2.5 Profile of UK customers The residents of the United Kingdom are often categorised based on their economic status. Within the UK, numerous clothing brands cater to different customer groups by offering clothing products at various price points (Agata et al., 2020). More affluent individuals in the UK exhibit a preference for garments crafted from high-quality fabrics with sophisticated designs, as these choices serve as indicators of their social standing. A notable example of a UK-based luxury fashion brand is Burberry, which boasts a valuation exceeding \$10 billion (Fashion United, 2017). Given its status as a high-end fashion brand, Burberry deliberately targets customers who have substantial purchasing power and an inclination towards fashionable attire (Bayoud et al., 2017). On the other hand, the middle-class populace residing in the UK tends to consider both affordability and product quality when making their clothing purchases. Moreover, urban residents in the UK exhibit a greater propensity for purchasing clothing compared to their counterparts residing in suburban or rural areas (Fashion United, 2017). In the UK, it is customary for women to complement their attire with matching hats, much like the fashion choices of the royal family (Agata et al., 2020). The chart below shows the consumer expenditure of the UK populace.

In million GBP

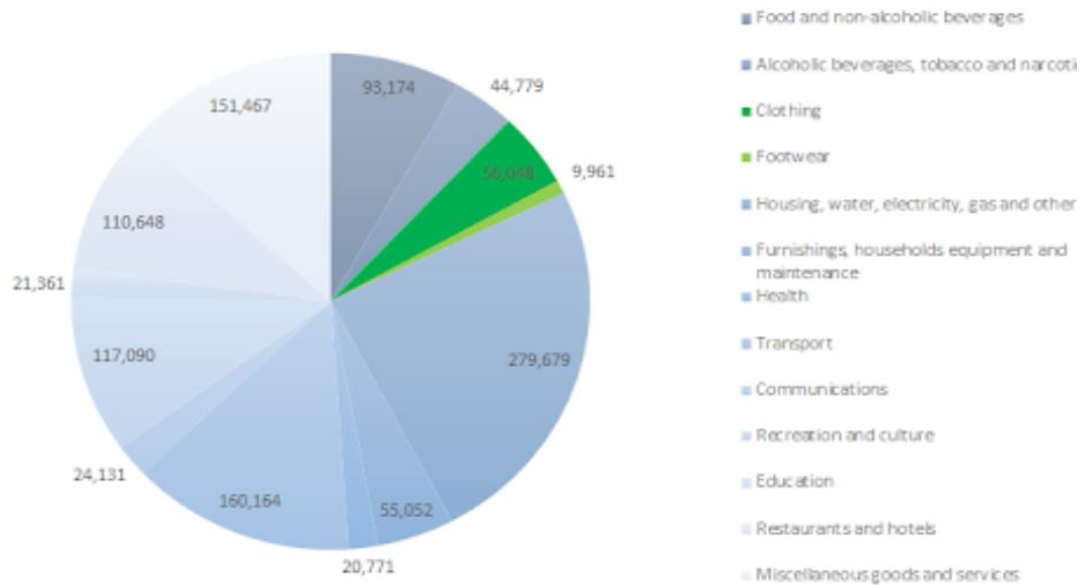


Figure 2: Consumer expenditure

Source: Fashion United (2017)

As shown in the chart, consumer expenditure on clothing among residents of the United Kingdom is recorded at approximately 56,048 units (Fashion United, 2017). Notably, the UK market attracts various clothing brands from different nations, each strategically targeting their preferred customer segments within the country. In 2017, the import value of leather footwear in the UK amounted to \$1.03 billion (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016), while the import value of sweaters that specifically cater to cold weather conditions reached \$3.18 billion (Fashion United, 2017). The inhabitants of the UK exhibit diverse choice in terms of attire, encompassing a wide range of garments such as Western clothing options like jeans, sweatpants, T-shirts, shirts, dresses, gowns, and more. Additionally, the traditional dress of individuals residing in England is known as Alatza (Agata et al., 2020).

2.2.6 Customer Motivation

The motivations of consumers are an important factor in companies' ability to enhance current and future sales, which can be adopted by using models such as Maslow's Need Hierarchy. Özkan et al. (2020) stated that consumers' motivations act as a significant driver to attaining organisational

objectives. The companies have to understand their customer base by using purchasing and rational business-related factors. Moreover, Kler et al. (2022) explained that consumer motivation actions can be considered according to price, brand, place, and product to encourage customers' buying behaviour. Similarly, the requirement of a consumer can even be considered as a significant factor which can help to modify a company's processes for fulfilling their needs. This can impact customers' purchasing motivations which were raised for an important level of intensity. On the other hand, customers' motivations can be influenced with regard to a product's utility by focusing on its price, quality, and lifespan. Hence, marketers, in order to understand customers' decision making and buying processes, can develop innovative marketing communications.

Furthermore, customers' motivations are key to fulfilling buying decisions. To understand consumers' motivations, companies need to convert the proportions of emotional and functional value aligned with the needs of various customers. Moreover, Aburayya et al. (2020) opined that having a clear vision of customers' motivational factors can not only help industry leaders to understand customers' emotions but even help to build long-term relations within sellers and customers. However, the interaction of customers' motivation is only related to customer satisfaction by customers' perceived service rate and some mediator. Businesses need to develop features, products, and experiments through innovations intended to fulfil consumers' goals, which can help to gain motivated consumers. However, marketers have struggled to identify customers' motivations with regard to the complexities of non-physiological motivations. On the other hand, customers' motivation has been related to luxury brands which are typically dissimilar to their motivations regarding other types of company.

Customers' motivations can even be related to product packaging, which affects buying decisions. Beig and Nika (2019) explained that consumers have felt that there has commonly been a poor connection between product packaging and brand experience. Moreover, effective marketing strategies are needed to understand customers' motivations. In this regard, the theory of reasoned action can help to understand that all customers are motivated according to assumptions that develop from their experiences related to any given brand. On the other hand, Han and Anderson (2020) stated that customer motivations are related to online posts and reviews about a company's products or services. Additionally, social exchange theoretical models help to understand the impact of social interaction with rewards and costs, which has an effect on customers' motivation. The need of the consumer can even be recognised as the most significant factor in influencing their buying motivations. On the other hand,

customers' motivations are related to behavioural motivations which can be enhanced by organisations improving their product quality, corporate image, and values.

According to Freeman (2017), motivation plays a crucial role in driving individuals or groups to engage in various business endeavours. In addition to motivating business personnel, it is essential to cultivate customer motivation in order to sustain business profitability. This motivational force arises from a state of tension caused by unfulfilled needs and requirements (Freeman, 2017). Effective marketing strategies are grounded in the identification of customers' inherent needs, which can be addressed through the products and services offered by marketers (Bayoud et al., 2017). Marketers employ diverse approaches to inspire customers to purchase their products and services (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017).

Motivation can be categorised as being either positive or negative (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Positive motivation occurs when stimuli elicit feelings of optimism, excitement, and other positive emotions, prompting individuals to recognise their need for a particular product (Freeman, 2017). This positive motivation functions as a gift from marketers, leading to subsequent purchases (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). On the other hand, negative motivation triggers adverse emotions such as fear, reluctance, and non-performance (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017). Marketers sometimes employ fear-based appeals to motivate consumers to buy their products. For instance, advertisements for mountaineering apparel may highlight the challenges and dangers that climbers may face without proper gear, thereby capturing the attention of potential customers (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017).

Various strategies can be employed to motivate customers to purchase a product. These include elevating their social status, offering compensation or restitution, fostering feelings of safety and well-being, providing escapism from problems, offering rewards, and making persuasive statements (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017).

2.2.7 Dynamics of Customer Motivation

The dynamics of customer motivation undergo rapid changes in response to environmental conditions and cultural vulnerabilities (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). Individuals often exhibit a propensity to pursue new goals upon the achievement of their previous ones. Highly motivated individuals, driven by their present objectives, continually generate new intentions to facilitate goal attainment (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). Certain needs are particularly challenging to fully satisfy and serve as impulsive stimuli. It is inherent in human nature to progress to higher-level needs once basic needs have been met. Individuals who successfully attain their desired goals are capable of formulating more distinct intentions (Diacon, 2017).

The dynamics observed in customer motivation have focused on multiple dimensions which can relate to the core practices creating an impact on the attractiveness of the UK's clothing industry. The CSR approaches have been considered to regulate the dynamics of customer motivation, which can influence the purchase decision of the buyers. Palma et al. (2019) stated that the desires and needs promote customer participation, which can promote their satisfaction and loyalty. This leads to the promotion of a higher customer retention rate for the UK clothing industry. Understanding the requirements of customers can help in targeting them and contribute as a component of the dynamics of customer motivation to engage them in services and products. On a contrary note, it has been found that perceived value can denote the dynamics of motivation by providing emotional benefits and functional benefits (Itani et al., 2019). This can lead the clothing industry of the UK to communicate with its customers and demonstrate the “value proposition” of motivating them.

On the other hand, the dynamics of customer motivation represent the psychological and emotional aspects of a customer. Positive emotions such as a sense of belonging can motivate customers and engage them in a business (Bazi et al., 2020). This dimension can be used to promote marketing campaigns by the clothing industry and focus on developing the customer experience. Furthermore, the dynamics of customer motivation can often focus on the reward system provided by any service. The major forms of reward is loyalty programmes, discounts, personalised offers, and others which can denote the core propositions in customer motivation dynamics (Chen et al., 2021). This dimension of customer motivation can take place with exclusivity, urgency, and perceived gain, which can motivate people to make their decision making to purchase things. On a contrary note, the dynamics of customer motivation can focus on the influence of social aspects such as customer reviews, celebrity endorsement, and others (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). These social aspects can influence customer motivation and direct their purchasing behaviour for clothing products.

The dynamics of customer motivation also represent customisation and personalisation, which can focus on the decision-making attributes of customers. The major impact of CSR on the clothing industry of the UK has been one of focusing on providing personalised and customised products which can contribute to promoting customer motivation. Chen et al. (2020) stated that clothing business organisations can leverage technology and data to provide tailored products to customers to achieve the dynamics of customer motivation. Furthermore, the approaches promoted with ease of use and convenience can focus on simplifying customer journeys. Convenience can denote the dynamics of customer motivation

by providing a hassle-free experience and intuitive interface to the customers (Basyuk and Vasyliuk, 2023). The reduction of streamlining processes and friction points have been promoted as core differentiators for maintaining customer motivation which can regulate their dynamic behaviour. This has contributed to the decision-making approaches of the clothing industry to promote their CSR practices to adopt customer needs and maintain a competitive edge for the business.

2.2.8 Customer Satisfaction

According to Archie (2016), customer satisfaction refers to the measurement of how effectively a company's products and services meet customer expectations. The level of satisfaction experienced by customers can be indicative of their loyalty and their intention to make repeat purchases (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). Companies that provide high-quality customer service are able to ensure customer satisfaction, thereby maintaining a positive brand image. Highly satisfied customers are more likely to share positive reviews on social media and engage in positive word-of-mouth promotion. The importance of maintaining customer satisfaction extends beyond these factors (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). Notably, if customers are dissatisfied, they may cease to be loyal customers, which can have detrimental effects on a brand. Sustaining customer satisfaction over the long term is not an easy task (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). In addition to offering quality products and services, it is crucial to establish and maintain good relationships with customers by engaging in personalised communication, providing support, and utilising effective survey tools (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). To ensure ongoing customer satisfaction, brands must strive to fulfil customers' evolving needs and adapt their strategies in response to changing market trends (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Neglecting the needs of customers can lead to the long-term failure of a brand. Furthermore, customer satisfaction has financial implications (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). Customers who are satisfied with a brand are less likely to switch to competitors if their needs are consistently met in a timely manner. As Archie (2016) suggests, a misstep can provide competitors with an opportunity to outperform a brand. Maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction helps a brand to differentiate itself from competitors in the market. Customer satisfaction also plays a key role in fostering customer loyalty (Bayoud et al., 2017). Loyal customers are considered valuable assets that should be nurtured and protected from competitors. According to some researchers, acquiring new customers can be six to seven times more expensive than retaining existing ones (Degbey and Peltó, 2021). Loyal customers are estimated to be ten times more valuable than first-time purchasers.

Consequently, attending to the needs of current customers and ensuring their satisfaction is a critical factor that brands must prioritise (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

2.2.9 Customer Satisfaction Process

The process developed for promoting customer satisfaction has focused on a strategic approach which can focus on ensuring the satisfaction rate of customers with services and products. The core practices focused on customer satisfaction have involved analysing the requirements of the customers, measuring their responses, determining areas of improvement, and taking approaches to future development (Gajewska et al., 2020). This approach of analysing and promoting customer satisfaction takes place by encouraging business growth by determining the deliverables found by satisfied customers. Furthermore, this approach can take place in developing a healthy relationship with the customers and promoting brand reputation. Dash et al. (2021) have stated that customer feedback can provide significant insight into a business, which can help in promoting continuous improvement in a business. Purchase repetition by customers can focus on depicting the lifetime value which is considered one of the most crucial aspects of a business. The core attributes of the clothing industry in promoting its CSR for promoting customer satisfaction can be achieved by implementing the PDCA cycle. The PDCA cycle denotes the core components which are plan-do-check-act that focuses on continuous improvement in business practices (Isniah et al., 2020). The customer satisfaction process of a business can be managed via this cycle to improve the business outcomes in the clothing industry of the UK.

There are some steps that should be followed to reach high levels of customer satisfaction. Some of the steps of the customer satisfaction process are discussed below:

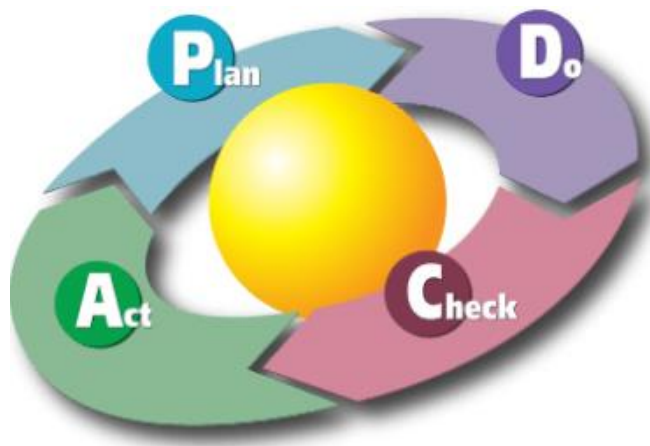


Figure 3: Customer satisfaction process

Source: Pham and Ahammad (2017)

Planning: It is very important to develop a plan on how to reach the customer level. The whole process of obtaining customer satisfaction has to be planned beforehand (Pham and Ahammad, 2017). The first step of the customer satisfaction process should be to develop the survey objectives. The survey should be designed in such a way that the preferences of the target customer regarding the product can be clearly determined. The plan should also include sending invitations to the target customers appropriate for this survey (Pham and Ahammad, 2017).

From this survey, the planning approach promoted with the PDCA cycle focuses on determining the core components affecting customer satisfaction levels. This process involves the identification of the expectations of the customers and their basic requirements. Sudari et al. (2019) mentioned that conducting market research and collecting information regarding customer feedback can help in determining their expectations. Additionally, customer surveys can help in analysing the demands of the customers and providing insights to businesses regarding customer satisfaction measures. This can help in determining the major attributes of the customers' preferences, which can promote the decision making of the business entities with regard to enhancing customer satisfaction rate. By contrast, the planning approaches for customer satisfaction take place by defining the goals encouraging customer satisfaction (Prasetyo et al., 2019). The information collected regarding customers defining the SMART goals can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction rates. This can focus on providing optimal outcomes for determining core areas of improvement, which can help develop strategies. The planning component of the PDCA cycle also contributes to the development of an action plan which can be implemented to develop strategies from the information gathered from the customers. This can lead the clothing industry of the UK to promote its decision making in improving customer satisfaction with the functional outcomes, services, and products of the business.

Doing: According to Mathur (2020), the implantation and execution of the survey should be successful. The survey process has to be done in an organised way and the all the results have to be collected accordingly. Then, the answers to each question have to be recorded statistically to gain an outcome (Pham and Ahammad, 2017).

The approaches promoted in conducting the survey have focused on the implementation stage, which can focus on analysing the major responses for developing customer satisfaction rate. The strategies identified in the planning phase and the action plan come into practice in this stage. Amaral et al. (2022) stated that the major approaches for executing the PDCA cycle have been promoted by allocating the required resources, providing training to employees, and implementing improvement plans. This takes place so as to support the approaches of the clothing industry of the UK to promote customer satisfaction rates. On a contrary note, the implementation phase also contributes to the data collection measures which can focus on promoting customer satisfaction. This approach to implementing strategies incorporates getting data from surveys, market research, customer feedback and complaints, and other metrics (Wankhade et al., 2022). The data collected from the survey can focus on analysing the core requirements of the customers which can lead the decision making to be focused on customers' needs and desires. In this regard, the clothing industry of the UK can take appropriate action to improve customer satisfaction by implementing strategic approaches and regulating the core deliverables revolving around customers' requirements.

Checking: This process includes checking the results of all the answers properly and then combining those answers to gain the final result. The comparison between the results in hand and expected results must necessarily be analysed to act on the basis of the results shown in the survey (Pham and Ahammad, 2017).

The core aspects promoted with the checking of the survey results can take place with the determination of the differences between the outcomes. This can help in determining the contradictory view provided by the responses and focusing on gaining a common outcome. The checking approach promoted with the PDCA cycle can avoid the mistakes promoted while finding the right implementation technique (Nguyen *et al.* 2020). From this context, the major approach which has been promoted with checking is the analysis of the data collected through survey. After that, the collected data is evaluated, which can help in assessing the impact on customer satisfaction. It has been found that the identification of the

trends can be analysed with survey data (Gazzola et al., 2020). Furthermore, the patterns and behaviour of the respondents can be considered in defining areas of improvement. This can help to depict the knowledge regarding the changing preferences of the respondents and lead to the analysis of the core approaches promoted by the survey. The comparison with the goals has also been determined as the major outcome of checking that can be promoted via the survey. The core outcomes of the checking approach can contribute to the predefined goals focused on prior to the planning phase.

Acting: This is the last step of this process which at first includes compiling the customer satisfaction report. After compiling, the report has to be analysed by the managers (Pham and Ahammad, 2017). Then, it must be determined which areas to focus on and where necessary changes need to be applied to keep customers satisfied (Paulina, 2016).

After checking the responses of the survey, the major approach which has been focused on these practices is to take corrective actions. This approach has been promoted by analysing the gaps in the survey results which can create a lack in data synthesis. Thus, the implementation of the corrective actions can take place by analysing the core deliverables from the data collection process in the PDCA cycle (Brown-Johnson ET AL., 2020). The underlying issues regarding customer satisfaction can be analysed via this approach, which can help with regard to future actions. Furthermore, the act phase of the PDSA/PDCA cycle also contributes to the continuation of the cycle by analysing the gaps and future development aspects. From this context, the customer satisfaction rate can be determined by focusing on the survey outcomes and developing a procedure for further investigation.

2.2.10 The Means of Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Measuring customer satisfaction is of paramount significance in gauging actual levels of customer contentment and devising strategies to ensure their sustained satisfaction. When customers experience a diminished sense of satisfaction with a particular brand, there exists a substantial risk of losing their loyalty, leading them to potentially switch to alternative brands (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). There are several ways in which customer satisfaction can be maintained, which are discussed below:

CSAT: CSAT, the customer satisfaction score, is a metric based on the time used to identify customer satisfaction through survey. This survey gives options for rating the answers to the given questions (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). The options for rating usually include points like satisfied, very satisfied,

neutral, and unsatisfactory (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). The high score is identified based on the number of positive responses to a particular question. It is a versatile customer satisfaction measuring process, and through it accurate feedback on specific kinds of experiences of the customers related to the product or service can be determined (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). It is best to record customer preferences changes in conducting this survey before and after making changes. Through this survey process, one can generally determine whether customers are satisfied or dissatisfied with products and services (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018).

The Net promoter score: The net promoter score is calculated by giving a scale for the answers ranging from 1 to 10. According to Mathur (2020), the net promoter score can be calculated by subtracting the detractor's percentage from the promoters. Through the scores, the customers' loyalty can also be determined (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). The questions are typically like "How would you like our company to offer eco-friendly packaging instead of plastic packaging from a scale of 1 to 10" (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). The participants' answers are categorised into three sections: high score, medium score, and low score. The reasons behind the respondents' given scores are unknown in this survey. The questions in this survey are easy and straightforward to answer (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

Customer score of effort: The customer effort score survey is usually on a scale of 1 to 5 (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). The question used in this survey to study customer satisfaction is, 'How hard did you have to work to get the products to your doorstep?' (Paulina, 2016). In this case, the first score on the scale will mean it was easy, and a score of 5 will mean it was very hard. The customer effort score is a standard process of increasing the loyalty of customers (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

Regarding the measurement of customer satisfaction, "CES" score or "customer effort score" plays an important role in estimating the major responses from the customers towards the organisations. Patti et al. (2020) investigated that metrics of this measurement strategy are mostly associated with the overall nature of the customer experience gathered while using an organisation's products. Consequently, the scores generated by applying this measurement tool drive business leaders to adopt informed decision-making approaches to identify required changes with their products. Moreover, the authors have claimed that this CX measurement metric has been effective in allowing customers to interact with businesses or organisations in a transparent way. However, Agag and Eid (2020) argued that the overall scoring model implanted in this measurement metric is limited in terms of providing constructive services, and certain queries can remain unanswered because of its close-ended form. Therefore, it has been explored that

CES is a distinct performance measurement metric used by organisations to gain a better understanding of levels of satisfaction among customers. Additionally, the CES metric has also been effective in maintaining an adequate organisational reputation through better customer satisfaction and customer loyalty which can be driven by proactive CSR approaches (Park, 2019). Thus, this element plays an important role in ensuring better corporate advantages regarding the effectiveness of the customer experience.

With regard to CSR strategies, this particular process of measuring customer satisfaction has been highly effective in making customers more interested in understanding sustainability concerns within an organisation. Tien et al. (2020) investigated that the CES metric consists of a significant questionnaire in which multiple questions relate to organisational performance in managing CSR strategies to protect the community. Moreover, these questions ensure a better development of general awareness about the CSR strategies across the customers and, consequently, a positive brand image can be projected. On the other hand, Cuesta-Valiño et al. (2019) explained that CES scores can also indicate the overall value of customers' loyalty towards the organisation by tracking overall consumer behaviours using this CES survey in terms of products and CSR activities. Furthermore, organisational employees can analyse customers in terms of their ease towards their experience while collecting data. Therefore, it can be considered that “customer score of effect” is an ideal measurement metric for making the interaction process between customers and organisations easier, which can ensure better customer satisfaction levels and loyalty.

Direct feedback: According to Mathur (2020), there are several straightforward ways by which customer satisfaction can be measured. Some of these surveys are known as the in-app customer survey, such as customer service through mail, post-service surveys, and voluntary feedback (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). The post-customer survey can take place through mobile phones and chatting. It can also be done directly when the customer stands right in front (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018). Feedback can be taken from customers directly after solving a problem. Voluntary feedback is one of the best ways to measure customer satisfaction because, in this way, customers willingly give feedback. A business should pay attention to this kind of opportunity and show interest so that the customer willingly shares comments (Bayoud et al., 2017). This can be achieved by keeping a comment box with papers

where the customers can leave comments, or otherwise through email and social media pages (Azevedo and Barros, 2017).

Indirect feedback: There are various methods available for measuring customer satisfaction indirectly, as highlighted by Sridhar and Ganesan (2016). These methods encompass a comprehensive range of channels and analytics. By adopting these approaches, organisations can gather feedback from customers without directly involving them, as suggested by Azevedo and Barros (2017). Indirect feedback can be obtained through analytics in multiple ways. One effective strategy involves monitoring customer behaviour on social media platforms, such as analysing comments, likes, and follows, as outlined by Keshavarz and Jamshidi (2018). Additionally, examining website content and traffic patterns provides valuable insights into customer preferences and habits. Consequently, the utilisation of these techniques has gained popularity and sparked debates regarding data tracking for understanding customer satisfaction and behaviour (Keshavarz and Jamshidi, 2018).

2.2.11 Improving customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction refers to the measure of products related to the company along with service for increasing overall experience of the customer to meet customer expectations. According to the view of Dam and Dam (2021), maintaining a competitive business environment helps to achieve customer satisfaction through superior quality of service or products. The clothing industry of the UK is currently implementing a number of strategies in order to improve customer satisfaction and to grow and expand the business by increasing the sales, including:

Offering a good shopping experience: Companies are presently planning to provide a better environment in order to improve the customer experience which can directly increase the sales and improves the volume. Offering a good shopping experience differentiates the brand in the mind of a customer which creates a favourable perception that exceeds expectations (Ardhiyansyah and Jaman 2023). Brands or retailers need to offer a positive shopping experience such as better-quality fashion products, with lower prices and exciting offerings in order to differentiate themselves from competitors and provide a pleasant atmosphere for customers.

Training employees along with a change in operational environment: Employee training is a major part of improving customer satisfaction, especially in the clothing industry. Customers always prefer the

well-trained salesperson or executives in the retail sector of fashion, which helps them to choose the most appropriate product from a wider range. Experienced or trained employees in the present market can be able to understand and identify the demands or needs of the customer, which makes it easier to guide them. Based on the view of Kurd et al. (2020) employees influence customer satisfaction by maintaining a good relationship with them. Based on the market environment, customers need to diverge frequently from the standard process of purchasing of products, especially in clothing, which can improve their satisfaction levels. Satisfaction levels will effectively increase when customers find the salespeople to be efficient and able to guide them, which is a positive sign for the clothing industry of the UK.

Self-Checkout: Self-checkout is another way to improve customer satisfaction, especially in the retail of the clothing industry. Customers are frequently forced to stand in long queues, which creates dissatisfaction. Companies can set up the self-checkout machine in order to mitigate customer dissatisfaction in this regard and allow for better customer service. Customer satisfaction presently impacts on the products, as well as the reputation of the company (Ali et al., 2021). Customers feel more flexibility in their shopping, and this creates a better customer experience.

Implementing digital technologies: The use of digital technology is currently growing in all sectors, especially for business. Most people are now using digital technologies, such as various platforms of social media and websites for purchasing a product (Noris et al., 2021). This could be an opportunity for the clothing industry of the UK to improve levels of customer satisfaction. Digital platforms in the clothing or fashion industry enable the customer to see the products without going to the shops, which saves time. The clothing industry also needs to incorporate digital payment methods in order to gain customer satisfaction.

There are six ways in which customer satisfaction can be improved, as indicated below:

Listening to customers: In order to effectively meet customer demands, it is of paramount importance to understand their preferences. Research indicates that approximately 60% of customers have expressed dissatisfaction with the services they receive relative to the corresponding costs incurred (Shin et al., 2017). Consequently, contemporary companies have adopted various customer service tools to capture and document customer interactions and concerns. Through the utilisation of artificial intelligence, these

tools facilitate the identification of crucial conversations pertaining to the organisation's products or services (Roberts, 2017). Consequently, by attentively listening to customers, companies can enhance overall customer satisfaction levels.

Managing expectations: A company can also lose its loyal customers if the company fails to meet the customer's expectations of the brand (Shin et al., 2017). The higher the expectation level they can meet, the higher the company's ultimate rewards. The service and product should be offered to the customers in such a way that the end reaction becomes proactive, not reactive (Shin et al., 2017).

Understanding customers: The key to unlocking customer satisfaction is to know your customers very well, especially their buying behaviour (Shin et al., 2017). However, keeping track of what every customer says or the way they behave takes considerable work. In contrast, the brand or products but through having as much important information from the potential customers and the collected data can be appropriately used overall to understand the customers (Roberts, 2017).

Collecting feedback: To improve customer satisfaction, getting customer feedback and then turning it into action is essential. Customer feedback can be collected in several ways (Roberts, 2017). These include implementing surveys, monitoring social media, and taking feedback directly after the products or services are used. Indirect feedback can also be collected with the help of analytics (Shin et al., 2017). All these methods are very helpful in collecting feedback. Care must be taken that the feedback that will be converted into action to improve customer satisfaction is collected from the target customers. Then, the feedback has to be taken into action by the manager after developing strategies (Shin et al., 2017).

Improving products and services: Products or services should be improved if it is found necessary to do so based on the results of research and feedback (Shin et al., 2017). Roberts (2017) stated that, sometimes, the products provided to the customers are only as helpful as the updated products offered to the customers in the market. In this case, the products or services should be changed or updated whenever necessary. For example, the company Nokia took it too long to launch smartphones into the market when its competitors were coming up with new models of smartphones one by one (Roberts, 2017). As a result, Nokia had to sell its shares in the market at a low price because it took too long for them to improve their products (Shin et al., 2017). Nowadays, people are more concerned about CSR activities like using eco-friendly products, helping society, and producing without harming the environment. That is why improvements in the products and services should be made with the changes in people's preferences and trends in the market (Roberts, 2017).

Treating employees well: The employees are the ones who are given responsibility for giving proper service to customers. Front-line staff are the those who communicate with customers and represent the brand (Shin et al., 2017). Any rude behaviour or delivery of misinformation by such employees will lead to customer dissatisfaction and the loss of loyal customers. Roberts (2017) stated that customers often have complaints about staff's behaviour. That is why knowing how the staff communicate with the customers is very important. If there is any lack in their behaviour they should be replaced or retrained to ensure they can keep customers satisfied with their behaviour (Shin et al., 2017). The staff are the ones who usually have to deal with different customer questions and problems. That is why it is important to keep the employees happy by giving them a good working environment, treating them well, providing incentives and bonuses, verbally appreciating their work, training them whenever necessary, and showing respect (Shin et al., 2017).

2.3 Organisational Attractiveness

Organisational attractiveness has a major role in the case of employee branding and their improvement in the clothing industry. Zhang et al. (2020) noted that CSR and sustainability practices help business organisations to effectively maintain their organisational attractiveness. In fact, organisational attractiveness mainly focuses on five factors, namely social, market, applications, brand, and economic values. Clothing companies in particular, especially ***Marks & Spencer*** and ***Barbour***, operate their work culture through focusing on brand innovation and a creative work culture that effectively attracts experienced candidates from within the UK. In this regard, most clothing industries have developed a productive and innovative organisational structure that helps employees to gain job satisfaction. However, the clothing industry also faces major challenges, especially global inflation, increasing market competition in clothing industries. The clothing and clothing industry also applied CSR practices that encouraged their employees to participate in sustainable development plans (Wilhelmy et al., 2019), whilst organisational structure and management styles critically impact on the sustainability of organisational attractiveness. These factors critically impact organisational attractiveness and its internal work culture. In the long term, external factors such as global inflation and market competition critically impact the growth of the clothing industry and its sustainability performance in the international market.

Organisational attractiveness has a significant impact on employee engagement as well as maintaining quality-based work operations. Wörtler et al. (2021) noted that organisational attractiveness and its

internal business environment has a major role in operating a productive work culture. Due to these reasons, most clothing industries are keen to maintain their organisational attractiveness which helps to reduce employee turnover issues and develops a friendly relationship between employees and business management in the clothing industry, boosting productivity. In fact, an innovative and productive work culture is a significant requirement in maintaining organisational attractiveness in the clothing industry. In particular, *AllSaints* and *Clarks* use corporate and sustainability practices that help to develop an excellent workplace for their UK employees. In this regard, CSR practices help clothing industries to build a strong brand presence in the international market. In the long term, such CSR practices helped these business organisations to attract experienced and talented candidates in the workplace. On the other hand, every clothing industry used different strategic approaches of CSR and sustainability practices that led to a complex situation in the case of poor sales and issues with dissatisfied customers in the international market. Bustamante et al. (2021) note that business organisations use CSR and sustainability practices to maintain their organisational attractiveness; in particular, most clothing industries apply net zero emission and sustainably practices.

The clothing industry has also used different variables based on employees and their work culture such as job security, incentives, and maintaining an ethical work culture. Brand performance and customer satisfaction helps business organisations to enhance their organisational attractiveness (Santiago, 2019). These strategic approaches help this industry to reduce employee issues, conflict, and discrimination-based situations. In this regard, most clothing industries also use their strong brand image to help gain competitive advantage in the international market. CSR practices and customer satisfaction allows the clothing industry to build a strong brand presence that improves organisational attractiveness. It helps to develop a strong brand perception, attractiveness to customers and employees, and to focus on talent retention and overall business success. However, organisational attractiveness also depends on internal work culture, such as employee performance, workplace growth, and diversity management. Organisational and product attractiveness has a critical impact on business organisations and their sustainable growth (Munir et al., 2019). Most clothing industries have not properly maintained their organisational attractiveness, creating major complications with regard to ongoing business success.

Clothing industry highly maintains customer and employee satisfaction to enhance their organisational attractiveness. In fact, an effective organisational attractiveness has helped the clothing industry to adopt fast decisions and problem-solving approaches with regard to external market factors such as increasing

competition and global inflation. In particular, most clothing industries focus on their employees in terms of maintaining their work-life balance and productivity. This strategic approach has helped these business organisations to improve their sustainability performance extensively. On the other hand, Zhang et al. (2020) stated that external market issues such as the Russia-Ukraine war, global inflation, and substitute product threat critically impact the clothing industry and its organisational attractiveness. In this regard, most clothing industries have not maintained their organisational attractiveness and workplace productivity.

The development of technology has given rise to a complicated situation in the clothing industry in terms of its sustainability performance. In this regard, most clothing industries effectively focus on their organisational attractiveness such as workplace productivity, employee performance, and CSR practices. The research aims to evaluate the major impact of organisational attractiveness in the clothing industry by identifying CSR and sustainability performance. The following discussion identified the concepts of organisational attractiveness and its measurement via critical analysis. In particular, it also described the strategic approaches to improve organisational attractiveness and its benefits in the clothing industry.

2.3.1 Concept of Organisational Attractiveness

According to Diacon (2017), the concept of organisational attractiveness refers to the degree of desirability that individuals associate with working for a particular organisation. Determining the factors that contribute to an organisation's attractiveness involves understanding why individuals perceive it to be superior to other organisations and what specific aspects make it appealing to them (Cinar, 2019). Numerous variables influence an individual's preference for one organisation over another, with people generally inclined to apply for jobs in companies that are deemed more attractive in the market (Diacon, 2017). Extensive research has been conducted to uncover the underlying reasons for organisational attractiveness, as this knowledge enables companies to develop strategies to enhance their appeal (Cinar, 2019).

