

## **Role of Carroll’s CSR Pyramid in Shaping Consumer Buying Behavior: A Case of Detergent Industry of Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this paper is to empirically apply the concept of Carroll’s CSR pyramid, on the buying decisions and behaviors of consumers, particularly when selecting a detergent/washing powder in Pakistan. Here, the packaging origin of the detergents’ brand has been used as the moderating variable. In addition to this, the stakeholder theory has been applied where consumers are primarily expected to be well informed of their buying choices. The study essentially comprises of a household, drop-off cross-sectional survey that has been taken by men or women who do groceries. In this regard, four elite areas of Lahore, Pakistan (DHA, Cantonment, Gulberg, and Model Town) were selected, with the assumption that the residents of these areas might be interested in a CSR initiative, taken by their preferred detergent brands. Also, the participants were selected through the convenience sampling technique, and were given 24 hours to fill the survey, at a time of their convenience. Then, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was run on the 280 usable questionnaires that had been acquired. The results depicted that the buyers of detergent brands in Pakistan are mostly attracted towards the three levels of the CSR pyramid; the economic level, the ethical level, and the philanthropic level. Moreover, findings also revealed that the packaging origin of the respective detergent brands significantly moderate the relationship between all levels of the CSR pyramid, as well as the consumer buying behavior of detergent brands, except on the legal and economic levels. This research provides insights into the other, locally packaged detergent (and household) brands, which are currently indulging, and are also interested in carrying out CSR activities. These insights may help organizations to reflect upon how, by using different levels of CSR initiatives efficiently, detergent brands can achieve more sales, with their buyers selecting their particular brand over other competing global brands.*

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR), economic level of CSR activity, legal level of CSR activity, ethical level of CSR activity, philanthropic level of CSR activity, consumer buying behavior.

**JEL classification:** M14, M30, M31.

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## **1. Introduction**

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has steadily become a crucial component for companies, in order to attain sustainable growth. This is especially applicable if businesses are operating in a volatile environment, with the active participation of all the relevant stakeholders. Today, the organizations should ideally not exist for the sole purpose of achieving higher returns and long-term well-being. They must also put emphasis on being accountable and responsible towards all the attached stakeholders, and the environment as a whole (Harrison, Rouse, & De Villiers, 2012). In this regard, businesses competing on the role of CSR activities are not able to perceive it as a liability to the company anymore. Rather, they view it as an asset that helps in strengthening exceptional long-term relations with all the stakeholders, especially the consumers. The concept of CSR was first coined in by Archie Carroll, and has been treated as an active area of research. It is normally put forth as an initiative, that represents and reflects all the stakeholders of a company conscientiously, and in a more responsible and effective manner. CSR is a lens through which firms look after, and also reflect upon the ideas that seem attractive to the society, and help them become accountable for their actions.

Conforming to the ideas presented by Carroll (1991), CSR activities are divided into four levels. These include the economic level of CSR activities, legal level of CSR activities, ethical level of CSR activities, and the philanthropic level of CSR activities. The economic level of CSR activities deals with the benefits and rewards that a business should look forward to, while operating in the society. On the other hand, the legal level of CSR activities attends to the businesses ensuring that they follow suit with the laws and legal agreements that have been established for them, as a business. As far as the ethical level of CSR activities are concerned, the businesses try to contribute to the society in a meaningful manner. This is primarily in order to make it a better one, by indulging in activities and initiatives that are constructive for the society as a whole. Lastly, the philanthropic level of CSR activities refers to the intentional, or voluntary behaviors and activities that are highly admirable by the stakeholders, if performed in an effective manner. However, if not executed in the right way, the businesses will be not be judged adversely.

In the present era, because of the active role social media, and other effective tools of communication, stakeholders and consumers alike are well informed of their rights. They are also well aware of the key responsibilities that the businesses owe towards them. All this knowledge

makes it critically significant for the firms to pursue, as well as exploit CSR initiatives. This is primarily be undertaken by bringing forth safe products and services for the consumers, which can further support the societies by lifting up their standards of living in the long run (Eshra & Beshir, 2017). Additionally, according to Gigauri (2012), every business has two major responsibilities; a) to make sure that value and satisfaction is being provided to the stakeholders, and b) societal problems to be solved in a socially responsible manner.

In this regard, several studies have provided evidence of the strong and positive influence of CSR programs on consumers' attitudes and behaviors, for different brands. This influence makes the brands more attractive for the person on the buying end. People firmly believe that buying a brand that is associated with a cause helps them in realizing that they are a) doing good to the society, and b) are forming a perception about a businesses, in terms of how their products are safer to consume (Min, Ai, Choo, Wah, & Yang, 2015; Rahim, Jalaludin, & Tajuddin, 2011; Safi & Ramay, 2013). Moreover, due to the emerging importance of CSR activities, many studies focusing on this context, have been carried out in the Asian region i.e. pertaining to Pakistan, India, Turkey, Nigeria, Egypt, China, and many others. The idea behind these studies has been to study how CSR initiatives impact the consumer intentions, so as to purchase different products belonging to all the different sectors such as cellular companies (Ali, 2011; Saleh, Ebeid, & Abdelhameed 2015; Sarfaz, 2014), FMCG companies (Khan, 2017), generic business organizations (Nochai & Nochai, 2014), livestock (Vahdati et al., 2015), and property companies (Yam, 2013).

