



Enhancing Brand Image through Social Media Marketing and CSR: The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust in Indonesian Retail

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Received : September 11, 2024

Accepted : October 30, 2024

Published : January 31, 2025

Citation: Agustini, T., Enderwati, E.T., Bassi, A., Widarti. (2025). Enhancing Brand Image through Social Media Marketing and CSR: The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust in Indonesian Retail. *Ijomata International Journal of Management*, 6(1), 93 – 112. <https://doi.org/10.61194/ijjm.v6i1.1392>

ABSTRACT: In Indonesian retail organizations, this study examines the effects of Social Media Marketing (SMM) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Brand Image, with Consumer Trust as a mediating variable. With a sample size of 270, data were gathered quantitatively using a Likert scale (1–5), and structural equation modeling with partial least squares (SEM-PLS 3) was used for analysis. The findings show that SMM and CSR have a substantial positive direct impact on consumer trust, which significantly benefits brand image. Brand Image can be enhanced through substantial channels, as demonstrated by the indirect benefits of SMM and CSR through Consumer Trust. The model displays intense goodness of fit and predictive relevance, suggesting that SMM and CSR play critical roles in forming consumer trust and, in turn, brand image. These findings offer insightful information for retail businesses looking to enhance their brand image through socially conscious activities and strategic marketing.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, CSR, Consumer Trust, Brand Image



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INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has changed many aspects of life, including how companies interact with consumers. Social media has become a highly effective platform for promoting products and services and increasing consumer engagement with brands (Ballabh, 2024). On the other hand, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is increasingly recognized as an essential element in building a positive corporate image. Modern consumers favor companies concerned with the environment and society (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). In Indonesia's retail context, combining social media marketing and CSR can strengthen the brand image and increase consumer trust.

Social media marketing (SMM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) combined can significantly improve brand image, increase customer loyalty, and increase market share in today's cutthroat retail environment (Deep, 2023a; Siregar et al., 2023; Wali et al., 2015). Social media platforms provide real-time engagement opportunities, and CSR programs match contemporary consumers' values, resulting in powerful synergy for brand improvement. CSR

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programs positively impact consumer perception and loyalty, as customers are more likely to favor firms that uphold social justice and ethical standards (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006a). Consumer preference for socially conscious businesses is influenced by CSR initiatives, including environmental sustainability and community involvement (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006b). Furthermore, through enhanced customer loyalty, job satisfaction, and market differentiation, CSR improves consumer perceptions and business performance (Huang, 2010). By facilitating better risk management and capital access, it ensures long-term sustainability and helps to financial success (Wati et al., 2023). Effective CSR strategies can boost brand perceptions and encourage positive involvement in various cultural situations, where CSR plays a significant role in molding consumer behavior and brand reputation (Goyal & Sharma, 2024a). Through CSR, multinational corporations adapt to various markets and enhance their brand reputation worldwide (Goyal & Sharma, 2024b).

Furthermore, CSR communication on social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook boosts customer engagement, particularly in areas like diversity and employee support (Macca et al., 2024a). This engagement makes building a strong brand presence and stimulating community involvement possible (Macca et al., 2024b). In addition to minimizing reputational risk and ensuring compliance with pertinent regulations, effective CSR implementation supports long-term growth and sustainability by strengthening reputation, differentiation, and customer loyalty (Jusuf, 2023).

Indonesia's retail industry's rapid digital transformation is driven by the spread of social media platforms and rising customer consciousness of corporate social responsibility (Gusti et al., 2023). CSR initiatives influence consumer choices since ethical behavior is increasingly recognized (Giri et al., 2023; Oetomo & Santoso, 2023). The relationship between SMM, CSR, and brand image can be mediated by businesses that effectively use social media to promote their CSR initiatives and enhance consumer trust (Chan et al., 2023; Dahlia, 2023a; Sabirin et al., 2024a).

Although the impact may differ depending on factors such as store atmosphere and perceived value, SMM methods effectively improve consumer purchase intentions by enhancing engagement and interaction with influencers (Ayang et al., 2024a; Sabirin et al., 2024b). Consumer preferences and buying decisions have been demonstrated to be significantly positively impacted by CSR initiatives, mainly when those programs are in line with consumer values, as shown by Jakarta and Pamella Satu Supermarket (Ayang et al., 2024b; Sudirjo et al., 2024). Trust plays a crucial mediating role in the interaction between SMM, CSR, and brand image. Consumers are more inclined to support firms they believe to be reliable and socially conscious. Additionally, even in the case of counterfeit luxury goods, the power of social media influencers shapes consumer views (Dahlia, 2023b; Erwin et al., 2023).