Organisational attractiveness becomes evident to employers when they perceive an organisation as conducive to productive work, characterised by high standards and anticipated benefits (Cinar, 2019). Such attractiveness possesses a certain power that captures people's attention and contributes to retaining both existing employees and customers for prolonged periods. Moreover, it helps maintain a positive brand image for the company (Agata et al., 2020). Apart from physical aesthetics, various elements within an organisation contribute to its attractiveness, including its sense of community,

fairness, trust, innovation, caring, and compliance (Shin et al., 2017). Organisations that prioritise trust in employee ideas, flexibility, engagement, and performance tend to attract a larger pool of potential employees (Agata et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous organisations went beyond their conventional boundaries by altering their slogans, logos, promotional strategies, employee motivation techniques, workplace satisfaction initiatives, hygiene protocols, working policies, and hours (Agata et al., 2020). These changes served not only to ensure safety but also to communicate the organisation's genuine concern for the well-being of everyone involved, thereby enhancing its attractiveness in the eyes of the public (Agata et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Measurement of organisational attractiveness

Research focused	Variables	Articles
Organisational attractiveness according to the employer's (Bakanauskiene, 2017)	The image of the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall image that an organisation presents to the public • The contribution of the organisation in the society, community and environment • The quality of the products and services of the organisation. • Reliable job • Less distraction • Secured environment • Maintenance of ethical standards
	Job security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More career growth opportunities • Appreciation level • Vacations policy
	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation and rewards

Organisation fitness and attraction (Bakanauskiene, 2017)	Competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A competitive package of compensation and work environment • Options to work from home in situations like the COVID-19 pandemic
	Branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation should build a brand image that shows that they care about their employees and target customers • Achievements of the organisation • Attractive culture of the organisation • Maintaining good ethical
	Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Boldness • Modernity
Organisational attractiveness and personal traits (Turban, 2015)	Instrumental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions of work • Working hours • Power distance • Locations
	Symbolic Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activeness • Popularity • Success <p>Source: Cinar (2019)</p>

The measurement of organisational attractiveness plays a crucial role in addressing various gaps within a company, as it encompasses factors that contribute to the overall appeal of an organisation (Agata et al., 2020). This assessment has garnered significant attention from researchers, such as Davies, Mosley, Nadler, Edwards, Turban, Jiang, and others, who have explored diverse variables and their impact on sustaining organisational attractiveness (Bakanauskiene, 2017). As demonstrated in the table above, instrumental attributes represent a vital factor in understanding the construct of organisational

attractiveness and personal traits. Diacon (2017) asserts that these attributes enable individuals to discern the advantageous aspects of an organisation as well as its deficiencies. Empirical investigations have highlighted the importance of viable influencing factors that project a positive organisational attitude (Bakanauskiene, 2017). Additionally, scholarly inquiries have revealed that medium- and large-sized organisations tend to be perceived as more attractive by individuals (Cinar, 2019).

2.3.3 How to Increase Organisational Attractiveness

According to Cinar (2019), enhancing organisational attractiveness is imperative for organisations aiming to cultivate a positive brand image and establish enduring relationships with stakeholders. Various strategies can be employed by organisations to augment their attractiveness, which is contingent upon the products and services they offer (Bayoud et al., 2017). Creating a consistent message that resonates throughout the organisation is essential to elevating its attractiveness (Barbopolos and Johansson, 2017). Consequently, organisations should communicate to individuals the reasons why they should recognise and develop an affinity for the brand. This entails elucidating the benefits offered to customers, highlighting their competitive edge, underscoring what sets them apart from competitors, emphasising their quality standards, fostering an appealing organisational culture, among other factors (Bande et al., 2019).

The workforce, responsible for representing the brand, plays a crucial role. Therefore, organisations must attract talented individuals by showcasing the amenities, growth opportunities, and work environment offered (Bande et al., 2019). A more appealing workplace environment is likely to attract highly skilled and experienced applicants, promoting longer-term commitments to the organisation. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many organisations to adapt to remote work policies. Consequently, caring messages related to the situation have become an integral part of promotional efforts for numerous organisations due to the pandemic (Bande et al., 2019).

Another effective method for enhancing organisational attractiveness is to define the organisational culture. By establishing an attractive company culture, organisations differentiate their brand image from that of their competitors (Cinar, 2019). If a company is unsure about how to enhance its company culture, conducting a survey could well be a valuable tool. This survey could include questions such as “What expectations do you have of an organisation but do not currently receive” accompanied by various response options (Barbopolos and Johansson, 2017). Based on the survey responses, organisations can make adjustments that are most appealing or desirable to respondents.

Clearly articulating the benefits of being associated with the organisation is also of paramount importance in increasing organisational attractiveness (Bande et al., 2019). These benefits may encompass both present offerings and future prospects (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017). Given the increasing prevalence of individuals engaging online for various purposes, feedback and reputation management on the internet have become crucial to organisations striving to enhance their appeal. Hence, monitoring the company's online reputation is highly significant (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017).

2.4 Relationship between CSR, customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness

Organisational attractiveness depends on its CSR practices and customer satisfaction that help the clothing industry to maintain a productive work culture. Product innovations and brand reputation helps business organisation to increase their organisational attractiveness (Pono et al., 2019). In this case, clothing companies, especially *Adidas* and *Levi Strauss & Co.*, particularly focus on their CSR and sustainable practices to effectively maintain a creative and productive work culture. The multinational clothing industry also used artificial intelligence- and machine learning-based software to measure their customer satisfaction and employees' performance. CSR practices helped to improve employees' loyalty and the moral ethics that are essential to the clothing industry's ability to effectively maintain organisational attractiveness. In addition, customer satisfaction and CSR practices encourage employees to reach their highest potential and focus on more innovative and creative thinking in the workspace. It helps clothing companies to develop an effective relationship between customer satisfaction, CSR practices, and organisational attractiveness. On the other hand, the clothing industry faced major challenges to improve organisational attractiveness because of different and insufficient organisational structures and work cultures. Poor customer satisfaction and fake branding also reduced the clothing industry's sustainably performance and its future growth (Widagdo and Roz, 2021). In this case, any strategic approach to build a CSR, customer satisfaction, and organisational attractiveness relationship is quite challenging for most clothing industries.

CSR and sustainability practice helped the clothing industry to attract global customers' attention and build a strong brand presence in the international market. CSR practices helped business organisations to enhance their organisational attractiveness in the international market (Nguyen et al., 2020). This strong brand values and market growth support encourage the clothing industry to effectively maintain

their organisational attractiveness in the case of hiring talented candidates in the workplace. Particularly, customer satisfaction helps the clothing industry to increase its sales and annual growth, which became beneficial in the case of focusing on CSR and sustainable practices. Customer satisfaction and CSR practices allow the clothing industry to maintain organisational attractiveness with regard to sustainability. On the other hand, parts of the clothing industry used fake publicity of CSR practices to influence employment via organisational attractiveness. For instance, *Adidas* suffered major workplace issues because of employee discrimination and lack of diversity. This workplace challenges critically impact on its CSR practices and workplace-based moral ethics that reduced business attractiveness in the international market.

Customer satisfaction and employee performance helped the clothing industry to maintain their organisational attractiveness in the UK market. Business organisations reputation and brand values are highly dependent on customer relationship management and its sustainable performance (Khan et al., 2022). In this case, customer satisfaction plays a major role in organisational attractiveness. Particularly, organisational attractiveness partially depends on customer satisfaction and a productive work culture. In these cases, customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness effectively depend on each other, which helps the clothing industry to operate a productive and innovative work culture. The clothing industry implements advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and information technology to measure their product development and customer satisfaction. On the other hand, poor customer satisfaction also influenced the clothing industry and reduced their annual and sales growth. Most clothing industries have used fake social media marketing and CSR practices that reduced their brand reputations and business attractiveness (Alilou et al., 2021). The clothing industry focuses on organisational attractiveness and CSR practices very intensively. External market factors such as cyberthreats and market competition have a significant impact on the clothing industry and its poor associated customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction also encourages other customers to purchase clothing products from the same industries. Multinational clothing and clothing companies *George* and *TK Maxx* used AI-based operation and marketing software that helped them to develop attractive brand values in the UK market. Particularly, organisational attractiveness and a strong brand presence are highly dependent on their customer satisfaction and CSR practices. These factors influenced customer engagement and employee productivities in the case of maintaining organisational attractiveness. On the other hand, organisational

attractiveness is also influenced by poor customer satisfaction and lack of CSR practices. Multinational clothing industries primarily focus on their customer satisfaction and CSR practices, which has helped these industries to demonstrate their organisational attractiveness in the international market. In this case, different work cultures and its leadership management effectively influence the clothing industry and its organisational attractiveness.

2.4.1 Impact of CSR on Customer Satisfaction in the UK Clothing Industry

According to Barbopolos and Johansson (2017), CSR has both direct and indirect impacts on customer satisfaction in the UK clothing industry. Existing studies have shown that customer satisfaction can be considered an outcome of CSR (Mulligan, 2017). Researchers have examined the relationship between the reputation of the company, CSR, and customer performance, finding that CSR positively influences the performance level of target customers, leading to increased revenue generation for clothing companies (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016).

Numerous studies have investigated the combination of CSR and customer satisfaction in the clothing industry, with corporate reputation often identified as a mediator between CSR, customer satisfaction, and the performance of clothing companies (Mulligan, 2017). Khan (2016) suggested that higher levels of customer satisfaction result in an increased number of loyal customers in the UK clothing industry (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Positive word of mouth and improved behavioural intentions of customers are observed when their satisfaction levels are met, which can be influenced by factors such as brand image, products, services, and CSR activities (Shin et al., 2017). Satisfying customers by fulfilling responsibilities towards society and the environment fosters a positive brand perception, ultimately leading to customer satisfaction (Shin et al., 2017).

Empirical studies have identified a strong relationship between customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Organisations should be cautious, ensuring that customer satisfaction does not shift towards dissatisfaction as unethical activities by companies have resulted in the loss of loyal customers in the past (Mulligan, 2017). Therefore, ethical practices contribute to higher customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth. The Polyanna principle suggests that highly satisfied customers tend to provide positive feedback on various aspects of a clothing brand. Conversely, dissatisfaction can lead to negative comments (Shin et al., 2017). Consequently, brands focus not only on their core products but also on corporate social responsibilities to maintain customer loyalty and satisfaction (Shin et al., 2017).

Khan (2016) asserts that customers who are consistently satisfied with a product or service tend to establish stronger connections and engage more with the brand. Thus, there is a positive relationship between word of mouth and customer satisfaction. Conversely, dissatisfied customers engage in negative word of mouth, which can harm the brand's reputation (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Engaging in CSR activities attracts attention on various advertising platforms, leading to increased customer satisfaction and positive word of mouth for organisations (Mulligan, 2017). In one study, it was proved that there is an impact of CSR on customer satisfaction in the UK clothing industry, and the diagram developed on that study on the basis of their findings is shown below:

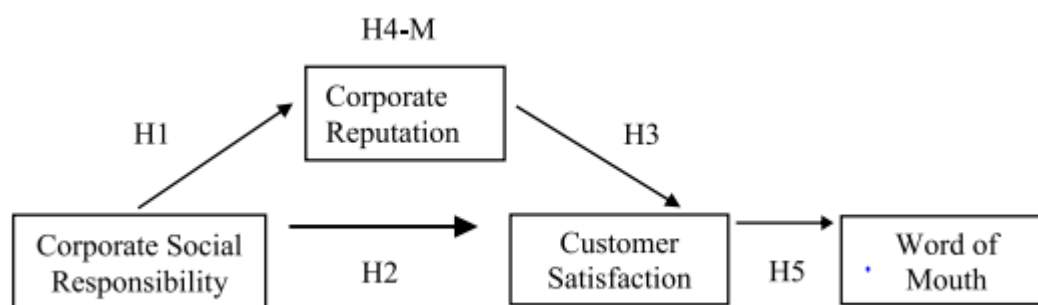


Figure: CSR-CR-CS-WOM relationship and mediation effect developed in hypothetical mode Source: Sridhar and Ganesan (2016)

As shown in the above figure, CSR has a direct impact on customer satisfaction. Acting as an intermediary, customer reputation plays a significant role in this relationship, while customer satisfaction subsequently leads to positive word-of-mouth referrals (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). The diagram presented above has been substantiated through alternative hypotheses. In economies such as the United Kingdom, which exhibit financial development, organisations are encouraged to undertake extensive campaigns and projects focused on CSR, as these endeavours contribute to enhancing people's quality of life (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Multinational corporations have also recognised the

importance of engaging in CSR activities across various countries, including underdeveloped regions, as a means to establish stronger connections with local communities and foster positive word-of-mouth endorsements (Mulligan, 2017). Moreover, Khan (2016) suggests that clothing industries, in order to sustain their competitive advantage, should earnestly consider the implications of CSR initiatives. Particularly within the clothing manufacturing sector, a substantial amount of waste and the use of harmful chemicals are prevalent. If customers were to gain a genuine understanding of the adverse impacts these factories' wastages have on people's lives and the environment, they would likely develop dissatisfaction, specifically directed toward those brands (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016).

Azevedo and Barros (2017) argue that for the UK clothing industry to maintain sustainable growth, companies must prioritise various aspects of CSR, encompassing social issues, human rights, values, environmental concerns, safety rights, ethics, community development, and more (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). In fact, a strategy advisory group recommends that clothing companies generating substantial profits should be subject to strict governmental regulations mandating their active participation in CSR activities (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). Retail companies should also exercise due diligence in assessing the working conditions and production methods of the manufacturers from whom they source their products (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). By promoting eco-friendly garment production processes, clothing companies can not only attract more customers but also enhance customer satisfaction (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Given that CSR activities address various global issues, including environmental, social, and economic concerns, they are regarded as ethical practices in the realm of corporate responsibility (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). As CSR represents a sound ethical practice, individuals may seek guidance from legal experts to ensure the proper execution of these activities. Mulligan (2017) suggests that by promoting ethical practices, such as CSR, on a larger platform, businesses can inspire others to participate in similar endeavours.

According to Barbopoulos and Johansson's (2017) survey, 75 out of 90 respondents emphasised the importance of clothing companies practicing CSR in the UK, expressing a preference for brands that allocate a portion of their profits to societal welfare (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Presently, there are clothing manufacturing companies and stores that offer naturally dyed clothes, free from harmful chemicals and waste. Businesses should seize this opportunity and demonstrate their interest in such practices to foster a voluntary customer inclination to share positive feedback (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). The general public is becoming increasingly aware of the current environmental conditions,

thereby leading to heightened concern among them (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). By investing in environmental reforms such as water management, reduced plastic usage, energy conservation, and tree planting, companies can effectively appeal to these environmentally conscious customers (Mulligan, 2017). The demand for purchasing of clothes in the market never gets less and to maintain customer satisfaction with their brands, companies should participate in corporate social responsibility and keep promoting it in different medias (Bande et al., 2019). The clothing companies in the UK like Babour, Paul Smith, Burberry, Oliver Spencer, Universal Works, etc., are engaged in different CSR activities and promote themselves on different digital and traditional platforms to keep their customers satisfied (Bande et al., 2019).

2.4.2 Impact of CSR on Organisational Attractiveness in the UK Clothing Industry

According to Cinar (2019), various variables influence individuals' preference for one organisation over another. Organisations that practice CSR also promote their work as it creates a favourable public impression (Diacon, 2017), ultimately enhancing the organisation's attractiveness (Barbopolos and Johansson, 2017). Studies have shown that many high-end and well-known brands adopt CSR activities to increase their attractiveness and maintain a positive image (Cinar, 2019). Organisations can enhance their attractiveness through various strategies depending on the products and services they offer (Mathur, 2020). It is crucial for organisations to establish a consistent message to increase their attractiveness (Barbopolos and Johansson, 2017).

Organisational attractiveness, as described by Diacon (2017), refers to an individual's level of desirability to work for a particular organisation. Legal experts are available nowadays to assist companies in practicing CSR ethically and in accordance with the law (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). Some notable UK clothing companies actively engaged in corporate social responsibilities include Burberry, Gieves & Hawkes, Clarks, Belstaff, and Crockett and Jones, among others (Bayoud et al., 2017). Research findings suggest that the attractiveness of clothing companies significantly impacts brand equity, and managers play a crucial role in making decisions that effectively promote the brand on appropriate platforms to attract target customers (Diacon, 2017). It has been identified that customers with a higher shopping budget are attracted to brands with a good reputation (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). CSR activities contribute to enhancing the brand's reputation and overall brand equity. Extensive research supports the notion that customers are more attracted to brands that demonstrate care for both

customers and society through their active involvement in corporate social responsibilities (Agata et al., 2017).

In Carroll's principle, emphasis has been given to the corporation to participate in social, environmental, and economic frontiers. Carroll has divided the social responsibilities mainly into four main categories (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015), these being the ethical, economic, philanthropic, and legal (Diacon, 2017). One of the CSR's legal aspects is complying with the rules and policies of customer protection, safety and security, and environmental laws including land for demonstration responsibly (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). In a study, the first hypothesis was that the impact of CSR on organisational attractiveness will be positive, which was proved right. The model of that study, as developed based on its research and findings, is shown below:

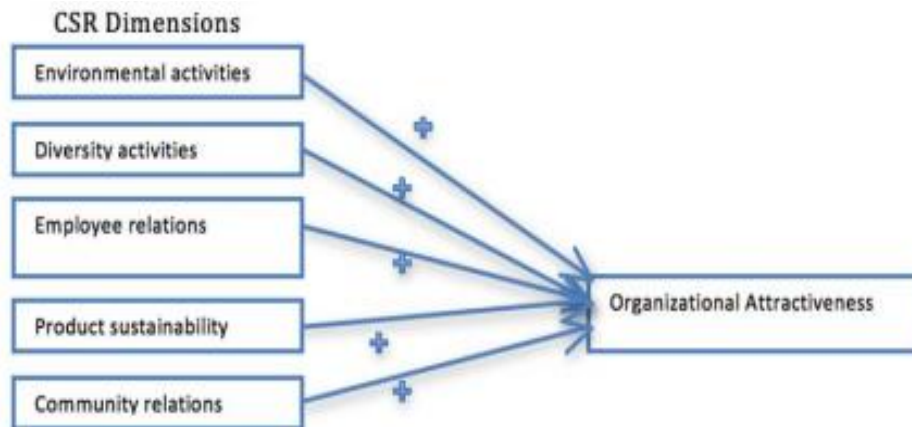


Figure: CSR dimensions and organisational attractiveness. Source: Ersoy and Aksehirli (2015)

As shown in the above figure, CSR dimensions such as environmental activities, diversity activities, employee relations, product sustainability and community relation have an overall effect on organisational attractiveness (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015).

The impact of diversity activities and community relations on organisational attractiveness has been empirically demonstrated (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Organisational attractiveness can be understood as a positive attitude towards the organisation (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). Mulligan (2017) argued that sustainability aims to achieve a balance between the environment and society, benefiting not only a nation but also the entire country. Azevedo and Barros (2017) emphasise the importance of sustainability in enhancing various aspects, which can be achieved through practicing CSR and adopting

the triple bottom line approach (Mulligan, 2017). The promotion of ethical practices by brands can significantly contribute to enhancing organisational attraction (Diacon, 2017). The emphasis on CSR practices, supported by legal frameworks, stems from their numerous positive effects in the business context (Bande et al., 2019). In the context of the clothing industry, the encouragement of CSR activities by legal advisors and the UK government stems from the positive impact these activities have on employees, as well as on society and the environment (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015).

Azevedo and Barros (2017) have conducted research indicating that organisational attractiveness enhances the reputation of a brand, leading many individuals in the UK to be highly attracted to purchasing clothes from reputable brands (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). Certain clothing manufacturing companies in the UK prioritise three key elements— reduction, reuse, and recycling— as part of their environmental stewardship efforts (Bande et al., 2019). Carroll (2019) identifies that CSR activities encompass not only environmental and societal benefits but also respect and honour, both within and outside the organisation. Organisations that actively engage in CSR practices are perceived as more attractive and respectable by individuals (Bande et al., 2019). The practice of CSR conveys a message that organisations are not solely focused on profit generation but also on the welfare of people and society (Agata et al., 2017).

Unlike the stakeholder theory, CSR is primarily concerned with business practices that are not harmful and, indeed, are beneficial to society, rather than a complete understanding of the business itself (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). Consequently, issues such as waste and toxic chemicals generated during clothing production in factories have become a concern in the UK (Agata et al., 2017). Corporate social responsibilities primarily revolve around fulfilling responsibilities towards society, followed by the community and the environment (Azevedo and Barros, 2017). Often, these social responsibilities are conducted under the guidance of stakeholders interested in the clothing industry (Mathur, 2020). Similar to the stakeholder theory, CSR activities remained a priority for clothing brands in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the struggle to generate profitable sales (Bayoud et al., 2017). These activities included measures such as ensuring employee safety, adapting to remote work policies, providing clothing and support to those in need, promoting awareness, and manufacturing and distributing masks (Mathur, 2020). Such activities establish a strong connection with society and enhance brand attractiveness, particularly during crisis situations such as pandemics (Mathur, 2020).

Several clothing companies, such as Burberry, are already engaged in various CSR activities, such as donating high-quality winter clothes to underprivileged individuals during the winter season (Bande et al., 2019). These efforts not only assist people in need but also build public trust in the brand, showcasing its commitment to social responsibility (Mathur, 2020). As a result, this trust cultivates a stronger attachment to the brand and enhances its attractiveness in the eyes of the public (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015).

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

2.5.1 Stakeholder Theory of CSR

According to Robert (2017), various companies employ instrumental stakeholder theory strategically to fulfil their organisational missions. This theory provides a framework for devising strategies aimed at maximising the company's profits and determining its economic growth and rewards. It also elucidates the management of stakeholders' diverse activities (Rahman et al., 2018). Successful clothing companies in the UK, both directly and indirectly, have utilised this theory to achieve their accomplishments. Additionally, Robert (2017) highlights the theory's emphasis on corporate social responsibilities, underscoring the significance of maintaining ethical practices through active engagement in activities such as human rights advocacy, social welfare initiatives, and poverty reduction. This perspective facilitates a better understanding of the importance of CSR, ultimately leading to heightened emphasis on its implementation. Consequently, a company's brand image is positively influenced, which contributes to its ultimate goal attainment and increased profitability (Rahman et al., 2018). Although specific CSR practices may vary among companies, employing this theory ensures the fulfilment of the core purpose behind CSR initiatives. Moreover, Robert (2017) identifies numerous instances where small businesses have swiftly achieved success and profitability by adhering to ethical business practices and fostering creativity. However, there remains an ongoing debate as to whether companies that engage in unethical practices can sustain this theory and its associated CSR activities over an extended period (Diacon, 2017).

According to Paulini (2016), effective stakeholder management plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term viability of a company. The stakeholder theory places considerable emphasis on CSR initiatives undertaken by businesses. Originating in 1963 (Goworek et al., 2020), the stakeholder theory was

developed by several influential scholars, including Freeman, and continues to be highly relevant in contemporary organisational contexts. This theory provides valuable insights into a company's operations and offers guidance for optimising performance (Goworek et al., 2020). Adopting the stakeholder theory can lead to enhancements in the work environment, employee performance, and overall accountability within a business. Scholars, such as Axevedo and Barros (2017) have successfully applied this theory and highlighted its adaptability across diverse companies and situations. By emphasising the integration of stakeholder theory with CSR, organisations can better address stakeholder management challenges (Goworek et al., 2020). Paulini (2016) emphasises that the stakeholder theory and CSR are complementary, with the combined implementation of these concepts yielding significant benefits for companies. The adoption of these theories in conjunction enables more effective and productive stakeholder management (Goworek et al., 2020).

The stakeholders of a company hold significant importance and, as such, companies strive to prioritise them to varying degrees, recognising their crucial role within the organisation (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). The stakeholder theory elucidates the behaviours that influence stakeholder relationships, emphasising the importance of determining what is morally right or wrong for a company (Paulini, 2016). Although the stakeholder theory has been criticised for its complexity and lack of comprehensive guidelines, numerous researchers continue to favour this theory due to its demonstrated benefits for effective business operations (Goworek et al., 2020). This theory underscores the necessity of comprehending stakeholders and fostering improved relationships with them (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). A successful implementation of CSR requires a thorough understanding of stakeholders' preferences and opinions, as this theory elucidates the interdependent relationship between CSR and stakeholders (Goworek et al., 2020). However, simultaneously adhering to both the stakeholder theory and CSR can pose challenges due to diversification among employees, cultures, qualifications, and other factors unique to each company (Roberts, 2017). Nevertheless, certain companies in the UK have successfully implemented both the stakeholder theory and CSR, leading to enhanced reputations (Roberts, 2017). The stakeholder theory asserts that nurturing positive relationships and valuing stakeholders contribute to the essence and vitality of an organisation (Paulini, 2016).

The concept of CSR differs slightly from the stakeholder theory as CSR does not aim to fully comprehend the intricacies of the business but rather focuses on business practices that are non-harmful and beneficial to society (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Corporate social responsibilities primarily

revolve around the fulfilment of obligations by businesses towards society, followed by the community and the environment (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Often, social responsibilities are guided by various stakeholders with vested interests. A key similarity between these two approaches is that, like the stakeholder theory, CSR entails assuming responsibility for society and the community (Goworek et al., 2020).

The stakeholder theory primarily concerns itself with enhancing a company's operations and impact, encompassing both the company's internal operations and the areas in which it conducts business activities (Roberts, 2017). This includes the geographical locations and communities in which the company operates. On the other hand, CSR is focused on social activities and orientations undertaken by the company. It is worth noting that CSR initiatives undertaken by a company are not necessarily confined to its immediate location or community; rather, these responsibilities can be fulfilled wherever the company identifies a need for assistance, even in different parts of the world (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). CSR is regarded as a corporate responsibility, thus establishing a connection between the stakeholder theory and CSR. The relation between the CSR and the stakeholder theory is shown below:

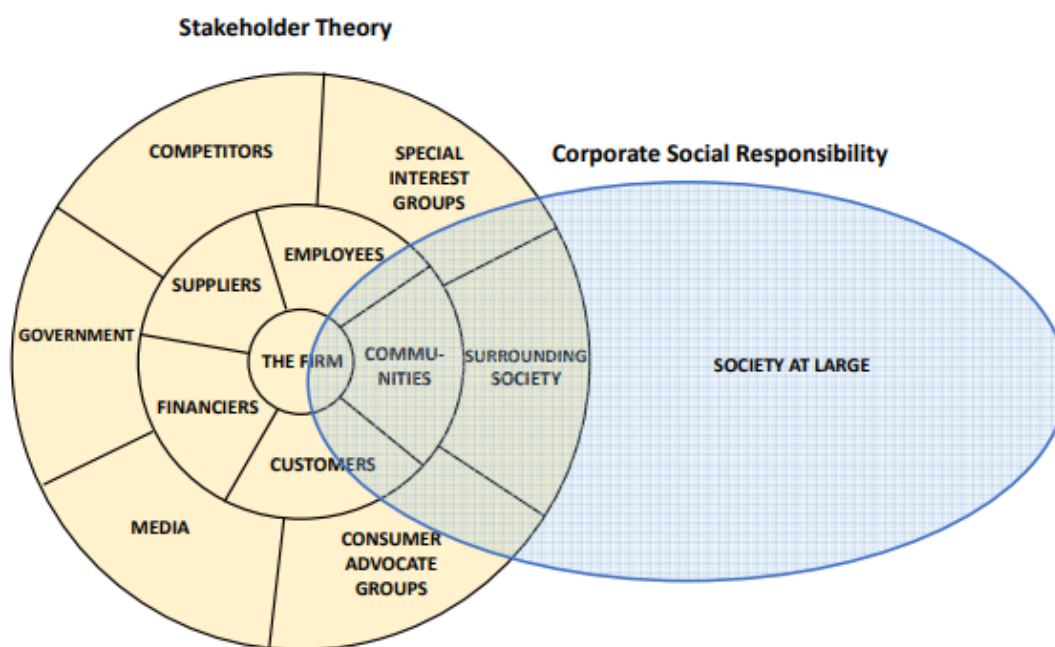


Figure: The relation between stakeholder theory and CSR. Source: Freeman (2017)

Within the context of internal organisational affairs, CSR entails the management of the workplace environment in a manner that avoids causing harm to society and the environment, while also

safeguarding labour rights (Rahman et al., 2018). As posited by Freeman (2017), stakeholder theory primarily revolves around fulfilling the company's obligations to its stakeholders. Within this theoretical framework, such responsibilities extend to comprehending and meeting the needs of suppliers and investors (Bayoud et al., 2017). Conversely, CSR is not primarily concerned with stakeholders but encompasses various issues related to it, such as the recycling of waste during production, which falls within the purview of a sustainable supply chain (Rahman et al., 2018). Consequently, stakeholders perceive responsibility as a multidirectional concept, whereas CSR is regarded as unidirectional (Freeman, 2017). Stakeholder interdependence, value creation, and purpose represent common factors are aligned between stakeholder theory and CSR.

Stakeholder interdependence: According to Freeman (2017), an accurate and strategic decision-making process is of utmost importance in effectively managing a business. Given the limited availability of resources in the world relative to the demands placed upon them, trade-offs emerge as a critical aspect of business decision making (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Many companies express concerns that prioritising community assistance may lead to reduced returns for shareholders (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Consequently, these companies may be compelled to allocate funds for community initiatives, potentially necessitating price increases for their products or services. However, Freeman (2017) argues that such assumptions are invalid dichotomies. He posits that stakeholders, due to their significant roles, generate value for one another and are inherently interdependent. Therefore, if a company chooses to support the community and society, it can enhance its reputation, which in turn benefits the stakeholders (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016).

Purpose: A fundamental prerequisite for the effective operation of any business enterprise is the establishment of a clear and well-defined purpose. This purpose serves as a guiding principle, ensuring that the company remains focused and does not deviate from its intended path (Freeman, 2017). In order to maintain strategic coherence and alignment, a purpose-driven organisation must not only possess a well-defined objective but also exhibit unwavering determination in pursuing it. It is crucial, however, that the established purpose adheres to a code of ethics and morality, thereby avoiding any engagement in unethical practices (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). By upholding an ethical and moral purpose, a company not only enhances its own prospects but also contributes positively to the betterment of society and the community at large (Goworek et al., 2020).

Creation of Value: The stakeholder theory emphasises the importance of proper treatment and value creation for stakeholders within a company (Freeman, 2017). Khan (2016) asserts that creating value for investors, suppliers, employees, customers, and the community is a key factor for any company. When a company encourages its employees to practice CSR, it actively avoids unethical behaviour (Khan, 2016). Implementing CSR not only benefits society but also generates value for the company's stakeholders. Consequently, a company that successfully creates value for its stakeholders is likely to increase its profitability and motivation to engage in further CSR activities (Freeman, 2017).

In addition to the stakeholder theory, Roberts (2017) highlights that corporate social performance (CSP) is an interchangeable term for CSR. By utilising both theories, companies can significantly benefit and progress towards positive development. The individuals responsible for managing corporate social performance must develop strategic plans that align with the company's purpose. Freeman (2017) argues that companies can bring about positive change by taking both CSR and CSP seriously. Senior management should prioritise CSP and CSR, as they enable a company to achieve its utmost success (Roberts, 2017).

2.5.2 Carroll's Four-Part Model

In 1991, Carroll formulated a comprehensive model of CSR consisting of four dimensions, which was initially published in 1979 (Hyun et al., 2017). Carroll subsequently transformed this model into a pyramid framework to present a consolidated representation of the original definition model (Archie, 2016). The pyramid structure was chosen for its geometric design, enabling a cohesive depiction of the various dimensions. This design ensures the model's resilience over time, while also enhancing its intuitive nature and accessibility (Roberts, 2017).

At the foundation of Carroll's pyramid resides economic responsibility, which constitutes the fundamental requirement for any business entity (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). Economic responsibility is considered the cornerstone that must be upheld by all companies, as it serves as a fundamental component (Freeman, 2017). Profits, as emphasised by Freeman (2017), are crucial to overall business growth and provide the means to motivate employees through monetary incentives. Furthermore, sustainable and robust economic performance is widely regarded as vital for any organisation's success (Freeman, 2017). Another significant dimension within Carroll's model is legal responsibility. This dimension encompasses several expectations, including compliance with local, federal, and state regulations, adherence to government laws, and fulfilment of legal obligations to stakeholders (Rahman

et al., 2018). Legal responsibility entails meeting the legal requirements imposed by the governing authorities, thus ensuring ethical conduct and accountability in business operations.

The present model elucidates that in order to bolster and advance the enterprise and societal conditions, it is imperative for sustained profitability to be robust (Hyun et al., 2017). Consequently, the establishment of a sustainable and economically sound business is instrumental in developing the infrastructure of CSR. This model proves particularly advantageous for the implementation of CSR in businesses due to its versatility and adaptability (Rahman et al., 2018). In addition, there are certain expectations associated with ethical responsibilities, such as embodying the qualities of a good corporate citizen and striving to align with emerging ethical norms for the betterment of society (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016).

Freeman (2017) contends that adherence to ethical conduct in business does not necessarily have to be confined to legal frameworks. The nature of ethical conduct itself offers flexibility and fosters a harmonious work environment. Carroll's four-part CSR model is shown below:



Figure: Carroll's pyramid of CSR. Source: Archie (2016)

The foundation of the pyramid is comprised of economic responsibility, which is essential for ensuring profitability and is mandated by society. Following economic responsibility is legal responsibility, encompassing compliance with laws and regulations governing fair business practices (Archie, 2016). The third component is ethical responsibility, which aims to prevent harm and promote fairness and justice (Archie, 2016). At the pinnacle of the pyramid lies philanthropic responsibility. The primary objective of philanthropic responsibility is to be a conscientious corporate citizen, as desired by society (Rahman et al., 2018).

Society also acknowledges the importance of businesses operating within the bounds of legal frameworks, as it is believed that adherence to the law encourages ethical practices such as CSR (Ashok et al., 2020). In developed countries, establishing a legal infrastructure for practicing CSR is often observed as a prerequisite for fostering business growth (Hyun et al., 2017). It is expected that businesses will demonstrate ethical conduct to avoid harmful practices and uphold the principles necessary to meet societal expectations in a fair manner. Roberts (2017) argues that businesses, like individuals, are anticipated to act as responsible corporate citizens. People expect companies to contribute financially, provide resources, and offer physical and mental support to fulfil their duties towards society (Hyun et al., 2017). The pyramid model underscores the significance of fulfilling fundamental obligations, particularly for financially stable companies (Archie, 2016).

2.5.3 Agency Theory of CSR

According to Diacon (2017), the focus of the theory of CSR lies primarily on the allocation of agency expenses. Additionally, this theory also addresses the structural aspects of ownership and the behaviour of managers (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Following the 1980s, many companies adopted the agency theory as a replacement for the previously prevailing concept of managerial capitalism (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Diacon (2017) elucidated that this theory facilitated companies moving away from opaque decision-making processes and aided in meeting the diverse requirements of stakeholders. Consequently, it is also regarded as a contributory factor in the systematic exploitation of bondholders. This theory offers recommendations for managing various aspects and factors associated with agency relationships. By establishing links between the logic of agency, positive agency theory practices, and the principle-agent literature, the stakeholder theory is further enriched. Consequently, this refined theory of corporate governance finds widespread application (Axevedo and Barros, 2017).

2.5.4 Triple Bottom Line of Sustainability

The triple bottom line framework, rooted in the belief that a company should prioritise not only profit making but also environmental and social considerations (Mulligan, 2017), emphasises three key dimensions of performance: the environmental, social, and financial (Sridhar and Ganesan, 2016). This framework offers several significant benefits, including enhanced business longevity, improved corporate reputation, and reduced investor risk. Sustainability, recognised as a salutary behavioural factor (Ashok et al., 2020), is not only advantageous for organisations but also contributes to the betterment of society. Mulligan (2017) posits that one of the primary objectives of sustainability is to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between the environment and society, benefiting not only a nation but the entire world. Therefore, the adoption of sustainable practices, complemented by the incorporation of CSR principles and the triple bottom line theory, becomes crucial in effecting substantial improvements (Mulligan, 2017). By implementing sustainability measures, companies can ensure the mitigation of poverty, educational deficiencies, safety concerns, and other social issues that afflict human beings (Mulligan, 2017). The imperative for sustainability holds true irrespective of the geographical scope of business expansion, be it at the national or international level (Ashok et al., 2020). The triple bottom line theory, by encompassing both internal and external sustainability, serves to guarantee suitability for the present and future generations. Researchers have made significant contributions to this theory, emphasising its importance and striving to gather the necessary resources to ensure sustained corporate operations (Ashok et al., 2020). Mulligan (2017) underscores the value placed on caring for individuals in society within this theory, as it confers multiple benefits upon the company, such as fostering a positive brand image. This aspect, in turn, facilitates job creation, worker safety, and equitable wage distribution (Axevedo and Barros, 2017). Sustainability, as Mulligan (2017) contends, acts as a powerful instrument in ensuring the acquisition and preservation of essential resources, while simultaneously educating people about practices that could harm society and engender unethical behaviour. The maintenance of sustainability perpetuates the continuous preservation of the triple bottom line's three elements (Roberts, 2017). The theory's three pillars – people, planet, and profit – equally serve the betterment of society, harbouring the potential for positive future transformations (Bayoud et al., 2017).