A lot of research has already been conducted on the impact of CSR activities on consumer buying patterns, but none of these have targeted the detergents as the key product of the FMCG sector. Particularly, in the case of Pakistan, CSR initiatives are primarily developed by the parent brands. For instance, the company Unilever, and their CSR initiatives are part of their Sustainable Living Plans. In this regard, detergent brands such as Surf Excel and Ariel act as key partners in the campaigns that are initiated by Unilever, as a part of their CSR agenda.

Detergents are a part of the FMCG sector, which means that, as a fast moving consumer good, they are used on a daily basis, that too very commonly, in households. Detergents have been selected in this study, primarily because CSR activities help consumers to recognize and differentiate between brands that are safe to use, and brands that help the environment and society in return as well. Also, detergent brands that are

usually associated with CSR campaigns, tend to have a more positive brand image, and a competitive edge over the other competing brands as well (Yu, Kuo, & Kao, 2017). Considering this gap, the current research aims at exploring the impact of Carroll's CSR pyramid levels, on the typical consumer buying behaviors. Moreover, the product category of detergents has deliberately been selected, mainly because many global brands such as Tide, Surf Excel, and Henkel have ventured into going 'green', by publicly displaying their eco-labels. If a brand is eco-friendly, it is viewed as an environmentally sustainable brand, and people can administer, and recognize it through the eco-labeling that is displayed on the packaging (Bigliardi, Bertolini, Mourad, & Ahmed, 2012). When it comes to detergent brands, Surf Excel and Ariel are considered to be renowned brands that indulge in active CSR campaigns, targeting some of the core issues that exist in our society. In specific terms, Surf Excel can be witnessed addressing the issue of poverty, and often promotes a culture of kindness in its campaigns, such as endorsing the hashtags, #NeikiEkIbadat and #MadadEkIbadat. These campaigns have been aimed towards providing the low-income strata with clothes, and other forms of necessities that are sourced via Unilever's CSR plans. Another detergent brand that goes by the name of Ariel put out the hashtag #ShareTheLoad. The campaign that was designed around this hashtag was aimed at promoting the equality and need for sharing responsibility of the household between partners in a marriage. This is a concept that is still novel in the Pakistani society, where women are believed to be the sole caretakers of the household chores. Focusing on detergents meant looking observing the impact that the respective CSR activities have in addressing and controlling the existing societal problems such as poverty, women rights, and education. In Pakistan as well, detergents are one of the categories of FMCG which have actively been involved in designing campaigns that target societal problems, and have played their role in addressing certain key issues (Farooq, 2020). Moreover, the packaging origin of the brand (local or foreign) has also been tested as a moderator between all the CSR pyramid levels, and the consumer buying behaviors for detergents.

## **2. Review of Literature and Hypotheses Development**

### **2.1. Consumer Buying Behavior Driven by CSR Initiatives**

Consumer behavior is the study of the practices whereby individuals choose, shop, consume, and/or discard products & services, so as to satisfy their particular needs and wants (Solomon, Dahl, White, Zaichkowsky, & Polegato, 2016). Since the last few years, it has

increasingly become indispensable to know a company's customer in and out, and understand their exact needs and wants. This facilitates the businesses in manufacturing customized products and services for their consumers. Moreover, it also helps the businesses in selecting CSR activities that will draw the positive attention of prospective investors, potential customers and consumers, towards their products and services. (Safi & Ramay, 2017).

Consumers focusing on buying, and using products attached with a CSR initiative are considered to be socially responsible. In this context, the idea of the stakeholder theory is applicable here, which states that businesses should exercise a sense of responsibility towards certain groups of individuals (Freeman, 1984). According to Maignan (2001), the most important role in the stakeholder groups is played by the consumers. These consumers are typically expected to spend more time in searching the products, possess more knowledge about what is being offered, and make sure that they do not buy products and services that are harmful to the environment, and/or to the people (Min et al. 2015).

According to Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001), having a sound knowledge of CSR among consumers, leads to the development of positive attitudes and purchase decisions, and also positively influences the consumers' buying decisions. Other studies that have been undertaken in this area of research have shown that the personality of the consumer also plays a vital role, when attempting to draw the attention of consumers towards the CSR initiatives taken by a firm (Rahim et al., 2011; Safi & Ramay, 2013, Saleh et al., 2015). However, according to Khan (2017), people do not only tend to prefer CSR campaigns and initiatives, as the main driver to purchase one brand over the other, instead, they focus more on the price, ingredients, and quality of the product.

The notion of CSR has been found to have a significant impact on increasing the sales for the company. This has primarily been done by increasing their profits and returns, which essentially help in increasing the value of the firm in the market, and are also a source of sustained growth and competitive advantage (Diddi & Niehm, 2016; Mackey, Mackey, & Barney, 2007; Nsikan, Umoh, & Bariate, 2015; Weinzimmer & Esken, 2016). A firm's performance tends to improve because consumers usually want to buy those brands that are more ethically responsible, and often give back to the society (Creyer, 1997). Most of the companies in developed countries, that have their CSR initiatives in check, have been seen to have higher sales, as compared to competitors that were not involved in any CSR activity.

Moreover, it was also observed that the consumers preferred to buy more from companies that had well-developed CSR campaigns (Ali, 2011; Eshra & Beshir 2017; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Mohr et al. 2001; Nochai & Nochai, 2014). According to Carroll's CSR pyramid, there are four levels of CSR. This study considers all those levels as independent variables, in order to study their impact on consumer buying behavior, particularly for the detergent industry in Pakistan.