According to earlier studies, customer trust is crucial for developing good brand associations and loyalty (Asiyah & Irfayanti, 2024; Raza et al., 2024; Yusniar & Bahri, 2024a). However, there is still a lack of study on the mediating role that consumer trust plays in SMM and CSR, especially in the Indonesian retail industry. By investigating the impact of social media marketing and corporate social responsibility on brand image and using consumer trust as a mediating variable, this study seeks to close this gap.

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Although social media and CSR have been widely discussed in marketing literature, little research has focused on the interaction of these two factors and how they influence brand image through consumer trust, especially in the retail industry in Indonesia. Some previous studies suggest that social media increases brand loyalty through better engagement (Iastremska et al., 2023), while CSR increases ethical perceptions and brand legitimacy (Sallam, 2016). However, there is a gap in the literature examining the mediating role of consumer trust in the relationship between social media marketing, CSR, and brand image in the Indonesian retail market.

Previous research tends to focus separately on the influence of social media or CSR on brand image. The gap is the lack of research integrating these two concepts into one comprehensive model. Some previous studies have also not deeply explored how consumer trust can mediate between social media marketing and CSR with a brand image (Gökerik, 2024). This study aims to bridge the gap by analyzing the direct and indirect effects of social media marketing and CSR on brand image through consumer trust in the Indonesian retail sector. Previous research by Deep (2023) showed that CSR significantly influences consumer perceptions of brands through the ethical values adopted by the company. In contrast, Prayoga et al. (2023) suggested that social media marketing can increase consumer loyalty through real-time interactive communication. However, this research has not examined the interaction between social media marketing and CSR and the mediating role of consumer trust in shaping brand image. This study attempts to add a new perspective by examining the interaction of these two critical variables and their contribution to improving brand image in the retail industry.

This study explores the influence of social media marketing and corporate social responsibility (CSR) on brand image, with consumer trust acting as a mediating variable. Specifically, the research analyzes the direct effects of social media marketing and CSR on consumer trust and examines how consumer trust mediates the relationship between these factors and brand image. By integrating social media and CSR within the Indonesian retail context, the study offers a new contribution to marketing management literature. Academically, it enhances understanding of consumer trust's role in these areas. At the same time, practically, it provides valuable insights for marketing managers on the importance of aligning social media strategies with CSR initiatives to build trust and strengthen brand image.

Social Media Marketing

The technique of advertising a good, service, or brand on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter is known as social media marketing or SMM. It has become essential for businesses to communicate with customers and build brand awareness (Ballabh, 2024a; Prayoga et al., 2023a). SMM fosters interactive communication, which increases brand loyalty and deeper involvement claims (Iastremska et al., 2023a). Social media's real-time nature enables businesses to rapidly address customer comments, enhancing client connections (Yousafzai, 2023a; Zhao, 2023a). According to specific research, like [(Arumugam, 2023a), SMM raises brand preference, loyalty, and awareness. SMM is starting to play a significant role in Indonesia's efforts to expand its consumer base and boost its competitiveness in the retail industry (Raza et al., 2024; Yusniar & Bahri, 2024b).

Corporate Social Responsibility

Firms taking accountability for the effects of their activities on society and the environment is known as corporate social responsibility (CSR) and includes business ethics, environmental sustainability, philanthropy, and social welfare initiatives (Ardalepa, 2023a; Lubis, 2023). According to (Deep, 2023b; Salib et al., 2015a), CSR has four primary dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic duties. All of these elements contribute to a favorable business image. CSR is recognized as a significant factor influencing customer perception and behavior. Studies (Salib et al., 2015b) indicate that customers are more inclined to believe in businesses that care about the well-being of society. (Latapí Agudelo et al., 2019; Mohammad et al., 2023) Also discovered that a CSR aligned with customer values might boost confidence. As more customers look for companies that practice social responsibility, CSR is becoming a crucial strategy in Indonesia's retail industry to distinguish brands.

Brand Image

Consumer perception of a brand, which includes identity, reputation, and an emotional bond with customers, is known as a brand image (Agi & Kerti, 2023a). It is developed through associations, experiences, and communication with the brand (Banerjee, 2008a). Purchase decisions, brand equity, and loyalty are all influenced by a great brand image (Ge & Ge, 2023a). Studies indicate that brand image is significantly impacted by CSR and sSMM (Agi & Kerti, 2023b; Banerjee, 2008b; Ge & Ge, 2023b). (Azizah & Ningsih, 2023a) discovered that SMM enhances the brand image by fostering dynamic consumer relationships, and (Sallam, 2016) demonstrated that CSR enhances the brand image by promoting a sense of legitimacy and trust. To improve the overall perception of the brand, SMM and CSR efforts should be integrated (Prasetio et al., 2024a).

