The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer happiness and brand admiration

Petek Tosun

*Department of Business Administration, Kadir Has Universitesi,
Istanbul, Turkey, and*

Nihat Tavşan

Department of Business Administration, Piri Reis University, Istanbul, Turkey

Abstract

Purpose – This study examines the effect of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumer happiness and brand admiration as a consequence of consumer happiness. It suggests an original conceptual model that investigates perceived CSR, ethical consumption and hope as antecedents of consumer happiness.

Design/methodology/approach – The study followed a quantitative approach. A face-to-face survey was conducted to examine the conceptual model. Data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

Findings – Hope and perceived CSR significantly influence consumer happiness. Consumer happiness is a significant antecedent of brand admiration. Although consumers' ethical position (idealism and relativism) is linked to ethical consumption, ethical consumption does not influence consumer happiness. Idealism and relativism are insignificant in moderating the perceived CSR–consumer happiness relationship.

Practical implications – Brands' CSR actions create a positive atmosphere and contribute to consumer happiness and brand admiration. Managers can emphasize happiness and hope in CSR programs to build stronger consumer relationships. CSR activities can be engaging for consumers regardless of their ethical consumption levels.

Originality/value – Although CSR, consumer happiness and their impacts on consumer–brand relationships are crucial, previous studies mainly focused on the organizational perspective and employee emotions regarding CSR. This study focused on consumer happiness in the CSR context and tested a conceptual model that revealed the significant relationships between hope, perceived CSR, consumer happiness and brand admiration. It extended previous findings by showing the direct positive impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness.

Keywords Consumer happiness, Hope, Corporate social responsibility, Idealism, Relativism, Brand admiration

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Happiness, a subjective condition in which an individual feels good and functions effectively in various life domains, has gathered significant public and scholarly attention in the last decade (Chia *et al.*, 2020). Organizations can contribute to consumer happiness through corporate social responsibility (CSR), which can be defined as the commitment of a company to achieve and improve long-term environmental, societal and economic well-being (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019; Strotmann *et al.*, 2019; Chia *et al.*, 2020). CSR aims to support the well-being of society, contribute to stakeholder happiness and benefit companies (Chun, 2016; Strotmann *et al.*, 2019). Companies can shape their CSR strategies to achieve the current and long-term well-being of generations and integrate CSR into their communication strategies to manage the opinions of their stakeholders about their contributions to sustainable development (García-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). CSR can foster happiness as consumers feel happier when they perceive firms are supporting their internal and external stakeholders (Schellong *et al.*, 2019).

Understanding the antecedents and consequences of consumer happiness is critical since it contributes to achieving a competitive advantage and increases brand revenues and

consumer retention (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2022). Building positive emotions and increasing the happiness of their customers and employees is recommended to be integrated into the strategic directions of companies to build sustainable competitive advantage (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2021). When consumers see that a brand contributes to the environment and society, they build positive emotions toward the brand (Gupta *et al.*, 2021). The link between CSR, consumer happiness and brand perceptions must be investigated because brands can use CSR to foster happiness and brand admiration and many corporations include CSR with substantial budgets in their corporate agendas. Besides, understanding the antecedents and consequences of happiness benefits managers, society and policy-makers since happiness significantly influences individuals' decision-making and economic behavior (Lane, 2017).

Brand admiration is a relatively new construct in consumer–brand relationships and it is crucial to examine its antecedents (Rohra and Sharma, 2016; Trivedi and Sama, 2020). In particular, studies focusing on brand admiration and happiness are scarce (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019). Admiration is crucial to elevating a brand's CSR activities from sole image-building to real customer advocacy (Jung and La, 2020). Brand admiration provides numerous benefits to a brand, such as brand passion and loyalty (Rohra and Sharma, 2016) and increased consumer engagement, which are crucial for a strong brand (Aaker *et al.*, 2012). Besides, it is a significant predictor of purchase intentions (Trivedi and Sama, 2020; Gupta *et al.*, 2021), advocacy (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019) and emotional brand attachment (Joo and Kim, 2021).

Despite the increased importance of consumer happiness, the knowledge regarding the relationship between CSR activities and consumers' psychological conditions is still limited (Jaunky *et al.*, 2020; Chia and Kern, 2021; Dhiman and Kumar, 2022). Researchers have given little attention to the impact of CSR on consumers' happiness and instead focused mostly on employee responses to CSR (Chia *et al.*, 2020; Chia and Kern, 2021). In particular, the mechanisms that describe the relationship between perceived CSR and consumer behavior must be understood better (Ahn, 2021). Considering the importance of the link between CSR, consumer happiness and brand admiration and addressing a critical gap in the literature, this study examines the effect of perceived CSR on consumer happiness and brand admiration as the consequence of consumer happiness. It suggests an original conceptual model that investigates perceived CSR, ethical consumption and hope as antecedents of consumer happiness.

Hope is an optimistic future perspective (Okazaki *et al.*, 2019) and a positive motivational state (Bryce *et al.*, 2020) that can independently influence a consumer's happiness besides perceived CSR. Although hope is a highly relevant concept in marketing and consumer behavior (MacInnis and Chun, 2007) and is closely related to happiness, its ambiguous relationship with happiness needs further study (Pleeging *et al.*, 2021). To address this gap in the literature, this study examines the impact of hope on consumer happiness. Besides hope, ethical consumption behavior is included as a predictor of consumer happiness. Although ethics and CSR are distinct concepts, they share an apparent link (Vitell *et al.*, 2003). Examining hope, happiness, ethical consumption and CSR perceptions together will contribute to the literature because studies that focus on the influence of ethical consumption on happiness are scarce (Xiao and Li, 2011; Goo, 2020; Fei *et al.*, 2022) and understanding the ethical aspects of consumer behavior is critical in marketing (Vitell and Muncy, 2005). Finally, the influence of consumers' diverse personal ethical perspectives was considered in the research model since highly diverse unique ethical perspectives must be examined as they are closely related to judgments and the CSR–happiness relationship, i.e. substantial research on positive psychology and CSR has focused on individuals' ethical behavior at work (Forsyth, 1980; Treise *et al.*, 1994; Chia and Kern, 2021). However, little is known about how consumers' moral characteristics influence consumer emotions in the CSR context, which calls for further studies focusing on moral virtues as moderators (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019).