### *2.1.1. Economic Level of CSR*

According to Carroll (1991), the economic level is the first level of the CSR pyramid. It is attributed as one of the main responsibilities of a business, primarily ensuring that the company produces products, and/or offers those services that are valuable to the stakeholders as a whole, and which successively help the business to pay back to its stakeholders. The economic aspect of CSR consists of the external and the internal environment of the company. That is to say, the company does not only need to satisfy the internal stakeholders and earn profits, but it also has to give back to the society, and provide value to its external stakeholders at the same time.

In order to achieve the economic level of CSR, it is essential to produce such goods, and offer those services that are beneficial to the society, that too at reasonable and affordable prices. Moreover, companies need to make sure that they pay their workers/employees at the right time and the due value is provided to the stakeholders, and their duties are fairly obliged (Carroll, 1991).

In their study, Maignan and Ralston (2002), briefly explained how a famous brand name such as Ben & Jerry's was not interested in economic CSR. It was, however, more involved in the other levels of the CSR pyramid, which could in return pose critical strategic issues for the company in the longer run. At another instance, a study based in Saudi Arabia also concluded that residents there do not consider the economic level of CSR as a vital element of CSR (Alfakhri, Nurunnabi, Alfakhri, & Hossain, 2020).

Economic CSR has been found to have a positive impact on the purchase intentions of consumers, but the lowest priority has been allotted to it, out of all the levels that are taken into consideration (Mulaessa & Wang, 2017). In a similar manner, Yunus et al. (2017) also examined the consumers' purchase intentions, and its impact on the CSR initiatives

carried out in Malaysia. He concluded that buyers weigh the economic level of CSR, more than the other levels of CSR. Hence, in this context, we hypothesize the following hypothesis.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The economic level of CSR has a positive effect on the consumer buying behavior for detergents.

### *2.1.2. Legal Level of CSR*

Legal level of CSR is marked as level which refers to the adherence of the relevant laws, regulations, and obligations that are introduced by the government, so that businesses are able to standardize their operations (Carroll, 1991). People generally tend to admire those companies that conform to all legal responsibilities that are put on them. It is considered to be the minimum social obligation from the firms' side (Lin-Hi, 2010). Also, this level ensures that the company's performance and objectives are well coordinated with what the stakeholders demand from the company. It is generally believed in the society that firms adhering to legal laws, and offering products and services of high-quality specification are reliable, and harmless to use (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001).

As per the Carroll's CSR pyramid, if a company wants to accomplish its economic goals, it is essential for it to follow all the legal intricacies, in view of the government's policies (Carroll, 1991). Consumers rate the legal responsibility of a business, as the most important responsibility that essentially makes them decide which brand to purchase. This is primarily because they fathom a brand that follows all legal obligations is considered to be safer to use, and carries a positive impact on sales (Safi & Ramay, 2013).

Moreover, it is very important for firms to make sure that they follow the customer and product-based laws, reduce the negative impact on the environment, and deal with competitors in a law-abiding manner (Conchius, 2006). In this regard, no relationship was found between the legal level of CSR and the consumer behavior, in a study conducted in Malaysia (Min et al. 2015), and between the urban and rural perception of CSR in Vietnam as well (Huang, Do, & Kumar, 2019). Whereas, Nochai and Nochai (2014) found legal level of CSR significantly impacting consumer buying behavior. Hence, we offer the following hypothesis.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Legal level of CSR has a positive effect on consumer buying behavior for detergents.

### 2.1.3. *Ethical Level of CSR*

The ethical level of CSR is characterized by the activities that are pursued by the businesses, in accordance with societal norms, values, and behaviors (Carroll 1991; Eshra & Beshir, 2017). It is imperative for businesses to ensure that there is stability amongst the economic, legal and ethical levels of the CSR activities, and any disparity amongst these three levels can lead to inevitable complications for the businesses, in the longer run. Consumers were found highly likely to be willingly paying higher prices for the products, and developing a favorable attitude towards those companies that practiced ethical business practices (Creyer, 1997). According to Creyer (1997), when consumers read ethical labels on the brands, such as “No Animal Testing”, they preferred to purchase that particular product/service, as compared to the competitor’s products. Moreover, consumers rated the ethical level of CSR as the most important, and even the most superior one to all the other levels of CSR. They also considered buying products that were manufactured by companies that had ethics as a core virtue (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). In addition to this, ethical brands have been considered to be linked significantly with customer well-being as well (Ferrell, Harrison, Ferrell, & Hair, 2019). However, specifically speaking, Indian consumers consider it to be an extremely important parameter that a company indulges in ethical practices (Gupta & Wadera, 2019). Hence, keeping these intricacies in mind, we hypothesize that:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** The ethical level of CSR has a positive effect on the consumer buying behavior for detergents.

### 2.1.4. *Philanthropic Level of CSR*

The philanthropic level of CSR is referred to as any activity or obligation that is primarily intentional and voluntary in nature, and following these initiatives leads to higher levels of recognition and appreciation (Carroll 1991; Eshra & Beshir, 2017). There are very few people who actually anticipate this level of CSR to be fulfilled by any organization. Philanthropy is a choice that is made by an organization, though the expectations from the society are always there (Tewari & Pathak, 2014).