2.5.5 Maslow's Motivational Theory

The theory of Dr Abraham Maslow, which is based on motivation with respect to the human needs hierarchy known as the Maslow's hierarchy of need, is accepted universally (Sridhar and Ganesan,

2016). This theory was established in the late 1960 (Shih et al., 2018). The needs are all based on the psychological needs of a human being. The psychological needs are ranked from the lower level to the higher level. In this theory, it is posited that human beings at first try their best to satisfy basic needs and, when these are fulfilled, they satisfy the higher-level needs of the hierarchy (Shih et al., 2018). It is the nature of humans to move forward in satisfying the higher-level needs subsequent to satisfying the basic ones.

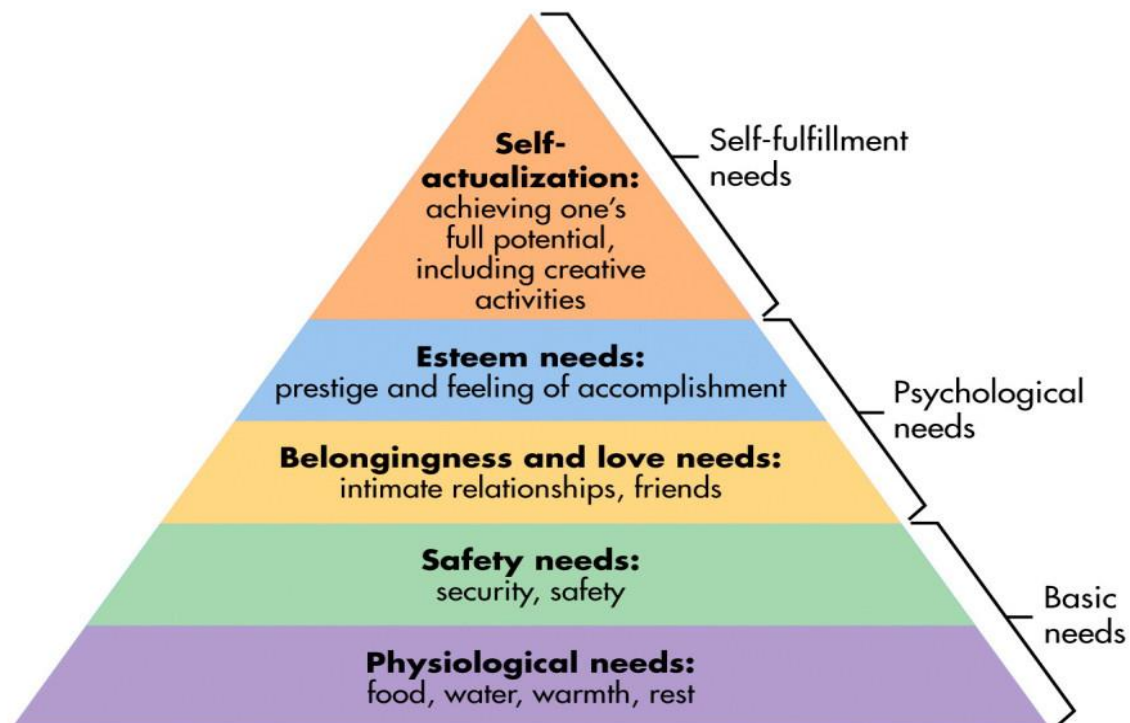


Figure: Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Source: (Shih et al., 2018)

According to Roberts (2017), there is an overlap of the needs shown in the hierarchy because it is believed that no needs can be satisfied fully. The first are psychological needs, which include food, shelter, air, water, etc., which are basically biogenic needs (Shih et al., 2018). It is the most basic or primary need of a human out of all the needs. After the fulfilment of psychological needs, people move towards fulfilling their security and safety needs, which include order, stability, protection, routine, etc. (Roberts, 2017). Safety also includes insurance and some savings for fulfilling these needs. The next is social needs, which include friendship, affection, belonging, etc. (Shih et al., 2018). After feeling protected and fulfilling psychological needs, an individual typically feels the need to gain social acceptance. This sense of having belonging or social acceptance motivates them to be indulged in their

different actions and have different things (Bayoud et al., 2017). After social needs are fulfilled, people feel the desire to fulfil ego needs, which include self-admiration, status, prestige, confident, etc. (Bayoud et al., 2017). A person feels self-esteem when they start getting approval and respect. If all these needs are not fulfilled then the person often feels helpless (Shih et al., 2018). After meeting the needs of self-esteem, people feel the need for self-actualisation or self-fulfilment. At this stage, people feel complete and thus begin to feel the need to provide help to others (Roberts, 2017).

2.6 Literature Gap

There are several studies about the impact of CSR on the customer satisfaction and about the impact of CSR on the organisational attractiveness in other sectors, rather than UK clothing industry. There are very few research on the impact of CSR activities on the customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness of the clothing industries in the UK. Therefore, there is a gap in detail analysis about impact of CSR activities of the UK clothing industry on their customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness. There is, however, considerable information about UK brands' CSR activities on the companies' official websites and in newspaper articles (Degbey and Pelto, 2021). Though there are many UK clothing brands that are more or less engaged in CSR activities, there are not any research papers that have specifically discussed CSR practices in relation to industry attractiveness and customer satisfaction in the UK clothing industry.

There has been limited research addressing the implementation of strategies pertaining to CSR within the clothing industry of the United Kingdom (UK), with regard to enhancing organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction (Barbopoulos and Johansson, 2017). Furthermore, existing studies have not sufficiently explored the intricacies of promotional strategies employed by UK clothing industry entities. Therefore, this study aims to provide in-depth insights into the optimal promotional media that should be employed by the UK clothing industry to effectively promote their CSR initiatives. Additionally, the study will elucidate the rationale behind the selection of specific media channels for promotional purposes. Moreover, this research will extensively examine the interrelationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness, with a particular focus on the promotional activities undertaken to demonstrate a company's engagement in CSR initiatives. Notably, certain studies have failed to elucidate their promotional strategies or campaigns aimed at promoting CSR, which will be duly considered within this study. Furthermore, this investigation will specifically concentrate on the various

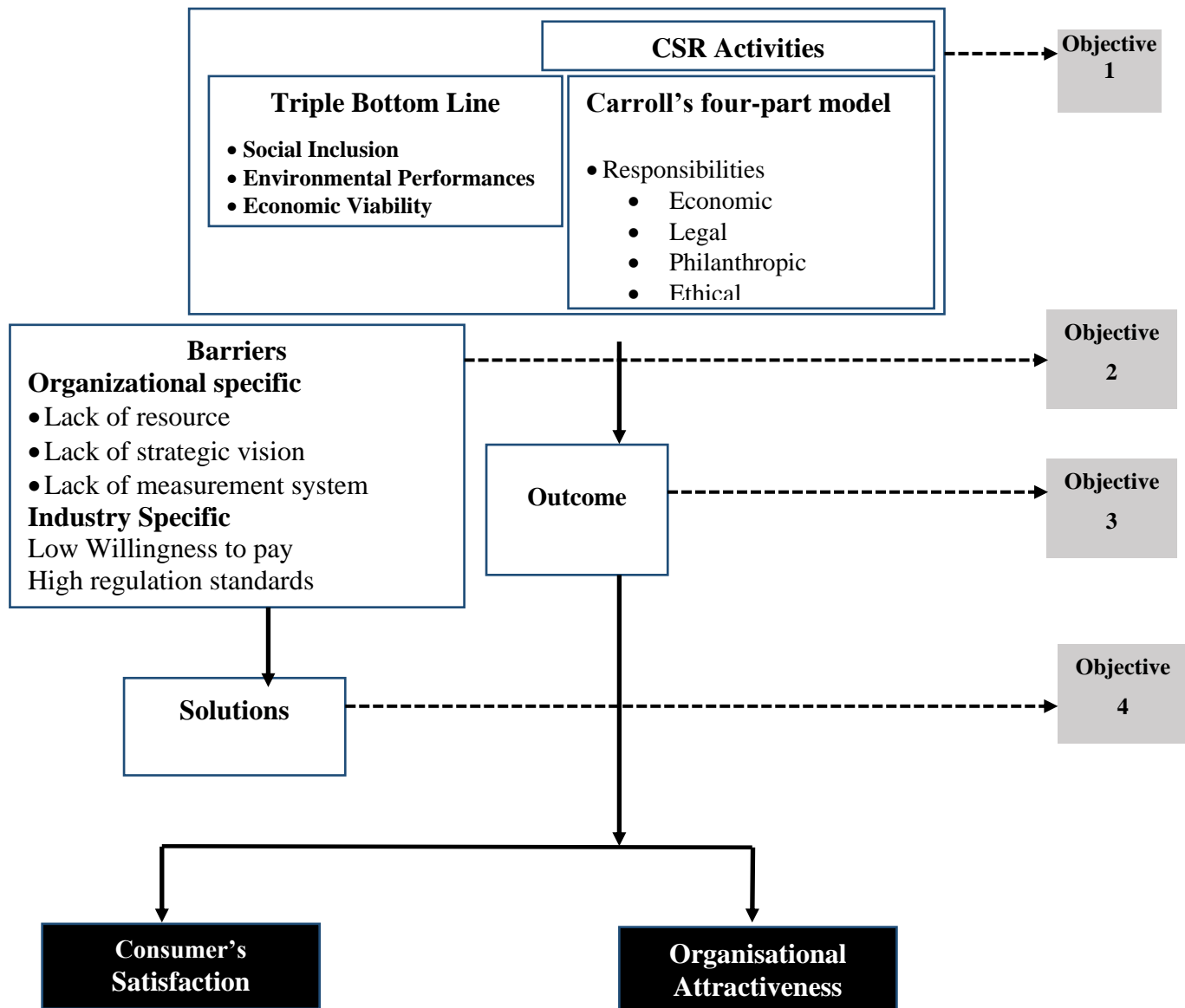
types of CSR practices adopted by clothing manufacturing and retail companies, with a specific emphasis on those prevalent within the UK. In summary, this study endeavours to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of organisational promotional strategies aimed at enhancing their attractiveness.

Additionally, previous studies have failed to focus on the cost structure, funding process, and motivational process for corporate social responsibilities of UK clothing industries to influence organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction. It has been mentioned that the well-known and high-end brands tends to spend more on the corporate social responsibilities compared to other small or growing companies (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). This is because those companies are more financially able to participate in those activities and help more people. The companies, in this way, are not only able to follow good ethical practices but are also able to increase the organization's attractive and keep their customers satisfied (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). Based on the project types, CSR can be very expensive (Ersoy and Aksehirli, 2015). The financial matter is a very important part of the conduction of CSR activities of a company, and other companies can also gain direction on how to spend money and design the cost structure if there is enough information about such provided (Bande et al., 2019). Therefore, this study will allow for considerable insight into the financial planning and cost structure of corporate social responsibility activities, including donation, sponsorship, payments, rents, and resources.

On the other hand, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation exert a significant influence on corporate social responsibilities (Paulina, 2016). Extrinsic factors, such as safety measures, facilities, payments, and appreciations, have been identified as key elements in this regard (Paulina, 2016). Additionally, intrinsic factors, including effective leadership, a positive work environment, ethical practices, and job security, have also been recognised as crucial aspects (Paulina, 2016). This study aims to specifically examine the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors underlying corporate social responsibilities while investigating their impact on organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction within the UK clothing industry.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

In this part of the chapter, the theoretical framework, which is based on the literature review, is described. It starts with the conceptualisation of research objective one, followed by research objectives



two, three, and four.

Figure 4: Conceptual framework

Research Objective one

To analyse the current CSR practices by UK clothing industry

Over the last decades, CSR as a concept has attracted the attention of many researchers in the management sphere. In fact, whilst most of them have created different models and theories concerning the concept of CSR, the matter has led to different approaches to CSR. From this point, it is sufficient to offer an overview of the commonalities and differences between the various theories of CSR in order to determine a common form of implementation to the CSR approach that reflects the interests of both shareholders and the community.

Sustainability has had its role increased from a corporate perspective, although it is difficult to develop a definition for this concept (Kouaib, Mhiri and Jarboui, 2020). Corporate sustainability scholars pointed out the ambiguity of the corporate sustainability field. The era of corporations integrating sustainable practices has given rise to a serious question: How can sustainability be taken into consideration to measure firm performance?

Several studies have investigated this issue and focused on the contribution of sustainability undertakings towards enhancing corporate performance. The findings can be used to determine how companies could turn corporate sustainable performance (CSP) into a systematic and effective approach (Nikolaou, Tsalis and Evangelinos, 2019).

Corporate sustainability performance refers to a company's ability to operate in a manner that upholds ecological integrity, social well-being, and sound governance principles, while simultaneously generating value for its shareholders (Ahmad et al., [2023](#); Luque-Vílchez et al., [2023](#)). It encompasses the effective management of environmental resources, fostering positive social relationships, and maintaining high standards of ethical conduct (Bellandi, [2023](#)).

The literature also reveals that while there is much discussion about what companies should do, there is little data about, or analysis of, what companies are doing in practice.

Various theories can be used to explain the relationship between corporate governance mechanisms and sustainable performance (e.g., agency theory, resource dependency theory, stewardship theory, legitimacy theory, political cost theory, and stakeholder theory).

In this research, two mainstream theories are deployed: Triple Bottom Line theory and Carroll's four-part model.

- **Triple Bottom Line**

Most CSR theories acknowledge that the idea's foundation is the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept introduced in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission. John Elkington officially named it in 1994 (Pan, Sinha and Chen, 2020). This theory is also known as the 3Ps, or three pillars. It states that a company should be responsible for three features: Profit, People, and the Planet, and economic, social, and environmental responsibility.

The triple bottom line (TBL) has reformed management discourse by making sustainability part of the business agenda (Kouaib, Mhiri and Jarboui, 2020), yet increasingly the TBL has evolved into a proxy for sustainability, often visually depicted as the mutual maximisation of economic, social and environmental dimensions.

There is increasing evidence suggesting that environmental and social criteria impact the market in complex ways. The corporate world has demonstrated a willingness to respond to public pressure for improved performance on non-economic issues by embracing Triple Bottom Line (TBL) principles.

The TBL model urges organizations to consider their environmental and social bottom line, in addition to their financial bottom line. Although the notion of accounting for social and environmental impacts is not new (Birkel and Müller, 2020), the TBL has greatly contributed to incorporating sustainability into the business agenda (Pan, Sinha and Chen, 2020). TBL has become a dominant approach today in terms of corporate reporting and being more transparent in accounting practices (Pan, Sinha and Chen, 2020). Sustainable practices have economic advantages, and business activities must be legitimized. Academics and practitioners would benefit from an improved understanding of corporate sustainability goals. (J.Manag Organ.2022)

Only if a company cares for all three aspects of Triple Bottom Line can it be called sustainable because they are closely related. Caring for Profit and People makes it equitable and fair, but omitting environmental protection dooms the Planet. On the other hand, tending only to Planet and People, and forgetting about the Profit makes CSR policy bearable, but business needs profits to survive. Again,

suppose a company pays attention to Profit and Planet, discarding the People. In that case, Štreimikienė and Ahmed, (2021) believe that it is viable and profitable, but in the long term can lead to a fall in employees' morale and the breach of social contract.

- **Carroll's four-part model**

On the other hand, Carroll's pyramid suggests that the corporate has to fulfil responsibility at four levels: the Economic, Legal, Ethical, and Philanthropic. Carroll's four-part CSR was originally stated as follows: "Corporate social responsibility encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organisations at a given point in time" (Carroll 1979, 1991). This set of four responsibilities creates a foundation or infrastructure that helps delineate in some detail and frame or characterise the nature of businesses' responsibilities to the society of which they are a part (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019).

Rahardjo, Karijanto Prijo, and Kurniawati. "Carroll Pyramid Implementation of Environmental Responsibility Programs of PT Pertamina EP Subang Field, Tambun Field, and Jatibarang Field in Organic Agriculture" *Journal of Social Research* 2.9 (2023): 3331-3340.

Despite the plethora of CSR definitions over the last 50 years, Carroll's four-part conceptualisation has been the most durable and widely cited in the literature (Kouaib, Mhiri and Jarboui, 2020). Some of the reasons for this are that the model is simple, easy to understand, and has an intuitively appealing logic. Over the 25 years since Carroll first proposed the model, it has been frequently reproduced in top management and CSR journals, mostly by Carroll himself. Carroll has sought to assimilate various competing themes into his model, e.g., corporate citizenship and stakeholders (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019). Furthermore, the model has been empirically tested and is largely supported by the associated findings (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019). Finally, the model incorporates and prioritises the economic dimension as an aspect of CSR, which may endear business scholars and practitioners. Carroll's pyramid is also very simplistic and static, failing to capture the complexity of CSR in practice.

Research Objective two

To identify the challenges related to CSR practices faced by firms in the UK clothing industry

To make stakeholders aware of social and environmental activities and strategies, companies are increasingly issuing easily accessible CSR reports. These reports are growing among investors, governments, NGOs, customers, and other concerned stakeholders. A concern among academics and

practitioners is how statements in CSR reports compare with the actual corporate commitment of addressing social and environmental issues. While the firm's level of commitment should be clear in the reports (Żychlewicz, 2015), Yuen and Lim, (2016) found it difficult to determine whether an organisation was actually implementing the strategies and management actions or merely reporting such to appease stakeholders.

While there is extant literature focusing on CSR, this literature focuses mainly on discussing the benefits of CSR. There is very limited literature that focuses on identifying and examining the barriers that impede the implementation of CSR. The following gaps in the literature are noted. Firstly, a comprehensive study on the barriers to CSR implementation is presently lacking; relevant studies are noted to be fragmented. For instance, Du, Bhattacharya and Sen (2011) have limited their analysis on barriers relating to the trust. In another study, Bell, Lee and Lewis (2005) have narrowly discussed issues on pragmatic and ethical barriers to CSR disclosure. Secondly, there is an absence of such a study on shipping companies. Each industry presents a unique set of social and technical challenges to implementing CSR and, thus, requires individualised attention from researchers.

This probably explains why, despite the availability of information on the implementation of CSR, many shipping companies still experience difficulties in doing so (Drobetz et al., 2013)

It became apparent that managers in large global businesses are moving away from the language of CSR to embrace what they describe as the broader concept of sustainability. Global businesses use practices such as scientific targets, supply chain mapping, procurement, responsibility for products beyond the factory gate, and engagement with the Circular Economy and other multi-stakeholder initiatives in their efforts to apply Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to business practices. (Williams and Murphy, 2023).

Firm-specific barriers are micro-factors that are heterogeneous and their impact on CSR implementation could vary according to individual firms. These barriers can be influenced, controlled, and managed by a firm through change management and transformation of organisational culture and leadership. On the other hand, industry-specific barriers are macro- and homogeneous factors that are invariably experienced by all firms in a given industry, which in this case refers to the clothing industry. These barriers are largely shaped by external forces such as the competitive and political landscape.

Research Objective Three

To determine the effect of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in UK clothing companies

As customer loyalty is considered a vital objective for a firm's survival and growth, building a loyal customer base has become a major marketing goal. Still, it is also an essential basis for developing a sustainable competitive advantage (Yuen and Lim, 2016). Understanding loyalty cultivation or retention is thus considered to be a key element in delivering long-term corporate profitability as profits can be increased over the lifetime of a customer through their retention. Prior research has demonstrated that CSR impacts consumers' attitudes, purchase intentions, consumer-company identification, loyalty, and satisfaction. Initial studies indicate that consumers take a firm's commitment to CSR initiatives when evaluating companies and their products (Żychlewicz, 2015). In addition, it is widely agreed that customer satisfaction leads to customer retention, purchase intentions, and word of mouth. Thus, CSR and customer satisfaction are expected to be positively related to customer loyalty. Customers' positive perceptions of a brand are a sign of a high level of trust in that brand. The reputation of a business is a crucial asset that must be favourable and well known since it affects how customers perceive the business' operations [38]. Therefore, CSR perceptions are essential for creating valuable material that fosters the development of a company's image. Participating in CSR fosters a positive reputation. In reality, brand trust is the primary factor influencing brand image, as it is thought to be the route leading to certain marketing benefits and outcomes (Khan and Fatma, 2023).

Research Objective Four

To provide a set of recommendations to the firms to use CSR more effectively

The framework shown above is developed based on reviewing the topics of the literature review. The variables of the framework are CSR and its impact on the other two variables, customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness. In the framework, it has been shown that the different activities of the CSR have an impact on the customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness of the clothing industry. The main types of CSR activities that create an impact are environmental responsibility, ethical responsibility, social responsibility, philanthropic responsibility, and economic responsibility. The organisation that maintains trust in their employee's ideas, flexibility, engagement, and performance attracts more people to work in those organisations. During the COVID-19 pandemic there were many organisations that went outside their comfort zones by changing their slogans, logos, methods of

promotion, motivation, workplace satisfaction, hygiene maintenance, working policies, and hours for employees, etc. (Agata et al., 2020).

CSR has been presented as a tool to manage risk for the company, and to fend off risks such as future legislation (Smith, 2003).

Both customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness have a considerable impact on maintaining the reputation and sustainability of an organisation. The practice of any of the CSR activities can create an impact on the organisation. It has been discussed in many studies that the practice of CSR by organisations has an impact on the customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness of the clothing industry. CSR activities have both direct and indirect impacts on organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction. There have also been a number of studies that discussed CSR activities' impacts specifically on the customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness of the clothing industry of the UK.

There are specific reasons for choosing this particular theoretical framework. In this literature chapter, two theoretical frameworks in particular have been reviewed. The first theoretical framework mainly highlighted the impact of CSR on corporate reputation and customer satisfaction. On the other hand, the other theoretical framework focused on CSR dimensions and their impact on organisational attractiveness. The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of CSR activities on the organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction in the clothing industry in the UK. However, the first theoretical framework reviewed in this study could not focus on the research aims in this study, where it only focused on the impact of CSR on customer satisfaction. Additionally, the focus was not on the clothing sector in the UK. On the other hand, the second theoretical framework only focused on the impact of CSR dimensions on organisational attractiveness, whereas it also ignored the UK clothing industry. Considering the limitations of these two theoretical frameworks, the conceptual/theoretical framework developed in this study focuses on all of the independent and dependent variables defined in the research topic that, in turn, cover the research aims.

3.8 Conclusion

The literature review chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of the research objectives based on a secondary research investigation of the topic. Initially, this chapter presents an overview of the topic,

drawing upon the findings of various researchers. CSR can be understood as a practice that aims to work towards stakeholder advantage, resulting in a positive impact on the public and enhancing the brand's reputation. Several researchers have discovered a significant and positive influence of CSR engagement on many clothing companies in the UK. Although not all companies in the UK clothing industry practice CSR, numerous organisations maintain a good reputation and enhance their organisational attractiveness through their dedicated involvement in various CSR initiatives. These companies strive to bring about positive changes through CSR practices, alongside the provision of high-quality products and services to their target customers, thereby increasing overall customer satisfaction. Consequently, several clothing companies in the UK, despite not currently practicing CSR, are actively developing strategies to implement CSR in the future.

The subsequent section of the chapter explores CSR activities in their entirety, along with different theoretical perspectives. Legal experts in the UK strongly advocate that companies should not limit their objectives and aims solely to profit or internal welfare but also strive to create a positive impact on society at large. The practice of CSR, as emphasised in business ethics, benefits both the company and society. Furthermore, a close relationship exists between the concept of the triple bottom line and CSR, as the three elements of the triple bottom line theory – namely, people, planet, and the organisation's profitability – interrelate with CSR. In the agency theory of CSR, emphasis is placed on considering the agency's expenses and the functioning of ownership structures. Sustainability, as a key objective, aims to identify the equilibrium between society and the environment that is beneficial to the nation as a whole, encompassing specific purposes and the entire country.

Moreover, customer behaviour is influenced by several factors, including personal, psychological, and social aspects. Motivation, as a psychological factor, represents an internal influence on customers' purchasing behaviour. Marketers play a crucial role in analysing how to motivate customers to purchase their products and services. The key concepts related to customer behaviour encompass needs, the cognitive dissonance theory, and consumer's perceived values. When customers are satisfied with a product and the brand's image, they are more likely to become loyal customers who repeatedly return to the store to make further purchases. For instance, Burberry, a clothing brand known for delivering faultless, high-quality garments, has successfully retained customers due to its commitment to quality.

The perceived customer benefits encompass advantages derived from products, services, personnel, and reputation. Conversely, customer costs encompass various factors such as monetary expenses, energy

consumption, time investment, and psychological burdens. Augmenting customer satisfaction with a brand necessitates diligent customer research. Although customer research can be costly, numerous companies allocate substantial financial and temporal resources to this endeavour due to the favourable outcomes it yields. Different types of customer research can be conducted depending on the organisation's requirements, facilitating the identification of customer segments, behaviours, and needs. Customer research plays a pivotal role in enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering brand loyalty. Consequently, brands can introduce alterations to packaging, communication platforms, physical evidence, and approaches, ultimately resulting in a positive impact and heightened organisational appeal.

Within the United Kingdom, customers exhibit diverse clothing preferences, ranging from Western attire such as jeans, sweatshirts, T-shirts, shirts, frocks, and gowns, to specific traditional garments. To ensure customer satisfaction, organisations must meet customers' desired needs and adapt their strategies when necessary, accounting for evolving market trends and styles. Failure to satisfy customers will ultimately lead to long-term brand failure, as customer satisfaction is directly tied to sustained sales generation. Even loyal customers are willing to switch to alternative brands if their expectations are not met. Enhancing organisational appeal is imperative to long-term brand image and relationship development. Organisations must effectively communicate the reasons why customers should recognise and value their brand, highlighting the benefits they provide, their competitive advantages, distinctive qualities, and maintained standards. Notably, the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many organisations to adopt work-from-home policies, necessitating the inclusion of caring messages related to the situation in promotional efforts.

Clothing companies must prioritise CSR initiatives to sustain their competitive advantages, given the environmental impact of harmful chemicals and waste generated by clothing production. Research reveals a significant relationship between a clothing company's attractiveness and its brand equity. Several dimensions of CSR, including environmental activities, diversity initiatives, employee relations, product sustainability, and community involvement, impact an organisation's appeal. However, the existing literature exhibits certain research gaps, notably the lack of information on cost structures or financial management and regulation of CSR activities within the UK clothing industry. Furthermore, limited research exists on the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness within the UK clothing industry specifically.

Drawing upon the findings and analyses of the literature review, a conceptual framework demonstrates the influence of CSR on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness. The framework encompasses various variables, including corporate social responsibilities, their impact on the clothing industry, customer satisfaction, and organisational attractiveness. Throughout this chapter, the practice of CSR by organisations has been extensively discussed, emphasizing its potential to significantly enhance customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness within the UK clothing industry.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology employed in the present research. Taherdoost (2016) defines research methodology as a systematic and scientific approach to collecting, analysing, and processing research data in order to achieve the research objectives and aims. In this study, the Research Onion model, as expounded by Wilson (2015), is employed to structure the methodologies. Following this model, the chapter initially discusses four significant types of research philosophy, namely interpretivism, pragmatism, realism, and positivism, and determines the most suitable philosophy for this research. Pelham and Blanton (2016) emphasise the importance of research methods, both deductive and inductive, in outlining the appropriate research design. Subsequently, the researcher examines various research designs and selects the specific type that aligns with the objectives of this study. Furthermore, this chapter elucidates various research policies and identifies precise strategies to be employed in this study. Additionally, the researcher defines and discusses the methods for data analysis and data collection. Finally, the chapter addresses research integrity, ethical considerations, and validity. The researcher demonstrates how this study upholds ethical standards and ensures reliability and validity (Creswell and Clark, 2018).

4.2 Research paradigm

Every research methodology is inherently shaped by a comprehensive framework of underlying assumptions, which exert a significant influence on the study's design and ultimate findings. Hence, it becomes imperative to diligently recognise and articulate the specific research paradigm to which the researcher adheres. Within the domain of business research, ontology and epistemology are commonly acknowledged as the principal philosophical perspectives guiding investigations. These paradigms find their origins in a seminal work conducted by Burrell and Morgan in 1982.

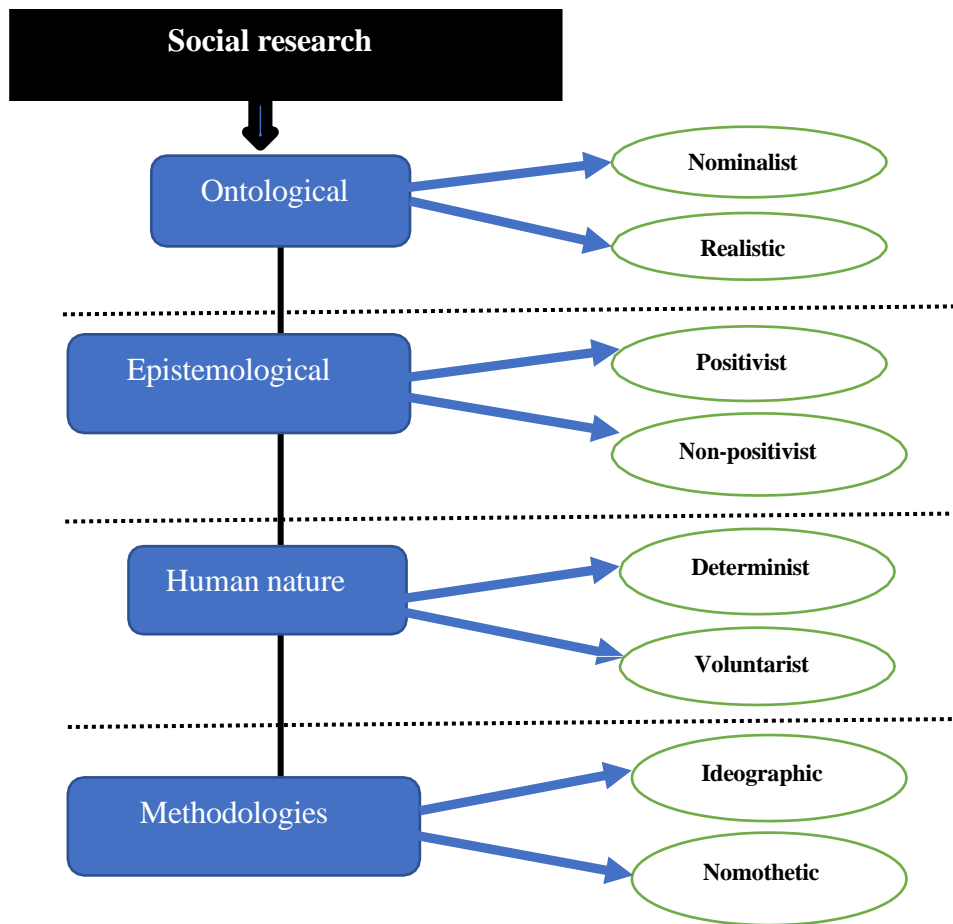


Figure 5: Dimensions of social research

Source: Burrell and Morgan, (1982)

Ontology, as demonstrated above, pertains to the fundamental nature of the phenomenon under research. Within a nominalist ontological framework, the social world is regarded as existing external to the individual. Furthermore, the social world consists of names and concepts that serve to construct reality. Conversely, within a realist ontological perspective, researchers posit that the social world is independent of individual perceptions as it is composed of tangible and genuine structures. The second dimension discussed above encompasses the categories of epistemology. Epistemology deals with how individuals comprehend the world and interact with others. Scholars adopting a positivist approach seek to identify correlations and causal relationships in order to shed light on and comprehend social realities. In contrast, anti-positivists contend that knowledge is inherently relative. They argue that knowledge can be constructed from internal perspectives. The third dimension of social research engages in debates

concerning human nature. From a determinist standpoint, human actions are controlled by the environment. Conversely, a voluntarist perspective posits that human nature possesses autonomy. Finally, the fourth dimension explores various methodologies available for research. Within an ideographic framework, firsthand knowledge pertaining to the subject under investigation is crucial to analysing subjective accounts. Conversely, the nomothetic approach emphasises the importance of employing a structured methodology and established practices to acquire knowledge (Burrell and Morgan, 1982).

From an epistemological perspective, the research paradigm selected for this study is interpretivism. Interpretivism acknowledges and respects the diversity among individuals as one of the key objectives of the social sciences. Accordingly, the researcher aims to comprehend the meaning behind social actions (Bryman, 2016). Moreover, a subjective approach aligns with the current study, as it enables the researcher to examine varying perspectives of employees representing participating organisations using a structured analytical framework. Crotty (2015) asserts that the choice of research paradigm should be guided by the guidance provided in the existing literature on the research topic.

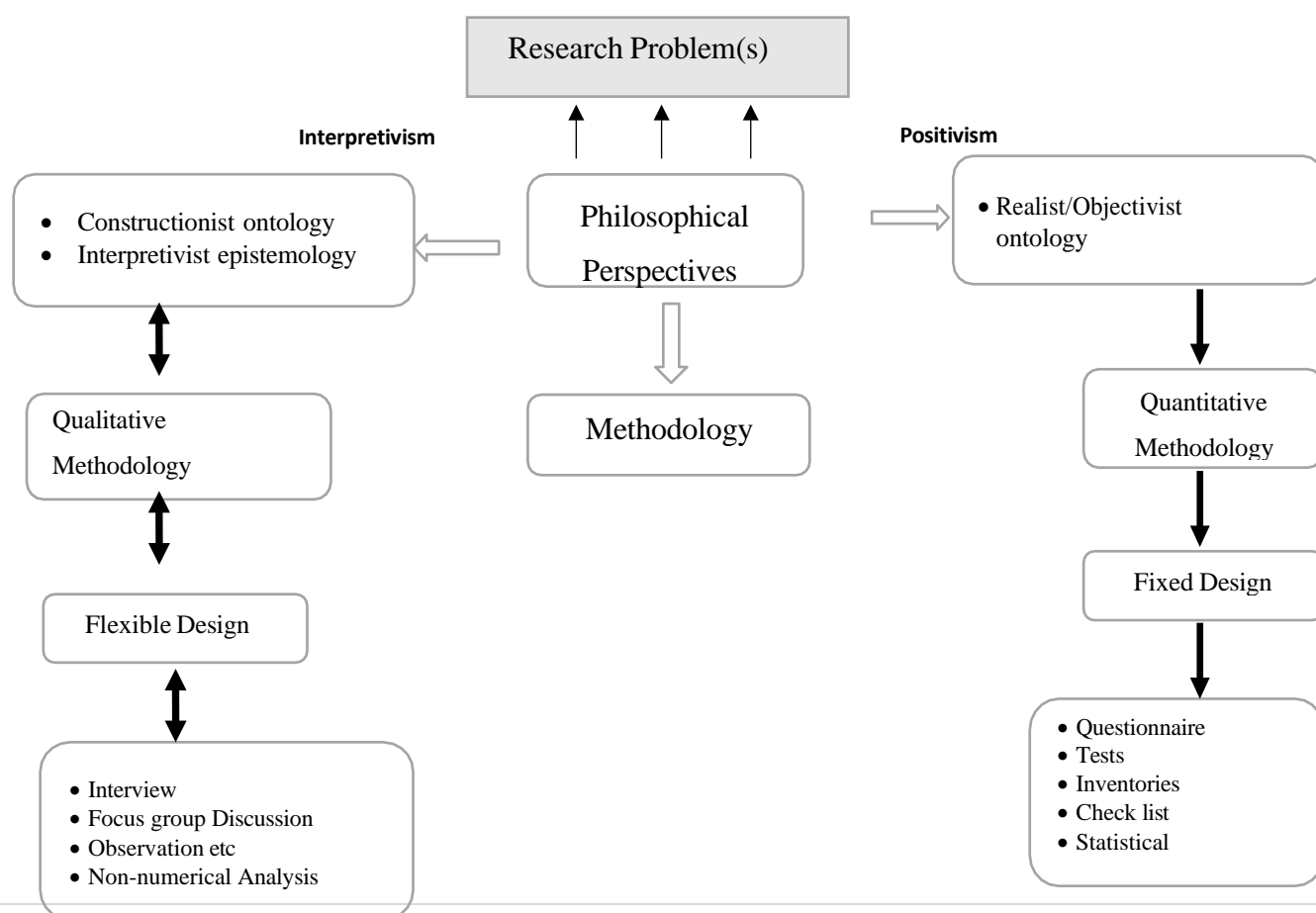


Figure 6: Foundation of research

Source: Tuli, (2010)

Ontological assumptions pertain to the nature of knowledge and the means through which individuals acquire and demonstrate it, as well as the criteria for determining the adequacy and authenticity of an experience (Blakie, 2009). In the context of this study, a constructivist approach has been adopted. According to constructionism, there is no absolute truth waiting to be discovered. Thus, in order to comprehend and make sense of the data, such an approach is deemed appropriate. However, the notion of “truth” in this context emerges from the researcher’s active engagement with the real world (Crotty, 2015).