Literature review

Definition of happiness

Happiness can be defined as a broad term that includes the subjective assessment of the overall favorableness of life, positive affection and having a good life realized through virtuous character and behavior (Bettingen and Luedicke, 2009; Sääksjärvi and Hellén, 2013; Chun, 2016). Chia *et al.* (2020) explained happiness as a whole concept that covered hedonic, objective, subjective and eudaimonic aspects. Although happiness can be considered an aspect of subjective well-being, a broader term (Stone and Krueger, 2018), happiness and subjective well-being are often used interchangeably, while happiness is the popular term (Diener, 2000). Happiness is explained as subjective well-being and life satisfaction (Jaunky *et al.*, 2020). Subjective well-being is generally measured in three ways; (1) self-evaluation of satisfaction from life as a whole, (2) experiential well-being that consists of emotions and (3) eudaimonic well-being that is associated with one's beliefs about the purpose and meaning of life (Stone and Krueger, 2018). Similarly, Diener and Ryan (2009) define subjective well-being as the level of experienced well-being associated with an individual's general evaluation of life and the feelings and judgments about life satisfaction and emotional reactions to life events. Well-being can be examined from two perspectives; the hedonic definition of happiness, which emphasizes pleasure and the eudaimonic definition, which focuses on self-realization and the meaning of life (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

Within that context, this research will follow Diener (2000), Ryan and Deci (2001), Diener and Ryan (2009) and Pleeging *et al.* (2021) and define happiness as a term that covers subjective well-being, present positive emotions, the general satisfaction with life, and the overall emotional and cognitive assessment of life. This definition of consumer happiness is subjective happiness that covers hedonic happiness, emotions such as joy associated with one's environmental engagement and eudaimonic happiness, a subjective sense of meaning in life (Chia *et al.*, 2020; Fei *et al.*, 2022). This definition accepts that subjective well-being's cognitive and emotional elements are interrelated; a person's assessment that something makes life meaningful and more satisfactory relates to their feelings (Ahuvia and Friedman, 1998; Diener, 2000).

CSR and consumer happiness

CSR can be defined as the voluntary activities of organizations that include environmental and social concerns in business operations and stakeholder relations (Van Marrewijk, 2003). Carroll (2015) has defined CSR as the social initiatives of brands that aim to give back to society by expanding their activities beyond legal and economic issues. CSR is the commitment of a company to design its business operations, aiming to achieve long-term environmental, societal and economic well-being (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019). CSR is an applied field of positive psychology, an area in psychology that focuses on personal strengths and ways to improve and flourish people rather than preventing and treating deficiencies (Chia *et al.*, 2020; Chia and Kern, 2021). Positive psychology analyzes subjective well-being or happiness as an individual's general affective and cognitive evaluation of life (Diener, 2000).

Over the past decades, brands in various sectors are cultivating consumers' happiness by promising products and positive experiences that will make consumers happy (Mogilner *et al.*, 2012; Fei *et al.*, 2022). Designing business concepts for happiness can exceed hedonic pleasure and superficial value propositions and aim to be authentic and contribute to consumer happiness (Sääksjärvi and Hellén, 2013). Thus, CSR can enrich and enhance any customer-oriented business concept by including a good purpose and socially fulfilling elements. In this perspective, responsible management is closely connected to social life and significantly influences society's governance of the common good (Chia and Kern, 2021).

Companies can contribute to people's happiness in the subjective, hedonic, objective and eudaimonic aspects through their CSR activities (Chia *et al.*, 2020). With the contribution of appropriate CSR activities, consumer happiness can flourish people by ensuring an

individual's optimal functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2001). Besides supporting society, making consumers happy benefits firms as an effective marketing strategy that leads to emotional brand connection and loyalty (Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Yoshida *et al.*, 2021). Depending on information processing and cognition, consumers who perceive a high level of CSR activity are more likely to develop brand identification and engagement (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019). For example, engaging with social media marketing content or exposure to social media marketing can influence consumer happiness (Lee *et al.*, 2021). Consumer perceptions of a brand influence consumer happiness by changing the interpretations of a pleasing, engaged and meaningful life about a particular brand (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2022). Within that context, companies' CSR actions contribute to the positive psychological states of consumers (Ahn, 2021) and positively impact consumer advocacy (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019), positive word-of-mouth (Markovic *et al.*, 2022), consumer happiness (Schellong *et al.*, 2019) and consumer trust and well-being (Su and Swanson, 2019). Therefore,

H1. Perceived CSR influences consumer happiness.

Hope and consumer happiness
Hope is a positive emotion associated with beliefs and expectations about the uncertain but possible realization of a goal-congruent outcome and a pleasant future (MacInnis and De Mello, 2005; Kemp *et al.*, 2017; Okazaki *et al.*, 2019). Hope can increase people's ability to imagine and figure out alternative ways to reach positive outcomes and goals (Lam *et al.*, 2021). Hope is a positive motivational state influencing individuals' functioning (Bryce *et al.*, 2020). People with higher hope levels have higher degrees of belief about their future-oriented competency and goal achievement, which leads to fewer mental health symptoms (Lenz, 2021). In alignment with previous studies, the current study defines hope as a set of perceived capabilities and possibilities to reach goals (MacInnis and Chun, 2007).