According to Eshra and Beshir (2017), if the employees of a firm participate in such voluntary actions that are aimed towards doing well, it helps them to develop a level of persistence by facilitating the support



needed to boost the quality of life of people in the society. Usually, companies tend to get confused between the philanthropic level of CSR, and the ethical level of CSR. The fundamental difference between these two levels is that in the ethical level of CSR, it is important for the company to operate in a virtuous and moral manner, because the society demands such behavior. Whereas, at the philanthropic level of CSR companies consciously aim towards gaining appreciation for their goodwill efforts towards the society. However, if the employees are not involved in any philanthropic activity, it will not provoke any criticism for the firm (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004).

Philanthropic activities are essential for a company, in order to gain advantage over its competitors. Also, it is of the utmost significance that companies include philanthropy as a key component in their strategy formulation, in order to gain the society's admiration (Figar & Figar, 2011). In the same context, Bežovan (2002) discussed the main forms through which a business gives back to the society. According to the findings, it is either done by giving out scholarships and/or by making the living conditions of people better. Also, products that have an educational campaign attached to it are usually bought more by customers, as they primarily to contribute towards the increasing literacy levels in the society. According to a study of Vietnamese consumers, urban consumers are more inclined towards the economic level of CSR, whereas the rural consumers pay more attention to the philanthropic level of CSR (Huang et al., 2019). Hence, we can hypothesize that:

**H<sub>4</sub>:** The philanthropic level of CSR has a positive effect on the consumer buying behavior for detergents.

## ***2.2. The Packaging Origin of the Detergent Brand as a Moderating Variable between all the CSR Levels and Consumer Buying Behavior***

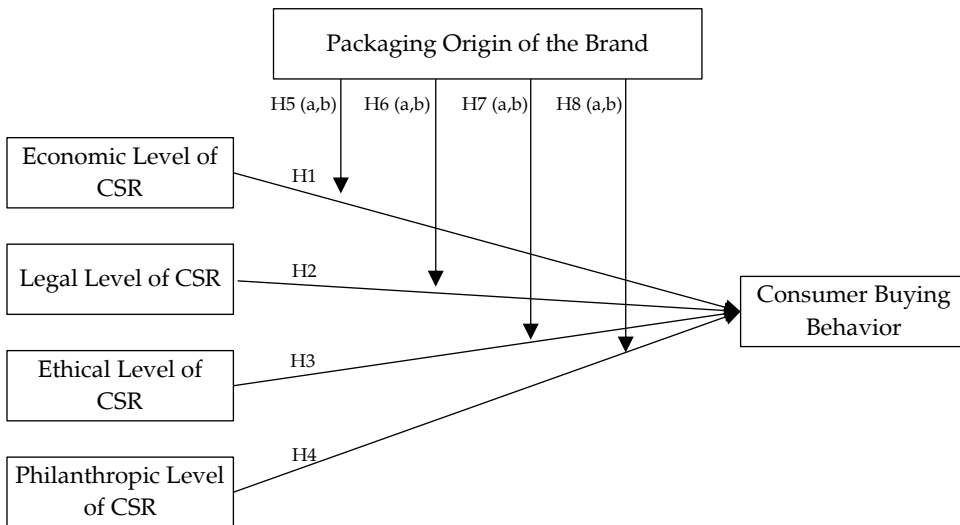
Due to globalization, a country's marketplace usually consists of both the global and local brands. In this regard, the intense demand for consumer goods in Pakistan has attracted millions of dollars of global investments (Haq, 2018). Consumers usually prefer global brands, in order to feel their connection with specific groups e.g., global cosmopolitanism (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). In the current scenario, we assume that the people of Pakistan think of global brands as more socially responsible, primarily because of the "green" element attached to them.

In this regard, the concept of ethnocentrism plays a vital role. Polycentric consumers evaluate the products solely based on their qualities/benefits, irrespective of the country of origin. Perhaps, they might also consider them more positively because they are imported brands (Vida, 2001). According to Alden et al. (1999), consumer ethnocentrism may be capable of moderating the function pertaining to the superior appeal of the global brands in the market place. Therefore, based on the literature that surrounds this area of study, we can hypothesize that:

**H<sub>5a-5h</sub>**: The positive effect of all the four levels of CSR, on the consumer buying behavior for detergents will be stronger for detergent brands that have been packaged abroad, and weaker for detergent brands that have been packaged locally.

The proposed model and hypotheses are summarized in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model**



Using the model displayed in figure 1, we have checked the significance of Carroll's CSR Pyramid, on shaping the consumer buying behavior in the detergent industry of Pakistan. The four domains of Carroll's pyramid are thus taken to be as the independent variables. Whereas, the consumer buying behavior is considered to be the dependent variable. Moreover, the packaging origin of the brand acts as a moderating factor to further test the hypothesis that have been stated earlier.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1. Research Design and Data Collection***

This study is descriptive, quantitative, and cross-sectional in nature. With the help of the survey conducted for the purpose of this nature, four relationships were tested. These included testing whether positive relationships exist between all four of Carroll's CSR pyramid levels separately, and the consumer buying behavior, for the considered detergent brands. In this regard, the questionnaire that was designed was generated, and conducted through household drop-off/pick up (DOPU), self-administered questionnaire method. In this method, the respective questionnaires (refer to Appendix A) were self-delivered to the respondents at their homes, with the primary aim of giving them time to fill them out in their private space and time, keeping in mind the factor of convenience for them, with a promise for getting them back to the researchers within the 24 hours mark.