Furthermore, constructionism posits that social interactions are not the sole source of social phenomena. Nonetheless, this perspective recognises that reality is subject to continual reevaluation and revision (Bryman, 2016). It is crucial for the researcher to acknowledge this when examining the operations within organisations. Constructionism aligns exceptionally well with the current study, given its utilisation of open-ended questions. The objective of this research is to comprehend how clothing industries in the UK implement CSR, as well as the benefits and challenges they encounter in doing so. The researcher’s personal, academic, and professional experiences have guided this research, and contemplating this epistemological standpoint has played a pivotal role in constructing the research framework.

4.3 Research Philosophy

4.3.1 Understanding Research Philosophy

Taherdoost (2016) posits that research philosophy refers to the fundamental assumptions underlying the researcher’s perception of objective reality. Research philosophy encompasses the nature, origin, and development of knowledge. In essence, it embodies the researcher’s beliefs regarding the appropriate

methods for collecting, analysing, and applying information related to a phenomenon. These assumptions form the foundation for research methods and strategies employed in a study, while also influencing the researcher's investigation and comprehension of the subject matter. Thus, Wilson (2015) advises researchers to be cognisant of their philosophical commitments when developing research tactics. Research philosophy provides the essential assumptions through which the researcher perceives and interprets their environment. These principles serve to guide both research policies and the methodological approaches adopted (Wilson, 2015). **Classification of Research Philosophy**

Taherdoost (2016) posited that research philosophy encompasses several categorisations, namely positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, and realism. These classifications constitute the theoretical underpinnings that guide researchers in their quest for knowledge and understanding. By delineating these philosophical perspectives, researchers can adopt a systematic approach to their inquiries, ensuring rigour and coherence throughout their academic endeavours. The following sections provide an overview of each philosophical stance within the context of research methodology, elucidating their unique characteristics and contributions to the field.

Interpretivism Philosophy

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2017), the interpretive philosophy significantly bolsters the research process by facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the constituent elements of the study. They propose that interpretivism serves as a transformative conduit that seamlessly integrates human interest into empirical research. This is further underscored by Wilson (2015), who highlights the predilection of interpretive studies towards employing naturalistic methods for data collection, such as interviews and observations. In addition to primary data, interpretive studies also substantially draw upon secondary data sources. A distinctive characteristic of these studies is their emphasis on inductive research methods, typically employed within the context of a qualitative research approach. While these studies may focus on relatively smaller samples, they compensate by conducting a thorough, in-depth analysis of data over an extended period of time.

As Pelham and Blanton (2016) aptly observe, one of the major strengths of the interpretive philosophy lies in its ability to imbue qualitative research with a high degree of intellectual rigour. This, in turn, enhances the authenticity and credibility of the data, ensuring that it is a reliable representation of the phenomena under study. However, interpretivism is not without its limitations. One notable concern pertains to the demonstrability and reliability of data in the research, which may be compromised to a

certain extent. Another potential drawback is the limited generalisability of the research findings, as they may not be universally applicable. This is primarily due to the influence of the researcher's perspective and values, which, as Morgan (2017) points out, can significantly impact the data, potentially limiting the comprehensive nature of the research findings.

Positivism Philosophy

The positivist philosophy places emphasis on the acquisition of “factual” knowledge through systematic observation and data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2014). Positivist philosophers adopt an objective approach to interpret and gather data with an emphasis on observable and quantifiable results. In other words, researchers in this paradigm rely on statistical analysis and measurable observations (Taherdoost, 2016). According to Taherdoost (2016), positivist studies are grounded in experiential evidence and aim to predict and explain phenomena. These studies draw on existing literature and theories to formulate and test hypotheses. As noted by Pelham and Blanton (2016), positivist studies typically involve larger sample sizes and random participant selection. However, there are certain limitations associated with the positivist philosophy. Positivist philosophers rely on a narrow source of knowledge and often neglect concepts such as time, space, and origins, which cannot be directly experienced. Furthermore, although positivist studies build upon existing literature and theories, they may lack comprehensive debates or thorough examination of alternative perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2014).

Realism Philosophy

Realism philosophy is founded upon the concept of an independent reality that exists beyond human cognition. According to Taherdoost (2016), realism philosophy asserts that it unifies the entities perceived or acknowledged as reality or nature, which are accessible to anyone who contemplates or observes them. This philosophical framework centres around the promotion of a scientific approach to expanding knowledge. It can be further categorised into two groups: critical realism and direct realism. Direct realism places emphasis on the role of individual human intelligence in perceiving reality (Orban, 2018). On the other hand, critical realism highlights the limitations of human perception in accurately representing the material world. It acknowledges that sensations and images of the actual world can be deceptive and fail to capture the essence of the physical realm. In essence, critical realists advocate multi-level studies, while direct realists perceive the world as being inherently static (Wilson, 2015).

Pragmatism Philosophy

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2017), the philosophy of pragmatism emphasises diverse approaches to comprehending research tasks and the world. The research question assumes significant importance within this context. Within the context of pragmatism, scholars can adopt both positivist and interpretive positions. Pragmatic philosophers have the flexibility to employ multiple research approaches and strategies. Pragmatism acknowledges the utilisation of inductive and deductive methods, as well as quantitative and qualitative approaches. By identifying appropriate methods and strategies, the pragmatic researcher seeks to resolve research challenges. This implies that the researcher has the freedom to select superior techniques, procedures, and approaches. In certain studies, the simultaneous employment of quantitative and qualitative methods becomes crucial. In such cases, the philosophical vision of pragmatism is particularly fitting (Orban, 2018). Suitability of Interpretivism Philosophy in this Study

The interpretivist philosophy emerges as the most appropriate paradigm for this study, as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the subject matter through the lens of individual perspectives (Orban, 2018). Rooted in the understanding that reality is socially constructed, this philosophical framework embraces qualitative research methods, such as participant observation and interviewing, which rely on establishing subjective relationships between the subjects and the researcher. To address the research question and overcome existing challenges, this study aims to collect qualitative data through interviews and analyse various secondary sources. Consequently, the researcher adopts a qualitative research approach employing an inductive research method, using a limited sample size, to achieve the research objectives (Morgan, 2017).

In order to evaluate the research findings within a qualitative research context, a semi-structured interview format is employed. According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2017), the interpretivist philosophy represents a fundamental approach in business research, wherein qualitative methods allow for the prediction of research outcomes. Employing interpretivism in this study has proven highly advantageous, enabling the researcher to acquire comprehensive knowledge of the research subject and gather abundant information (Wilson, 2015). By employing qualitative data, which is inherently subjective in nature, the study aligns itself with the interpretivist philosophy, facilitating the exploration of diverse thoughts and relevant concepts in the realm of business research and aiding in the achievement of the study's ultimate objectives. The interpretivist philosophy acknowledges that individuals possess their own unique interpretations of reality, thereby contributing to the classification

of individual realities and the productive interpretation of the research objectives and topics. Hence, the decision to adopt the interpretivist philosophy in this research is deemed both prudent and effective in accomplishing the study's aims in a thorough and proficient manner (Denzin and Lincoln, 2014).

4.4 Research Approach

4.4.1 Classification of Research Approach

Research approaches encompass the range of methodologies employed in the pursuit of scholarly research. This discussion delves into the three principal categories of research approaches, namely inductive, deductive, and abductive that are indicated below.

Inductive Approach

The inductive approach, also referred to as a bottom-up approach (Black, 2009), is characterised by its progression from specific observations to broader generalisations. Researchers employing this approach commence their investigation with meticulous observations and measurements, identifying patterns and regularities, and formulating tentative hypotheses. Subsequently, these researchers develop overarching conclusions or theories. The inductive method is notably empirical and open-ended, particularly during the initial stages of inquiry. It entails the construction of novel models based on evolving data and employs research questions to mitigate potential bias. By examining past research phenomena from various perspectives, the inductive approach endeavours to unearth new phenomena (Wilson, 2015). This approach finds particular relevance in qualitative research, and is particularly suited to situations where researchers possess limited knowledge of the subject matter and research topics, as well as when there is a dearth of secondary data sources and existing literature (Denzin and Lincoln, 2014).

Deductive Approach

According to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2017), the deductive approach is regarded as a top-down method. This approach operates from the general to the specific, whereby the researcher initiates the investigation with specific observations and measurements, identifies patterns and regularities, and formulates tentative hypotheses. These hypotheses are subsequently tested and confirmed through the

systematic collection of additional observable data. The deductive approach is characterised by its focus on the verification and testing of research hypotheses. This methodology is particularly well-suited for various types of research inquiries. It is most applicable when researchers possess a preliminary understanding of the subject matter and research topics, and when abundant secondary data sources and literature are available (Ramanathan, 2013).

Abductive Approach

The abductive approach is employed to address the limitations of deductive and inductive approaches. A notable drawback of the deductive approach is its failure to elucidate the process of selecting theories to be tested through the formulation of hypotheses (Creswell and Clark, 2018). Conversely, the inherent limitation of the inductive approach lies in its inability to generate theories based solely on empirical data. In contrast, the abductive approach allows researchers to commence their investigation by identifying dilemmas or perplexing phenomena, and subsequently proposing plausible explanations. This approach proves particularly valuable when existing theories fail to account for observed phenomena and when unexpected puzzles emerge. In such cases, researchers select the most viable explanation from a range of alternatives. To explicate these perplexing facts and puzzles identified at the initial stages of the research process, researchers may employ both quantitative and cognitive reasoning. The abductive approach finds particular utility in scientific research endeavours (Denscombe, 2010).

Suitability of the Inductive Approach in this Study

This study employs an inductive approach, which necessitates the use of qualitative data to address the research question and achieve the research objectives (Denscombe, 2010). By adopting an inductive approach, the study allows research findings to emerge from prevalent, recurring, or noteworthy themes inherent in the collected data, without the constraints imposed by predetermined procedures (Ramanathan, 2013). Consequently, the researcher employs an inductive methodology to generate new theories based on the qualitative data obtained through interviews. Employing this inductive strategy enables the researcher to diligently observe the qualitative data, identify commonalities, patterns, and trends, and formulate tentative assumptions. Conversely, given the interpretivism philosophy underlying this study, the inductive approach is deemed appropriate to align with the research objectives and aims (Denscombe, 2010).

Alternative research approaches, such as abduction and deduction, are also relevant to qualitative research. Nevertheless, both deduction and abduction are insufficient to comprehend human behaviours and the actual essence of phenomena (Cadete, 2017). In this particular study, however, an inductive research method was employed to fulfil the principal research objectives. It is evident that a deductive approach can establish the true nature of something, while an abductive approach suggests actions to be taken for future improvements (Black, 2009). Nonetheless, shortcomings exist in both deductive and abductive approaches, which can be mitigated by incorporating an inductive approach (Creswell and Clark, 2018).

4.5 Research Design

The research design is intricately linked to the functional research approaches. Various elements such as the choice between qualitative or quantitative approaches, the selection of telephone conversations or face-to-face interactions, and the utilisation of tailor-completed assessments or collected objects are all integral components of the research design process (Cadete, 2017). The research design consists of two distinct stages. The initial stage focuses on the structure, research logic, and framework, elucidating the nature of the research inquiry (descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory). Furthermore, this stage assists researchers in determining the appropriate approaches, such as experimental design, case study design, cross-sectional design, or longitudinal design (Denscombe, 2010).

The second stage of the research design centres on the study procedures. It encompasses decisions regarding data collection techniques (quantitative, qualitative, or both), types of data (secondary, primary, or a combination thereof), and the sampling strategy to be employed in the study. Ultimately, the initial stage of research design furnishes a comprehensive research arrangement that provides guidance for addressing the research problems and questions. Conversely, the second stage of research design highlights the choices made by researchers to gather the necessary evidence (Creswell and Clark, 2018). Classification of Research Design

Exploratory Design

According to Braun and Clarke's (2016) research, the exploratory design places significant emphasis on early exploration and comprehension of hypothetical and theoretical concepts. This design is

particularly useful when researchers have initial concepts or experimental findings but need to gather additional information and deepen their understanding. By enhancing the foundation of research, this approach serves as a guiding framework for subsequent studies (Black, 2009).

Explanatory Design

According to Dudovskiy (2018), the explanatory design provides conceptual tools for identifying and comprehending the underlying reasons and significance that a researcher seeks to elucidate. This approach is employed when the research has acquired a substantial body of knowledge that enables the prediction of potential outcomes. The explanatory design examines the interrelationships and synergistic dynamics among various elements (Bajpai, 2011).

Descriptive Design

According to Braun and Clarke's (2016) research, this design offers a comprehensive framework for identifying and addressing research variables, while also addressing the questions of how, when, how many, what, and where. This approach facilitates a clear understanding of the essential elements necessary to investigate distinct research problems. As an illustrative example, the descriptive design serves to summarise the structure and scope of a market, including its rates of growth, trends over time, and how specific teams respond in the workplace (Cadete, 2017).

4.5.2 Research Design in this Study

The present study employs an explanatory research design to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction, organisational attractiveness, and CSR in the clothing sector of the United Kingdom. According to Cadete (2017) and Dudovskiy (2018), the explanatory design is well suited to this research as it enables the exploration of various issues related to these variables. The explanatory approach provides insights into the key factors responsible for the development of CSR initiatives that impact customer satisfaction. Additionally, it elucidates the appropriate CSR practices that can enhance competitive advantages, identifies the optimal timing and locations for implementing these CSR activities, and outlines the necessary control mechanisms for managing the stages of CSR implementation.

Moreover, the explanatory design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the UK clothing industry and offers a summary of the current state of customer satisfaction within the country (Cadete, 2017).

This research design is particularly appropriate for investigating the relationship between CSR, customer satisfaction, and organisational attractiveness in the UK. It sheds light on the influence of CSR activities on customer satisfaction by elucidating the reasons why such actions are instrumental in achieving predictable levels of customer satisfaction and enhancing the overall appeal of the clothing sector in the UK. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the clothing sector of the United Kingdom (Dudovskiy, 2018).

4.6 Data Sources

This study utilises two types of data sources: primary and secondary. Primary data sources encompass various methods such as surveys, experimental research, case studies, observations, and interviews. These methods directly gather data and are considered first-hand sources. On the other hand, secondary data sources involve the utilisation of existing data collected by third parties. Secondary data, often referred to as second-hand data, is not directly associated with the researchers. Key secondary data sources in this study include books, journals, websites containing relevant study materials, numerical data, organisational annual reports, and statistical statements. In the present research, the researcher adopts both primary (semi-structured qualitative interviews) and secondary (articles, websites, reports) sources.

4.7 Research Methods

4.7.1 Explanation of Research Methods

Research approaches can be broadly categorised into qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research is considered to be more straightforward and explicit compared to qualitative research. It involves the collection of numerical data, which is then analysed via mathematical and statistical methods. Braun and Clarke (2016) state that the objective of quantitative research is to establish general patterns of occurrence and attitudes across different settings and contexts. It is particularly suitable for testing and either supporting or refuting theories. Observations, surveys, and secondary data are the primary sources of quantitative data. Quantitative data can be collected through experiments, surveys,

and controlled observations. For instance, closed-ended questions in a questionnaire or rating scales can be utilised to generate quantitative data (Dudovskiy, 2018).

However, Modell's (2016) investigation revealed that quantitative studies do not provide participants with the opportunity to explain and interpret their personal views and choices due to the controlled nature of such studies. Researchers often possess limited knowledge and understanding of statistical analysis, which can result in flawed analysis and subsequent interpretation. Additionally, smaller-scale quantitative studies may be less reliable due to the limited amount of data available. In quantitative research, there is also a risk of researchers overlooking important occurrences in favour of theory testing (Bajpai, 2011).

In contrast, qualitative research does not rely on numerical or mathematical data. It is an experiential research approach that employs multiple techniques in a naturalistic manner, aiming for an in-depth understanding of the research subject. The primary goal of qualitative research is to explore the social reality experienced by individuals, groups, and cultures. Therefore, individuals and groups are studied in their natural settings. In essence, this approach involves the analysis of words or language, and it may also incorporate visual elements such as pictures, photographs, and observations. Qualitative research focuses on the exploration of phenomena and is particularly useful in answering "why" and "how" questions. Thus, the qualitative approach is fundamentally empirical (Dudovskiy, 2018).

According to Braun and Clarke's study (2016), qualitative research plays a crucial role in suggesting robust processes, identifying causes and effects, and exploring potential relationships. However, qualitative research has certain limitations. Firstly, if participants do not perceive the value of sharing accurate information, the data they provide may be inaccurate or misleading. In such cases, ensuring the confidentiality of participants' data becomes challenging for the researcher. Moreover, researchers may encounter difficulties in maintaining objectivity in qualitative research due to their involvement in the data collection process. In addition, establishing the reliability and validity of qualitative data, given its subjective nature and diverse sources, presents a significant challenge (Morgan, 2017).

4.7.2 Suitability of the Qualitative Method in this Study

Each study must carefully consider whether to employ a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach. In this particular research, the researcher opted for a qualitative methodology to enhance the comprehensiveness of the research findings and to uncover both theoretical and numerical aspects of the

study (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The qualitative technique serves as a medium for conveying the specific conditions of the research objects, facilitating a deeper understanding of the research topic and data. In the qualitative research process, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to gather qualitative data. Braun and Clarke's (2016) research focused on three prominent UK clothing companies, namely H&M, Primark, and New Look. Interviews were conducted with one manager and ten buyers from each of the three clothing companies. By allowing participants to engage in in-depth discussions, the researcher gained valuable insights into the participants' perspectives on the office environment and amenities within the denim industry in Bangladesh (Bajpai, 2011).

Modell's (2016) investigation demonstrated that the qualitative approach is particularly well-suited to exploring and evaluating complex phenomena. This study aims to validate its findings using qualitative data sources. The researchers collected qualitative data, primarily through interviews, to evaluate the personal experiences of management personnel regarding CSR practices in the UK clothing sector. Furthermore, the researcher utilised qualitative data to explore quantitative results (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The study employed a two-stage approach, with the first stage involving a preliminary quantitative tool used in the literature review, followed by the second stage, which utilised a qualitative instrument. The qualitative stage enhanced and provided further insights into the quantitative outcomes, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the collected data (Carr, 2014).

In summary, qualitative research offers a pragmatic and focused approach to capturing people's perspectives and emotions, thereby providing valuable insights. In this study, qualitative research was employed to examine changing attitudes within a specific group, namely customers of a particular service or product, as well as attitudes within the organisation. Modell's (2016) investigation revealed that the qualitative approach is not constrained by the limitations of quantitative methods. Qualitative data proved beneficial in this study as it enriched the context and elucidated aspects that quantitative statistics alone would not reveal. The use of qualitative research provided flexibility, allowing the researcher to adapt inquiries and elicit responses more effectively. It also allowed the researcher to be more abstract in selecting areas of investigation and determining subsequent steps (Altheide and Johnson, 2014). Moreover, the study employed a targeted qualitative research design, focusing on specific groups and key aspects within the organisation to gather meaningful information. This approach facilitated efficient data collection while minimising costs (Bajpai, 2011).

4.8 Sampling

The selection of a research sample is a critical component of research design, as the overall quality of the research is contingent upon this process. In social scientific research, there are various sampling methods available, necessitating careful identification of potential candidates. Blandford (2013) suggests that meticulous consideration can be ensured by selecting the sample from a pool of “information-rich” research subjects who possess the requisite qualifications to speak about the research topic. In the context of this study focusing on the clothing industries in the UK, it was imperative to enlist vital informants who held decision-making positions within these businesses.

The literature indicates that organisational managers primarily bear the responsibility for decision-making activities. They play a key role in assessing the landscape and scope of new technological or strategic investments. Consequently, recruiting participants from this population would yield richer data and facilitate a robust interpretation of CSR adoption among the UK clothing industries.

Sampling methods can be broadly classified into two categories: probabilistic and non-probabilistic (Creswell, 2013). Probability sampling involves the selection of a sample based purely on chance, employing a random selection process where every individual has an equal likelihood of being chosen. In contrast, non-probability sampling involves the gathering of samples in a manner that does not afford every individual an equal chance of being included, typically based on specific inclusion criteria.

Non-probabilistic sampling can further be categorised into convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling, also referred to as accidental sampling, involves selecting samples based on accessibility. However, this type of sampling is not representative of the target population. Although considered suboptimal, convenience sampling proves useful when the opportunity to study certain cases is exceptionally rare (Blakie, 2009).

In the current study, purposive sampling was deemed most appropriate. This technique is commonly employed in qualitative studies with a small sample size. Purposive sampling entails the deliberate selection of study subjects based on specific objectives. It is particularly effective when the researcher believes that the chosen participants possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to provide relevant information (Patton, 2002). Stake (2000) suggests that in case study designs, purposive sampling allows for the examination of various interests and facilitates the development of an in-depth understanding of

the study area. Considering the study's aim, objectives, and research design, purposive sampling is deemed an ideal choice.

4.8.1 Case Selection Criteria

To ensure the selection of appropriate case studies for this research, the researcher established three mandatory selection criteria. Careful consideration was given to the selection of three companies that were expected to fulfil the following sampling criteria:

Mandatory Selection Criterion 1: Each participating organisation had to operate within the realms of social or environmental spheres, either for profit or with a commitment to advancing social missions.

Mandatory Selection Criterion 2: Each organisation had to demonstrate a proven track record of success and the creation of social value for a minimum period of three years.

Mandatory Selection Criterion 3: Each organisation had to have implemented CSR practices. To evaluate these practices, the researcher consulted secondary sources such as company websites, reports, and articles published in industry magazines.

Determining the ideal sample size for qualitative interviews lacks a standardised definition (Saunders et al., 2016; Baker and Edward, 2012). Nonetheless, the theoretical saturation paradigm proposed by Guest et al. (2006) offers valuable guidance on the number of interviews that need to be conducted. According to Guest et al. (2006), the key to conducting excellent qualitative research lies in achieving data saturation. Theoretical saturation can be reached in as few as five interviews, should recurring themes continue to emerge. With as few as six interviews, it is possible to develop themes and meaningful explanations. Therefore, the potential number of interviews serves as an indicator of data saturation. However, by examining previous studies and existing themes, the primary target for interviews was determined to range between 35 to 40 participants. Ultimately, 22 interviews were conducted, as eight of the targeted participants declined to participate in interviews.

The following table presents a summary of the three companies and participant information from which data were collected:

Enterprise	Industry	Participants code	Position of the Participants	Responsibilities
H&M	Clothing	P1	Manager	Managing team production planning process
		P2	Employer	Selling Representative
Primark	Clothing	P1	Manager	Staffing recruitment and financial process
		P2	Manager	Relationship manager
		P3	Employer	Invoicing
New Look	Clothing	P1	Manager	Managing team production planning process

Table 1: Participant Information

4.9 Data Collection Method

This study utilised a combination of primary and secondary data to establish its research framework. The underlying research paradigm employed was phenomenology, which primarily yields qualitative data as opposed to quantitative data. Quantitative research, as stated by Collis and Hussey (2013), embodies an objective approach and involves the examination of numerical data through statistical analysis. In contrast, qualitative research is inherently more subjective in nature and focuses on constructing conceptual models. In this particular study, these models were generalised to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with the impact of CSR within the clothing industries of the United Kingdom. By adopting a qualitative approach, this research facilitates the comprehensive exploration of ideas pertaining to the subject matter, thereby generating in-depth and nuanced perspectives. This method enables the acquisition of valuable insights into individuals' thought

processes and impressions. Thus, the interviews were employed as the means to allow participants to articulate their genuine thoughts and perspectives by responding to open-ended questions.

Qualitative methods are characterised by their emphasis on individuals' insights and understandings. One notable advantage of qualitative methods in exploratory research is their utilisation of open-ended questions, which provide participants with the freedom to respond in their own unique manner. In contrast, quantitative methods impose predetermined answer options. Open-ended questions facilitate the elicitation of evocative, socially relevant, non-predefined, and descriptive responses.

Another strength of qualitative methods is their flexibility, which allows researchers to delve deeper into participants' original answers by posing follow-up questions of the "why" or "how" nature, for instance. The researcher must attentively listen to participants' statements and strive to comprehend their individual thoughts and values. The objective is to encourage participants to expand upon their responses. Qualitative research encompasses a range of diverse methodological and theoretical approaches, each supported by various data collection techniques. Among the most commonly employed methods in qualitative research are interviews, focus groups, and observations.

Interviews typically involve one-on-one interactions between the interviewer and the participant. This approach is particularly advantageous when investigating sensitive topics, as it creates a safe environment in which interviewees feel comfortable expressing their emotions and beliefs without the presence of others. Focus groups, on the other hand, involve a group of participants who collectively discuss a specific topic or subject under the guidance of a mediator.

According to Nyumba et al. (2018), the optimal number of members in a focus group is typically considered to be between six and eight, with a minimum of three participants deemed acceptable and a maximum of 14. Observations, as a data collection technique, involve researchers observing participants and their interactions in natural settings, such as work environments, clinical settings, and public places. There are two primary types of observations: direct and participant. In direct observation, researchers observe participants without actively participating. In contrast, participant observations involve the researcher both observing and interacting with participants within their natural surroundings. These observations can further be classified as covert or overt. Covert observation occurs when participants are unaware that they are being observed, while overt observation involves participants being informed of the researcher's presence.

Considering the interpretive approach employed in this research, a qualitative data collection method was deemed essential. Thus, the selected methods for data collection included interviews and observations for primary data, supplemented by documentary analysis for secondary data.

4.9.1 Interview

Interviews were employed as a methodological approach in this study to gain insights into the attitudes, opinions, and purchasing behaviours of customers in the clothing industry in the UK, specifically in relation to CSR practices. Additionally, interviews were conducted with managers to examine the impact of CSR and to explore the potential for CSR adoption, as well as the barriers to its implementation. The use of interviews offered the advantage of flexibility, allowing the researcher to modify and adapt questions during the course of the interview. However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations associated with interviews, including the time required to conduct them, the interviewer's skills, and the costs associated with collecting primary data (Saunders et al., 2016).

To effectively manage time, the researcher carefully planned the interviews within a specific timeframe. Furthermore, the researcher possessed prior experience in conducting interviews for academic purposes and had enhanced their interviewing skills through a review of the relevant literature (e.g., Qu and Dumay, 2011; Mohajan, 2018; Frances, Coughlan, and Cronin, 2009) on qualitative interview techniques, in addition to receiving guidance from their supervisor.

Interview methods offer researchers the ability to focus on specific topics within a case study and generate valuable insights in their research area. According to Qu and Dumay (2011), qualitative interviews should adhere to two important principles: maintaining a coherent line of inquiry, and asking questions in an unbiased manner. Judd et al. (1999) suggest that open-ended answers provided during interviews can contribute to the development of new hypotheses, which is particularly beneficial when exploring novel research phenomena.

There are three primary types of interviews. Structured interviews strictly adhere to an interview protocol to guide the researcher, employing a comprehensive set of predetermined questions to investigate specific issues or subjects. The purpose of these questions is to identify specific themes or core issues, limiting the opportunity to gather additional contextual information from participants. Structured interviews are considered a convenient and efficient method for interviewing participants.

On the other hand, unstructured interviews involve fewer, if any, predetermined questions and often resemble natural conversations. Unstructured interviews offer researchers a more flexible approach, enabling them to establish rapport with participants, particularly when discussing sensitive topics. This interview technique allows the researcher to extract the most informative and comprehensive evidence possible. However, due to the absence of a standardised interview procedure, participants may occasionally deviate from the central research theme.

Finally, semi-structured interviews employ an interview protocol to guide the researcher while allowing for a more flexible discussion between participants and researchers. This type of interview maintains a certain level of structure, while also providing the researcher the opportunity to seek additional information without the need for multiple rounds of interviews. The semi-structured interview approach offers considerable flexibility and ensures that the researcher remains focused on their research question.

For the present study, semi-structured interviews were employed as the preferred method of data collection. This approach aligns well with the aim of understanding the development of a specific phenomenon (Robson, 2002). Dudwick et al. (2006), Gopaladas (2016), and Mohajan (2018) advocate the use of semi-structured open-ended interviews in qualitative studies. It is worth noting that a notable limitation of the interview method is the absence of well-structured questions, which may result in poorer recall of information (Yin, 2014). However, the utilisation of open-ended questions can help mitigate the influence of the interviewer and minimise potential biases.

As highlighted by Mohajan (2018) and Qu and Dumay (2011), semi-structured interviews offer a platform for participants to provide detailed descriptions and accounts of their experiences and perceptions of phenomena. By employing a set of open-ended queries, these interviews allow the researcher to gather instinctive and in-depth responses (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The process of using semi-structured interviews as a data collection strategy entails several phases, which are described below. The Development of the Interview Guide

An interview guide is a fundamental tool in qualitative research, consisting of a well-organised list of questions that facilitate a comprehensive discussion on the research subject during the interview (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). The effective structuring of an interview guide is crucial to the gathering data that aligns with the purposes and objectives of the research (Gopaldas, 2016). Notably, the utilisation of an interview guide prevents the researcher from exerting undue influence or bias on the conversation, instead allowing the interviewee to provide a rich narrative based on their lived experiences (Qu and Dumay, 2011).

A semi-structured interview guide typically includes a set of broad, guiding questions that elicit spontaneous, in-depth responses and detailed information (Qu and Dumay, 2011; Mohajan, 2018). However, Corbin and Strauss (2015) emphasise that the researcher can employ probing questions and ask follow-up inquiries to further explore specific issues raised during the interview. Thus, utilising semi-structured interviews offers flexibility and encourages participants to engage in lateral thinking, rather than confining the discussion to a rigid predetermined plan as seen in structured interviews.

The interview process commenced with the researcher posing some general questions about the organisation and its activities. This initial approach aligns with established best practices in the field of interviewing (Myers and Newman, 2007). After covering the general questions, participants were guided through a series of preplanned questions. These interview questions were formulated based on the research objectives and guided by the findings of the literature review.

The planning of the main interview questions and their relationship to the research objectives are shown below:

Questions	Rationale	Satisfies
Q1. What is your position/role in this company?	To differentiate the opinions, needs and expectations between different groups of employees in the clothing companies of UK.	Demographic
Q2. What CSR activities/practices are practised in this company/business?	To understand the CSR practices/activities by UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 1

Q3. What are the ways/strategies of practicing CSR in this company/business?	To understand the CSR practices/activities by UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 1
Q4. Can you identify any relationship between CSR and customer satisfaction in this company? If you can, can you explain please?	To investigate the relationship between CSR and customer relationship in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 1
Q5. Can you identify any relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness in this company? If you can, can you explain please?	To investigate the relationship between CSR and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 1
Q6. Do you think CSR practices in this company affect customer satisfaction? If yes, can you explain, please?	To understand the impact of CSR practices/activities on customer satisfaction in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 2
Q7. Do you think CSR practices in this company affect organisational attractiveness? If yes, can you explain, please?	To understand the impact of CSR practices/activities on organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 2
Q8. What are the shortcomings of CSR practices/activities in this company?	To investigate the shortcoming of CSR practices/activities in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 3
Q9. What challenges are being faced by this company in practicing CSR?	To investigate the challenges of CSR practices/activities in the UK clothing industry including Primark, H&M and New Look.	Objective 3

Q10. What consequences may be faced by the UK clothing industry if they do not implement CSR strategies?	To analyse the impact of absence/lack CSR activities on the customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 3
Q11. What opportunities can this company take to allow for further improvements related to current CSR practices on customer satisfaction in clothing industries in the UK?	To examine and identify the opportunity for further improvements related to current CSR practices on customer satisfaction of clothing industries in the UK.	Objectives 4
Q12. What opportunities can this company take to allow for further improvements related to current CSR practices on attractiveness of clothing industries in UK?	To examine and identify the opportunities for further improvements related to current CSR practices on attractiveness of clothing industries in the UK.	Objective 4
Q13. In your view, what is the importance of stakeholder involvement in implementing CSR strategies in UK clothing industry?	To examine and identify the opportunities for further improvements related to current CSR practices on customer satisfaction and attractiveness of clothing industries in the UK.	Objective 4
Q14. In your view, what initiatives as CSR strategy can this company take to improve customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness?	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5
Q15. In your view, how can this company implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organisational	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5

attractiveness?		
Q16. In your view, how can this company implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness?	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5
Q17. In your view, how can this company implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness?	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5
Q18. In your view, how can this company implement CSR strategy to improve its business codes and compliance?	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5
Q19. If you have any other ideas or suggestions regarding the improvement to CSR practices/strategies in the UK clothing industry to improve customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness, please could you explain?	To find out the ways of improving customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through CSR activities in the UK clothing industry.	Objective 5

Follow-up questions were posed to the participants based on their initial responses. These additional inquiries provided an opportunity for the interviewees to delve further into matters pertaining to the organisations' adoption of CSR, and to explore its consequential impact on brand value and customer satisfaction. The researcher actively encouraged participants to articulate their viewpoints explicitly and engage in a comprehensive discussion regarding their involvement with CSR.

4.9.1.2 Conducting the Interview

Face-to-face interviews were selected as the preferred method for data collection due to their capacity to yield higher quality and more accurate information compared to telephone interviews, which tend to be characterised by formality. The adoption of face-to-face interviews enabled the facilitation of natural conversation and the disclosure of comprehensive narratives. Potential participants were initially contacted via email or telephone, and upon their agreement to participate, appointments were scheduled to conduct the interviews in person. To ensure clarity regarding the research objectives, a participation form was disseminated during the preliminary stages. Additionally, participants were assured that their data would be securely stored on a password-protected laptop.

In order to maintain anonymity, the identities of participants were anonymised by employing virtual names such as P1, P2, rather than revealing their actual names. The researcher explained the study's purpose to the participants during the interviews, and both verbal and written consent were obtained. The duration of each interview ranged from 15 to 20 minutes. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed for further analysis.

4.9.2 Observation

Observation serves as a fundamental method of collecting primary data, allowing researchers to acquire information pertaining to organisational settings, activities, verbal and non-verbal communication, and various physical phenomena. Through this approach, researchers gain real-time insights into interpersonal behaviours (Yin, 2014). Two primary types of observation exist: direct and participant. As Pettigrew (1990) notes, direct observation can prompt researchers to identify inconsistencies between interview statements and genuine thoughts. Nonetheless, Robson (2002) acknowledges that observation also presents certain limitations, such as selective attention on the part of the observer and the influence of interpersonal factors, wherein the observer gravitates toward comfortable situations to avoid discomfort. For the purposes of this study, direct observation was employed. In this method, the observer assumes a non-participant role, endeavouring to minimise any potential bias. This approach not only consumes less time but also enables more focused research.