Hope is a crucial and positive psychological construct significantly correlated with happiness (Lam *et al.*, 2021) and a person's life enjoyment (Pleeging *et al.*, 2021). Hopeful people are less likely to be affected by adverse events as they can figure out more ways to resist or remain resilient (Okazaki *et al.*, 2019). Hope appeals in advertising effectively promote positive attitudes and intentions to use a service provider (Kemp *et al.*, 2017). Hope relates to consumer purchase decisions and behavior (Okazaki *et al.*, 2019). For example, hope influences customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Huseynli and Mammadova, 2022). Hope contributes to well-being as hopeful people are more likely to focus on positive things around them and perceive fewer obstacles (Lopez *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, hope is negatively related to negative psychological feelings like anxiety (Bryce *et al.*, 2020). Thus,

H2. Hope influences consumer happiness.

Ethical consumption and consumer happiness
Ethical consumption is doing good, not benefiting from illegal things and environmental awareness in consumption (Vitell and Muncy, 2005). Ethical consumption is linked to solving social problems during consumption and influences consumer happiness (Fei *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, Goo (2020) reported that ethical consumption consciousness positively influences life meaning and happiness. In other studies, sustainable consumption (Guillen-Royo, 2019), prosocial spending and green purchase behavior (Xiao and Li, 2011) are positively linked with life satisfaction and happiness. Personal motivations focused on self-actualization through ethical purchases lead to happiness (Hwang and Kim, 2018). The self-determination theory can also explain these findings (Ryan and Deci, 2000) because feeling autonomous and competent by regulating personal consumption in alignment with ethical values can contribute to needs satisfaction and well-being. Thus,

H3. Ethical consumption influences consumer happiness.

Ethics position and ethical consumption
A person's ethical ideology is a set of values, attitudes and beliefs that influence their ethical judgments about the morality of specific actions (Barnett *et al.*, 1994). A consumer's ethical position, ideology or moral philosophy is explained in two dimensions: idealism and relativism, which have been the most influential in the literature and validated across cultures (Forsyth, 1980; Treise *et al.*, 1994; MacNab *et al.*, 2011). Relativism and idealism determine the ethical beliefs of consumers and shape a person's perceptions of consumer actions as ethical or unethical (Vitell and Paolillo, 2003; Vitell and Muncy, 2005). Moral philosophy also influences consumer judgments about a business practice as right or wrong and consequently affects consumer behavior (Treise *et al.*, 1994; Dubinsky *et al.*, 2005). Besides, consumers' moral virtues moderate the relationship between CSR perception and brand admiration (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019),

Idealism refers to an individual's attitudes regarding the consequences of specific actions on others' welfare (Barnett *et al.*, 1994). Idealists think the inherent goodness of a particular activity must guide a behavior regardless of the outcomes (Treise *et al.*, 1994; Vitell and Paolillo, 2003). People who score high on idealism are intrinsically more likely to behave ethically (Vitell and Paolillo, 2003). Idealists believe it is incorrect to do something that harms others, even to pursue a higher good, and all actions should have positive outcomes (Barnett *et al.*, 1994).

Relativism can be explained as the rejection of universal ethical rules (Forsyth, 1980). Relativists think that no single set of moral principles can formulate what is right or wrong for everyone at all times and places (Treise *et al.*, 1994). Relativists believe that moral judgments can vary among individuals, absolute ethical principles do not exist, and action is moral if it produces the maximum good consequences in a given situation (Barnett *et al.*, 1994; Vitell and Paolillo, 2003). Within that context, this research suggests that relativism and idealism influence ethical consumption because what is excellent and correct changes from person to person. Thus,

H4. Idealism influences ethical consumption.

H5. Relativism influences ethical consumption.

Ethics position as a moderator
Brands' CSR actions can create happiness, and the level of happiness can vary among individuals. Happiness is related to one's ethical philosophy, like enjoying pleasant experiences or conducting virtuous behavior (Chia *et al.*, 2020). Virtuousness can lead to happiness for oneself and others (Chun, 2016), and brands' CSR actions can make consumers feel happy depending on their ethical ideology. Company CSR actions can be ethically virtuous (O'Mara-Shimek *et al.*, 2015) and can lead to different levels of consumer happiness depending on individuals' idealism and relativism levels. Ethical ideologies shape consumers' CSR perceptions (Palihawadana *et al.*, 2016) and consequent emotions by moderating the impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness (Barnett *et al.*, 1994). Some consumers may feel happier than others when they see companies' CSR actions depending on their ethical ideology because happiness can stem from a sensation of meaningfulness in life (Lam *et al.*, 2021). Happiness is related to an individual's assessment of the overall favorableness of life (Veenhoven *et al.*, 2021), and individuals can interpret the meaningfulness of CSR actions from their ethical perspectives.