The utmost care was taken that the questionnaire was given to the right target audience (men or women, who do groceries for their home), who were concerned about the CSR initiatives that have been carried out by different detergent brands. In this regard, four, high profile and elite areas of Lahore (Defense Housing Authority, Cantonment, Gulberg, and Model Town) were selected. The households were selected through the convenience sampling technique. Moreover, the researchers randomly approached 100 households from each locality that had been shortlisted. The research was carried out over a course of 30 days, and a total of 400 questionnaires were circulated in the above-mentioned areas. According to Roscoe (1975), a sample size of 250 - 400 is treated as an exceptional one because the results established can be generalized. In this regard, a total of 337 questionnaires were retrieved back, out of which 280 were usable questionnaires. The overall response rate was at 70 percent. The socio-demographic characteristics of the study, and the other variables related to the CSR initiatives are provided in Table 1:

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Sample**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	108	38.6
	Female	172	61.4
<b>Age</b>	Below 24	51	18.2
	25 to 34	68	24.3
	35 to 44	118	42.1
	45 and above	43	15.4
<b>Education</b>	High school/O levels	10	3.6
	Intermediate/A levels	34	12.1
	Bachelors	131	46.8
	Masters	89	31.8
	Post Graduate	16	5.7
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	94	33.6
	Married	174	62.1
	Widowed	12	4.3
<b>Monthly Disposable Income (Rupee)</b>	< 50,000	17	6.1
	50,001 to 75,000	38	13.6
	75,001 to 100,000	89	31.7
	100,001 to 125,000	63	22.5
	125,001 to 150,000	56	20
	> 150,000	17	6.1
<b>Who does the grocery?</b>	Me	50	17.9
	My Spouse	57	20.3
	Me and My Spouse	158	56.4
	Servants	15	5.4
<b>Do you prefer buying brands offering CSR initiatives?</b>	Yes	201	71.8
	No	49	17.5
	Does not matter	30	10.7
<b>Detergent Brands used in home</b>	Ariel	74	26.4
	Surf Excel	103	36.8
	Express Power	64	22.9
	Brite	18	6.4
	Tide	21	7.5
<b>Packaging origin of the brand (Local or foreign)</b>	Local	156	55.7
	Ariel+Express Power+Brite=Local Surf Excel+Tide=Foreign	124	44.3

### **3.2. Measures**

#### *3.2.1. Dependent Variable*

When taking the dependent variable into account, the consumer buying behavior was measured using five items, as measured on a five-point Likert scale. This ranged from a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Wu & Lin, 2014; Xu & Yang, 2012). The items, item loadings, and Cronbach's alpha can therefore be seen in Table 2.

#### *3.2.2. Independent Variables*

The economic level of CSR, legal level of CSR, and the ethical Level of CSR were measured using the five items that were gauged on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Wu & Lin, 2014; Xu & Yang, 2012). The items, item loadings, and Cronbach's alpha can thus also be seen in Table 2. However, the philanthropic level of CSR was measured using four items that were gauged on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Wu & Lin, 2014; Xu & Yang, 2012). The items, item loadings, and Cronbach's alpha can thus be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2: Carroll's CSR Pyramid Levels Constructs**

<b>Latent variable (Cronbach's alpha)</b>	<b>Measured variables (items)</b>	<b>Item loading</b>
<b>Consumer Buying Behavior (0.926)</b>		
CBB1	I purchase products and services of the detergent brand on regular basis.	0.83
CBB2	The detergent brand promotional activities fuel my purchasing desire.	0.81
CBB3	I am highly familiar with different detergent brands.	0.77
CBB4	I would recommend my friends or relatives to purchase the detergent brand.	0.88
CBB5	I would tell other consumers about the advantages of buying the detergent brand.	0.93
<b>Economic Level of CSR (0.934)</b>		
Eco1	The detergent brand stimulates the local market.	0.82
Eco2	The detergent brand is offered at a reasonable price	0.89
Eco3	The detergent brand provides great value for money.	0.88
Eco4	The detergent brand provides advantages to the consumers.	0.76
Eco5	The detergent brand stimulates economic activities in Pakistan.	0.83
<b>Legal Level of CSR (0.920)</b>		
Legal1	The detergent brand abides by legal regulations	0.94
Legal2	The detergent brand abides by all transaction laws and regulations.	0.88
Legal3	The detergent brand meets all its legal obligations.	0.87
Legal4	The company that owns this brand complies with the regulations of the country.	0.81
Legal5	The detergent brand meets all required regulations.	0.65
<b>Ethical Level of CSR (0.919)</b>		
Ethical1	The detergent brand meets the expectations of the society.	0.76
Ethical2	The detergent brand respects the moral standards of the society.	0.88
Ethical3	The detergent brand handles defective units to meet satisfaction of consumers.	0.75
Ethical4	The detergent brand is trustworthy and reliable.	0.87
Ethical5	The detergent brand abides by its commercial ethical standards.	0.89
<b>Philanthropy Level of CSR (0.898)</b>		
Phil1	The detergent brand meets the expectations of society in the field of philanthropic activities.	0.85
Phil2	The detergent brand organizes or sponsors philanthropic activities.	0.84
Phil3	The detergent brand staff participates in philanthropic activities on a voluntary basis.	0.72
Phil4	The detergent brand participates in public welfare activities.	0.91

### 3.3. Statistical Analysis

The data was further analyzed through the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique. The SEM was undertaken, in order to study the measurement model through the confirmatory factor analysis, and then the proposed hypotheses was tested further through the path analysis. The maximum likelihood estimation was checked, in order to analyze the normality of the data (Kline, 2005). Moreover, the data had no missing values.