Direct observation offers a more detached perspective, allowing researchers to gather empirical data. Technological tools can prove advantageous in facilitating direct observation. Video or audio recorders, for instance, assist researchers in observing phenomena. Based on this form of observation, researchers

typically focus on specific sampled circumstances or individuals rather than immersing themselves entirely within the broader context. Notably, the present study identified a key observation pertaining to the physical settings and environments in which clothing industries operate. In this regard, the researcher meticulously examined the central subject matter while maintaining objectivity with regard to the study's objectives. This approach facilitated an understanding of the contextual factors that influence each company's operations and the resources they employ in their strategic endeavours. To document the observed data, field notes were employed. These field notes serve as a valuable tool for maintaining a structured plan of observation readily accessible to the researcher.

4.9.3 Secondary Data

Organisational or archival documents serve as invaluable sources for obtaining information pertaining to the events and activities of an organisation, which may not be accessible through alternative research methods (Patton, 2002). According to Yin (2014), the data found within organisational documents are characterised by stability, accuracy, and a comprehensive coverage of various activities and events. However, researchers must exercise caution when utilising this type of document, as they are susceptible to bias.

Within the context of the present study, a combination of secondary and primary documents was employed. Secondary data encompassed relevant case studies pertaining to the clothing industry, journals discussing CSR activities, and blogs. Primary documents, on the other hand, consisted of financial reports, marketing plans, press releases, and marketing brochures. This comprehensive approach involved scrutinising multiple information sources to collect secondary data, thereby enabling the researcher to engage in data verification through cross-checking. The following table demonstrates a framework for collecting secondary data.

Case Topic	Data sources	Indicators
Nature of the company and their mission	Website of the company, the company's annual report, media report related to the company's activity, interviews	History of the company, industry they operate in business activities, geographical location, stakeholders etc.
Type of business model adopted	Website of the company,	Business structure,

	company's annual report, publicly available report, interview.	ownership, the composition of employees and volunteer.
The marketing practice of the company	Website of the company, inventory records, audited financial statements, annual reports, industry report, interviews	Types of marketing activities, types of promotion, communication, types of channels used for marketing activity, profit–loss account, asset and liabilities.
CSR activity of the company	Companies' social media platform, blogs related to the company marketing activity, media report. Annual report	
Barriers and challenges	Government policy report, media report, blogs, etc. Interviews.	Challenges faced while operating in a business environment

Table 2: Framework for collecting secondary data

4.10 Pilot Test

4.10.1 Concept of the Pilot Test

Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) propose that pilot testing is a crucial procedure for assessing the questionnaire strategy prior to conducting the actual research trial. This practice enhances the researcher's ability to obtain more reliable outcomes and affords them the opportunity to ascertain the time required for the research. Additionally, pilot testing allows for the validation of the language used in the study's tasks. According to Mads (2013), pilot testing facilitates the researcher's ability to conduct tests in unfamiliar subject areas, engage in unmoderated and remote learning, evaluate projects with high visibility, perform usability tests, and implement a research scheme.

4.10.2 Pilot Test Used in this Study

In this study, the researchers utilised online methodologies to conduct a pilot test. The data was collected from prominent retail establishments, namely Topshop, Primark, and Marks and Spencer, located in London. In line with the research of Whitehead and Lopez (2013), the researchers engaged in consultations with a single management staff member and three buyers from each of the aforementioned

companies. To gather comprehensive data, a questionnaire was administered to the participants, supplemented by follow-up communication conducted via email (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

4.10.3 Result of the Pilot Study

When it comes to collecting primary data, interviews and surveys are commonly employed. Conducting a pilot study is considered a crucial step in assessing the feasibility of the primary data collection methods. In support of this notion, In (2017) conducted an investigation which determined whether a pilot study can effectively determine the suitability of utilising interviews and surveys. Furthermore, the pilot study serves the purpose of identifying challenging questions and other issues encountered by the participants. It enables researchers to obtain more reliable outcomes and offers insights into the time required for the research, as well as ensuring the appropriateness of the language used in the instruments (Carr, 2014). Subsequently, the researcher eliminates insignificant elements and resolves ambiguities in the survey, thereby enhancing the quality of the questions in both reviews and interview questionnaires. Consequently, the outcomes of the pilot study contribute significantly to the overall improvement of the research process, ultimately leading the researcher to achieve the desired final outputs (Thorpe and Jackson, 2014).

4.11 Data Analysis

Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000, p.116) assert that the analysis of qualitative research data is a complex and time-consuming task. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research typically involves the collection of extensive raw data, making the analysis process intricate, time-consuming, and labour intensive (Corbin and Strauss, 2015; Mohajan, 2018; Cresswell, 2013). It is recommended that this systematic and repetitive process begins early in the data collection phase (Qu and Dumay, 2011). The analysis of qualitative data entails the interpretation of individual accounts within the larger dataset, requiring a structured and focused approach. When analysing cases, one frequently employed method involves comparing patterns that align with existing theories, previous scholarly articles, and the researcher's own experiences. This approach entails identifying explanations within cases that are relevant to the issue under investigation (Yin, 2014), allowing for generalisation and supporting the author's theoretical propositions.

Qualitative researchers have access to various data analytical methods, including narrative analysis, discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, content analysis, and thematic analysis. These methods can be

utilised to conduct qualitative data analysis (Bennett, Barrett, and Helmich, 2018; Braun, Clarke, and Terry, 2014). Content analysis (CA) and thematic analysis (TA) are the two most widely used methods in qualitative research inquiry.

CA and TA differ in their outcomes, as CA tends to produce quantitative results, while TA aims to identify and explain both explicit and implicit ideas (Vaismoradi et al., 2016; Bennett et al., 2018; Braun et al., Terry, 2014). In this research, TA was selected as the method for analysing the qualitative data collected from semi-structured interviews.

Multiple case study analysis typically involves two phases. In the first phase, the researcher collects information from multiple cases to generate codes or keywords that are common across one or more cases. In the second phase, these keywords are merged to generate subthemes that provide deeper meaning to the concepts. The identified subthemes are then grouped into main themes.

For this study, codes were generated by identifying repetitive statements in the data, as well as similarities within the interview content. Additionally, relevant notes and documents related to the subject matter were considered. The codes were then grouped to generate subthemes that added a higher level of thematic context and theoretical propositions. These subthemes were further organised under main thematic headings. Four main themes (three derived from the TBL framework and one additional theme from the data analysis) were identified. The process of analysis and findings generation continued until the researcher reached a theoretical saturation point where no new information emerged to shed light on the phenomenon. The researcher utilised recorded interviews and secondary data, which were classified into initial keywords and subthemes to explore the overall meaning (Creswell, 2013). A detailed discussion of the data analysis conducted is provided in the discussion chapter.

4.11.1 Theme Development through the Thematic Approach

The analysis process employed in this study employed the thematic analytical framework as an explicit method. This approach involved the systematic examination of data to identify, explain, document, and report any clusters of data that exhibited a discernible pattern (Creswell, 2013). For the analysis of qualitative interview data, Miles and Huberman (1994) proposed a three-step process. These steps encompass data reduction, data display, and conclusion-drawing and verification. These steps emphasise a continual, iterative, and concurrent procedure for data analysis. In contrast, Braun and Clarke (2006) presented a comprehensive and widely-used guide consisting of six steps for conducting thematic

qualitative analysis. These steps include familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and writing up the analysis. However, this study adopted a hybrid model by integrating the processes outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2006). This hybrid model encompasses four steps for the analysis of qualitative data, which serve as a driving force in the analytical process.

The following figure shows the thematic analysis process adopted in this study.

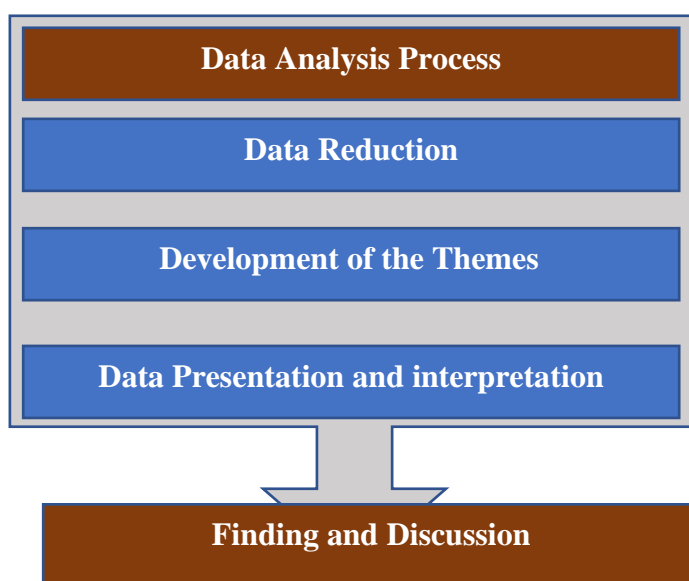


Figure 7: The data analysis process of TA (Islam, 2020)

The actions conducted at each stage are described in more detail in the following sections.

Data reduction

The initial phase of the qualitative data analysis procedure encompassed data reduction, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). Within the scope of this study, data reduction was effectively achieved through the implementation of three distinct actions: repetitive listening to the recorded interview data, attaining familiarity with the data, and transcription of pertinent information. These procedures have been visually represented in the following diagram (see Figure 8).

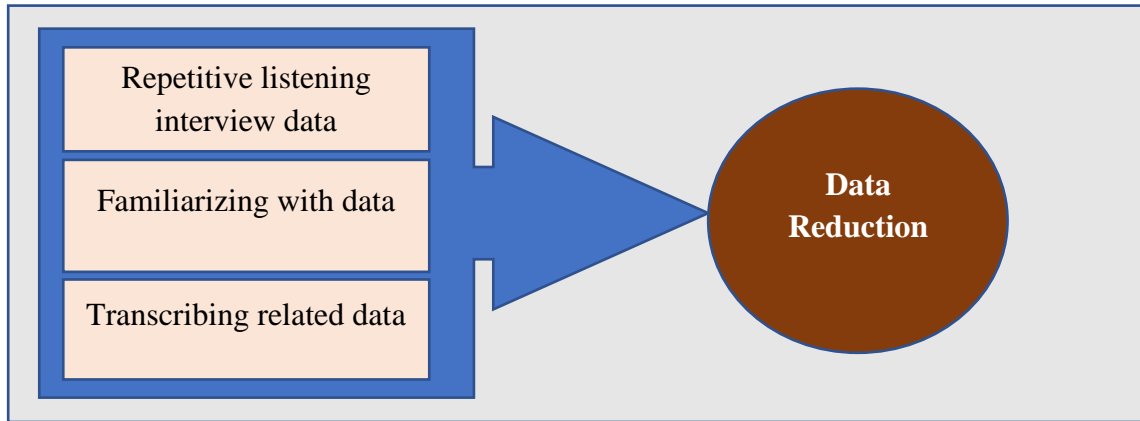


Figure 8: The data reduction process (Islam, 2020)

In the initial stage, an exhaustive analysis of the recorded interviews was conducted. Simultaneously, the researcher meticulously examined the field notes multiple times. By engaging in the dual process of listening to the interviews and perusing the field notes, an acquaintance with the data was established, thereby facilitating the attainment of a comprehensive understanding. Consequently, the data could be categorised and transcribed in accordance with the relevant concepts, while extraneous information was disregarded in the pursuit of potential patterns and structures (Burnard et al., 2008; Creswell, 2013). The transcription of the recorded data proved instrumental in the identification of key themes.

Development of the Themes

The subsequent phase of the analytical process entailed the identification of key themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) posit that definitive guidelines for determining what constitutes a theme are absent. Rather, a theme embodies a pattern that signifies something significant or captivating about the data. In this particular investigation, the researcher discerned three primary themes aligned with the research objectives. These themes encompassed barriers, customer satisfaction, and company attractiveness.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 804) expound that a code entails the act of “tagging chunks of texts with labels.” It is described as a technique for categorising data in order to comprehend the connections and patterns within the data and to link it to the overarching themes (Burnard et al., 2008; Braun, Clarke, and Terry, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Employing this approach, the researcher successfully segmented the extensive transcripts of data into more manageable portions by assigning labels and categorising them

into codes. Consequently, this enabled the efficient handling of the substantial volume of interview content.

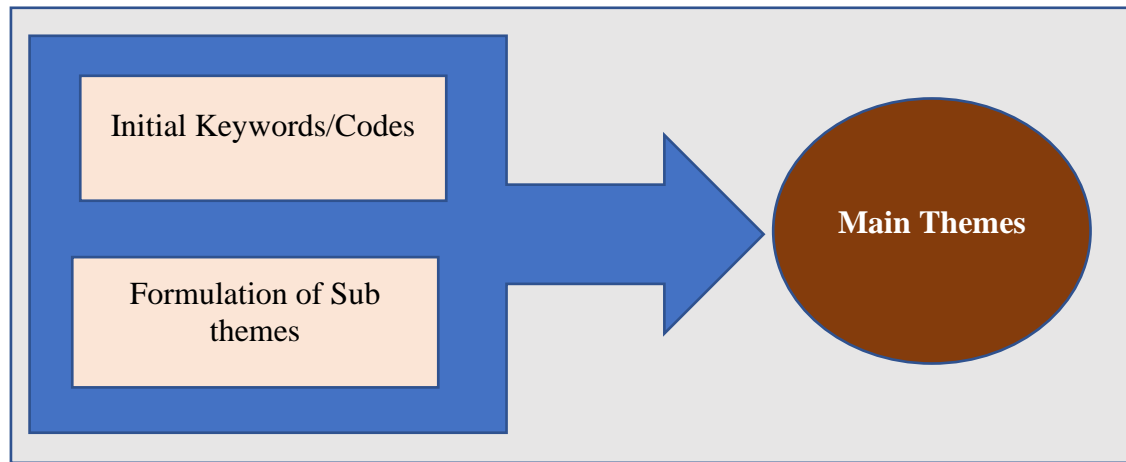


Figure 9: Development of the Main Themes (Islam, 2020)

During this stage, the researcher engaged in the process of data organisation to establish a more coherent structure. The technique employed for coding involved condensing the data into smaller, yet meaningful, units. The selection of a coding approach depended on the researcher's viewpoint and the specific research questions under consideration (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Each relevant data segment, which captured pertinent aspects related to the research questions, was meticulously coded. It is worth noting that not all text was subject to coding, and the codes themselves were not predetermined. Instead, the researcher developed and adjusted the codes by thoroughly reviewing the interpreted data and actively engaging in the coding process. This coding methodology is commonly referred to as “open coding” (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017, p. 3355).

In this study, the researcher examined the coded data segments and observed a clear association among them, leading to the formation of distinct groups. By organising the codes into clusters, the researcher derived sub-themes. In order to achieve to create the themes, data categorisation plays a crucial role in organising and analysing large volumes of qualitative data. NVivo 12 is a powerful computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that offers a range of features to facilitate the categorisation process, and the researcher used this program for data categorisation. Thus, upon completion of this process, the

sub-themes were further classified into three overarching categories: Barriers, Customer Satisfaction, and Company Attractiveness.

According to Braun, Clarke, and Terry (2014), coding is an iterative process, necessitating continuous review and refinement of themes and sub-themes. After organising the keywords and sub-themes into potential headline themes, these themes underwent reevaluation to verify the presence of a coherent pattern. In certain instances, specific quotes were assigned multiple codes, as they exhibited congruity with more than one sub-theme. Consequently, it was critical to establish the associations between these quotes and the corresponding sub-themes. The following table provides an overview of the themes, sub-themes, and codes that emerged from the data, accompanied by their respective descriptions.

Theme Development

Theme extracted from managers' and employees' contributions

Main Themes	Sub Themes/Codes	Key words
The types of CSR activities	Philanthropic-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • culture and art activities • charitable activities • supports private and public educational institutions
	Ethical-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operates in a manner • prevents unethical behaviours • enhance quality of life • make efforts to be good citizenship
	Legal-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • government • law • federal, state, and local regulations
	Economic-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximising earnings • competitive position
	Environmental-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recycling pollutants and wastes • invests in energy conservation • eco-friendly products

Challenges/barriers for Organisations	Managerial-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of • commitment • understanding • strategic Planning • Complexity to implement
	Organisational New Look Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Finance
	Laws and Regulations New Look Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Regulatory framework
	Risk Management-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Process • Loss
	Supply Chain-Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suppliers • Materials • Inputs • Manufacturing • Development • Sourcing
Providing Organisational attractiveness	Adopting Positive Consumer Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand • Consumers • Products • Quality
	Considering External Environment of Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Market • World • Responsibility • System

Theme extracted from customers' contributions

Main Themes	Sub Themes/Codes	Key words
Ensuring Customer satisfaction	Institutional/Stakeholders Pressure Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Government • Employees • Shareholders • Suppliers

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financiers • Communities • Trade Associations
	Responsibility Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic • Ethical • Legal • Environmental Contribution • Consumer Protection
	Community Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools • Parks • Charities • Habits • Health Care

4.12 Ethical Consideration

According to Fischer (2016), ethical considerations necessitate careful consideration by the researcher. In this study, ethical guidelines were followed based on established ethical codes of conduct. Initially, the researcher obtained the participants' informed consent through open agreement from the defendants and other experts affiliated with the relevant organisation. Additionally, the researcher obtained an endorsement letter from the university, ensuring the protection of information pertaining to the accused and their organisations.

This application was submitted to the PG Research Committee of the University of the Wales Trinity Saint David. The researcher accessed relevant data with permission from the involved parties, thus addressing ethical challenges to maintain validity, legality, and ethical integrity (Miller, 2016).

The information acquired throughout interviews and observations were used to comprehend and evaluate the situation, experiences, attitudes and opinions of managers and customers of the three companies.

In the realm of research ethics, it is imperative to safeguard the well-being of research participants (Orban, 2018). Researchers must inform participants about the procedures, objectives, and potential risks associated with the study. Participants must provide their consent to participate in the research.

Participation information and consent forms were provided (see Appendix 1 and 2) and they were asked to sign these prior to the interview. Interview participation was entirely voluntary, and the participants were at liberty to withdraw at any time without reason or consequences.

Researchers are obligated to uphold moral values, ensuring that participants are not exposed to any conditions that could harm them as a result of their involvement in the study. Such harm may manifest psychologically, physically, or both. Maintaining participant confidentiality is of paramount concern in research. Two core ethical principles, namely reliability and discretion, are employed to protect participant confidentiality. Researchers must ensure participants' privacy by ensuring that their identifying information remains undisclosed to anyone except those directly involved in the research. Furthermore, researchers must keep participants anonymous throughout the study, including from the researchers themselves. While preserving confidentiality can be challenging, it is a robust guarantee of confidentiality in research.

In this study, participant information remained confidential. To maintain anonymity, the names of participants have not been given. Rather, each participant has been coded with a pseudonym such as: P1, P2, P3, P4.

Importantly, this is crucial in situations where participants may need to disclose sensitive information, such as prior traumatic experiences (Black, 2009).

Researchers must also address ethical dilemmas concerning individuals' rights to access services. Researchers should outline all relevant research conducted, consider participants' potential rights, and uphold necessary ethical standards and principles. Governments often establish Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) comprising individuals who review research proposals and thoroughly deliberate the ethical implications and necessary measures to ensure participant confidentiality, rights, and safety (Orban, 2018). Furthermore, IRBs provide valuable support in protecting both researchers and organisations against potential legal ramifications resulting from negligence in addressing ethical concerns related to research participants. IRBs establish protocols to protect participants' confidentiality and access to their private and personal information. In this study, the researcher will ensure participant confidentiality by carefully determining the timing, context, and extent of self-disclosure (behaviourally, intellectually, and physically) with others (Orban, 2018).

According to Prins (2018), it is a common practice among researchers to anonymise participants' identities in order to safeguard their characteristics. In the context of this study, the individuals involved are not ordinary individuals, and therefore there is no risk of compromising their reputation or encountering scarcity as a result of data disclosure. As noted by Garson (2016), most research participants are individuals who are not easily identifiable by the general public. Hence, there is no concern that their inclusion in the study would cause embarrassment or harm rather than benefit. Nevertheless, accurately assessing the actual consequences of data disclosure remains challenging. However, the researcher in this study would prioritise privacy concerns by concealing the identities of participants to ensure they could not be identified. Ethical research practices, as well as recommendations from the literature, suggest that if there is any potential for data misrepresentation, researchers should refrain from altering participants' characteristics to suit their needs (Shuttleworth, 2017).

Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018) argued that evaluating the impact of changes in participant characteristics on research outcomes is often difficult. In many instances, information related to the individuals involved and their affiliations must be appropriately safeguarded. The researcher has obtained relevant data with the permission of the parties involved. This research entails additional ethical challenges in maintaining validity, legality, and confidentiality. It is imperative to protect the rights of research participants in the context of graft research. Moreover, researchers are obligated to inform participants about the procedures, objectives, and potential risks associated with the study (Shuttleworth, 2017).

The second issue concerns the inadvertent disclosure of participant information by researchers, which is a common occurrence in research due to the necessity of assistance or "turning a blind eye" to certain omissions. This reality of research is often overlooked in methodological discussions but is of great concern to researchers, particularly those dealing with sensitive matters and requiring counselling support. However, "turning a blind eye" is a challenging endeavour (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2017). This can be addressed by clearly outlining research guidelines within specific research protocols. In this study, ensuring complete privacy is not entirely feasible since the purpose of collecting information from participants is to generate new knowledge, advance theoretical understanding, and disseminate findings. The primary reasons for sharing information in the study are to foster critical thinking among researchers, disseminate research results, and guide future investigations (Thorpe and Jackson, 2014).

The third issue pertains to the intentional violation of privacy for the purpose of ensuring the security of participants, which consequently gives rise to concerns among researchers. Garson (2016) has addressed this subject in previous research and policy works. In such cases, researchers obtain the informed consent of participants when there is a possibility of risk or harm. However, it should be noted that there is no illicit activity involved. Whitehead and Lopez (2013) assert that researchers must also consider the potential exploitation of vulnerable individuals and instances of child abuse, while also accounting for the course of action to be taken if participants decline to disclose certain information. It is crucial for researchers to assess the potential impact of such disclosures on participants and how they may respond over an extended period of time. There are no specific instances of deliberate breaches of confidentiality in relation to participants' welfare. Consequently, researchers have a clear understanding of the legal obligations regarding disclosure, encompassing both the risks of harm to participants and any unlawful activities. Furthermore, the research does not involve the participation of vulnerable individuals or children, thus eliminating the possibility of exploiting such individuals (Novikov and Novikov, 2013).

Finally, the utilisation of emerging and innovative technologies, such as visual and online approaches, in 21st-century social research has raised concerns regarding privacy. This is due to individuals' apprehension regarding the application of these technologies in safeguarding their data confidentiality and privacy (Smith, 2017). However, in the present study, there are no significant concerns regarding the confidentiality of participants' information and the use of technologies as the researchers will engage with participants in face-to-face interactions and collect information through physical means. As noted by Garson (2016), the researchers will employ a laptop and various applications to manipulate, store, and maintain the collected data, which may raise privacy-related inquiries from participants. Therefore, the researcher will handle such tools discreetly and aim to foster participant trust (Smith, 2017).

4.13 Validity

As stated by Garson (2016), the concept of reliability in research pertains to the ability of research findings to be replicated. A study is considered reliable if it produces consistent results when replicated. When a group of individuals observe the same behaviours or events and all arrive at the same outcomes, the information is deemed trustworthy. On the other hand, validity in research refers to the accuracy and integrity of the research. In essence, validity is the extent to which the data collected reflects the true phenomenon being studied. If the research findings are truthful and accurate, they are considered valid.

Three key aspects of validity are construct validity, internal validity, and external validity (Thorpe and Jackson, 2014).

Middleton (2019) argues that internal validity is crucial in research as it establishes a causal relationship between two variables. If an external factor beyond the control of the researcher influences the research outcomes, it can compromise the internal validity of the study. Construct validity involves the process of linking specific measurements or indicators to broader theoretical concepts or constructs. When the operationalisation of the independent variable in a research study is achieved accurately, the study can be considered valid. External validity refers to the generalisability of research findings to a broader population. It is practically impossible for researchers to include the entire target population in their study (Orban, 2018).

A study conducted by Modell (2016) revealed that researchers often select a sample from a larger population to form research conclusions. In such cases, the external validity of the research is considered valid if the research findings accurately generalise to the larger population. This indicates that the smaller sample group should be representative of the larger target population to ensure the external validity of the research (Novikov and Novikov, 2013).

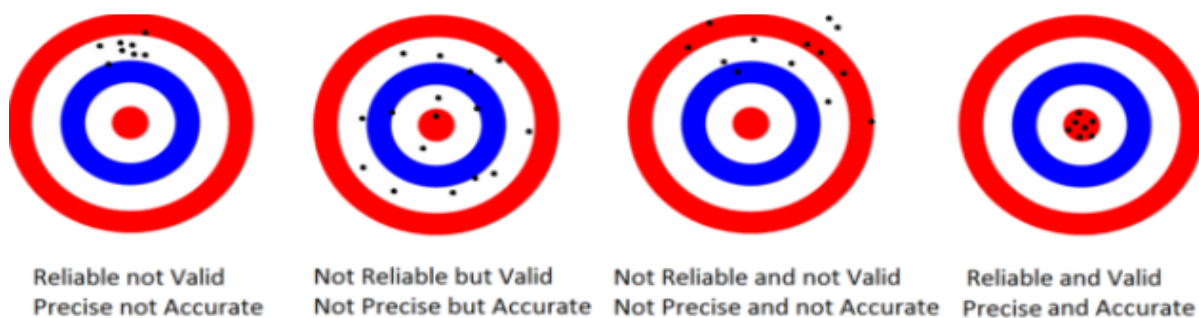


Figure 10: Research Reliability as well as Validity.

Source: Teddlie and Tashakkori (2017)

The diagram presented above illustrates four potential scenarios. In the initial phase, the researcher successfully achieved the objective in a consistent manner (Thorpe and Jackson, 2014). However, the core objective was subsequently lost. In the first scenario, the researcher systematically and consistently controlled the incorrect value for each participant. Consequently, this approach was reliable but not

effective. According to Whitehead and Lopez (2013), in the second scenario, the researchers collected information that was not reliable, although it could be accurate but lacked precision and correctness. The third scenario indicates that the data was neither trustworthy, accurate, nor precise. The final scenario represents researchers obtaining valid, reliable, accurate, and precise data (Gabriel, 2013). Reliability in research is demonstrated when the study is repeated, and this produces consistent results. When multiple observers witness the same behaviours or events and all arrive at the same outcomes, the information is deemed trustworthy. Conversely, in research, validity refers to the credibility and integrity of the study. In essence, validity represents the authenticity of the data. If the research findings are authentic, they are considered valid (Smith, 2017).

Conversely, conducting an excessively large trial is not recommended due to the difficulties it presents for researchers and the wastage of time, money, and resources. A smaller sample size can yield precise results (Creswell and Clark, 2018). In this study, the researcher will focus on two samples, each consisting of thirty-three participants, for conducting interviews. These sample sizes are considered appropriate for obtaining precise results representative of the target population. Consequently, the information gathered through the interviews and surveys will be deemed valid (Punch, 2014).

According to Whitehead and Lopez (2013), bias, which represents systematic errors, can affect the validity of research. Biases in research can stem from the researcher's perspectives or preferences, the methodology used to collect variables, and the selection of research topics. Biases can also arise from inherent flaws when researchers have a strong preconception or selectively analyse data. Furthermore, biases in research are generally categorised as measurement biases, intervention biases, and selection biases. While it is challenging to eliminate biases in research, they can be significantly reduced by considering factors that may influence the outcomes during the research project and analysis phases (Punch, 2014). In this study, the researcher has selected a topic that focuses on expected results. The researcher will conduct interviews with two samples, each comprising thirty-three participants. These sample sizes are appropriate for obtaining precise results that are representative of the target population. Thus, the information obtained through the interviews and surveys will be considered valid. To mitigate intervention bias, the researcher ensured that the topics were approached in the same manner across different groups of participants (Smith, 2017).

4.14 Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive account of the research methods employed to address the research questions in a rigorous manner. Initially, a thorough exploration of various paradigmatic perspectives was undertaken, followed by a justification for adopting an interpretivist, inductive position as the most suitable paradigm and approach to this research. Additionally, different research approaches were deliberated, leading to the selection of multiple case studies as the preferred approach. Furthermore, the researcher elucidated various research strategies pertinent to qualitative research, outlining each strategy and providing a rationale for opting for a qualitative research strategy.

To ensure appropriate case selection for this research, three mandatory and two optional criteria were meticulously evaluated, resulting in the selection of three clothing companies (Primark, H&M, and New Look) as participants for semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, the chapter expounded upon the chosen data collection methods, namely interviews and direct observation. A meticulously crafted question guide was employed, while the role of field notes in capturing observational data was duly acknowledged. Interviews were then conducted with a total of 22 participants.

Among the array of qualitative analytical frameworks, thematic analysis was deemed most suitable for the purpose of data analysis. Additionally, the chapter delved into matters of reliability, validity, and ethical considerations, which were carefully addressed to ensure the study's credibility, acceptability, and trustworthiness. To facilitate the subsequent phase of the research, a thematic analytical framework was employed for data analysis. To allow for a clearer understanding, the overall research design process for this study is presented below.

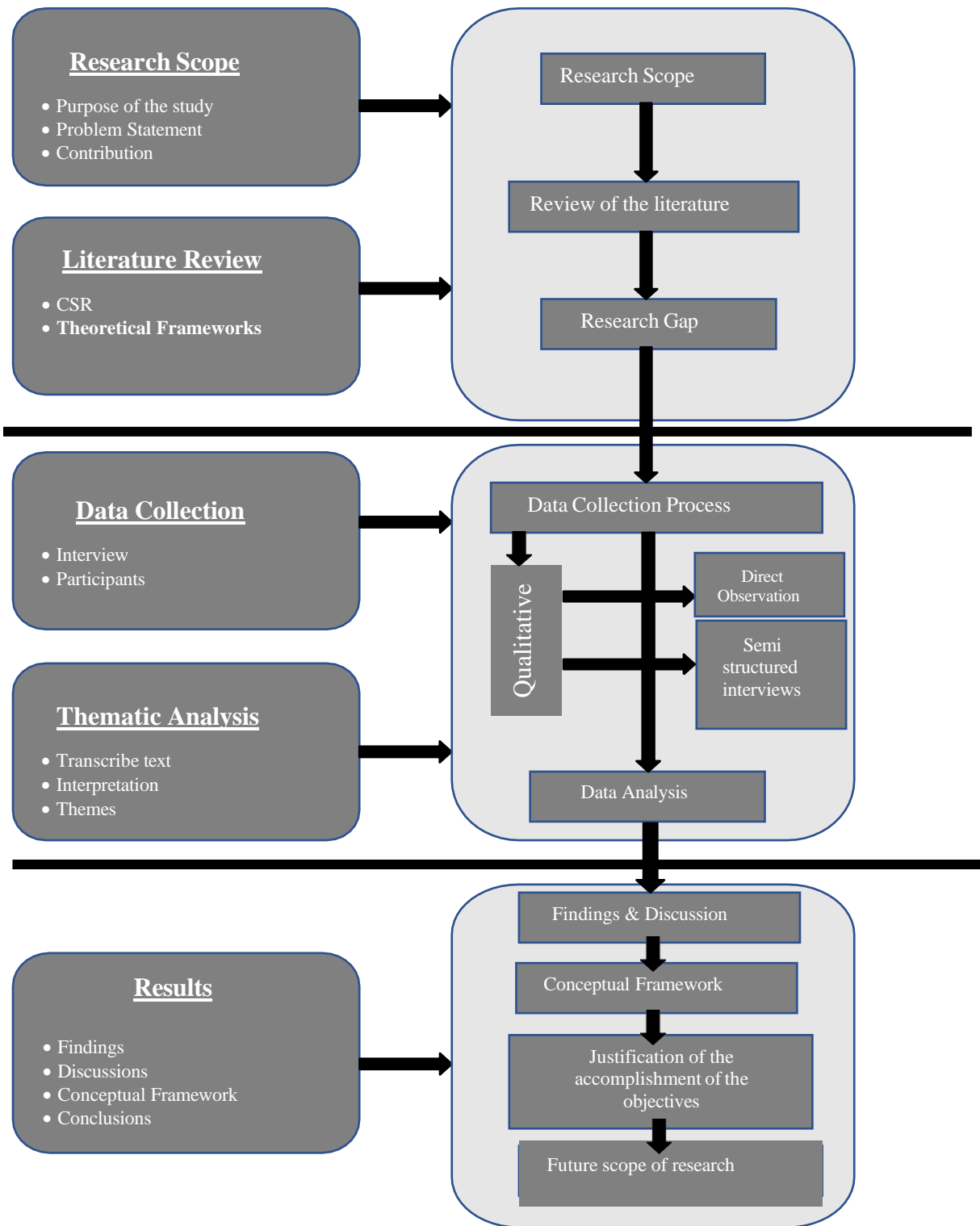


Figure 11: Summary of the research methodology

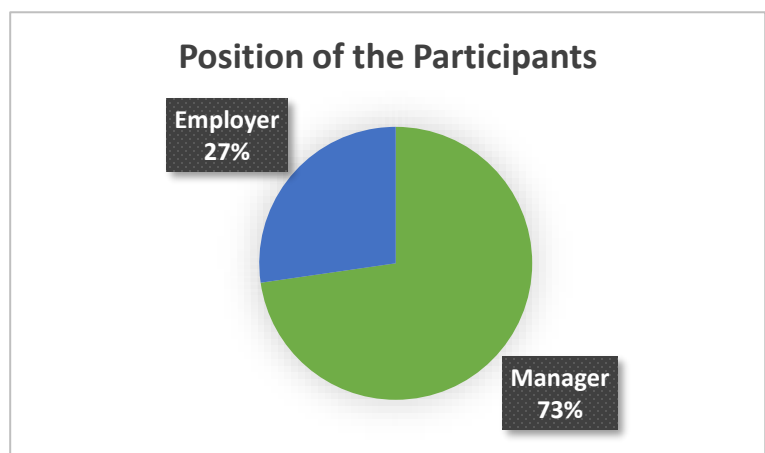
Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings

The clothing sector in the United Kingdom is vital to the economy and has far-reaching effects on British culture and the natural world. Thus, it is crucial for businesses in this sector to think about how their CSR efforts may affect customer loyalty and brand appeal. Using a selection of companies that have implemented CSR efforts, this research seeks to examine the effect of CSR on consumer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry. Information was gathered through in-depth interviews with managerial people at these businesses, and then examined thematically. This section of the research paper is dedicated to analysing the acquired data with the help of participant quotes and compiling the results. A thematic content analysis has been utilised for the interview transcripts. This research has the ability to enlighten both professionals and researchers on the advantages of CSR in the fashion sector, as well as to draw attention to any obstacles or restrictions that may exist in this area. Businesses in the apparel industry may make more ethical and sustainable choices concerning their CSR tactics and procedures if they have a thorough understanding of the effect CSR has on consumer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness.

5.1 Analysis of the collected data

5.1.1 Demographics

After reviewing relevant literature and discussing potential interview topics, the researcher settled on the range of 35–40 as the sample size. However, only 22 interviews were ultimately completed. Among them, the majority were in managerial positions in the three mentioned companies. Eight potential interviewees declined to take part.