A consumer's moral identity significantly interacts with perceived CSR, influencing consumer advocacy and CSR engagement (Jung and La, 2020). For example, consumers' moral virtues condition the impact of CSR practices on consumer attitudes and consumers with higher integrity present higher admiration for CSR practices (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019). Individuals with low relativism or absolutists (Barnett *et al.*, 1994) can be more likely to

interpret CSR actions as mandatory for a business since they believe there is an absolutely correct way of running a company contributing to society. Similarly, a high idealism can change the relationship strength between perceived CSR and consumers' happiness. Idealism influences CSR's perceived importance (Palihawadana *et al.*, 2016). For example, Vitell *et al.* (2003) have found that idealistic employees perceive CSR as more critical in achieving an organization's long-term goals. In another study, business students' ethical idealism levels have been found as a significant predictor of CSR implementation intentions in their future companies (Ham *et al.*, 2019). It can be expected that the more idealistic a consumer is, the more they will feel positively regarding a brand's CSR actions. Therefore,

H6. Idealism moderates the impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness.

H7. Relativism moderates the impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness.

Consumer happiness and brand admiration

Aaker *et al.* (2012) define brand admiration as a powerful emotion that produces positive behavioral consequences. Brand trust, positive brand experiences and brand identification are the primary reasons for admiring a brand (Rohra and Sharma, 2016). Besides, brand attitude (Trivedi and Sama, 2020) and impressive and unique experiences (Rohra and Sharma, 2016) influence brand admiration. Brand admiration, the most vital element in a long-lasting customer-brand relationship, is associated with virtuous qualities and morally admirable actions that accomplish perceived benefits or usefulness and pleasure of the brand (Rohra and Sharma, 2016). Consumers' judgments of brand competence and warmth contribute to brand admiration (Aaker *et al.*, 2012). Perceived authenticity of CSR activities and corporate self-sacrifice positively influence brand admiration (Jung and La, 2020). A brand that expresses good intentions toward people on its social media pages achieves brand admiration (Joo and Kim, 2021). Within that context, helping others and behaving responsibly may elicit positive emotions that would build brand admiration.

A shared vision between a consumer and a brand determines consumer brand identification, which predicts consumer loyalty (Yoshida *et al.*, 2021). Appropriate CSR actions positively affect consumer admiration (Castro-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2019; Gupta *et al.*, 2021; Modyop *et al.*, 2022). CSR association, or a consumer's awareness and beliefs about a company's responsible behavior, positively influences the consumer's brand identification and affective commitment and loyalty to the brand (Fatma *et al.*, 2016). People who feel happy due to a brand's CSR activities may admire the brand as happiness is closely related to consumer feelings and behavior (Ahuvia and Friedman, 1998; Yoshida *et al.*, 2021) and loyalty (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2021). Happier consumers may be more likely to develop brand commitment, while unhappy consumers may be more doubtful (Belanche *et al.*, 2013).

According to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions increase individuals' social and psychological resources. For example, CSR actions that stimulated hope contributed to customer-brand connections (Ahn, 2021). Besides, higher life satisfaction and well-being improve physical health, sociability and trusting behavior (Diener and Ryan, 2009). A frequent experience of happiness and hope constitutes positive thinking, which can help a person in multiple domains, such as building social relationships (Naseem and Khalid, 2010). Thus, people with more positive emotions are more likely to build strong relationships and be open to new impressions. Depending on the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, Ahn (2021) showed that a hotel's CSR activities positively influence customers' engagement because perceived CSR affects customers' emotions, broadening their emotional and cognitive connection with a brand. Consumer happiness influences brand loyalty, which composes the willingness and intention to continue purchasing, recommending and preferring the brand as the first choice

(Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2022). The influence of customer brand identification on consumer loyalty is contingent on consumer happiness (Yoshida *et al.*, 2021). Therefore,

H8. Consumer happiness influences brand admiration.

Methodology

The current study has a quantitative research approach. The conceptual model has been examined by a consumer survey. Data were analyzed with partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework.

Data collection

Data were collected at five different locations in the city center of İzmir, Turkey, using the face-to-face survey method. To keep the involvement level of the participants high, the research assistants directed the questions to the respondents themselves. They made the markings on the questionnaire according to the answers given. A convenience sampling was implemented where passers-by who volunteered for the survey were recruited. Participation was voluntary, and no incentives were offered. Five hundred eighty-two respondents were recruited for the study. Six of the respondents left the survey unfinished, citing various reasons, so the total number of surveys analyzed was 576.

Scales

Consumer happiness items were adapted from the short depression-happiness scale of Joseph *et al.* (2004). Ethics position was measured using the ethics position scale of Forsyth (1980), which is a general measure that can be applied to measure moral ideology in almost any context related to ethical judgment (Treise *et al.*, 1994). Perceived CSR items were adapted from Su and Swanson (2019) and Markovic *et al.* (2022), where the brand admiration scale was based on the study of Castro-Gonzalez *et al.* (2019). The brand used in the survey was a food brand that is a dominant market player in Turkey in a broad range of products in many categories, such as biscuits, chocolates, cakes, snacks, cereals, yogurt, milk and chewing
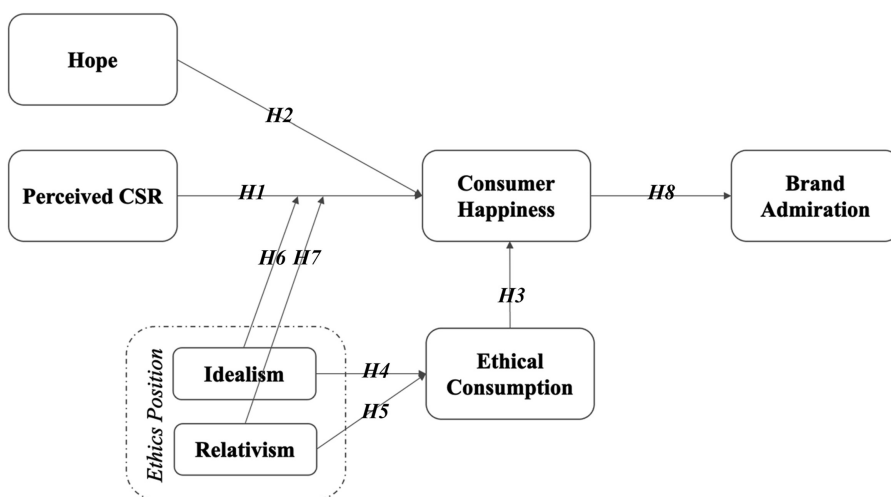
Source(s): Illustrated by the authors