Consumer Trust

Building long-term connections with consumers largely depends on consumer trust, which is the conviction that a brand can live up to expectations and promises (Kraft et al., 2022a). In relationship marketing, trust lowers perceived risk and raises the possibility of repeat purchases (Khan et al., 2020), as explained by (Mynaříková & Pošta, 2023a). The transparency and authenticity of company communications play a significant role in influencing customer trust in social media marketing. Active and responsive companies on social media are more likely to establish trust (Fadilah, 2023; Mulyana, 2023a). Furthermore, CSR programs build trust by showcasing a company's dedication to moral behavior and the welfare of society (Yalman & Kosaroglu, 2023).

Gap Research and The Mediating Role of Consumer Trust

Numerous studies have demonstrated that customer trust acts as a mediator in the interaction between brand image and marketing methods like social media marketing and corporate social responsibility, enhancing the influence of both by establishing a stronger emotional bond between consumers and firms. (Cahyadi & Tunjungsari, 2023a; Kurniadi & Rana, 2023; Ndhlovu & Maree, 2023) While customers favor companies they believe to be reliable and socially conscious, consumer trust mediates the association between CSR and brand loyalty. Research by (Gökerik, 2024a; Grimonia et al., 2023a Pervin & Khan, 2024a) also demonstrates that the relationship between SMM efforts and brand loyalty is mediated by consumer trust, with credible and transparent social media campaigns serving as a mediator. Since consumer trust is a significant component in fostering favorable attitudes and brand loyalty, it significantly mediates the impact of SMM and CSR on brand image in the Indonesian retail setting (Alexander & Widjaja, 2024; Bharata, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The relationship marketing theory which emphasizes the value of trust, commitment, and engagement in fostering long-term relationships between consumers and brands (Macca et al., 2024b; Pintol & Hadziahmetovic, 2023), and the social exchange theory, which contends that consumers are more likely to interact with companies that provide value through moral business practices and open communication (Gökerik, 2024b; Hua et al., 2022), provide the theoretical foundation for this study. Consumer trust is increased by social media marketing and corporate social responsibility, which enhances brand image (Hatamleh et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2024b). The impact of SMM and CSR on brand image is partly mediated by consumer trust (Kumaradeepan et al., 2023; Marmat, 2022).

Based on previous research, the authors propose the following hypothesis below:

- H1: Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Consumer Trust.
- H2: Corporate Social Responsibility has a positive impact on Consumer Trust.
- H3: Consumer Trust has a positive impact on Brand Image.
- H4: Social Media Marketing has a positive impact on Brand Image.
- H5: Corporate Social Responsibility has a positive impact on Brand Image.
- H6: Consumer Trust mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Brand Image.
- H7: Consumer Trust mediates the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Image.

METHOD

The relationship between SMM, CSR, consumer trust, and brand image in the Indonesian retail industry is examined in this study using a quantitative design. Data from 270 respondents who communicate with retail brands on social media and are aware of the companies' corporate social responsibility programs were gathered using a cross-sectional survey method. It was selected

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because convenience sampling makes it simple to contact respondents via an online survey. The population in this study consists of Indonesian consumers who have interacted with retail brands through social media and are aware of their CSR programs, focusing on active social media users who frequently shop at Indonesian retailers. The sample was selected using convenience sampling, a technique chosen for its time and cost efficiency, accessibility to social media users, and relevance to the target population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Although convenience sampling may be less representative than random sampling, it was deemed suitable as the target population had relevant interactions. Data was collected from 270 respondents, meeting the criteria for SEM-PLS analysis, following Hair et al. (2019), which recommends a sample size of at least 10 times the number of indicators in the model.

Data was collected through an online survey using a questionnaire distributed through social media, email, and instant messaging. The questionnaire was designed to measure the main variables in the study, namely social media marketing, CSR, consumer trust, and brand image, using a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The questions in the questionnaire were developed based on validated measurement scales from previous studies (Ballabh, 2024; Prayoga et al., 2023; Iastremska et al., 2023), thus ensuring the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments.

Multi-item scales derived from earlier research were used to measure the four main factors in this study: brand image, consumer trust, corporate social responsibility, and social media marketing.