5.1.2 The Types of CSR Activities

This theme refers to the various CSR activities undertaken by the clothing companies in this study. Scholars have pointed out the ambiguity of the corporate sustainability field. The era of corporations integrating sustainable practices gives rise to a serious question: how can sustainability be taken into consideration to measure firm performance? In order to determine this, the theme demonstrates various aspects of CSR covered by UK clothing companies. In order to understand the CSR practices/activities by UK clothing industry, including Primark, H&M, and New look, the researcher asked about the types of CSR activities that were practised in their respective companies.

Philanthropic-Based

The term “philanthropic duty” frequently denotes a company’s commitment to enhancing society at large. Engaging in corporate philanthropy, such as allocating a portion of a business’s profits to worthy charities within the community, represents a prevalent practice. Typically, these donations are channelled through trusts or foundations. Remarkably, some of the respondents emphasised that their respective companies extend their philanthropic activities to encompass both private and public educational institutions. This inclination towards supporting educational establishments underscores the significance of investing in knowledge acquisition and nurturing intellectual development within the community. By engaging in philanthropic activities targeted at educational institutions, companies contribute to the advancement of society through fostering learning opportunities, promoting innovation, and empowering individuals to reach their full potential. Supporting private and public educational institutions aligns with a broader societal perspective that recognises education as a fundamental driver of social progress. These initiatives not only benefit the educational institutions themselves but also have a ripple effect on the overall well-being of the community. By directing resources towards education, companies help bridge socio-economic gaps, enhance access to quality education, and foster a more equitable society. A number of the participants stated the above as follows:

P1: “Invests in initiatives that improve educations... The company’s mission is to improve the quality of life for young people, women, and girls by providing them with the resources they need to succeed economically... has adopted the Global Reporting Initiative’s (GRI) criteria, created in collaboration with the textile industry and non-profit groups, as the framework for its corporate social responsibility initiatives.”

P1: “Efforts centre on raising public consciousness about the importance of environmental education, with a particular emphasis on the three Rs: reusing, reducing, and recycling... Implementing four initiatives to broaden people’s reach to social safety nets, financial literacy, and related services.”

Primark committed to make all its clothes from recycled or more sustainably sourced materials by 2030. At the end of our first year, 45% of clothing units sold met these criteria, an increase from 25% at the launch of Primark Cares, so they are making progress in this area (Primark Sustainability and Ethics Progress Report 2021/22).

P2: “Ensure all workers are paid a reasonable wage... help them acquire financial education and social security benefits....”

It was found that the three companies mentioned in the research undertakes various charitable activities in their CSR programmes as well. For instance, the participants stated the following:

P1: “Donates in infrastructure for providing potable water and sanitary facilities...”

P2: “...collaborate with non-profits and international organisations worldwide... such as UNICEF... the American Cancer Society, and the Irish Cancer Society....”

P3: “Maintains dialogue with experts, NGOs, and the government...”

Furthermore, in addition to their investments in educational and other institutions, these companies allocate significant resources to the development and research of renewable energy sources. They also actively collaborate with subcontractors to ensure favourable working conditions and undertake various CSR initiatives. Additionally, they engage in ongoing dialogue with non-profit organisations to foster positive relationships and promote sustainable practices. Notably, given that many of their suppliers lack sufficient power and education, these companies play a pivotal role in raising awareness and mobilising funds to enable access to alternative renewable energy sources. This multifaceted approach to corporate sustainability demonstrates the companies’ commitment to fostering environmental stewardship, social welfare, and economic development. By investing in renewable sources and supporting their suppliers, these companies contribute to the transition towards a greener and more sustainable future. Moreover, their engagement with non-profit organisations demonstrates a proactive stance in addressing societal challenges and driving positive change. As many of the suppliers are not well powered or educated, these companies help to raise awareness and funds in order to gain access to alternative renewable sources. Also, P1 states as follows:

P1: “Aggregate spending power of the suppliers and in gaining access to alternative renewable sources that they might not have exposure to on their own”

The present study examines the CSR endeavours of three companies, emphasising their commitment to philanthropic endeavours in support of educational institutions and charitable organisations. Notably, one of the companies exhibits a noteworthy dedication to educational improvement, aligning its CSR initiatives with the Global Reporting Initiative's criteria. Another company focuses on promoting environmental education and endeavours to expand the availability of social safety nets, financial literacy programmes, and related services, thereby raising public awareness about their significance.

Moreover, these companies have a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability. For instance, one company directs its donations towards infrastructure projects aimed at providing clean drinking water and sanitary facilities. In a similar vein, another company engages in collaborations with non-profit organisations and international entities, such as UNICEF and the American Cancer Society, to foster global initiatives. Furthermore, a third company actively engages in ongoing dialogues with experts, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and governmental bodies to address environmental concerns.

Additionally, these companies prioritise the provision of fair and equitable wages for their employees, while also offering financial education and social security benefits. Recognising the importance of maintaining favourable working conditions, they collaborate with subcontractors to ensure optimal work environments. Furthermore, these companies actively contribute to raising awareness and funding for the adoption of alternative renewable energy sources. One company underscores its commitment to supporting the aggregate spending power of its suppliers, thus facilitating their access to renewable energy sources.

By undertaking these multifaceted CSR initiatives, the companies demonstrate their profound commitment to social and environmental sustainability, as well as their dedication to fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, including employees, subcontractors, non-profit organisations, and governmental bodies.

Ethical-Based

The ethical obligations of CSR revolve around the imperative for businesses to align their actions with their stated values and objectives, while also considering their broader impact on society and the environment. These obligations encompass a diverse range of activities, including environmental preservation, fostering diversity and inclusivity among employees, philanthropy, and maintaining a safe

and equitable work environment. In addition, CSR incorporates principles such as ethics, sustainability, transparency, and accountability in procurement and supply chain management, as well as in the decision-making process.

A significant aspect of ethical CSR involves the prevention of unethical behaviours and the promotion of responsible conduct among stakeholders. By implementing measures to discourage unethical practices and encouraging stakeholders to adopt more responsible behaviours, businesses can contribute to the improvement of societal and environmental conditions. This proactive approach not only mitigates potential harm but also establishes a positive influence within the business ecosystem.

Within the realm of CSR, addressing unethical behaviours and promoting responsible conduct is an essential undertaking. It is vital for businesses to recognise the potential adverse consequences of unethical actions and strive to establish a culture of integrity and ethical behaviour. By implementing robust corporate governance structures, ethical guidelines, and codes of conduct, businesses can set clear expectations for their employees and stakeholders, fostering a sense of accountability and ethical decision making. For instance, some participants highlight the following related situations:

P1: "...part of our corporate social duty is influencing suppliers to make their products in accordance with applicable international standards... has its own set of guidelines that its contractors must adhere to...."

P2: "Assisting our vendors in making the transition to environmentally friendly energy sources"

P2: "When working on behalf of the company... subcontractors must adhere to all applicable laws, rules, and policies... including those that prohibit the use of child labour and for safe and healthy working conditions..."

Ensuring responsibilities towards employees is stated as follows:

P3: "It has opted to use CSR rather than terms like sustainability or corporate citizenship ...because the company... believes that it has a responsibility to improve the social conditions in the factories where its clothing is made..."

P1: "...focus is squarely on the working conditions of its suppliers... launched a series of initiatives to better the working conditions...suppliers are pleased... because of mutual respect... good brand image is created ...increases our competitive edge..."

P2: "...in the early phases of CSR efforts... we focused primarily on worker safety.... have since expanded to address environmental concerns and union rights as part of... corporate social responsibility... ensure the availability of suitable grievance procedures... broaden accessibility to aid for mental and physical wellbeing..."

P2: “helps employees strike a healthy balance between work and personal life... released this year with a trifold emphasis on the mind, body, and life... with the understanding that these three domains are interconnected.... stakeholders are easily engaged... subcontractors and workers under them are happy... due to improved working condition... eager to work harder...”

The respondents also emphasised that, in addition to these efforts, these companies engage in a range of initiatives to enhance the quality of life of their stakeholders as well:

P1: “The company’s mission is to improve the quality of life for young people, women, and girls by providing them with the resources they need to succeed economically....”

P3: “...improve clothing’s resistance to wear and tear ...boost women’s position via developing skills and eliminating their hurdles to development...”

P3: “...implementing four initiatives to broaden people’s reach to social safety nets, financial literacy, and related services.”

P2“... include provisions for safe and healthy working conditions... including adequate ventilation, temperature, and lighting... empowers individuals by providing them with the resources and a voice... to effect change in their communities... both at home and abroad.... Enhances their satisfaction...”

P2: “Our CSR activities are 360 degree oriented... creates a good word of mouth channel... customers are satisfied with the work and benefitted as well”

The three fashion retail organisations examined in this study demonstrate a strong commitment to ethics and sustainability in procurement and supply chain management. Moreover, transparency and accountability play significant roles in their decision-making processes. These organisations prioritise these values as part of their CSR initiatives, actively working to combat unethical practices and promote responsible behaviour among stakeholders.

Each organisation adopts distinct strategies to achieve these goals. For instance, one company emphasises strict adherence to a specific set of rules for its suppliers, ensuring compliance with ethical standards. On the other hand, another organisation supports its suppliers in transitioning to renewable energy sources, contributing to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly supply chain.

In addition to their dedication to ethical sourcing, these businesses prioritise the well-being of their employees. Fair pay and safe working conditions represent just two examples of their commitment to ensuring a positive work environment. Furthermore, they go beyond basic labour standards by implementing measures to enhance workers’ quality of life. This includes facilitating access to social

safety nets, providing financial literacy training, encouraging union membership, and promoting work-life balance. These actions not only directly benefit employees but also contribute to the overall reputation and competitiveness of the companies.

The organisations perceive their CSR efforts to be both comprehensive and multi-faceted, resulting in positive word of mouth and enhanced customer satisfaction. By engaging in socially responsible practices, these companies establish a favourable public image and reinforce their competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Legal-Based

Failure to comply with CSR's legal obligations can result in severe consequences, such as financial penalties, legal ramifications, and significant damage to the company's reputation. Regulatory agencies and legal actions often serve as enforcement mechanisms for these obligations. Therefore, it is incumbent upon companies to fulfil their responsibilities towards stakeholders and the betterment of society by meeting the legal requirements of CSR. These requirements constitute an essential component of a company's broader commitment to operating in an ethical and sustainable manner. The responsibility for ensuring legal compliance encompasses various areas, including adherence to labour laws, compliance with environmental restrictions, and upholding consumer protection statutes. Moreover, companies must not only adhere to their own principles and obligations but also conform to relevant industry standards and codes of behaviour that are applicable to their operations.

Adhering to applicable industry standards is noted as follows by some of the participants:

P1: "Has adopted the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) criteria, created in collaboration with the textile industry and non-profit groups, as the framework for its corporate social responsibility initiatives...product sustainability team must approve all merchandise for compliance with these standards."

P3: "When working on behalf of the company... subcontractors must adhere to all applicable laws, rules, and policies... including those that prohibit the use of child labour and for safe and healthy working conditions..."

Federal, state, and local regulations:

P1: "part of our corporate social duty is influencing suppliers to make their products in accordance with applicable international standards..."

P1: "our base requirements for content are comparable to, and in some cases higher than, those set by the industry.... product sustainability team must approve all merchandise for compliance with these standards"

P2: “we have a stringent set of processes and certified ingredients for blending and minimum content limits... have been updated with higher minimum percentage ratios of recyclable and more sustainably produced fabrics”

P3: “...has established its own norms and regulations that contractors must adhere to... These norms have been compiled into a code of conduct that draws inspiration from the UN Code of Conduct and ILO Conventions”

According to the participants interviewed, the fashion retail organisations examined in this study prioritise compliance with relevant rules and laws as an integral part of their CSR initiatives. They consider industry standards, such as the UN Code of Conduct and the criteria set forth by the Global Reporting Initiative, to be crucial benchmarks that must be upheld. Furthermore, these companies not only establish minimum requirements for sustainably produced fabrics and mandate authorisation by a product sustainability team for all their products, but they also employ rigorous systems to ensure adherence to these standards. For instance, H&M has developed a set of stringent code of conduct guidelines aligned with global standards to proactively address unethical practices. The respondents emphasised that these organisations maintain a zero-tolerance policy towards any violations of laws, regulations, or policies, including those pertaining to child labour and the provision of a safe and healthy work environment.

H&M is also aligned with the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and is informed by the ILO’s definition of decent work, Human Rights Policy, and the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, among others. It is required that all business partners to comply with the Sustainability Commitment and sign their Code of Ethics, and continuously conduct stringent due diligence of supply chains. As part of this, they assess not only salient human rights issues on an annual basis, but also the long-term risks and impacts for different parts of operations and value chain, such as what a shift to a net-zero and a circular fashion industry could mean for future work across the value chain (H&M Group Annual and Sustainability Report 2023).

Economic-Based

Ensuring economic viability is crucial for businesses as it forms the foundation of their long-term sustainability and ability to make positive societal contributions. By maintaining profitability, companies can not only survive in the competitive market but also uphold their social and environmental responsibilities. Financial stability allows businesses to allocate resources effectively, invest in socially and environmentally responsible practices, and provide support to their stakeholders.

Prioritising the ethical and sustainable pursuit of profit is essential for businesses to achieve economic viability in a socially responsible manner. This approach entails aligning business objectives with ethical standards, such as fair trade practices, responsible sourcing, and environmentally conscious production methods. By incorporating ethical considerations into their operations, businesses can build trust and credibility among stakeholders, attract socially conscious consumers, and enhance their brand reputations.

Furthermore, the effects of a business's operations extend beyond its immediate financial success and impact various stakeholders. Employees, for instance, depend on the company's economic viability for job security, fair wages, and opportunities for professional growth. Consumers also benefit when businesses prioritise economic viability alongside ethical and sustainable practices, as they gain access to reliable products or services that meet their needs while minimising negative social and environmental externalities. Additionally, the environment stands to gain when businesses proactively assess and mitigate the ecological footprint of their operations, transitioning towards more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. The perspectives of some of the participants are indicated below as maximising earnings and competitive position.

Maximising earnings:

P2: "increases customer orientation... perceived quality increase... employees satisfied as well... more sales and earnings..."

P1: "maximises earnings.... Enhanced brand image is created and often with competitive edge... offers a chance to establish credibility and win over patrons... resulting in lasting relationships and greater sales..."

P3: "There is a positive relationship... customers perception changes when they see the company doing CSR activities... positive brand image is created... employee turnover is also low in our company due to these programmes..."

Competitive position:

P1: "Yes... there is positive relation... customers' demands and attention can be better met.... If a business successfully markets a positive image of itself to them... ensures a good brand image... inspires customers... long term relationship and positive image creation..."

P3: "helps... gain customer loyalty... long term relationship and good reputation of the company in the market ...is a great tool for companies to demonstrate their reliability.... Increases consumer satisfaction by gaining gratitude and image value from the consumers..."

P2: "...we benefit from increased goodwill because it raises our standing in the eyes of stakeholders and makes it easier to outperform rivals... exerts reliability and transparency that puts an impact.... How a customer perceives a company... satisfied"

The findings suggest that CSR efforts play a crucial role in enhancing customer happiness, which serves as a catalyst for financial performance. By prioritising the satisfaction of their customer base, companies can not only improve their financial outcomes but also shape their public image. A positive public perception, in turn, can yield significant benefits by attracting new customers who are drawn to the company's commitment to social responsibility. Moreover, the participants highlight the importance of fostering trust and loyalty among various stakeholders, including consumers, suppliers, and employees. Respondents emphasise that a consistent and positive experience across all interactions helps to establish and maintain strong relationships with these key stakeholders. This, in turn, contributes to the long-term success and sustainability of the company. Additionally, the findings highlight the significance of a company's reputation, which is viewed as a valuable intangible asset. A reputable company is more likely to engender trust among its customers and stakeholders, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. Building and safeguarding a positive reputation should be a strategic priority for organisations seeking to maximise their business success.

Environmental-Based

It is the responsibility of businesses to minimise their impact on the environment through approaches such as energy efficiency, resource conservation, and pollution prevention. Greener production methods, renewable energy, and responsible sourcing are all examples of what this means. Companies may aid in the preservation of Earth for future generations and improve the sustainability of society as a whole by adopting steps to lessen their environmental effects. The participants point out three areas that are indicative of environmental-based types of CSR activities, which are (i) recycling pollutants and wastes, (ii) investing in energy conservation, and (iii) making eco-friendly products.

Recycling pollutants and wastes:

P1: "... eradicate single-use plastic materials and all our non-clothing waste... evaluating new technology investments to assist us recycle wastes into resources; collaborating with partners to do so..."

P2: "...improve clothing's resistance to wear and tear... we are making garments biodegradable or recyclable... use only materials with minimal environmental impact...."

P2: “we are researching and executing product recycling models... discovering sources of pollution and prospects for enhanced waste collection administration...”

Investing in energy conservation:

P1: “... infrastructure for providing portable water and sanitary facilities.”

P1: “Assisting our vendors in making the transition to environmentally friendly energy sources”

P3: “...monitoring energy usage at major strategic manufacturing sites to find places... and aggregate their spending power and gain access to alternative renewable sources that they might not have exposure to on their own....”

Eco-friendly products:

P1: “...in the early phases of CSR efforts... we focused primarily on worker safety.... have since expanded to address environmental concerns... has a stringent set of processes and certified ingredients for blending and minimum content limits... have been updated with higher minimum percentage ratios of recyclable and more sustainably produced fabrics”

P3: “...part of our corporate social duty is influencing suppliers to make their products in accordance with applicable international standards... we are making garments biodegradable or recyclable... use only materials with minimal environmental impact”

P2: “... reduce carbon emissions by 50% ... throughout our supply chain... forming teams consisting of environmental experts present in both the regions where we produce our goods and at headquarters as well.... improves our partnership with our suppliers and manufacturing facilities and helps guarantee environmental sustainability across the board”

The respondents representing clothing companies in the United Kingdom expressed a strong emphasis on the significance of mitigating harmful environmental impacts through their endeavours. Their CSR activities encompass a range of initiatives, such as the recycling of pollutants and wastes, investment in energy conservation, and the development of eco-friendly products.

To exemplify, Primark has undertaken substantial measures to eliminate the usage of single-use plastic materials and non-clothing waste. Additionally, the company is actively exploring new technological investments that facilitate the conversion of waste into valuable resources through recycling. This demonstrates Primark’s commitment to adopting innovative solutions to address environmental challenges.

Nearly a decade ago, in 2013, Primark launched the Primark Sustainable Cotton Programme (PSCP) with 1,251 women farmers in Gujarat, India. Working in collaboration with agronomic experts, CottonConnect, and a local grassroots organisation, SEWA, the objective was to understand and reduce the environmental impact of their cotton, support the livelihoods of cotton farmers, and explore how they could change the way they sourced cotton.

Similarly, H&M has directed its attention towards ensuring the biodegradability or recyclability of their garments, while also prioritising the use of materials with minimal environmental impact. By incorporating sustainable materials into their products, H&M contributes to minimise the ecological footprint of the clothing industry.

They are investing in projects to reduce GHG throughout their whole value chain. So far, they have invested in more than 20 projects focusing on increasing the proportion of more sustainable materials and renewable energy, phasing out coal, advancing energy efficiency, and enabling carbon removal, where return on investment is measured by GHG emission reductions, not financial gain. For example, they launched the Green Fashion Initiative to help suppliers become more energy efficient and transition away from fossil fuels. H&M is also a lead investor in the Fashion Climate Fund, which is designed to drive collective action to tackle supply chain GHG emissions. In January 2022, they also stopped onboarding new supplier factories with on-site coal boilers, in support of overall climate goals and the aim to source 100% renewable electricity in both operations and supply chain by 2030. This will not only help us reduce GHG emissions, but also secure energy prices and increase the amount of new renewable electricity. H&M has also set up internal carbon pricing to influence decisions about which materials, production processes, and transport modes to use, helping to reduce GHG emissions (Annual Report of Sustainability, 21/22).

Moreover, New Look has adopted a multifaceted approach to sustainable fashion practices. They are utilising fewer blended natural and synthetic fibres in their clothing, thereby reducing the environmental impact associated with textile production. Additionally, New Look has made efforts to minimise the use of ornamentations such as crystals and glitter, which often contain harmful substances and contribute to environmental pollution. Furthermore, the company has introduced jeans with detachable buttons, promoting the concept of longevity and encouraging consumers to engage in sustainable fashion choices.

These concerted endeavours by clothing companies in the UK exemplify their commitment to reducing the environmental impact of the industry and fostering sustainable practices. By incorporating eco-friendly measures into their CSR activities, these companies are paving the way for a more environmentally conscious clothing sector. These initiatives not only address current environmental challenges but also set an important precedent for future industry practices, encouraging other companies to follow suit.

5.1.4 Challenges/Barriers to Organisations

This theme identifies the various challenges faced by the clothing companies in this study from the respondents' points of view. As a result, the theme analyses the shortcomings of CSR practices, and the challenges in the UK clothing industry including to Primark, H&M, and New Look. Furthermore, the impact of the absence of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry is also evaluated.

Managerial-Based

From a managerial perspective, the absence of commitment, comprehension, and coordination among employees and other stakeholders poses a significant barrier. A noteworthy example is the lack of understanding and adherence to codes of ethics by suppliers, leading to violations. Educating and coordinating these stakeholders is a complex and challenging endeavour. Moreover, the recurring issue of inadequate commitment often gives rise to problems and misunderstandings within the organisational context. For example, some participants consider such situations as follows:

P2: "The devotion of the personnel and the company's CSR vision and mission frequently conflict or are at odds with one another.... Miscommunications and inefficiency are the result."

P3: "lack of commitment and understanding among employees... commitment and strong employee engagement is not found very often... causes unfortunate losses..."

Another barrier is the lack of understanding of CSR codes and ethics among suppliers, particularly those in developing countries, which can result in violations of company values:

P3: "Understanding of the activities is not well coordinated. Causes waste of resources and time..."

P2: "Suppliers often lacks understanding of the norms and company values... educating suppliers from developing countries is a complex process... often violate rules..."

According to one respondent, some of these businesses lack strategic planning in their CSR dimensions:

P3: “It is difficult for business... to move in the right path... when it comes to corporate social responsibility (CSR) there are no established principles, rules, or directions to follow...”

The complexity of implementing CSR initiatives is significant, particularly when it comes to educating suppliers in developing countries or utilising sustainable materials in countries where products are manufactured. Furthermore, there is a lack of resources and knowledge about CSR initiatives among certain public and private institutions, communities, and individuals, which can lead to uncertainty about whether to invest in these programmes:

P2: “educating suppliers from developing countries is a complex process... often violate rules...”

P1: “there is often not enough facilities or knowledge of utilising sustainable materials in the countries where the products are manufactured... educating them remains a hard process...”

P2: “only a few public and private institutions, communities, and individuals are informed of CSR projects... fewer resources are allocated to them... Their perspective on CSR actions is really limited... this uncertainty, businesses often debate whether they really want to give to CSR programmes or not....”

The responses obtained from the interview participants strongly indicate the presence of multiple barriers hindering the effective implementation of CSR initiatives within the clothing industry. One significant barrier identified is the lack of commitment and understanding among employees and other stakeholders, which often leads to miscommunication and operational inefficiencies. This barrier shows the necessity of cultivating a shared understanding and commitment towards CSR objectives among all relevant parties. Another noteworthy barrier relates to the insufficient comprehension of CSR codes and ethics among suppliers, particularly those situated in developing countries. This knowledge gap can potentially result in violations of a company’s core values and principles. To address this issue, proactive measures should be taken to enhance the understanding and adherence to CSR standards within the supply chain, especially in developing nations. Furthermore, the absence of strategic planning in the CSR dimensions of clothing businesses poses a significant challenge.

Without a well-defined and coherent plan, organisations may struggle to progress in the right direction and effectively implement their CSR initiatives. To overcome this hurdle, businesses need to incorporate strategic planning into their CSR efforts, enabling them to navigate the complexities associated with implementing sustainable practices and social initiatives. The complexity of implementing CSR initiatives further exacerbates the challenges faced by the clothing industry. This complexity is particularly evident when attempting to educate suppliers in developing countries or integrate

sustainable materials into manufacturing processes. Such endeavours require extensive coordination, knowledge sharing, and capacity building among all stakeholders involved. Overcoming these complexities necessitates collaborative efforts and the development of tailored strategies to ensure successful implementation of CSR initiatives.

Finally, a lack of resources and knowledge about CSR initiatives among certain public and private institutions, communities, and individuals adds to the barriers encountered. This lack of awareness often creates uncertainty regarding the benefits and value of investing in CSR programmes. It is imperative to address this gap by promoting knowledge dissemination, offering support mechanisms, and engaging relevant stakeholders in raising awareness about the positive impact of CSR initiatives. Taken together, these barriers emphasise the critical importance of addressing issues related to commitment, understanding, and coordination to effectively implement CSR initiatives within the clothing industry. By addressing these challenges, organisations can navigate the complexities, improve stakeholder engagement, and maximise the positive impact of their CSR efforts. The findings highlight the need for concerted efforts and collaborative approaches to overcome barriers and facilitate the successful implementation of CSR initiatives in the clothing industry.

Organisational-Based

Although companies strive to achieve bigger goals, many of them do not adequately fund these initiatives. This poses a problem for coordinators, as sourcing green materials for manufacturing consumes time, resources, and incurs significant expenses. For instance, one participant mentioned that:

P1: "sourcing green materials... for manufacturing causes time and resource waste... expensive as well... resources are not allocated evenly... the main goal is hampered... not enough budget allocation to employee and workers well-being despite taking plans..."

The insufficiency of funding allocated to CSR initiatives in these companies has emerged as a significant barrier, hindering the progress and success of these programmes, as highlighted by one of the respondents. This limitation is particularly evident in the context of sourcing green materials for manufacturing, a process that often proves to be time-consuming and costly. Consequently, the constrained financial resources can result in a misallocation of funds, which in turn hampers the achievement of the company's broader objectives. Moreover, an inadequate budget allocation is observed in relation to the well-being of employees and workers, even when plans for such initiatives

have been formulated. This shortfall in funding has the potential to undermine the effectiveness of CSR efforts.

The limitation of financial resources in supporting CSR activities raises several important concerns. Firstly, the sourcing of green materials for manufacturing represents a critical aspect of sustainable practices, with a direct impact on environmental conservation and reducing the carbon footprint of companies. Insufficient funding restricts the ability of organisations to explore alternative, eco-friendly materials and technologies, thereby impeding progress in achieving environmentally responsible operations.

Secondly, misallocation of resources due to limited funding can have far-reaching consequences. Without adequate financial support, companies may find themselves allocating resources to less impactful CSR initiatives, neglecting or overlooking the areas that could bring about substantial societal benefits. This misalignment between available resources and intended goals not only diminishes the potential positive impact of CSR efforts but also weakens the company's reputation as a socially responsible entity.

Furthermore, the neglect of employee well-being due to inadequate budget allocation poses ethical and practical concerns. While organisations may have devised plans to improve employee welfare, the lack of sufficient funding hampers the implementation of these initiatives. This can result in diminished employee satisfaction, reduced productivity, and potential risks to workplace safety and health. Ultimately, such circumstances hinder the company's ability to create a supportive work environment and may impede the cultivation of a positive corporate culture.

To address these challenges, it is crucial for companies to prioritise CSR funding and allocate sufficient resources to support their initiatives effectively. This requires a comprehensive evaluation of the financial implications associated with CSR programmes during the budgeting process. Moreover, companies should actively seek partnerships with external entities, such as non-governmental organisations or government agencies, to leverage additional funding opportunities and share the financial burden of CSR implementation.

Laws and Regulations-Based

It is often challenging for companies to navigate the right path, as many countries where they source materials or outsource manufacturing lack established principles, rules, or directions to follow.

Additionally, according to a respondent, several corporations offer overlapping public-benefit CSR initiatives. One respondent, when asked about challenges, asserted that:

P1: “when it comes to corporate social responsibility (CSR) there are no established principles, rules, or directions to follow... a lack of agreement among the groups responsible for CSR processes... several corporations provide overlapping public-benefit CSR initiatives.... For CSR projects to be successful, these groups will need to work together and reach a consensus....”

One of the primary challenges encountered by companies in the implementation of CSR initiatives pertains to the absence of clear guidelines and direction. This dearth of explicit guidance often leads to confusion and inefficiency, as different groups within the company may unknowingly work towards overlapping or conflicting goals. Thus, in order for CSR initiatives to be effectively executed, it is crucial for these disparate groups to collaborate and establish a consensus regarding the direction and focus of their CSR endeavours.

Moreover, the absence of well-defined principles and rules further compounds the difficulties faced by companies when approaching and executing CSR initiatives. Without established guidelines, companies may struggle to navigate the complexities of responsible business practices, hindering their ability to effectively contribute to societal well-being. Consequently, this lack of guidance emerges as a significant barrier to companies striving to uphold ethical standards and generate a positive impact on society.

Risk Management-Based

Due to a lack of strategic planning, valuable resources are often wasted, leading to losses. Human biases and inadequate facilities also contribute to this issue. First, there are policy issues, according to the respondents:

P3: “Leadership objectives and staff passion... often don’t align... The devotion of the personnel and the company’s CSR vision and mission frequently conflict or are at odds with one another....”

P2: “... greater the CSR initiatives of an organisation... smaller groups who aspire to make a difference in this space face obstacle...”

Another problem is the complexity of the process in the activities:

P2: "... human biases take place... causes unfair advantages to minority groups...there is often not enough facilities or knowledge of utilising sustainable materials in the countries where the products are manufactured... educating them remains a hard process..."

Loss:

"Commitment and strong employee engagement is not found very often... causes unfortunate losses..."

... understanding of the activities is not well co-ordinated. Causes waste of resources and time..."

"Sourcing green materials... for manufacturing causes time and resource waste... expensive as well..."

The implementation of CSR initiatives poses significant challenges for companies, primarily attributed to the absence of established principles and guidelines. This lack of a comprehensive framework often leads to a misalignment between the company's CSR vision and mission and the passion and objectives of its leadership and staff. Consequently, conflicts arise, and inefficiencies permeate the process, hindering the successful execution of CSR initiatives.

Moreover, the complexity involved in implementing these initiatives is further compounded in countries with limited facilities and insufficient knowledge to effectively utilise sustainable materials. This dearth of resources can result in unfair advantages for specific groups, creating an inequitable playing field. Additionally, the complexity of the implementation process itself can prove to be expensive and time-consuming. As a result, companies may encounter obstacles that impede their ability to fully achieve their CSR goals.

Furthermore, the lack of strong employee engagement and understanding regarding CSR activities can lead to a wastage of resources and unfortunate losses. When employees are not adequately informed or involved in CSR initiatives, their contribution may be suboptimal, undermining the potential positive impact. This emphasises the need for robust employee engagement programmes and comprehensive training to ensure effective implementation and maximise the value generated from CSR endeavours.

These aforementioned challenges not only impede the success of individual CSR projects but also hinder the efforts of smaller groups that aspire to make a significant difference in this domain. Smaller organisations may face even greater hurdles due to limited resources and capacity, making it vital to address the barriers faced by these groups in order to create a more inclusive and impactful CSR landscape.

Supply Chain-Based

There are numerous challenges and barriers to implementing sustainable and ethical practices in the supply chain of the fashion industry. These challenges encompass issues such as suppliers' limited understanding or compliance with ethical codes, as well as the absence of well-defined guidelines and regulations in certain countries. For instance, some of the participants stated the relevant issues as follows:

P1: "educating suppliers from developing countries is a complex process... often violate rules... can't be monitored constantly..."

P3: "there is often not enough facilities or knowledge of utilising sustainable materials in the countries where the products are manufactured... educating them remains a hard process..."

P1: "... suppliers care about the success of the businesses they work with... they care about the CSR policies and practices of firms because they want to keep their good name in the community. However, some of the supplier lacks knowledge in the area and causes problems by violating standards."

Additionally, sourcing green materials is costly and time-consuming, which can impact the overall price of the products and the efficiency of the supply chain. Another issue is the transportation system in outsourced countries, which may not prioritise sustainability and can have adverse impacts on the industry as a whole. Some of the participants stated their opinions regarding materials, manufacturing, and sourcing as follows:

Materials:

P2: "sustainable materials are often extremely costly... increases overall price of the products..."

Manufacturing:

P1: "sourcing green materials... for manufacturing causes time and resource waste... expensive as well..."

Sourcing:

P1: "The transportation system employed in this sector.... of the outsource nations... is not green aware... as well as not economical... effect the sustainability of the overall industry..."

These challenges highlight the need for companies to have strong commitment, understanding, and coordination among stakeholders in order to effectively implement sustainable practices in their supply chain.

5.1.5 Providing Organisational Attractiveness

When asked if there was any impact or relation between CSR and organisational attractiveness respondents asserted there is positive relation. Through their CSR activities, companies aim to satisfy their customers as well as suppliers and employers by positioning themselves in a positive fashion in their minds. Positive company image puts a great impact on the overall outcome of the company.

Adopting Positive Consumer Orientation

Consumer orientation is facilitated when a company embraces CSR activities. The research findings indicate that organisations that actively participate in CSR initiatives generally cultivate a favourable reputation, especially among younger customers. This positive image, in turn, contributes to heightened goodwill and a competitive advantage within the marketplace. The reason behind this phenomenon lies in the ability of CSR activities to inspire customers and foster enduring relationships, ultimately enhancing the overall brand perception of the company. Moreover, engaging in CSR can significantly augment the reliability and transparency of a company, thereby exerting a positive influence on customer perceptions and satisfaction levels. When companies adopt CSR practices, they demonstrate a commitment to ethical conduct and social responsibility. This commitment engenders a sense of trust and confidence among customers, as they perceive the company as being more trustworthy and accountable. For instance, some of the participants point out such situations as follows:

P1: “helps to create... positive image especially among younger customers... more good terms with customers. maximises earnings.... Enhanced brand image is created and often with competitive edge...”

P1: “ensures a good brand image... inspires customers... long term relationship and positive image creation...”

P2: “...we benefit from increased goodwill because it raises our standing in the eyes of stakeholders and makes it easier to outperform rivals... exerts reliability and transparency that puts an impact.... How a customer perceives a company... satisfied”

P2: “There is a positive relationship... customers perception changes when they see the company doing CSR activities... positive brand image is created...”

Stakeholders have a tendency for a notable inclination towards collaborating with socially responsible companies, as they have a vested interest in such partnerships. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that the effectiveness of CSR initiatives hinges upon the extent of commitment and comprehension demonstrated by employees, as well as the alignment of CSR objectives with the overarching vision and mission of the company. The participants’ responses in this study also indicate that organisations

engaging in CSR activities are more likely to foster positive relationships with their customers. These companies are perceived as embodying higher-quality standards and can inspire customer loyalty. Some of the participants highlighted these above as follows:

P3: “employees are satisfied with their workplace... customers also judge from a good point of view... when this happens... customers perception changes when they see the company doing CSR activities...”

P1: “helps... gain customer loyalty... long term relationship and good reputation of the company in the market...”

P1: “incentives from loyal customers, which boost the company’s bottom line...”

P2: “customer perceived quality increases... employees satisfied as well... more sales and earnings...”

These companies also benefit from increased goodwill and a competitive edge in the market. CSR activities are seen as a way to demonstrate reliability and increase consumer satisfaction, and educating the public on the importance of CSR is considered essential. Additionally, the CSR activities of these companies are often oriented towards meeting the demands and attention of their customers and aim to create a positive brand image, leading to increased sales and earnings.