Figure 1.
The conceptual model

gums. The brand was selected due to high consumer awareness and wide availability as a snack brand all around Turkey in almost all retail shopping points. Besides, it has been recently chosen as the "Lovemark" of Turkey in the snacks category. It frequently uses the "happiness" theme in its marketing communication. A pilot study was carried out following the creation of the questionnaire to measure the reliability of measurement instruments. Before the final data collection, it was ensured that the participants understood the questions and answered comfortably. The sources and sample items for scales are outlined in Table 1.

Analysis method
SmartPLS v3 was used to perform confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and path analysis. The SmartPLS program is a variance-based measurement approach and is accepted as a reliable analysis program for measuring the relationships between variables (Dash and Paul, 2021). The moderation analyses were performed through the product indicator approach (Hair *et al.*, 2021), which refers to generating the interaction term through the multiplication of each indicator of the moderation variable by each indicator of the independent variable (Chin *et al.*, 2003). Some aspects make PLS-SEM superior to covariance-based structural equation modeling as PLS-SEM can reliably analyze data in non-normal distribution, test complex models, explore with a smaller number of observations and can carry out both formative and reflective analysis while covariance-based SEM cannot execute (Sarstedt *et al.*, 2020). However, to ensure the reliability of the study, the confirmatory factor analysis was first performed in a variance-based SEM program (SmartPLS) and then in a covariance-based

Construct	Number of items	Sample items	Reference
Perceived CSR (PCSR)	5	The brand is an environmentally responsible brand The brand contributes to society in positive ways	Su and Swanson (2019), Markovic *et al.* (2022)
Consumer Happiness (CH)	6	When I am notified about a CSR activity, I feel happy When I see the CSR activity of the company, I feel pleased	Joseph *et al.* (2004)
Hope	12	I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me I have been pretty successful in life	Okazaki *et al.* (2019)
Ethical Position Idealism (EPI)	10	If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done One should never psychologically or physically harm another person	Forsyth (1980)
Ethical Position Relativism (EPR)	10	There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be part of any code of ethics What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another	Forsyth (1980)
Ethical Consumption (EC)	9	I correct a bill that has been miscalculated in my favor I do not purchase products from companies that I believe don't treat their employees fairly	Vitell-Muncy (2005)
Brand Admiration (BA)	5	I feel admiration when I think about the brand I feel respect when I think about the brand	Castro-Gonzalez *et al.* (2019)

Table 1.
Constructs and scales

SEM program (IBM Amos), and the results were comparatively interpreted. This comparison aims to clinch the reliability of the study's results.

Findings

Descriptive statistics

Fifty percent of the sample was female, while 50% was male. The average age of the participants was 32.35 (SD = 7,81; Age_{Min} = 16, Age_{Max} = 73). The age difference test across genders yielded an insignificant result (p = n.s.; $\bar{x}_{Female}$ = 32.19, SD_{Female} = 7.93; $\bar{x}_{Male}$ = 32.52, SD_{Male} = 7.71). The education distribution of the sample was measured ordinally through four categories as primary (3%), secondary (67.4%), undergraduate (22.4%) and graduate levels (7.3%).

Confirmatory factor analysis

The analysis started by employing the CFA through Smart PLS. The factor loadings of the test indicated a good fit by producing loadings over 0.70 (Table 2).

Construct reliability and validity are interpreted (Table 3). The Cronbach's α value of the constructs produced a high-reliability score. Thus, the internal consistency among the items of each construct satisfied the reliability requisite (Cronbach, 1951). The composite reliability

Construct	Items	Factor loadings	Construct	Items	Factor loadings
Brand Admiration	BA01	0.915	Ethical Position Relativism	EPR01	0.915
	BA02	0.918		EPR02	0.902
	BA03	0.925		EPR03	0.908
	BA04	0.920		EPR04	0.910
	BA05	0.919		EPR05	0.909
Consumer Happiness	CH01	0.919		EPR06	0.909
	CH02	0.903		EPR07	0.914
	CH03	0.911		EPR08	0.908
	CH04	0.918		EPR09	0.908
	CH05	0.922		EPR10	0.916
	CH06	0.914	Hope	H01	0.900
Ethical Consumption	EC01	0.906		H02	0.896
	EC02	0.903		H03	0.902
	EC03	0.908		H04	0.896
	EC04	0.904		H05	0.905
	EC05	0.892		H06	0.912
	EC06	0.889		H07	0.893
	EC07	0.893		H08	0.892
	EC08	0.906		H09	0.896
	EC09	0.892		H10	0.905
Ethical Position Idealism	EPI01	0.898		H11	0.905
	EPI02	0.878		H12	0.901
	EPI03	0.896	Perceived CSR	PCSR01	0.915
	EPI04	0.908		PCSR02	0.898
	EPI05	0.897		PCSR03	0.916
	EPI06	0.903		PCSR04	0.915
	EPI07	0.893		PCSR05	0.917
	EPI08	0.899			
	EPI09	0.901			
	EPI10	0.889			

Table 2.
Factor loadings of
the items

of the model also indicated a good fit by yielding values over 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2020). Average variance extracted (AVE) scores are interpreted to interpret the existence of convergent validity. The AVE scores suggested the satisfaction of convergent validity by producing values above 0.5 (Hair *et al.*, 2020).