#### 3.3.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The CFA was carried out, in order to test the goodness of fit criterion, and also to examine the reliability and validity of the measurement model (Hair, Anderson, Black, Babin & Tatham, 2006). In this regard, all the items were retained, because they were all above the cut-off point at 0.50. Moreover, no correlation was found amongst the error terms pertaining to all the items. Table 3 displays the information on the model fit indices.

**Table 3: Model Fit Summary for CFA**

Key	Recommended Value	Observed Value
<b>Chi-square/df</b>	1 to 3 (Segars & Grover, 1998)	1.980
<b>NFI</b>	Greater than 0.6 (Shadfar &	0.799
<b>GFI</b>	Malekmohammadi, 2011), greater than 0.8	0.754
<b>CFI</b>	(Segars & Grover, 1998), greater than 0.9	0.833
<b>TLI</b>	(Byrne, Shavelson, & Muthén, 1989)	0.756
<b>RMSEA</b>	Score less than 0.10 (Hair et al., 2006)	0.084

The reliability factor of the instrument was examined using the measure of composite reliability (Cronbach alpha). The value for this can be seen in Table 2. As a common practice, the general acceptable level of composite reliability is more than 0.70 (Salman, Khan, & Gul, 2014). In addition to this, the instrument validity was also examined by referring to the discriminant validity, using the suggested technique by Fornell and Larcker's (1981), where the AVE (convergent reliability figure) is compared with the ASV. The calculated value should ideally be less than the AVE. Table 4 summarizes the results of validity, of the instrument.

**Table 4: Instrument Validity**

Constructs	AVE Observed value	Discriminant validity Observed Value	Result
Consumer buying behavior	0.716	0.714	Holds
Economic level of CSR	0.740	0.699	Holds
Legal level of CSR	0.699	0.685	Holds
Ethical level of CSR	0.694	0.679	Holds
Philanthropic level of CSR	0.690	0.648	Holds

### 3.3.2. Structural Model Analysis

The formulated hypotheses were tested using the structural analysis in AMOS.

## 4. Results

The means and standard deviations, along with the correlation matrix have been mentioned in Table 5. The model for the analysis was found to be reasonably fit (chi-square/df = 1.787, NFI = 0.86, GFI = 0.89, CFI = 0.93, TLI, 0.92, RMSEA = 0.04). Moreover, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values can also be observed in Table 5. Since the value of each VIF is below five, we can conclude that there was no multi-collinearity found in the data.

**Table 5: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix**

Variable	Mean	S.D.	VIF	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Consumer buying behavior	2.17	0.59							
2. Economic level of CSR	2.16	0.59	2.8	0.80**					
3. Legal level of CSR	2.19	0.59	1.92	0.81**	0.87**				
4. Ethical level of CSR	2.21	0.65	2.06	0.93**	0.84**	0.85**			
5. Philanthropic level of CSR	2.23	0.58	2.34	0.88**	0.79**	0.81**	0.87**		
6. Packaging origin of the brand	1.38	0.5	2.01	0.82**	0.78**	0.83**	0.81**	0.80**	

Notes: n=280, \*\*p<0.01

The results for all the hypotheses can be summarized in Table 6.



**Table 6: Results of Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis	Relation	Estimate	Decisions
H1	Economic level of CSR	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.089** Supported
H2	Legal level of CSR	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.052 Not Supported
H3	Ethical level of CSR	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.894*** Supported
H4	Philanthropic level of CSR	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.410*** Supported
H5a	Economic level of CSR ( <i>local brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.053 Not Supported
H5b	Economic level of CSR ( <i>foreign brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.161 Not Supported
H6a	Legal level of CSR ( <i>local brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.187 Not Supported
H6b	Legal level of CSR ( <i>foreign brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.274 Not Supported
H7a	Ethical level of CSR ( <i>local brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.238*** Supported
H7b	Ethical level of CSR ( <i>foreign brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.364*** Supported
H8a	Philanthropic level of CSR ( <i>local brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.113** Supported
H8b	Philanthropic level of CSR ( <i>foreign brand</i> )	→ Consumer Buying Behavior	0.265** Supported

\*\* p<0.01 \*\*\*p<.001

In the model, the economic level of CSR activities was found to be a significant and positive predictor of a consumer buying a detergent brand, hence providing support for H<sub>1</sub>. However, the factor pertaining to the legal level of CSR activities was found to be unrelated to the consumers who were purchasing a particular brand of detergent. Hence, the H<sub>2</sub>, which stated that the legal level of CSR activities has a significant positive effect on consumer buying behavior for detergents, was therefore not supported. Furthermore, H<sub>3</sub> stated that there exists a positive relationship between the legal level of CSR activities, and the consumer buying behavior for detergents. In this regard, the relationship was found to be significant, thus providing support for H<sub>3</sub>. The philanthropic level of CSR activities, was observed to be a significant and positive predictor of the consumer buying behavior for detergents, hence providing support for H<sub>4</sub> as well. Collectively, these four independent variables contributed to about 87.30 percent of the variation in the consumer buying behavior for detergent brands in Pakistan ( $R^2 = 0.873^{***}$ )

However, when testing  $H_{5a-5h}$ , only the positive effect of the ethical and philanthropic levels of CSR, on the consumer buying behavior for detergents, was stronger when global brands were taken into consideration, and weaker when the local brands were looked at. The effects of the economic and legal levels of CSR were found to be insignificant for both the global and the local brands.