Considering the External Environment of an Organisation

Respondents highlighted that engaging in CSR activities can enhance organisational attractiveness across various dimensions. Firstly, responsible initiatives undertaken by the company can elevate employee satisfaction, consequently bolstering organisational appeal and the recruitment process. This is attributed to the fact that employees are more likely to be motivated to work for a company that actively embraces CSR and strives to make a positive impact on society. For example, one respondent asserted that:

P1: “Our has opted to use CSR rather than terms like sustainability or corporate citizenship ...because the company... believes that it has a responsibility to improve the social conditions in the factories where its clothing is made... include provisions for safe and healthy working conditions... including adequate ventilation, temperature, and lighting. These responsible acts by the companies increase employee satisfaction that contributes to the organisational attractiveness and recruitment process of further talented employees”

Additionally, having a strong CSR programme can also raise the standing of the company in the eyes of stakeholders and make it easier to outperform rivals:

P2: “stakeholders are easily engaged... subcontractors and workers under them are happy... due to improved working condition... eager to work harder...”

P1: “We empower individuals by providing them with the resources and a voice... to effect change in their communities... both at home and abroad.... Enhances their satisfaction...”

Finally, engaging in CSR can establish credibility and win over competitors, which can result in lasting relationships and greater sales:

P3: “Exerts reliability and transparency that puts an impact.... How a customer perceives a company... satisfied offers a chance to establish credibility and win over patrons... resulting in lasting relationships and greater sales...”

One notable finding derived from the analysis of the interview transcript is the positive impact of engaging in CSR activities on employee satisfaction, as well as its contribution to enhancing organisational attractiveness and the recruitment process. This is due to the fact that employees are likely to be more motivated to join a company that actively participates in CSR initiatives, thereby making a positive societal impact. Another significant finding indicates that a robust CSR programme can elevate the company’s reputation in the eyes of stakeholders and facilitate superior performance compared to competitors. This can be attributed to stakeholders’ heightened engagement and support for companies that are actively involved in CSR, subsequently leading to increased employee motivation and productivity. Finally, the respondents emphasised that engaging in CSR initiatives can establish the company’s credibility, effectively outshine rivals, and foster enduring relationships that translate into enhanced sales. This arises from the inclination of consumers and stakeholders to trust and endorse companies that demonstrate transparency and accountability in their CSR endeavours, consequently fostering greater customer loyalty and increased sales. Collectively, these findings underscore the value of adopting CSR as a strategic approach to augment organisational attractiveness and enhance competitiveness within the market.

5.1.6 Ensuring Customer satisfaction

This theme consists of three sub-themes, namely institutional/stakeholders pressure mechanisms, responsibility focus, and community focus.

Institutional/Stakeholder Pressure Mechanisms

The implementation of CSR initiatives has proven to be an effective means of enhancing a company’s reputation, particularly among the younger demographic. This demographic is increasingly placing importance on a company’s social and environmental impact, and CSR initiatives serve as a key driver

for positive brand perception. By engaging in socially responsible practices, companies can not only improve their standing with customers but also enhance their financial performance, thus establishing stronger relationships with their clientele.

Moreover, it is essential to note that the success of a CSR programme depends on its effective execution. When a company implements its CSR initiatives well, it can significantly boost brand recognition and reputation, which, in turn, can provide a competitive advantage in the marketplace. By aligning their business operations with the principles of social responsibility, companies can foster a positive image and attract customers who are increasingly conscious of a company's ethical practices.

This connection between CSR and customer satisfaction can be further understood by examining the institutional/stakeholder pressure mechanisms. These refer to the influences exerted by external entities, such as regulatory bodies, industry associations, and consumer advocacy groups, on companies to adopt socially responsible practices. In the context of customer satisfaction, the implementation of CSR initiatives can be seen as a response to these pressures, as companies strive to meet the expectations and demands of their stakeholders. By recognising the significance of societal and environmental issues, companies can proactively address these concerns and establish themselves as responsible corporate citizens, thereby enhancing their reputation and strengthening relationships with their customer base.

P2: "...we benefit from increased goodwill because it raises our standing in the eyes of stakeholders and makes it easier to outperform rivals... exerts reliability and transparency that puts an impact.... How a customer perceives a company... satisfied. Also, we are aware of external factors such as regulatory bodies and consumer advocacy groups that provide more intention to become consumer satisfaction oriented."

One further important exploration is that stakeholders have a genuine desire to work with CSR-focused businesses. One respondent asserted that CSR-focused businesses may have an easier time attracting and retaining key constituents, which can have a positive effect on the company's reputation among consumers.

P1: "...stakeholders have a vested interest in collaborating with companies that are making strides in corporate social responsibility..."

Finally, CSR efforts can assist in the promotion of trustworthiness and openness, which can improve the brand's image in the eyes of consumers. Since customers may be more inclined to trust and have confidence in businesses that exhibit a commitment to social responsibility, this could contribute to increased customer happiness.

P1: “helps to create... positive image especially among younger customers... more good terms with customers. maximises earnings.... Enhanced brand image is created and often with competitive edge...”

Based on the aforementioned situations, the findings demonstrate that the CSR can help to gain customer loyalty and create a long-term relationship with the company. This can be achieved through positive brand image creation and the formation of good terms with customers, which can result in increased sales and earnings for the company. Additionally, CSR can lead to increased customer perceived quality and employee satisfaction, both of which can contribute to greater customer loyalty and boost the company’s bottom line. Engaging in CSR can provide incentives for loyal customers, which can further increase customer satisfaction and lead to increased profits for the company.

P3: “employees are satisfied with their workplace... customers also judge from a good point of view... when this happens... customers perception changes when they see the company doing CSR activities...”

P1: “helps... gain customer loyalty... long term relationship and good reputation of the company in the market...”

P1: “incentives from loyal customers, which boost the company’s bottom line...”

P2: “customer perceived quality increases... employees satisfied as well... more sales and earnings...”

Responsibility Focus

When questioned regarding recommendations, the respondents expressed the need for a multitude of initiatives aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness through the implementation of CSR activities. Primarily, it is advised that businesses establish close collaborations with the government and other relevant stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of their CSR endeavours. This can be accomplished by fostering transparency and forging partnerships with reputable non-profit organisations. Moreover, it is imperative for businesses to adopt a comprehensive approach to CSR that tackles crucial societal challenges and extends its benefits to all communities, including those residing in rural areas.

Enhancing the impact of CSR initiatives necessitates collaboration between businesses and the government, as well as other stakeholders. By working in tandem, businesses can leverage the expertise and resources of various entities to optimise the outcomes of their CSR efforts. Increased transparency plays a crucial role in this process, as it promotes accountability and ensures that the intended objectives of CSR initiatives are achieved. Transparent practices allow stakeholders to monitor and assess the

impact of businesses' CSR activities, leading to a more meaningful and effective engagement with the community.

Additionally, developing partnerships with reputable non-profit organisations can significantly enhance the credibility and impact of businesses' CSR initiatives. Non-profit organisations often possess specialised knowledge and experience in addressing social and environmental issues. By collaborating with such organisations, businesses can tap into their expertise, access valuable networks, and leverage their established relationships with local communities. These partnerships can create a mutually beneficial environment where businesses gain credibility and support, while non-profit organisations receive resources and assistance to further their social missions. For instance, some of the participants described this situation as follows:

P2: "CSR projects can be improved through the combined efforts of the government, workers, consumers, businesses, stakeholders, and the broader population...Also, collaboration with non-profit organisations enrich the knowledge and perspectives with regard to social an environmental issue."

P3: "...There needs to be openness and publicity surrounding the company's CSR initiatives.... to present all relevant statistics and details about CSR activities.... Also, the partnership between for-profit and non-profit organisations bring opportunities for both parties. For instance, companies gain credibility and NGOs get resources."

Finally, businesses can increase their organisational attractiveness and customer satisfaction by educating the public about the importance of CSR and actively raising awareness of their own CSR initiatives.

P2: "developing reputable non-profits that can make a difference... in the area of corporate social responsibility... is essential."

Only a small percentage of organisations, communities, and individuals are made aware of CSR efforts. They have a very narrow view of CSR activities. Together, the government, workers, customers, businesses, stakeholders, and the general public can make progress in this area.

Community Focus

One crucial recommendation put forth by the respondents is that CSR activities must possess a high level of accessibility and inclusivity to achieve their desired impact. In order to be effective, CSR initiatives should be easily accessible to individuals residing in both rural and urban areas, catering to the needs and challenges specific to each region. Moreover, it is essential for these activities to address a

diverse range of pressing societal issues in order to comprehensively contribute to sustainable development. Some of the participants described this situation as follows:

P1: "...has to be plans in place to make sure that CSR activities are just as accessible in rural regions as they are in cities... if we want to see positive results from CSR practices... to ensure that those in need benefit from CSR processes, programmes, and initiatives."

P2: "CSR must take a sweeping, all-encompassing strategy that addresses pressing societal issues such as child labour, health insurance, schooling, the welfare of girls and women, and more"

Another key finding is that according to the respondents, only a small percentage of organisations, communities, and individuals are currently aware of CSR efforts, which limits the impact and resources allocated to these initiatives. This highlights the importance of transparency and publicity in order to raise awareness and engage more stakeholders. As a result, respondents recommended that the public be educated on the importance of CSR, emphasising the need for businesses to actively promote these initiatives in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

P2: "only a few public and private institutions, communities, and individuals are informed of CSR projects... fewer resources are allocated to them... Their perspective on CSR actions is really limited... this uncertainty, businesses often debate whether they really want to give to CSR programmes or not...."

"Educating the public at large on the importance of corporate social responsibility is essential..."

In terms of recommendations for increasing customer satisfaction and organisation attractiveness, one action that businesses can take is to focus on building relationships with stakeholders through transparent and well-publicised CSR initiatives. This can help to increase trust and credibility, leading to increased loyalty and satisfaction among customers. Additionally, by addressing pressing societal issues and making CSR activities accessible to a wide range of communities, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to social responsibility and make a positive impact on society. This can enhance the organisation's reputation and attractiveness to potential employees, customers, and other stakeholders. In the next chapter, the researcher considers discussion on the findings of the analysis. Thus, the themes presented in this chapter are extended in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Discussion of the Findings of the Analysis

In this study, the researcher has conducted interviews in order to better understand how CSR in the UK clothing industry affects consumer happiness and brand appeal. This section of the thesis is dedicated to discussing the acquired data from the interview transcripts. The researcher elaborates upon the key findings from the interview in order to compare and contrast them with previous research. Finally, the researcher creates a framework to be followed from the final findings and discuss its importance and implications.

6.1 CSR Activities

The *first objective* of the study was to analyse the current CSR practices by the UK clothing industry.

Based on the analysis of the interview transcripts, it was observed that the three companies mentioned in this study engage in various philanthropic and charitable activities as part of their CSR programmes. These companies notably invest in education and public awareness initiatives. Additionally, they allocate significant resources to the development and research of renewable sources, collaborate with subcontractors to ensure favourable working conditions, and undertake other CSR initiatives. These findings align with previous research conducted by Nyame-Asiamah and Ghulam (2019), which demonstrated the positive impact of charitable contributions and philanthropic actions on retail sales effectiveness within the UK retail sector. Moreover, McWilliams et al. (2006) asserted that retail managers can enhance sales growth, brand loyalty, and customer retention through charitable giving. However, it is important to note that community service and environmentally friendly practices have not been found to directly influence retail sales growth (McWilliams et al., 2006).

The act of donating to charitable causes is regarded as voluntary rather than obligatory (Waddock and Graves, 1997). Widiastuty and Soewarno (2019) proposed three distinct perspectives on corporate philanthropy: altruistic, profit-maximisation, and political/institutional power. According to the profit-maximisation theory, corporations engage in charitable events when there is a direct financial advantage, such as tax benefits for US corporations (Enquist et al., 2008). Conversely, the governmental and institutional influence interpretation of corporate philanthropy is supported by the findings of McWilliams et al. (2006), who discovered that private sector businesses are more inclined to donate to improve property rights and strengthen political ties. Moreover, Wang et al. (2015) argued that

companies' responses to CSR are primarily strategic and economically driven. This viewpoint aligns with the research conducted by Li, Nyame-Asiamah, and Ghulam (2019), which found that businesses' reactions to CSR are influenced by both political and economic considerations.

According to the interview participants, these prominent fashion retail companies place significant emphasis on preventing unethical behaviours and ensuring a high quality of life. For example, Primark invests considerable effort into verifying that their subcontractors do not employ child labour. Additionally, these companies aim to ensure that their suppliers adopt sustainable practices. These practices fall under the umbrella of Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) (Quarshie et al., 2016). GSCM involves integrating environmental risk avoidance into all aspects of supply chain operations. Feng et al. (2017) highlighted that GSCM procedures are often viewed as cost drivers by a majority of businesses. However, several studies have demonstrated that implementing GSCM methods can lead to cost reduction, increased productivity, enhanced creativity, resource conservation, and competitive advantages in the marketplace (Quarshie et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2022; Modak et al., 2020). Furthermore, GSCM practices contribute to improved stakeholder perceptions of the company, boosting employee morale, productivity, customer loyalty, and satisfaction (Modak et al., 2020).

These fashion retail companies also undertake initiatives to improve the quality of life for their employees, which encompass provisions for safe and healthy working conditions, adequate ventilation, temperature, and lighting, work-life balance support, restroom accessibility, fire safety measures, appropriate work schedules, and fair compensation. These activities collectively fall under the category of employee-oriented CSR (Turker, 2009). Turker (2009) defines employee-oriented CSR as a series of company policies that aim to ensure workers favourable treatment, career advancement opportunities, procedural support, and work-family stability. This definition aligns with the concept presented by Shen and Zhang (2019). Yin et al. (2021) emphasised that these actions convey a clear message of valuing employees, acknowledging their contributions, and nurturing a relationship beyond transactional aspects. Consequently, employees are more likely to feel a sense of belonging when they perceive that their employer actively pursues CSR policies with their well-being in mind (Yin et al., 2021; Shen and Zhang, 2019). However, it is worth noting that maximising employee satisfaction has not been found to directly impact retail sales growth, according to McWilliams et al. (2006).

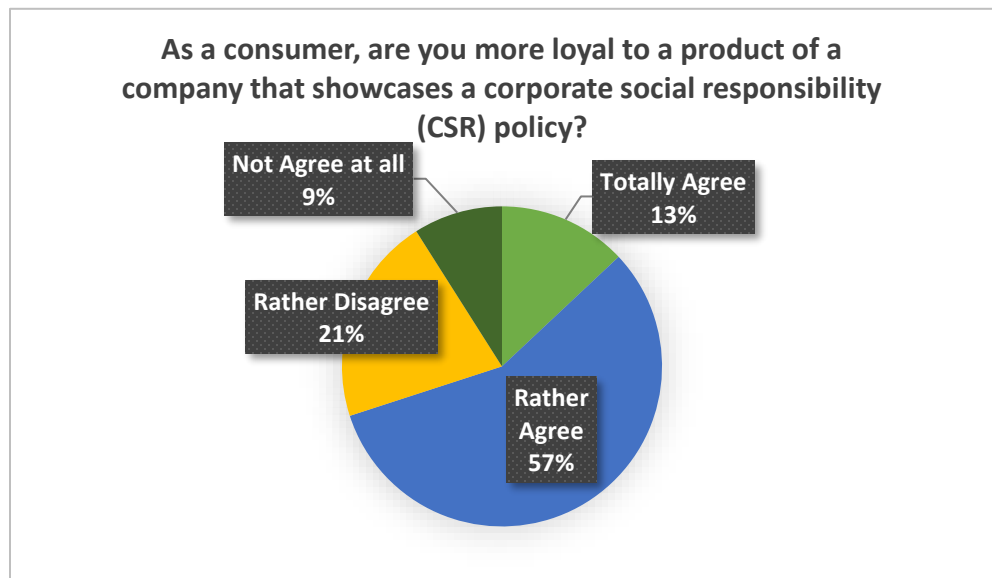
In order to abide by the laws these companies follow strict rules. Furthermore, this inspires and sometimes forces stakeholders to do the same as well. For example, H&M follows stringent codes of

conduct created by them that are in line with the global standards developed to restrict unethical behaviours. Influencing suppliers to fabricate their products in accordance with applicable international standards is a notable CSR activity by companies. When working on behalf of the company, subcontractors must adhere to all applicable laws, rules, and policies, including those that prohibit the use of child labour and for safe and healthy working conditions. According to Halkos and Nomikos (2021), when a business abides by the law, it also acts responsibly for its community. The company is free to operate as it sees fit, as long as its activities do not violate any applicable laws (such as those governing employment, the environment, or crime). Firms also have social obligations that are not written into law, and these make up part of a company's ethical responsibilities. In terms of doing business in an ethical manner, it is important to remember that being kind to the environment is a must. The company should be always conscious of the effects of its actions on the natural world. Humans and businesses alike have a moral and ethical obligation to do so (Tamvada, 2020).

The vast majority of respondents agreed that boosting brand trust and consumer loyalty while also giving the company a competitive edge and increasing revenue is a key objective of CSR initiatives. Companies engage in these pursuits in an effort to win over various stakeholder groups, including customers, suppliers, and staff. A positive public perception of a business has a significant effect on that business's success. Widiastuty and Soewarno (2019) present three distinct approaches to understanding corporate giving: altruistic, profit-maximising, and political/institutional power. These results are in line with those found by Nyame-Asiamah and Ghulam (2019), who found that giving back to the community through donations and other acts of generosity increases the efficiency of companies in the UK retail sector. McWilliams et al. (2006) argued further that charitable giving is an excellent way for retail managers to boost sales, brand loyalty, and customer retention. However, it has not been proven that eco-friendly and community-oriented business practices increase retail sales (McWilliams et al., 2006). This finding is consistent with the survey conducted by Statista (2019) about the influence of the CSR approach on customer loyalty in France. This number shows how the CSR policy has affected customer loyalty in France in 2019. Accordingly, 70% of respondents said they were fairly devoted to the brands of such companies (Statista, 2019). According to the profit maximisation principle, businesses only host charity events if doing so will directly increase their bottom line (Enquist, et al., 2008). In addition, Wang et al. (2015) argued that "strategic- and economic-driven" responses to CSR are prevalent among corporations. Consistent with this view are the results of a study by Li, Nyame-Asiamah, and Ghulam

(2019) who showed that the political and economic climates shape the ways in which some companies respond to CSR.

Minimising detrimental environmental effects constitutes a principal objective underlying CSR endeavours. Corporations acknowledge the significance of continuously investing substantial resources in developing greener manufacturing and supply



chain processes. For instance, New Look, a prominent apparel company, has adopted various sustainable practices such as employing fewer blended natural and synthetic fibres, reducing the use of embellishments like crystals and glitter, and producing jeans with detachable buttons. Feng et al. (2017) emphasise that retailers have increasingly embraced environmental concerns, implementing low carbon footprint initiatives as a means of attracting and retaining customers while expanding profit margins. The authors also contend that many firms view greener supply chain management (GSCM) practices as cost drivers. However, extensive reports have demonstrated that GSCM practices not only contribute to cost reduction but also enhance output, foster innovation, reduce waste, and improve competitive capabilities (Quarshie et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2022; Modak et al., 2020). In addition to these quantifiable benefits, GSCM practices enhance a company's reputation with various stakeholders by positively influencing employee morale, productivity, customer retention, and satisfaction (Modak et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the relationship between eco-friendly practices and business expansion does not always exhibit a consistent pattern. Some research indicates a significant positive impact of environmentally conscious strategies on business performance, while other studies suggest a negative correlation with expansion. These contradictory findings align with previous research on the association between CSR and financial performance (Peters and Mullen, 2009; Rodgers et al., 2013). Such inconsistencies likely stem from variations in theoretical frameworks, accounting methodologies, and philosophical

perspectives employed across the diverse array of studies exploring the CSR-financial success relationship (McWilliams et al., 2006).

6.2 Challenges/Barriers

The *second objective* of the study was to identify the challenges related to CSR practices faced by firms in the UK clothing industry.

From the interview transcripts, it was found that, from a managerial perspective, a lack of commitment, understanding, and coordination among the employees and other stakeholders is a major barrier. A number of companies stressed that they lacked the necessary personnel to properly execute CSR. This lends credence to the claims made by Ksiak (2017) and Wang et al. (2015) that inadequate resources, including information and funding, are the primary impediment to environmental action. Many businesses lack the human resources to provide CSR education and training to their staff and management. Lack of time and money are often cited as significant barriers to CSR (Ludlow, 2018). Furthermore, suppliers often do not understand the codes and ethics and violate them. Educating and coordinating them is a complex procedure according to the respondents. Too much competition is the most typical problem that these companies have to deal with. This is consistent with what Ksiak (2017) observed: the current supply chain business model is focused on short-term agreements, which encourage suppliers to consider the short term owing to enormous competition demands in terms of price, quality, and delivery time. Companies' profit margins tend to be poor when they operate in markets with large numbers of rivals. Since the returns on CSR investments are delayed for some time (Ksiak, 2017; Afzal and Thiengnoi, 2009), businesses are less able to make them. The costs associated with implementing CSR are too high, according to Graafland and Zhang (2014). Due to the intense competition in their industry, they just do not have the resources to devote heavily to CSR initiatives. CSR is seen by suppliers as a burden that does not assist them in winning or maintaining agreements with clients or increasing profitability (Graafland and Zhang, 2014).

Respondents also see the absence of concern for CSR on the part of customers and other stakeholders as a problem. On the other hand, studies by Ramasamy et al. (2010) show differently. They claimed that the growing middle class and their disposable income had sparked a renewed interest in CSR. Nyame-Asiamah and Ghulam's (2019) study corroborates the above with the finding that European consumers

are more likely to support ethical corporate practices than customers on any other continent. Furthermore, Fox Business (2016) undertook a survey about consumer perceptions towards CSR in the UK retail industry. 90% of the consumers polled said they would stop doing business with a company if they discovered it was acting irresponsibly, and 55% of the participants said they had done so already. Moreover, respondents asserted that although companies aim to achieve bigger goals, many of them do not sufficiently fund these initiatives. This poses a problem for coordinators as sourcing green materials for manufacturing requires time and resources, and is also expensive. This aligns with previous research findings. According to Graafland and Zhang (2014), the costs associated with implementing CSR are often too high. Ksiak (2017) noted that inadequate resources, including information and funding, are the primary impediments to environmental action. Additionally, many businesses lack the human resources to provide CSR education and training to their staff and management. Lack of time and money are often cited as significant barriers to CSR (Ludlow, 2018).

Respondents noted that it is often difficult for companies to move in the right direction as there are no established principles, rules, or directions to follow in many of the countries where they source materials or outsource their manufacturing. Local governments in these manufacturing countries, primarily in South Asia, are responsible for the oversight and implementation of CSR regulations, but they lack both the will and the resources to do so efficiently, as argued by Graafland and Zhang (2014) in a similar context. The majority of those interviewed for the study believed that the issue was not a deficiency of excellent legislation, but rather insufficient monitoring and implementation of these rules by provincial government employees due to a lack of training. The law often has gaps that can be exploited. The implementation of regulations would have a significant impact (Graafland and Zhang, 2014). Furthermore, according to a respondent, several corporations provide overlapping public-benefit CSR initiatives. Perry and Towers (2018) mentioned that companies that prioritise profit often disregard environmental and social concerns. Respondents also regard the lack of support from the government, NGOs, and other stakeholders as a challenge to CSR implementation.

In many countries where materials are sourced or to where manufacturing is outsourced, there is inadequate infrastructure. According to Kader and Akter (2014), the current transport network used in this business is inefficient and wasteful, posing a threat to the long-term viability of the sector. Bala et al. (2020) argued that customers are being pressured to make purchases despite having fewer options for transportation across the country's interior, leading to increased shipping times due to the absence of a

distant ocean port. In comparison, the delivery period for garment exports from China is 40-50 days, India's is 50-70 days, Sri Lanka's is 19-45 days, and Bangladesh's is 90-120 days (Rahman and Anwar, 2006). Ports serve as the primary distribution hubs for the global commerce of ready-made clothing. Hasan et al. (2018) highlight that rapid adaptation to market fluctuations is crucial in the garment business, but the sector is held back by the rudimentary application of ICT and weak port management.

Another issue mentioned by the respondents is a lack of strategic planning. Insufficient strategic planning often leads to the wastage of valuable resources and subsequent losses; human biases and inadequate facilities also contribute to this problem. This finding aligns with the research of Ksiak (2017), who observed that the current supply chain business model prioritises short-term agreements, causing suppliers to focus on short-term thinking due to intense competition in terms of price, quality, and delivery time. In highly competitive markets, businesses typically operate on low profit margins, which hampers their ability to undertake CSR initiatives because the results of such efforts are not immediately evident (Ksiak, 2017; Afzal and Thiengnoi, 2009). Graafland and Zhang (2014) stated that the price of implementing CSR is often deemed too high. In their highly competitive sector, suppliers perceive CSR as an unnecessary cost that does not help attract new customers, retain existing ones, or boost profits (Graafland and Zhang, 2014).

The study revealed that many suppliers fail to recognise the importance of adhering to ethical codes, as evident in their responses to questions about supply chain issues. Graafland and Zhang (2014) argued that the costs associated with implementing CSR are considered too expensive, making the whole process burdensome for suppliers and providing no assistance in securing or maintaining agreements with clients or increasing profitability. Due to intense competition in the industry, suppliers often lack the resources to heavily invest in CSR initiatives. Moreover, many countries that serve as material sources or production outsourcing lack established principles, rules, or guidelines that corporations must follow, further complicating the issue. The total cost increases due to the difficulty and higher prices of locating eco-friendly materials. Graafland and Zhang (2014) claimed that local governments in these manufacturing countries, particularly in South Asia, are responsible for overseeing and implementing CSR regulations, but they lack the will and capacity to do so effectively. Most of the individuals interviewed for the research agreed that the problem lies not in the absence of good legislation, but rather in the failure to adequately monitor and enforce these standards by provincial government

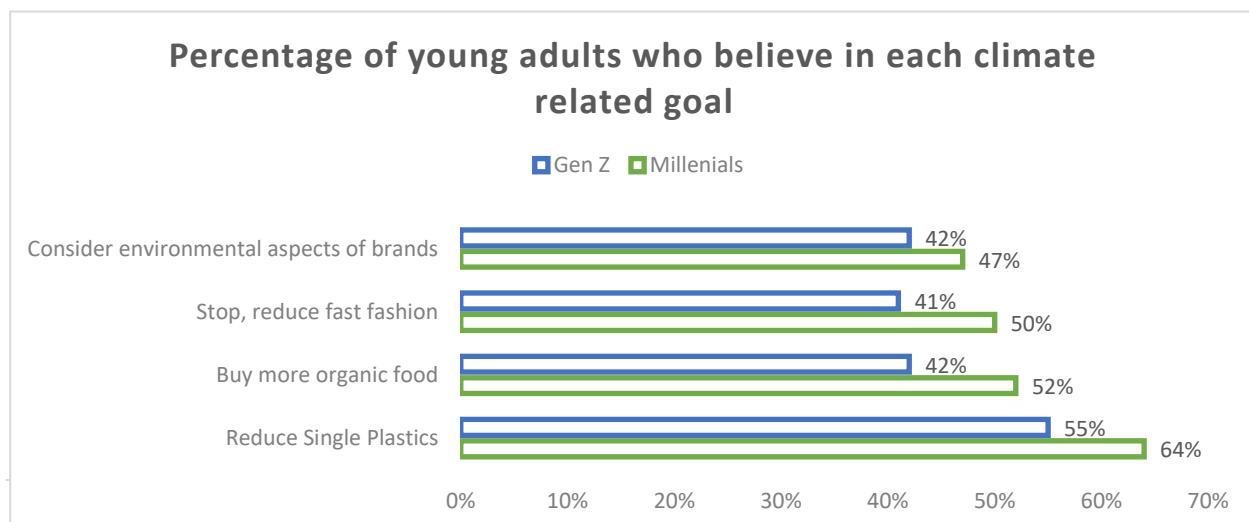
personnel. Loopholes in the legislation are often exploited. Establishing and enforcing rules and regulations would have a profound impact (Graafland and Zhang, 2014).

6.3 Organisational Attractiveness and Customer Satisfaction

The *third objective* of the study was to determine the effect of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in UK clothing companies.

6.3.1 Organisational Attractiveness

When asked about the impact or relation between CSR and organisational attractiveness, respondents asserted that there is a positive relationship. Through CSR activities, companies strive to satisfy not only their customers but also their suppliers and employees by positioning themselves in a positive light. A positive company image has a significant impact on the overall outcomes of the company. According to one respondent, CSR helps create a positive image, particularly among younger customers, which aligns with various contemporary reports. Deloitte's (2020) latest Global Millennial Survey, for example, reveals that many members of Generations Y and Z prioritise personal environmental issues. 64% of Millennials and 55% of Gen Zers indicated that they have taken steps to reduce their consumption of single-use plastics. Additionally, 52% of Millennials and 42% of Gen Zers stated that they proactively buy more natural, traditional foods, while 50% of Millennials and 41% of Gen Zers reported reducing or ceasing purchases of fast fashion. Consequently, when a company demonstrates environmentally conscious CSR activities, their brand image improves among this vast majority of young adults (Deloitte, 2020). Whether directly or indirectly, the study by Markovic et al. (2022) suggests that CSR contributes to favourable word of mouth among customers.



Additionally, the impact of CSR on brand authenticity is positively moderated by the attractiveness of alternatives. If consumers find another brand to be more alluring, CSR can serve as a mechanism of differentiation to strengthen the credibility of the focal brand (Markovic et al., 2022).

Furthermore, stakeholders have a vested interest in collaborating with companies that are making strides in CSR, according to the respondents. The respondents also noted that if the company feels responsible for the consequences of its work and tries to compensate them in a positive way, stakeholders feel more attached to the company. This also gives a competitive edge, as there are benefits in increased goodwill. It raises the standing of the company in the eyes of stakeholders and makes it easier to outperform rivals. These findings are consistent with those of Bhattacharya et al. (2008), who found that stakeholders who are made aware of CSR initiatives are more likely to want to work for the firm, make investments in the company, and buy the company's products. Perceptions of internal CSR activities were found to be directly connected to both organisational attractiveness and corporate reputation by Story et al. (2016). Organisational reputation was the only medium through which external CSR practices were associated with the desirability of the firm.

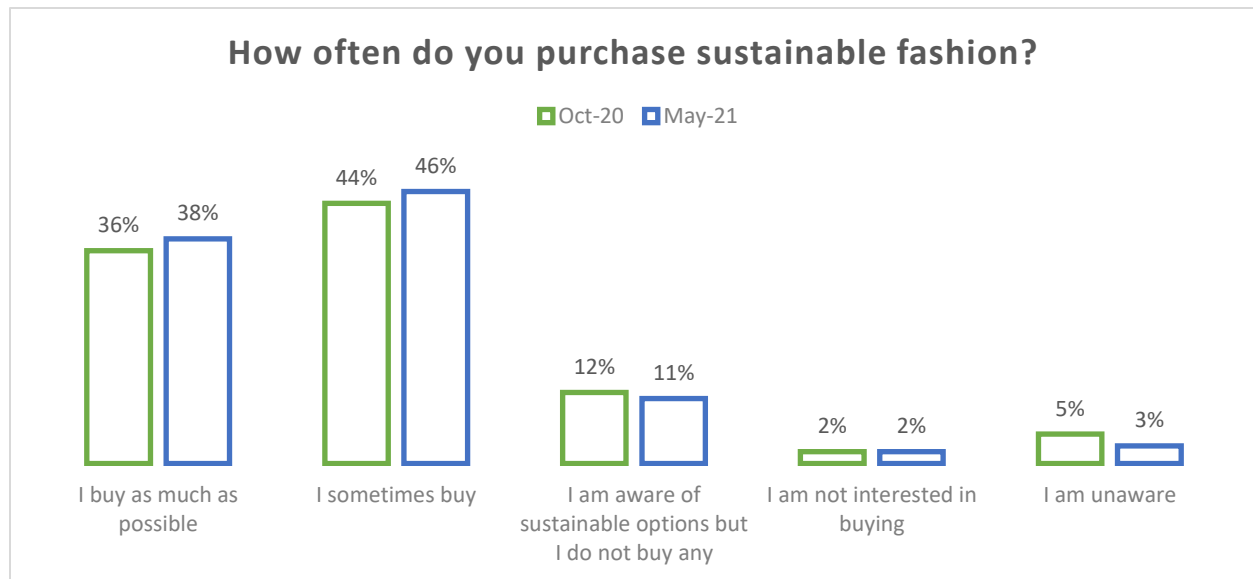
Furthermore, respondents assert that employee retention is easier. This is also consistent with another report by Statista (2020). According to the survey, 83% of millennials say CSR is very essential when deciding where to work, and 75% would accept a wage decrease of 30% to do so. In this context, Zhang et al. (2020) also cited that social responsibility has a significant impact on how interested potential employees are in working for a company. However, Go and Bortree (2017) cited that when there is not much of a connection between a company's interests and a societal issue, potential employees may suspect that the company is merely doing CSR to improve its organisational attractiveness. In this way, material that is congruent with or a good fit for CSR has a greater ability to signal CSR's trustworthiness than information that does not, leading to a more favourable assessment of the business (Go and Bortree, 2017). Recruiters, according to Zhang et al. (2020), could alleviate this issue by including a line about the company's commitment to CSR in their job postings. Advertisements that a company is socially conscious to its stakeholders may not be sufficient to entice the best and brightest employees, especially if the CSR is not directly related to the company's main activities. Instead, it is possible that bringing up CSR will backfire, as prospective employees may view the authenticity of CSR with scepticism if it is not directly related to the company's primary business. In light of the importance of CSR to the continued success of the company, it is recommended that recruiters mention this in relevant job

postings. Moreover, Go and Bortree (2017) advised that when explaining the CEO's activist efforts, recruiters should include any relevant details. When CEOs speak out on social issues, it can boost the credibility of a company's CSR efforts if those efforts are consistent with the company's mission. When CSR is misaligned with a company's core activities, the company's credibility suffers, and the company has a harder time attracting and retaining talented employees (Brooks, 2016).

6.3.2 Customer Satisfaction

According to the respondents, there is positive relation between CSR and customer satisfaction. By undertaking CSR, customers' demands and attention can be better met. Evidence from studies of customer reactions to CSR initiatives and their impact on purchasing decisions supports this position. Based on the data, there has been an increase in consumers' willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly goods, and CSR initiatives have a substantial impact on Millennials, a demographic that is of particular interest to marketers (McAllister, 2016). According to Nielsen's (2016) research, 66% of shoppers pay more for services and goods from businesses that prioritise doing good for society and the environment. That is a significant increase from the 50% recorded in the previous year. It has been found that between CSR and customer satisfaction, business reputation acts as a mediator, as shown in a study by Zhang et al. (2020). They also demonstrated how a company's CSR track record may influence its public image, ultimately leading to happier clients. However, Farooq et al. (2014) found evidence that CSR for social public benefit receives less emphasis than CSR for environmental and economic sustainability. This is due to the fact that, of the three facets of CSR (CSR for employees, CSR for customers, and CSR for social public welfare), the impact on satisfaction among customers and organisational attractiveness from CSR for social public welfare is the weakest.