In the next step, 1,000 bootstrapping is employed. The t-values of the items of the latent variables suggested significant results, which showed that the factor loadings of the constructs are adequate (see Figure 2).

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BA	0.954	0.965	0.845
CH	0.961	0.968	0.836
EC	0.970	0.974	0.809
EPI	0.973	0.976	0.803
EPR	0.977	0.980	0.828
Hope	0.979	0.981	0.811
PCSR	0.950	0.961	0.832

Table 3.
Construct reliability and validity of the model

Figure 2.
The *t*-values of the factor loadings

Lastly, the goodness of fit of the model is interpreted. The SRMR value was 0.019, with a cutoff value of 0.08 (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Another goodness of fit value NFI was 0.943, above the cutoff value of 0.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1998). As a result, the CFA produced satisfactory results. Another critical indicator of measurement validity, discriminant validity, was examined (see Table 4). The Fornell-Larcker criterion suggested the establishment of discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

After CFA is completed through the variance-based SEM approach, CFA is conducted through the covariance-based SEM approach. The factor score weights of the items are distinguishingly loaded onto the relevant latent variables (Table 5).

The goodness of fit of the covariance-based confirmatory factor analysis produced results in line with the variance-based confirmatory analysis previously run. The findings indicated a fit (Table 6).

Following the interpretation of the goodness of fit test of the confirmatory factor analysis, standardized regression weights of the items were evaluated. The findings suggested that none of the items was below the cutoff value of 0.7. As a result, the findings indicated that CFA yielded reliable results in both variance-based and covariance-based SEM approaches. So, a variance-based approach is pursued in hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis testing
The overall assessment of the structural model produces significant results (Table 7).

When testing the *t*-scores bootstrapping is performed by running across 5,000 sub-samples. H1, H2, H4, H5 and H8 were supported, whereas H3, H6 and H7 were rejected (Table 8 and Figure 3).

Theoretical discussion
This study contributed to the literature by providing empirical evidence regarding a relatively less studied topic, the emotional impact of CSR on consumer happiness and admiration. It focused on consumer happiness in the CSR context and tested a conceptual model that revealed the significant relationships between hope, perceived CSR, consumer happiness and brand admiration. The results supported H1; perceived CSR significantly affects consumer happiness. Brands' CSR actions contribute to the well-being and flourishment of consumers by creating a positive atmosphere. CSR can be considered a source of positive consumer experience and enjoyment. Supporting Chia *et al.* (2020), this study provided empirical findings that broadened the knowledge about the impacts of CSR on consumer happiness. So far, consumer happiness has been associated with joyful experiences or satisfactory products (Mogilner *et al.*, 2012; Fei *et al.*, 2022). The current results extended previous findings by showing the direct positive impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness. CSR emerges as an area where brands can surpass customer expectations and achieve positive emotions.

Construct	BA	CH	EC	EPI	EPR	Hope	PCSR
BA	0.919						
CH	0.791	0.915					
EC	0.746	0.761	0.899				
EPI	0.795	0.827	0.795	0.896			
EPR	0.743	0.778	0.757	0.783	0.910		
Hope	0.739	0.777	0.709	0.785	0.714	0.900	
PCSR	0.784	0.803	0.760	0.803	0.733	0.762	0.912

Table 4.
Fornell-Lacker discriminant validity assessment

Item\Constuct	BA	EC	EPI	EPR	Hope	CH	PCSR
BA05	0.176	0.003	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.009
BA04	0.165	0.002	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.008
BA03	0.176	0.003	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.009
BA02	0.158	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.006	0.008
BA01	0.153	0.002	0.003	0.002	0.001	0.005	0.007
EC09	0.002	0.092	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC08	0.002	0.110	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.004
EC07	0.002	0.096	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC06	0.002	0.088	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC05	0.002	0.091	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC04	0.002	0.103	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC03	0.002	0.108	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC02	0.002	0.103	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.003
EC01	0.002	0.110	0.003	0.002	0.000	0.001	0.004
EPI10	0.003	0.003	0.080	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.003
EPI09	0.003	0.003	0.090	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.004
EPI08	0.003	0.003	0.086	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.004
EPI07	0.003	0.003	0.080	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.003
EPI06	0.004	0.003	0.094	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.004
EPI05	0.003	0.003	0.085	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.004
EPI04	0.004	0.003	0.095	0.002	0.002	0.005	0.004
EPI03	0.003	0.003	0.087	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.004
EPI02	0.003	0.002	0.072	0.001	0.002	0.004	0.003
EPI01	0.003	0.003	0.088	0.002	0.002	0.004	0.004
EPR10	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.099	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR09	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.091	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR08	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.093	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR07	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.095	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR06	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.094	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR05	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.089	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR04	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.091	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR03	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.093	0.001	0.003	0.001
EPR02	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.084	0.000	0.003	0.001
EPR01	0.002	0.002	0.002	0.100	0.001	0.003	0.001
H12	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.078	0.002	0.003
H11	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.001	0.080	0.002	0.003
H10	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.001	0.081	0.002	0.003
H09	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.073	0.002	0.003
H08	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.070	0.002	0.002
H07	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.071	0.002	0.003
H06	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.001	0.089	0.003	0.003
H05	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.001	0.081	0.002	0.003
H04	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.071	0.002	0.003
H03	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.076	0.002	0.003
H02	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.072	0.002	0.003
H01	0.001	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.077	0.002	0.003
CH06	0.005	0.001	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.135	0.007
CH05	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.003	0.003	0.153	0.008
CH04	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.003	0.003	0.146	0.008
CH03	0.005	0.001	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.132	0.007
CH02	0.005	0.001	0.004	0.003	0.002	0.121	0.006
CH01	0.006	0.002	0.005	0.003	0.003	0.148	0.008
PCSR05	0.008	0.004	0.004	0.001	0.003	0.008	0.173
PCSR04	0.008	0.004	0.004	0.001	0.003	0.007	0.170
PCSR03	0.008	0.004	0.004	0.001	0.003	0.007	0.171
PCSR02	0.006	0.003	0.003	0.001	0.002	0.006	0.134
PCSR01	0.007	0.003	0.004	0.001	0.003	0.007	0.159