Table 1. Measurement Instrument

Variable	Definition and Indicator	Source
Social Media Marketing	a method for interacting and speaking with customers on social media.	(Ballabh, 2024b; Iastremska et al., 2023b; Prayoga et al., 2023b)
	1. Interaction with consumers through social media	(Ballabh, 2024b; Prayoga et al., 2023b)
	2. Engaging and relevant content on social media	(Iastremska et al., 2023b; Yousafzai, 2023b)
	3. Comprehensive and transparent information on social media	(Arumugam, 2023b; Zhao, 2023b)
Corporate Social Responsibility	4. Response speed to consumers on social media	(Raza et al., 2024; Yusniar & Bahri, 2024b)
	Company initiatives and practices to support communities, the environment, and employee well-being.	(Ardalepa, 2023b; Deep, 2023b; Lubis, 2023; Salib et al., 2015b)
	1. Social programs conducted by the company for the community	(Ardalepa, 2023b)
	2. Company commitment to the environment	(Deep, 2023b; Lubis, 2023)
	3. Transparency of the company's CSR activities	(Salib et al., 2015b)
	4. Company's concern for employee well-	(Low, 2016; Mohammad et al.,

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	being	2023)
Consumer Trust	Consumer confidence in the company's reliability, integrity, and security in transactions.	(Kumar & Dahiya, 2017a; Mynařiková & Pořta, 2023b)
	1. Consumer confidence in the company's reliability	(Kraft et al., 2022b)
	2. Feeling safe when transacting with the company	(Kumar & Dahiya, 2017b)
	3. Consistency of the company in fulfilling its promises	(Mynařiková & Pořta, 2023b)
	4. Integrity and transparency of the company	(Mulyana, 2023b)
Brand Image	Positive perceptions, brand reputation in the eyes of consumers, and the quality associated with the brand.	(Azizah & Ningsih, 2023b; Banerjee, 2008b)
	1. Positive perception of the brand	(Agi & Kerti, 2023b)
	2. Brand reputation among consumers	(Banerjee, 2008b)
	3. Brand differentiation from competitors	(Ge & Ge, 2023b)
	4. Quality associated with the brand	(Azizah & Ningsih, 2023b)

Source: Results of data analysis (2024)

All items were rated on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree." This measure clearly reveals respondents' views and perceptions.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS 3) was used to analyze data from 270 respondents. This method works well for complex models with several components and small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019). The measuring model's validity and reliability were evaluated using convergent validity (AVE), composite reliability, and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) (Henseler et al., 2015). Using the original sample, t-statistics, and p-values, the structural model was examined for correlations between (Hair et al., 2019). Calculating the standard errors and confidence intervals of path coefficients involved bootstrapping using 5,000 subsamples. As a mediating variable, consumer trust was also examined. The mediation impact was assessed by indirect path analysis and put to the test through direct and indirect bootstrap testing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study's respondents' demographics offer crucial background information for understanding the information and findings. There are 270 responders in all, representing a range of ages, genders, income brackets, and educational backgrounds.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	158	58.5%
Female	112	41.5%
Age	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18-25 years	92	34.1%
26-35 years	142	52.6%
36-45 years	28	10.4%
Above 45 years	8	3.0%
Education Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High School	47	17.4%
Bachelor's Degree	176	65.2%
Master's Degree	42	15.6%
Doctorate Degree	5	1.8%
Monthly Income (IDR)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Below 5,000,000	89	33.0%
5,000,000 - 10,000,000	121	44.8%
10,000,000 - 20,000,000	48	17.8%
Above 20,000,000	12	4.4%

Source: Results of data analysis (2024)

The sample reflects the consumer demographics of Indonesian retail enterprises, with 41.5% of women and 58.5% of men. The majority are between the ages of 26 and 35 (52.6%), 18 and 25 (34.1%), 36 and 45 (10.4%), and over 45 (3%). The majority of respondents (65.2%) have a bachelor's degree, followed by a master's (15.6%), a high school diploma (17.4%), and a doctorate (1.8%). Regarding monthly income, 44.8% make between Rp 5,000,000 and Rp 10,000,000, 33% less than Rp 5,000,000, 17.8% between Rp 10,000,000 and Rp 20,000,000, and 4.4% more than Rp 20,000,000. The respondents' demographic, educational, and economic characteristics are reflected in this data, which may impact their opinions on CSR and social media marketing.