## 5. Discussion

According to Eshra and Beshir (2017), a firm involved in initiating activities that result in giving back to the society, and one that is frequently involved in socially responsible activities, has a more positive impact on the consumers. This also tends to become an attractive feature for the consumers, in such a way that they are compelled to purchase that brand. This current study builds upon on Carroll's CSR pyramid, regarding whether any CSR activity actually and ultimately affects the consumer buying behavior, while selecting a detergent/washing powder in Pakistan. Moreover, the authors have also used the packaging origin of the detergent brand, as moderating variable, in order to test the strength of the relationship that exists between all the levels of CSR activities, and consumer buying behavior pertaining to any detergent brand. The current study preserved the results of the previous research studies. It did so by simplifying the idea that in Pakistan, consumers generally tend to prefer three levels of CSR activities, out of the four levels, when they decide to buy a brand of detergent. Furthermore, the brands packaged abroad have been found to be stronger, in terms of moderating between the different levels of the CSR pyramid, and the consumer buying behavior of detergent brands.

### 5.1. Economic Level of CSR and Consumer Buying Behavior

The Economic level of CSR has been ranked as the second most important form of CSR, (Maignan & Farrell, 2004) and extremely important for consumers, particularly when selecting their preferred brands because of value creation (McAlister, Thorne, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2003). In Pakistan, it was concluded that consumers considered the economic level of CSR as an important variable, but not as important as the other countries did. However, the results received were positive, as well as significant in nature. This means that the detergent brands in Pakistan that are actively involved in the process of value creation are generally be considered to be more important, especially when the consumer will be deciding on which brand to buy. This in turn will lead to an increase in the sales, and help the respective company to pay back its stakeholders. In addition to this,

grocery shoppers in Pakistan believe that the eco-friendly detergent brands tend to provide a better value for their money, and hence are willing to pay more for them. However, according to the results, the packaging origin of a brand did not play any part in strengthening the role between the economic level of CSR, and the consumer buying behavior for detergent brands. The reason can be attributed towards rather similar prices of locally, as well as internationally packaged brands.

### ***5.2. Legal level of CSR and consumer buying behavior***

The legal level of CSR was a very critical factor for consumers. This was because they believed that companies following the appropriate legal rules and laws would make products that would be safe to use, and would not cause any harm (Conchius, 2006). In this context, Creyer (1997) presented the same results, as the legal level of CSR was seen to have a highly significant impact in increasing the level of the consumer buying behavior. When tested in the city of Lahore, insignificant results were obtained, showing that the consumers tend not pay heed to the legal situation of the respective company, and it has no effect on molding their consumer behavior towards a CSR oriented brand. There are two reasons behind this: i) In Pakistan, the legal aspects of a business are mostly kept as a private matter, and are kept confidential hidden; and ii) Consumers are unaware of their human and civil rights.

Even if consumers are aware of their rights, still taking consumer related matters to court leads to years of fighting the case, and very less chances of winning it in the end. In addition to this, many MNCs in Pakistan weigh the environmental issues to be far more concerning than their internal legal issues (Hameed, 2010). Hence, it is also assumed that the legal level of CSR activity has no impact on the consumer preferring a particular detergent brand. Moreover, as the results are insignificant, the packaging origin of the brand plays no role in strengthening the relationship between the legal level of CSR, and the consumer buying behavior for detergent brands, for obvious reasons.

### ***5.3. Ethical level of CSR and consumer buying behavior***

Research studies that have been undertaken in the past show that consumers prefer the ethical level of CSR, as the most important aspect in consumer buying behavior. Moreover, the companies involved in ethical behavior have a more loyal consumer base, and hence a higher sales pattern as well (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006). A study by Creyer (1997)

produced the same results, where the consumers preferred to purchase products from brands that were more ethical, and followed all the ethical set of norms and rules for existing in a society. It was even observed that for ethically labeled products consumers were willing to pay a higher price, without any regrets.

When this phenomenon was tested in Lahore, the exact same results were received, as the results were positive and highly significant. This showed that there exists a strong relationship between the ethical level of CSR, and the consumer buying behavior for detergents. In this regard, people tend to find eco-friendly detergent brands to be more trust worthy and reliable. Moreover, when the packaging origin of the brand was used as a moderating variable between the ethical level of CSR, and the consumer buying behavior for detergents, the relationship strengthens if the brand is packaged abroad. Results reveal that consumers in Pakistan expect the foreign/global brands to be more ethical than the local brands of detergent, hence a stronger relationship.