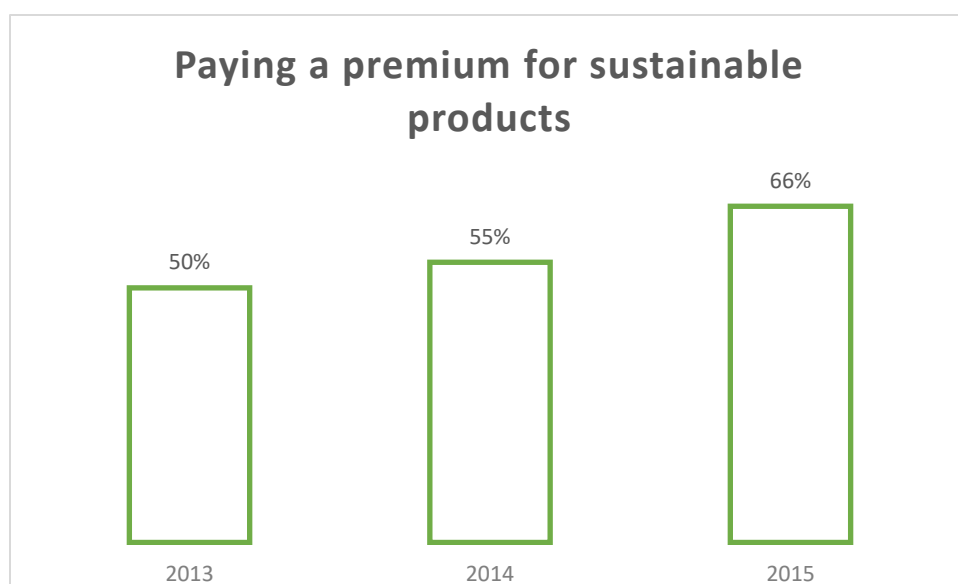
As found in the interview transcripts, it was seen that CSR activities help in gaining customer loyalty as well as in increasing customer retention to a company. In line with prior studies, the researcher finds that customers' optimistic views of a company's CSR play a significant role in maintaining their loyalty following a service interruption and subsequent restoration. This is consistent with the findings by Servera-Francés and Piqueras-Tomás (2019). According to the findings of their study, businesses who adopt CSR policies aimed at satisfying customers' demands can gain a competitive edge. In other words, a company's investment in CSR not only lessens the negative effects of its operations on society, but also creates value for its customers (Choi & La, 2013). Evidence from the study by Choi and La (2013) indicates that consumers are cognisant of and appreciative of CSR efforts by businesses that



cater to their specific interests. This leads to greater patron confidence in the business, which in turn boosts patrons' pleasure with the product or service and their dedication to the brand. McWilliams et al. (2006) further asserted that retail managers can enhance sales growth, brand loyalty, and customer retention through charitable giving. However, community service and environmentally friendly practices have not been shown to boost retail sales growth (McWilliams, et al., 2006). According to research by Zychlewicz (2015), customers consider a company's dedication to CSR when making purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it is generally accepted that satisfied customers mean repeat business, potential new customers, and positive word of mouth (Zychlewicz, 2015). Whether directly or indirectly, the study by Markovic et al. (2022) suggest that CSR contributes to favourable word of mouth among customers. Additionally, the impact of CSR on brand authenticity is positively moderated by the attractiveness of alternatives. If consumers find another brand to be more alluring, CSR can serve as a mechanism of difference to strengthen the credibility of the focus brand (Markovic, et al., 2022).

A survey by Vogue (2022) demonstrated that the proportion of Vogue readers who consider the environmental impact when shopping for clothing rose from 65% in October 2020 to 69% in May 2021. Moreover, the poll revealed the significance of brand loyalty to customers' efforts to make their shopping habits more environmentally friendly. According to Vogue (2022), consumers would rather stay loyal to their current brands that make efforts toward sustainability than switch to new sustainable brands. This means that well-known companies can benefit from investing in sustainable practices to retain customer loyalty. It also provides flexibility for firms to try out different approaches to sustainability, even if they do not always work out perfectly. Customers are more inclined to stick with a

brand that they believe is making an honest attempt to better itself. Nonetheless, in some significant markets, that devotion could be waning (Choi and La, 2013). China saw a considerable increase in the number of respondents in May 2021 who said they would be willing to switch from their favoured brands to others that have been shown to be more sustainable. Minor gains were recorded in Taiwan, Japan, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Experts warn that if companies do not put money into more sustainable business models, they may be gambling with their futures (Choi and La, 2013; Servera-Francés and Piqueras-Tomás, 2019).



6.4 Recommendations

The *fourth objective* of the study was to provide a set of recommendations to the firms to use CSR more effectively.

When asked for recommendations on improving CSR activities, respondents asserted that only a small percentage of organisations, communities, and individuals are aware of CSR efforts. They have a narrow view of CSR activities. To make progress in this area, it is important for the government, workers, customers, businesses, stakeholders, and the general public to come together. Respondents also see the lack of concern for CSR among customers and other stakeholders as a problem. In this context, Bhattacharya et al. (2008) demonstrated in their research that companies risk less favourable perceptions and attitudes from their stakeholders if they fail to properly and clearly communicate their CSR initiatives. They further noted that it is crucial to not just communicate with customers but also with

employees, investors, and other interested parties, as CSR can have a positive effect on major stakeholders other than customers; therefore, this is an issue of great importance (Bhattacharya et al., 2008). Respondents also noted that stakeholders have an interest in working with CSR-focused businesses. They also stated that stakeholder loyalty increases when a corporation acknowledges and attempts to mitigate the negative effects of its actions. Advantages in the form of enhanced goodwill also help a company stand out from the competition. It improves the company's image in the eyes of its constituents and makes it easier to surpass rivals. The results are in line with the work of Story et al. (2016), who found a correlation between stakeholders' views of an organisation's internal CSR initiatives and their views of the company's attractiveness and reputation. It was only through the company's reputation that external CSR practices became linked to the firm's attractiveness.

Additionally, respondents offered ideas on how to make CSR initiatives equally accessible in rural and urban areas. For CSR to be successful, businesses must ensure that CSR projects, initiatives, and procedures assist those in need. In order to achieve this, CSR must embrace a broad, all-encompassing strategy that addresses pressing social issues, including child labour, healthcare, education, women's emancipation, and more. Some of the actions taken by these businesses to improve the quality of life for their employees include implementing regulations for safe and healthy working conditions, such as proper ventilation, temperature, and lighting. They also help employees strike a healthy balance between their professional and personal lives, provide access to toilet facilities, implement fire safety measures, offer suitable working schedules, and provide competitive compensation. However, as other responders noted, there is a lack of implementation.

Turker (2009) claims that all such initiatives fall under the category of employee-oriented CSR. Turker (2009) aligns with Shen and Zhang's (2019) concept of employee-oriented CSR, defining it as a series of corporate policies that commit enterprises to providing workers with favourable treatment, professional progression chances, procedural assistance, and work-family stability. Employee-oriented CSR is also referred to as workforce-focused CSR. According to Yin et al. (2021), these activities send a clear message that the company values its people, appreciates their efforts, and sees its relationship with them as more than just a business transaction. Therefore, when employees believe their business actively pursues CSR initiatives with their well-being in mind, they are more likely to feel like insiders (Yin et al., 2021; Shen and Zhang, 2019). However, McWilliams et al. (2006) have demonstrated that increasing employee satisfaction will not necessarily lead to retail sales growth.

Executing these activities makes it easier to retain employees, according to respondents. However, potential employees may believe that a firm is only engaging in CSR to increase its organisational attractiveness when there is not much of a relationship between the company's interests and a social issue, according to Go and Bortree's (2017) research. As a result, information that is consistent with or well-suited for CSR has a better ability to indicate CSR's reliability than information that does not, resulting in a more positive appraisal of the company (Go and Bortree, 2017). According to Zhang et al. (2020), recruiters could solve this problem by mentioning the company's dedication to CSR in their job advertisements. Particularly, if the CSR is unrelated to the company's core competencies, merely advertising to stakeholders that a company is socially conscious may not be sufficient to attract the best and brightest people. Mentioning CSR without a clear connection to the company's core operations could backfire as potential employees may question its authenticity. It is advised that recruiters reference relevant CSR initiatives in job advertisements given their significance to the company's long-term performance. Recruiters should also include any pertinent information when outlining the CEO's activism initiatives, according to Go and Bortree (2017). CEO engagement on social issues can increase the credibility of a company's CSR initiatives. When CSR is not aligned with the company's main business objectives, its credibility suffers, and it faces challenges in recruiting and retaining talented individuals (Brooks, 2016).

In addition, as noted by the respondents, suppliers are concerned about the performance of the companies they work with, as well as the CSR activities of businesses, because they want to maintain a positive reputation in the community. Another important objective of businesses is to ensure that their suppliers operate sustainably. These procedures are referred to as "green supply chain management" (Quarshie et al., 2016). Through GSCM, businesses are guaranteed that all supply chain operations take into account the reduction of environmental risk. According to Feng et al. (2017), most firms often view GSCM procedures as a cost driver. However, numerous studies have shown that GSCM techniques help companies reduce costs, increase output, foster creativity, save materials, and gain a competitive edge in the market (Quarshie et al., 2016; Hsu et al., 2022; Modak et al., 2020). Along with these tangible benefits, GSCM techniques also help organisations gain favour with stakeholders by boosting employee morale and productivity, as well as customer loyalty and satisfaction (Modak et al., 2020).

However, as stated by Graafland and Zhang (2014) in a similar context, the issue is that local governments of these manufacturing countries, primarily in South Asia, are responsible for the oversight

and implementation of CSR regulations, but they lack the resources and motivation to do so effectively. The majority of those surveyed in Graafland and Zhang's study believed that the problem lay not in poor laws, but in the inadequate oversight and application of these regulations by provincial government officials due to a lack of training. There are also many legal loopholes that can be exploited. If implemented, regulations would have a significant impact (Graafland and Zhang, 2014).

Nonetheless, Ksiak (2017) found that the current supply chain business model favours short-term contracts, leading suppliers to adopt a short-term perspective due to intense competition for customers' business in terms of price, quality, and delivery time. Graafland and Zhang (2014) argue that CSR comes at an unreasonably high cost. Most suppliers see CSR as an unnecessary expense that does not increase earnings, retain customers, or attract new ones (Graafland and Zhang, 2014). Additionally, when asked about supply chain-related difficulties, it was found that many suppliers do not understand the importance of upholding these standards and ethics. According to Graafland and Zhang (2014), suppliers sometimes view the entire process as a burden that does not help them win or maintain contracts with clients or increase profitability, given the high costs associated with implementing CSR (Graafland and Zhang, 2014). It is important for companies to understand this limitation and educate suppliers and other stakeholders or to otherwise take initiatives to do so. Poor infrastructure in these nations is another issue. In this context, Ksiak (2017) suggests that if consumers can be made aware of these problems and the company's efforts, they would willingly pay a higher price instead of causing harm to the environment.

6.5 Final Findings

The aim of this study was to identify the impact of CSR on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the clothing industry of UK and provide guidelines and suggestions for the UK clothing industry on how they can improve their CSR activities to improve customer satisfaction and organisational structure.

- Companies operating in the United Kingdom's clothing business have been found to engage in a wide range of CSR initiatives, including those focused on the environment, charity, and philanthropy. These businesses put a lot of money into renewable energy research and development, subcontractor collaboration for decent working conditions and CSR programmes, communication

with non-profits, and so on, in addition to the money they put into schools and other institutions. Along with ensuring a high standard of living, corporations place a premium on discouraging unethical conduct.

- However, a significant challenge to effectively executing CSR efforts is the need for more commitment, awareness, and coordination among employees and other stakeholders. Also, corporations sometimes need help making the proper decisions since there are no clear guidelines or standards to adopt in the countries from where they import raw materials or contract out production. More communication between retailers and customers is needed. For instance, suppliers frequently fail to comply with applicable rules of conduct because they need to gain the necessary knowledge. It is a laborious process to instruct and coordinate them.
- It was discovered that CSR initiatives, organisational attractiveness, and employee satisfaction are all interconnected in a positive way. It has been shown that when CSR initiatives are carried out appropriately, they improve the company's reputation with customers, potential workers, vendors, and other stakeholders. Stakeholders develop emotional ties to a company if management takes accountability for the results of their actions and makes constructive reparations. Increased goodwill is a side benefit, but the advantage lies in the fact that it may be used to win business.

Therefore, the researcher proposes that these UK fashion retail enterprises inform their stakeholders about the value of these CSR initiatives by analysing the transcribed interviews in light of past publications. Although it was discovered that consumers are becoming more aware of socially responsible business practices, the concept is still not all-encompassing, and for business owners to carry out these CSR activities effectively, they must enlighten all of their stakeholders about the significance of these projects. Respondents also provided suggestions for expanding the reach of CSR activities beyond urban centres. Businesses must make sure their CSR projects, initiatives, and procedures actually help those in need in order for CSR to be effective. And to get there, CSR needs to adopt comprehensive strategies. Despite their lofty aspirations, however, several respondents pointed out that these corporations are not doing anything to adopt CSR. This could be due to increased prices or a shortage of available funds. Like the first problem, this one can be fixed if the relevant parties are made aware of the problems. Suppliers care about the success of their business partners and the CSR initiatives of their customers, as reported by the respondents. The term “green supply chain management” can be used by companies to ensure their suppliers are practicing

environmentally responsible business practices. By using GSCM, companies can rest assured that every step of their supply chains is taking measures to lessen their impact on the environment. Despite widespread belief to the contrary, GSCM practices actually help businesses cut expenses, boost productivity, encourage innovation, conserve resources, and secure a competitive advantage. In addition to these obvious gains, GSCM practices also help the company win over its stakeholders by increasing employee morale and output and gratifying customers. Finally, it is critical for businesses to recognise their own shortcomings and either proactively or reactively educate their suppliers and other stakeholders. Inadequate facilities in countries chosen as outsourcing destinations are another issue. Educating customers on these issues and the company’s efforts is important because research shows that customers are willing to pay more to avoid contributing to environmental damage.



Figure 12: Conceptual Framework

This framework presents a comprehensive three-stage plan aimed at bridging the knowledge gap regarding the impact of CSR on customer happiness and business attractiveness within the UK clothing industry. The first stage of the framework suggests that companies should actively engage in CSR

activities that promote economic growth, legal compliance, charitable giving, and ethical business practices. This aligns with established theories that emphasise the positive influence of CSR initiatives on customer satisfaction and firm attractiveness.

However, the second part of the framework identifies several obstacles that hinder the effective implementation of CSR initiatives by businesses. These obstacles encompass inefficient and uneducated supply networks, limited stakeholder awareness and engagement, absence of a legislative framework, inadequate financial resources, and scarcity of overall resources. By highlighting these challenges, the framework underscores the importance that firms address them in order to fully realise the benefits of their CSR efforts.

The third part of the framework presents potential solutions to address the challenges identified in the previous section. These solutions include the adoption of green supply chain management (GSCM) practices, enhancing the visibility of the company's CSR endeavours, expanding the geographical scope of CSR activities beyond metropolitan regions, and educating stakeholders about the value of CSR initiatives. By implementing these strategies, companies operating in the UK fashion sector can effectively overcome obstacles and enhance consumer satisfaction and brand appeal through impactful CSR practices.

The ultimate aim of implementing this framework is to boost sales, enhance reputation, and ensure the long-term sustainability of businesses within the UK clothing industry. By employing this three-step approach, businesses can proactively address CSR challenges and eliminate the barriers that impede the full implementation of CSR initiatives. This, in turn, facilitates the achievement of desired outcomes and establishes a solid foundation for enduring success in the industry.

6.6 Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the impact of CSR on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry. Through the analysis of various research findings and interview transcripts, several key findings have emerged, shedding light on the relationship between CSR, customer satisfaction, and organisational attractiveness.

First and foremost, it is evident that companies operating in the UK clothing industry are already actively engaged in a range of CSR initiatives. These initiatives encompass environmental sustainability, charitable contributions, and collaborations with non-profit organisations. These companies' commitment to ethical conduct and improving living standards is commendable.

However, the effective execution of CSR efforts poses certain challenges. A lack of commitment, awareness, and coordination among employees and stakeholders is a significant barrier. It is crucial for companies to foster a culture of CSR within their organisations, ensuring that all employees understand and embrace the importance of these initiatives. Additionally, there is a need for clear guidelines and standards in countries where raw materials are sourced, or to where manufacturing is outsourced. Companies should invest in educating suppliers and other stakeholders to ensure ethical practices throughout the supply chain.

The findings also highlight the positive relationship between CSR initiatives, organisational attractiveness, and employee satisfaction. Companies that effectively implement CSR activities enhance their reputation among customers, potential employees, vendors, and other stakeholders. By taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions and making positive reparations, companies develop emotional connections with stakeholders, leading to increased loyalty and goodwill. This competitive advantage strengthens the company's position in the market and enables it to outperform rivals.

Effective communication with stakeholders is essential to maximising the impact of CSR initiatives. It is crucial for companies to inform stakeholders about the value and significance of CSR projects. Clear communication not only helps in building customer trust but also enhances the perception of the company's commitment to social responsibility among employees, investors, and the general public. Transparency and clarity in CSR reporting and communication play a crucial role in ensuring the success of these initiatives.

This research also demonstrates that companies should ensure that their CSR projects address the pressing social issues faced by communities. A comprehensive approach, encompassing issues such as child labour, healthcare, education, and women's emancipation, is necessary to make a meaningful impact. By actively involving rural communities and implementing CSR programmes that cater to their specific needs, companies can contribute to sustainable development and improve the quality of life for all stakeholders.

Furthermore, the findings emphasise the significance of green supply chain management (GSCM) practices. By adopting GSCM, companies can ensure that their supply chain operations consider environmental sustainability. GSCM helps reduce costs and increase productivity, and enhances employee morale, customer loyalty, and satisfaction. Companies should prioritise environmentally responsible business practices and educate suppliers on the importance of adhering to ethical standards.

In conclusion, this study highlights the positive impact of CSR on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry. By actively engaging in CSR initiatives, companies can enhance their reputation, build customer loyalty, and outperform competitors. However, challenges such as a lack of awareness, coordination, and resources must be addressed to fully realise CSR's benefits. Effective communication with stakeholders, expansion of CSR activities beyond urban areas, and the adoption of green supply chain management practices are crucial to the success of CSR initiatives. Also, the conceptual framework presented in this study provides a three-step approach for companies to bridge the knowledge gap and overcome the challenges associated with CSR implementation. By following this framework, companies can proactively address CSR challenges, enhance customer satisfaction, and ensure long-term sustainability.

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APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:	PRITHWA BHATTACHARYA			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:	Member of staff:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Honorary research fellow:	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Undergraduate Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taught Postgraduate Student	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate Research Student <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	University of Wales Trinity Saint David			
5	Campus:	London			
6	E-mail address:	1817393@student.uwtsd.ac.uk			
7	Contact Telephone Number:				
For students:					
8	Student Number:	1817393			
9	Programme of Study:	DBA			
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	DR. Gladius David Kulothungan			

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
					Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval	Research Degrees Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	27/01/2021		
3		Institute Research Committee	<input type="checkbox"/>			
4		Other (write in)	<input type="checkbox"/>			

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	UWTSD Research Data Management Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3	UWTSD Research Student Handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared.as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓	
8	Is your research externally funded	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓	
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓
10		Employed	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ✓
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Satisfaction and Organizational attractiveness of Clothing Industry in UK		
2	Proposed start date of your research (not your course start date):	November 2020	Proposed end date:	June 2023
3	<p>Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words)</p> <p>Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Purpose of Research Activity</i> • <i>Proposed Research Question</i> • <i>Aims of Research Activity</i> • <i>Objectives of Research Activity</i> <p>Demonstrate, briefly, how <u>Existing Research</u> has informed the proposed activity and explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge</i> • <i>How it addresses an area of importance.</i> 			
4	<p>Purpose of Research Activity</p> <p>CSR has become a very important consideration in modern strategic planning of firms all around (Lynch, 2017). Companies that earn considerable amount of profit take CSR as an obligation to participate in welfare activities in society and position themselves as ‘caring organisations’ (Porter, 2005). Research shows that consumers are more willing to be associated with CSR focused companies (Diffey, 2007). Elizaveta (2010) points out that unsuccessful firms have a lack of engagement in CSR as one of the main contributors to their failure. However, bigger and successful firms have a better understanding of CSR and as such they structure and incorporate CSR well into their strategy as a way of attractiveness to customers (Lynch, 2017). This research focuses on the CSR practices of the clothing industry in the UK and how it impacts on customer satisfaction and overall attractiveness of the company for customers.</p>			
	Research Question			

	<p>The research will be conducted focusing on these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the key challenges faced by the UK clothing industry in implementing CSR practices that positively impact customer satisfaction and enhance industry attractiveness? • How have CSR practices evolved in the UK clothing industry, and what factors have influenced their adoption? • To what extent do CSR practices impact customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness in the UK clothing industry, and what are the underlying mechanisms through which this occurs?
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6	<p>Aims of Research Activity</p> <p>The aim of this study is to identify the impact of corporate social responsibility on customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness. And to analyse the level of customer satisfaction corporate social responsibility will bring in UK clothing industry.</p>
7	<p>Objectives of Research Activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explore the relation between CSR and customer satisfaction and as well as CSR and organisational attractiveness in UK clothing industry • To determine the effect of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organisational attractiveness in UK clothing companies. • To identify the challenges related to CSR practices faced by firms in the UK clothing industry • To examine and identify the opportunity for further improvements related to current CSR practices on customer satisfaction and attractiveness of clothing industries in UK. • To provide a set of recommendations to the firms to use CSR more effectively.

8	<p>Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)</p> <p>Provide a brief summary of all the methods that may be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.</p>
9	<p>Research Methodology</p> <p>The most important part of any research is to choose a proper method of research (Al Kerdawy, 2019). Qualitative methodology is based on the findings in words and narratives and qualitative study is suited when the data is difficult to be found, and sample size is small. The scope and nature of objectives and aim of the research were developed and a close scrutiny of available research methodologies suggest qualitative research methods as appropriate for this research – as this needs subjective, detailed and opinion-based data for finding out the reality behind the key issues to be discussed. So, primary data will be gathered by using semi-structured interviews from the organizational managers and key customer segments. Researcher will collect data from Primark, Topshop, and Marks and Spencer. To verify the findings from previous studies, the researcher will also conduct systematic review and identify if the findings of current study presented something new, or the findings are consistent with available evidence. The interviews will be conducted with 10 customers and 1 manager in each three companies. The interview questionnaire is developed on the basis of research objectives and informed by an extensive review of the literature.</p> <p>Research approach</p> <p>Research approach is an integral part of any research work and it is also an important part of this research study (Situmorang, 2019). In this study, the researcher has opted for an inductive approach. This approach would be helpful to understand the ethical standards and stand of managers, and customers with respect to CSR in the clothing industry in the UK. Particular emphasis will be placed on the current treatment and compensation mechanisms in place for the production staff of the clothing made.</p> <p>Design of the research</p>

In this research study, the researcher has selected the exploratory approach of design which involves subjective knowledge of key respondents, with an inductive analysis of data.

Data collection methods

In this study, primary data will be collected from, managers by visiting these three companies and customers through interviews. Secondary data will be collected from several existing journal, books, article and also from existing documentations related to CSR activities from each of these three UK clothing companies.

Questionnaire (for Managers)

- 1.What are the CSR activities of your company and how your company deal with it
- 2.Do you feel that your company can do more activities towards society
- 3.Do you think customers are really concerned about CSR activities of the company
- 4.What do you think how CSR can affect customer satisfaction and organisational-attractiveness
- 5.Do you organise training sessions to enhance the understanding of CSR
- 6.Have employees participated in external CSR training
- 7.Does your company participate in any voluntary CSR initiatives
- 8.Have your company set CSR requirements towards suppliers
- 9.What is the decision and opinion of management about CSR?
- 10.What is the future plan of your company about CSR?

Questionnaire (for Customers)

1. Are you really concerned about the CSR activities of the company
2. Could CSR practices influence your decision to purchase from a company
- 3.Can you give an example of when any of these responsible business practices have impacted your purchasing decisions, if yes please specify

	<p>4.What's your opinion about present CSR work that done by Clothing Industry?</p> <p>5.Are you satisfied with the actions taken by this industry towards society and its population?</p> <p>6.Which of the following social irresponsible behavior would impact your purchasing decisions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use of child labor in production Poor treatment of staff e.g., through pay gap between men and women. Poor service towards customers Business operations causing harm to the environment. <p>7. What they can do to increase effectiveness of CSR work?</p> <p>8. Are you aware of any of the socially responsible or irresponsible behaviors of the clothing industries</p> <p>9. What your further expectations are from clothing industry in terms of CSR activities?</p> <p>10. What is gender and age</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>In this research study, the research has chosen thematic analysis approach to analyze the collected data. Researchers can develop emerging major themes from the data according to the needs of objective and collected data of research. Themes can be selected based on those data, theory and ideas which come repeatedly at the time of research. After that it can make decisions on themes by analysis of primary and secondary data.</p>
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10	<p>Location of research activity</p> <p>Identify all locations where research activity will take place.</p>
11	<p>This research will be conducted in the UK only. The research team will visit three companies related to clothing industries in UK and have a detailed discussion with their managers to ask some research related questions to collect the primary data for the research.</p>

12	<p>Research activity outside of the UK</p> <p>If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g., from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.</p>
13	No, this research will only be conducted in the UK. The researcher has chosen three clothing companies in UK to do the research work. There are no outside influences that are involved in this research study.

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents <u>NOT</u> publicly available?	NO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
		YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	<p>If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	Will the research activity include:	YES	NO
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Use of interviews?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Use of diaries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Use of video or audio recording?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
16	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	Who are the intended participants:		
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		YES	NO
2	Students or staff at the University?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Vulnerable adults?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18?(Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Prisoners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Young offenders?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

12	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	The research team will visit three companies that are related to clothing industry and the team will ask questions to every manager that is available in the company. So, total managers of these three companies could be 30.
14	Who will the participants be?	The research team has selected all the managers to be the participants of this research project.
15	How will you identify the participants?	The visiting information of our research team will be informed earlier to the companies by our team and our team will identify

		those managers as we will have the appointments to meet the managers.
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16	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	<p>The research team has chosen three companies to do the research work and they will also take appointments of all the managers to the research work properly and also the managers can do their own work for the organization.</p> <p>As the research will be done within a short amount of participants and all of their feedbacks will be valuable to understand the current situation of CSR in the market. So, telling them that they can withdraw their participation can hamper the understanding of the CSR research.</p>			

28	Information for participants:	YES	NO	N/A
29	Will participants be paid?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 100px; width: 100%;"></div> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.		
<p>If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.</p>			
2	Full risk assessment completed and appended?	Yes	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
		No	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Risks to participants		
<p>For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data,</p>			

	sensitive organisational information	
4	<p>Risk to Participant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participant might get disturbed while asking the question as that person will be involved in his own work and this session will be time consuming. Due to that the participant can be disturbed because of work stress. 2. The data will be collected from the participants and there is a slight change of misplace of data. This could happen if some theft activity happens. 	<p>How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The team will ask the person for his convenient time so the work pressure of that person would be less and with the help of this way, the person won't be stressed due to workload. 2. This issue can be solved by keeping supervision on the data that have collected from the managers.
5	<p>If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g., sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g., criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g., helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities</p>	
	<p>Research activity has no sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topic or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>	
6	<p>Risks to investigator</p> <p>For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest</p>	
	<p>Risk to Investigator:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The researcher will be responsible to get the required data for the research. During data 	<p><i>How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This risk can be overcome by motivating the researcher to do the task well and also encourage the researcher to collect the data calmly.

	collection time some of the person will neglect to provide data at a first attempt and the researcher might try many attempts to get the proper data. This situation makes the researcher distressed.	
7	University/institutional risks For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	
	Risk to University: 1. Data protection 2. Lack of appropriate study material or resources with reference to research	1. Submit the project and research data in secured process such as in password protected file or pen drive. 2. Researcher can talk library authority and teachers for necessity books and journals in addition can purchase books from online or offline stores.

8	Disclosure and Barring Service			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	YES	NO	N/A
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	Feedback What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
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	The feedback will be provided by the research team after analyzing the data that have been collected from the participants. The feedback will include some topics like, the effect and impact of CSR in the current scenario and as per the data provided by the participants the feedback will be provided according to that. After successful completion of the research, three feedback sessions will be conducted and one session will be each for three companies at their premises.
2	Informed consent Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The research team will inform the participants that the background of this research and all the consent will be taken by the research team through phone calls.
3	Confidentiality / Anonymity Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	The confidentiality of the data will be taken care by the researcher as he will be the person to analyse the data.

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (<http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/>).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	YES	NO
	<i>"Personal data" means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.		
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	YES	NO
	“Special category data” means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects’ – (a) racial or ethnic origin, (b) political opinions, (c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature, (d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992), I physical or mental health or condition, (f) sexual life, (g) genetics, (h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	YES	NO
6	Manual files (i.e., in paper form)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	University computers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Private company computers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Home or other personal computers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Other – specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	<p>Researcher can use his laptop for store data and confidentiality of data. Laptop of researcher is secured and authentic for storing data in addition he can store data in additional drive for its security. In addition, this has to be mentioned that everything will be end-to-end encrypted and for this, it will be difficult for any third party to manipulate data. Moreover, as per the data protection act of 2018, all data and information will be securely stored.</p> <p><i>(this box should expand as you type)</i></p>		
14	All Data Storage		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
22	Use of data management system?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	Data archiving?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	The secondary data that will be used to do the research has been taken from electronic platform.		

	<p>Personal mobile phones have been used to convey all the details to the participants to get their consents.</p> <p>The data management system has been used to fetch all the collected data and it also helped to maintain the data properly.</p>		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	<p>Only few subordinates of the research team have the access to the data that are involved in the research activity.</p>		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The researcher will be the custodian of the data that have been generated from the research.		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not, why not.		
	All the data will be stored in the personal computer of the researcher and there will be a security protocol that will require password to access the data.		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. <i>(Most relevant to academic staff)</i>		
	<i>(this box should expand as you type)</i>		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	YES	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
		NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	YES	✓ <input type="checkbox"/>
		NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION K: Declaration

31	<p>The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.</p> <p>In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/</p>		
	Signature of applicant:	Prithwa Bhattacharya	Date: 30/03/2021

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	DR. Gladius David Kulothungan Dr. Doreen Nyaa Amundam	Date:
33	Signature:	Gladius Kulothungan Doreen Nyaa Amundam	30/03/2021

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		Date:
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I have completed ALL RELEVANT sections of the form in full.

✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (where appropriate)
✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT
✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
✓ <input type="checkbox"/>	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY

All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk, with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.

You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore **it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.**

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:
<https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/>

Appendix 2: Consent Form:

Consent Form

Research Topic

Impact of Corporate social Responsibility on customer satisfaction
and organizational attractiveness of the clothing industry in the UK

Name of the researcher: Prithwa Bhattacharya

Name of Supervisor (DoS): Dr. Gladius David Kulothungan

Please tick the box that applies

(This consent form will remain with the University of the Wales Trinity Saint David for the records)

I confirm that I agree to take part in the above study. Yes ☐ No ☐

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study. I have been provided with information at my level of comprehension about the purpose, method, demand, risk, inconvenience and possible outcomes of this research including, any likelihood and form of publication of results. Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow the interview to be audiotaped Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that any information that may identify me will be recognized at the time of analysis of any data. Therefore, any information that I have provided cannot be linked to me (*Privacy Act 1988 C*) Yes ☐ No ☐

Sign and date

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____

Appendix 3: Participation Sheet:

You are invited to take part in the following study.

Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness of the clothing industry in the UK

Your participation is entirely on your choice. If you don't want to part, you don't have to give a reason. If you want to take part now but change your mind later can pull out of the study at any time.

It is very crucial to understand why the research is being done before taking part in this study. This participant Information sheet is important to provide to the participants who decide to take part. It sets out what is the purpose of the study, what your participation would involve, what the benefits and risks to you and what would happen after the study ends. We will go through the information and answer any questions you may have.

Purpose of the study

The **aim** of this study is to identify the impact of corporate social responsibility on customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness in the clothing industry of UK and provide guidelines and suggestions for the UK clothing industry on how they can improve their CSR activities to improve customer satisfaction and organizational structure. The **Objectives** of this study are:

- To analyze the current CSR practices of UK clothing companies
- To identify the challenges and barriers that firms in the UK clothing industry face in implementing effective CSR practices
- To investigate the impact of CSR activities on customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness in UK clothing companies.
- To provide recommendations to the firms to use CSR more effectively.

Additional Information

- Your participation is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do decide to do so, you will be requested to sign a consent form. However, you will still be free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.
- If you take part in the interview, a face-to-face semi-structured interview will be conducted which will take 10-20 minutes.
- The information you will provide will be confidential. The researcher will store all the research data on her laptop, which is password protected and only researcher and the supervisory team will have the access to it.
- Your name and signature will only be taken for proof of reading the participant sheet and the consent form-these will not be used in any other way.
- Each participant will be coded with virtual name such as P1, P2, P3, P4 to maintain anonymity.
- If you have any concern about any aspect of this study or need any further information, you can always contact the researcher using the contact details below.

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Interview Questionnaire for Managers

- Q1.** What is your position/role in this business?
- Q2.** What CSR activities/practices are practiced in this company/business?
- Q3.** What are the various ways/strategies of practicing CSR in this company/business?
- Q4.** Can you identify any relationship between CSR and customer satisfaction in this company? If you can, can you explain please?
- Q5.** Can you identify any relationship between CSR and organizational attractiveness in this company? If you can, can you explain please?
- Q6.** Do you think CSR practices in this company affect customer satisfaction? If yes, can you explain, please?
- Q7.** Do you think CSR practices in this company affect organizational attractiveness? If yes, can you explain, please?
- Q8.** What are the shortcomings of CSR practices/activities in this company?
- Q9.** What challenges are being faced by this company in practicing CSR?
- Q10.** What consequence may face by UK clothing industry if they do not implement CSR strategies?
- Q11.** What opportunity this company can take for further improvements related to current CSR practices on customer satisfaction of clothing industries in UK?
- Q12.** What opportunity this company can take for further improvements related to current CSR practices on attractiveness of clothing industries in UK?
- Q13.** According to your view, what is the important of stakeholder involvement in implementing CSR strategies in UK clothing industry?

Q14. In your view what initiatives as CSR strategy this company can take to improve customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness?

Q15. In your view how does this company can implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness?

Q16. In your view how does this company can implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness?

Q17. In your view how does this company can implement CSR strategy to improve customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness?

Q18. In your view how does this company can implement CSR strategy to improve its business codes and compliance?

Q19. If you have any other ideas or suggestions regarding the improvement of CSR practices/strategies in UK clothing industry to improve customer satisfaction and organizational attractiveness, please explain

Thank You for Participation

Interview Questionnaire For customers

Q1. What is your age?

- a.** Less than 20
- b.** 21-30
- c.** 31-40
- d.** 41-50

- e. Above 50

Q2. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. other

Q3. What is your occupation?

Q4. Which city/town do you reside in?

Q5. What is your highest level of education?

- a. Doctoral degree
- b. Postgraduate
- c. Undergraduate
- d. Highschool
- e. Primary school
- f. Other (please specify)

Q6. What is your level of knowledge the term CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility?

Q7. How important is to you that companies operate on a socially responsible level?

Q8. In your opinion, what are the top three reasons a clothing company may adopt social and environmental responsible practices?

- a. To promote corporate image and reputation
- b. To increase efficiency in business
- c. Greater employee satisfaction
- d. Greater customer satisfaction
- e. Philanthropy
- f. Pressure from community groups
- g. Others (please specify)

Q9. Please rank the following in order of the importance they have on your purchasing behavior.

- a. Price
- b. Quality
- c. Marketing reputation
- d. CSR reputation

e. Social influence (friends, family etc.)

Q10. If a company had proven poor track record of CSR, would you stop purchasing products?

Q11. To what extent are you aware of that the company's CSR activities?

- a. Fully aware
- b. Aware
- c. Not aware
- d. Do not care.
- e. Other (please specify)

Q12. Do you know this clothing company you're purchasing from has CSR report?

Q13. Have you ever read the CSR report of the company?

Q14. Would you recommend any company based on its' CSR practices?

Q15. Do you have any more comments or ideas which you want to share on CSR in clothing companies in UK?

Q16. May I contact you for any follow up that may be required? If yes, please provide the following:

Email Address:

Contact Number:

Thank You for Participation