Table 5.
Covariance-based
factor score weights

Measure	Cut-off value	Value in model	Reference
GFI	>0.95	0.876	Miles and Shevlin (1998)
	>0.90		Hooper *et al.* (2008)
CMIN/DF	1 to 3	1.451	Carmines and McIver (1981)
	2 to 5		Marsh and Hocevar (1985)
	No less than 2		Byrne (1989)
NFI	>0.90	0.950	Byrne (1994)
	>0.95		Schumacker and Lomax (2004)
CFI	>0.93	0.984	Byrne (1994)
	>0.70		Bollen (1989)
RMSEA	<0.08	0.028	Browne and Cudeck (1989)
			Hu and Bentler (1999)

Table 6.
The goodness of fit outputs of covariance-based CFA

Dimension	Result
SRMR	0.051
NFI	0.940
R^2 – Brand Admiration	0.626
R^2 – Consumer Happiness	0.776
R^2 – Ethical Consumption	0.678

Table 7.
Overall assessment of the structural model

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	p values	Status
H1	PCSR → CH	0.258	3.049	0.002	Not Rejected
H2	Hope → CH	0.190	2.419	0.016	Not Rejected
H3	EC → CH	0.077	0.990	0.322	Rejected
H4	EPI → EC	0.521	7.176	0.000	Not Rejected
H5	EPR → EC	0.350	4.822	0.000	Not Rejected
H6	EPI Moderation → CH	0.082	1.369	0.171	Rejected
H7	EPR Moderation → CH	−0.093	1.464	0.143	Rejected
H8	CH → BA	0.791	26.491	0.000	Not Rejected

Table 8.
Hypothesis test results

When the relationship between hope and happiness was examined, it was found that hope significantly affected happiness, supporting H2. Hope influences consumer happiness. This finding can be explained by the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). Hope, as a positive motivational state (Bryce *et al.*, 2020), contributes to utilizing personal resources and triggers positive emotions and happiness. Individuals nurture feelings of hope for their desired outcomes since it gives life energy to people and plays a crucial role in reaching the desired self in the future. Previous studies have shown that hope contributes to well-being as it helps people to focus on positive things (Lopez *et al.*, 2009). This research has contributed to the literature by showing its direct impact on consumer happiness.

Another finding is the significant impact of idealism and relativism on ethical consumption. The results supported H4 and H5. Previous studies have pointed out the considerable influence of ethical ideology on ethical beliefs and judgments (Barnett *et al.*, 1994; Treise *et al.*, 1994). The current research extended previous findings by providing empirical evidence on the significant influence of ethical ideology on ethical consumption.
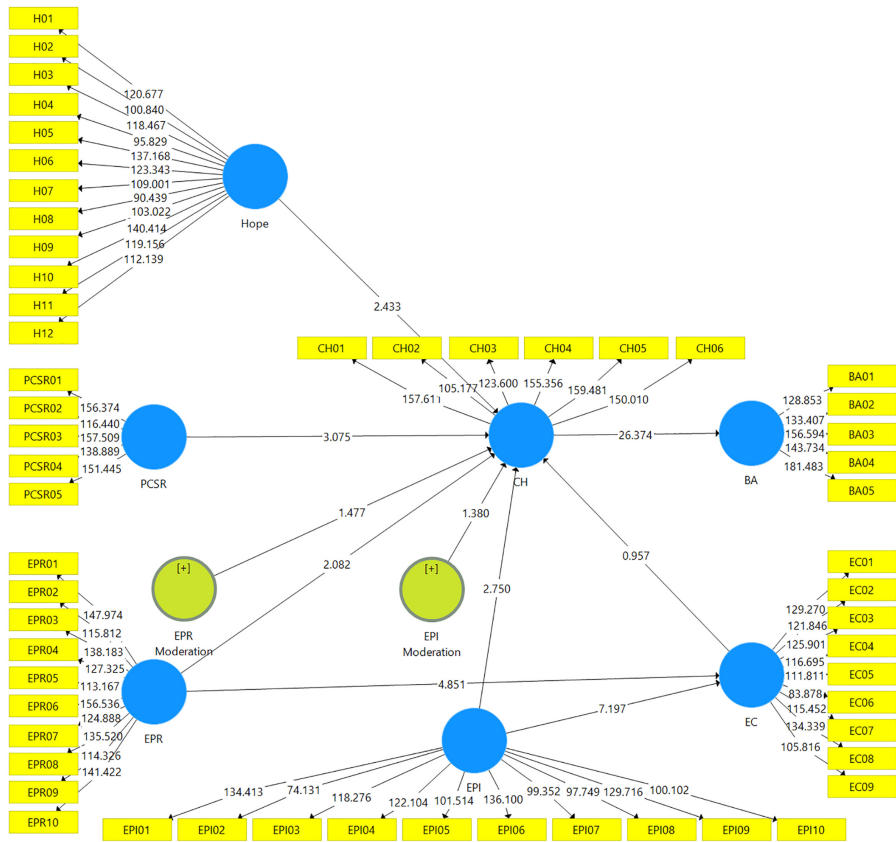
Figure 3.
Final path analysis
results