#### ***5.4. Philanthropic level of CSR and consumer buying behavior***

The philanthropic level of CSR has been found to be an important and significant aspect, when it comes to the consumer buying behavior. This is because consumers regard companies involved in it to be more responsible and caring for the society (Bežovan, 2002). According to Rahim et al. (2011), the philanthropic level of CSR is one of the most important levels of CSR, as it does not only aids in the development of the internal environment of the company, but also leads to more satisfied customers. In addition to this, Huang et al. (2019) found that the philanthropic level happens to be an extremely important parameter for Vietnamese consumers. Thus, the current study has produced the same results, showing that the philanthropic level of CSR is an important variable which affects the consumer buying behavior, in this case, for detergent brands. Moreover, it is expected for eco-friendly detergent brands to participate in public welfare activities, even more than non-eco-friendly detergent brands. Also, the relationship tends to strengthen if the detergent brand is packaged abroad. This is because people trust international brands more than the local brands, with respect to spending precious funds on activities related to social welfare.

## **6. Limitations, Future Research Directions and Implications**

### **6.1. Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The duration of conducting this study was a total of two months. Because of certain time limitations, a larger sample could not be taken into account, and only four elite residential areas of Lahore were selected. If there was a provision of more time and resources, data from other areas of different cities could also be considered, which could have helped in generalizing the results to a broader population. Moreover, the respondents were expected to fill in the questionnaires very casually, by not paying much attention to the questions being asked in the survey. Moreover, this study is particularly behavioral in nature, thus the longitudinal data can produce different responses as well. The research can also be replicated in other sectors of the FMCG industry, such as soft drinks, snacks and toiletries, etc. Lastly, the lack of knowledge and transparency by the brands selling detergents in Pakistan regarding CSR activities might also create huge difficulty, while choosing the right respondents for the study in the future.

### **6.2. Practical Implications**

This research clearly depicts that the economic, ethical and philanthropic levels of CSR are essential in affecting the consumer buying behavior of the consumers in Pakistan. For this purpose, the managers of local brands (not necessarily detergent only) can make sure that while developing CSR initiatives/programs, they include these three aspects in their policies, in order to encourage more consumers to buy their brands. Also, locally packaged detergent brands need to be more actively involved in all levels of the CSR activities, such as providing scholarships for education, planting trees to make the environment clean and fresh, and supporting women education in poverty stricken and suburban areas. This will leave a greater impact on the consumers. Meeting the ethical norms and behaviors is also very important for detergent brand managers, as making the ethical side of their business transparent can potentially lead to the creation of a more loyal customer base.

## **7. Conclusions**

Currently, as companies are trying their best to compete for higher sales from the other offerings in the market, CSR can be taken as extremely important factor. This is primarily because it can help the companies in

gaining more advantage over their competitors, to gain more profits, and eventually score more sales in the longer run. In addition to this, consumers now prefer to buy products/services that contribute more towards the betterment of the society. This is because they think that brands that are more responsible will always be better and safe to use, and they will become a part of the overall good that is taking place.

Also with this research, we can gauge that the locally packaged detergent brands in Pakistan should focus on the economic, ethical and philanthropic side of CSR. This is because the consumers believe they are more important, and directing their emotional capacity in this regard. Consequently, companies can have a more loyal customer base. It can also be seen that consumers of socially responsible firms tend to be more involved with the working of the firm. This in turn helps individuals portray their personalities, or identity by helping the brand achieve its socially responsible duties.

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## **Appendix A (Questionnaire)**

### **Section 1: Demographic Information**

- 1) Gender
  - a) Male
  - b) Female
  
- 2) Age
  - a) Below 24
  - b) 25-34
  - c) 35-44
  - d) 45 and Above
  
- 3) Education (Last degree received)
  - a) High School or O-Levels
  - b) Intermediate or A-Levels
  - c) Bachelors
  - d) Masters
  - e) Post Graduate Program
  
- 4) Marital Status
  - a) Single
  - b) Married
  - c) Widowed
  
- 5) Monthly disposable income
  - a) < 50,000
  - b) 50,001 to 75,000
  - c) 75,001 to 100,000
  - d) 100,001 to 125,000
  - e) 125,001 to 150,000
  - f) > 150,000
  
- 6) Who does the grocery
  - a) Me
  - b) My Spouse
  - c) Me and my spouse
  - d) Servants
  
- 7) Do you prefer buying brands offering CSR initiatives?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  
- 8) Detergent brands used in home?
  - a) Ariel
  - b) Surf Excel
  - c) Express Power
  - d) Brite
  - e) Tide

**Section 2**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I think that tie brand, can stimulate the local market.					
I think that the brand offers reasonably priced products					
I think that the brand provider great value products					
I think that the brand provides advantages for consumers					
I think that tie brand can stimulate economic activities m Pakistan					
I think that the brand abides by legal regulations					
I think that the brand abides by all transaction laws and regulations					
I think that the brand meets all its legal obligations					
I think that the products and services provided by the brand comply with the regulations of our country					
I think that the brand meets all required regulations					
I think that the brand meets the expectations of society					

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I think that the brand respects the moral standards of our society					
I think that the brand will handle defective products to the satisfaction of consumers					
I think that the brand is trustworthy and reliable					
I think that the brand abides by its commercial ethical standards.					
I think that the band meets the expectations of society in the field of philanthropic activities					
I think that the brand organizes; or sponsors philanthropic activities					
I think that the band staff participates in philanthropic activities on a voluntary basis					
I think that the brand participates in public welfare activities					
I purchase products and services of the brand on a regular basis.					
I think that the brands promotional activities stimulate my purchasing desire					
I'm highly familiar with the brands product categories and items					

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
I would recommend my friends or relatives to purchase Lie brands products or services					
I would tell other consumers about the advantages of buying the brands products and services					