On the other hand, the effect of ethical consumption on happiness was found insignificant, and H3 was rejected. Although ethical consumption might lead to happiness due to feelings of competence regarding the consumption regulation according to self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), results could not support that link. This discrepancy can be due to the brand chosen in the survey. Previous studies mainly explained the ethical consumption-happiness link as a consumer's autonomy in making meaningful consumption choices (Guillen-Royo, 2019; Xiao and Li, 2011). However, the participants in the survey might not associate ethical consumption with CSR-related positive emotions about the snack brand. This finding was consistent with the other unsupported hypotheses, H6 and H7. Relativism and idealism did not play a moderating role in the perceived CSR – happiness relationship. Although consumers' moral virtues moderate the relationship between CSR perception and brand admiration (Castro-Gonzalez et al., 2019), in the current study, perceived CSR did not create more happiness in idealistic or relativistic consumers than in others. Similarly, increased ethical consumption levels do not lead to higher consumer happiness. The findings exhibited a disconnection between happiness and ethical ideology and consumption. Ethical ideology and consumption were not associated with consumer happiness in the CSR context.

The results supported H8 by showing the significant impact of consumer happiness on brand admiration. This result supported the findings of Ahuvia and Friedman (1998) and Yoshida et al. (2021) and expanded previous studies by showing the positive influence of

consumer happiness on brand admiration in the CSR context. According to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), this finding can be explained as the influence of positive emotions on consumers' psychological resources, which helps them be more open to building a connection with brands. Therefore, happiness can lead to stronger relationships between consumers and brands.

Managerial implications

The results indicate that managers must consider consumer happiness more when designing their CSR campaigns. Besides its generally accepted and previously known economic and social benefits, CSR benefits consumers and society as it contributes to positive emotions. Since CSR makes consumers happier, business managers can benefit from many aspects of the positive atmosphere created through CSR activities. CSR provides managers with an appealing and valuable theme for content marketing, social media posts and integrated marketing communication campaigns. Disclosing CSR initiatives contributes to consumer flourishment. Brands can design interactive and engaging marketing actions related to their CSR programs. For example, a brand that focuses on environmental sustainability as its CSR domain can initiate conversations and word-of-mouth by triggering user-generated content on social media. Besides, they can create original content and start an interactive blog about the issue. In this way, they can contribute to society by increasing consciousness about sustainability while raising consumer engagement and strengthening their brand equity. Such initiatives can also be supported by native advertising partnered with reputable publishers. Some consumers may want to contribute to their favorite brands' CSR projects actively. To address such opportunities, brands can organize field events where consumers can volunteer for environmental cleanup.

Another significant finding of the study is that hope leads to happiness and consumer happiness leads to brand admiration. Thus, brands can enrich their business concepts and value propositions by including CSR and positive emotions. Marketers can use hope appeals and include hope and happiness concepts in their CSR campaigns. In alignment with these findings, brands can disseminate CSR messages that give hope to society and disclose their investments for future generations. At the individual level, they can design initiatives that empower and encourage customers to reach their ideal selves. Future-oriented marketing communications, sharing trustworthy official information about products, and consistently supporting society can be other recommendations. Company websites and social media accounts may be deemed official and reliable message sources that can contribute to consumer happiness. They can also include hope appeals to boost the positive impact on consumer emotions. Finally, brands can use hope-themed storytelling to strengthen their positive emotional connection with their target audience.

According to the results, brand managers may consider not including ethical aspects in their CSR communication and focus on positive emotions at a broader level. The insignificant impact of ethical consumption on consumer happiness indicates that CSR activities can appeal to consumers regardless of their ethical consumption levels. Besides, consumers' ethical ideology of idealism and relativism does not moderate the impact of perceived CSR on consumer happiness. Therefore, marketing managers can design CSR campaigns considering the mass audience and try to cover all consumers regardless of their ethical ideology or ethical consumption levels.

This research has shown that CSR campaigns can effectively create consumer happiness. Some brands use happiness as a theme in their advertising or even adopt it at a broader level as the main element of their brand positioning. The findings indicated that happiness makes consumers more open to connecting with brands. CSR can be critical in making consumers happier and increasing brand admiration. So, brands must focus on measuring consumer

emotions besides traditionally monitored marketing metrics like net promoter scores, customer satisfaction and loyalty. Managers may regularly measure happiness levels by examining user-generated content through text mining, sentiment analysis and systematic qualitative research such as customer interviews.

Limitations and future research directions

As with all studies, this research has some limitations. The findings are limited to the sample used in the study. Further studies can be conducted to test the conceptual model in different settings. The research model can be expanded by considering brand love and brand equity. The impact of CSR on consumer happiness and brand admiration can be examined by controlling for brand equity. Although CSR can be operationalized as a multi-dimensional construct (Carroll, 2015), this research utilized a one-dimensional scale to explore the overall CSR perception that can influence consumer emotions rather than distinguishing between specific CSR dimensions. Future studies can focus on specific CSR topics such as environmental, social and economic CSR initiatives. Qualitative studies can reveal deeper meanings of CSR regarding consumer happiness and brand admiration. Future studies can focus on brand personality and examine the relationship between CSR and consumer happiness, considering brand image and personality. This relationship can be explored further across consumer demographic segments and product categories.

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Corresponding author

Petek Tosun can be contacted at: petek.tosun@khas.edu.tr