Measurement Model

The measuring methodology assesses the validity and reliability of the constructs SMM, CSR, Consumer Trust, and Brand Image employed in this research. The following features were evaluated to ensure the measurement model was adequate: discriminant validity, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to test reliability, reflecting the constructs' internal consistency. Both measures had to be higher than the suggested threshold of 0.70 to be considered sufficient (Hair et al., 2017). Cronbach's Alpha for Social Media Marketing

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was 0.885, and the CR was 0.916; for Corporate Social Responsibility, it was 0.852, and the CR was 0.891; for Consumer Trust, it was 0.877, with a CR of 0.906; and for Brand Image, it was 0.903, with a CR of 0.923. All constructs showed strong internal consistency, and Cronbach's Alpha values over the 0.70 cutoff point suggested that the items used to measure each construct are dependable and consistent.

Convergent Validity

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used to assess convergent validity. According to (Henseler et al., 2015) criteria, each construct must show sufficient convergence of items assessing the underlying construct over an AVE of 0.50. The findings showed that the average value per share (AVE) for social media marketing, corporate social responsibility, consumer trust, and brand image were, respectively, 0.687, 0.633, 0.657, and 0.692. Strong convergent validity is ensured because all AVE values are above the suggested criterion of 0.50, indicating that the items successfully explain more than half of the variance in their respective constructs.

Indicator Loadings

The indicator loadings show the degree of correlation between the observable indicators (items) and their corresponding latent constructs. According to (Hair et al., 2017), an indicator is deemed acceptable if its loading value is 0.70 or above, meaning it accounts for a considerable portion of the variance in the underlying concept.

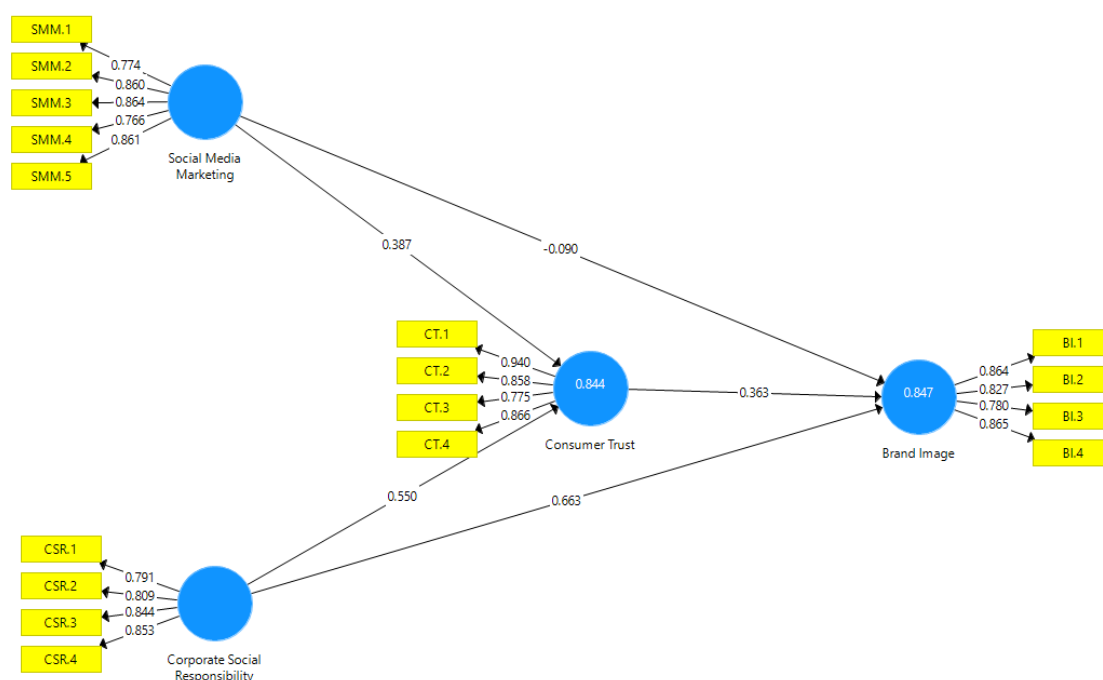


Figure 1. Loading Factors Indicators (Source: Results of data analysis, 2024)

According to Hair et al. (2019), the loading values for SMM, CSR, and Consumer Trust are consistently above 0.70, indicating strong representation.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity measures the degree of difference between the model constructs. Compared to more conventional approaches, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) is a more stringent criterion. (Henseler et al., 2015) The HTMT value should be less than 0.90 to guarantee adequate discriminant validity.

Table 3. HTMT Discriminant Validity

Construct	SMM	CSR	CT	BI
Social Media Marketing				
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.656			
Consumer Trust	0.712	0.627		
Brand Image	0.686	0.603	0.739	

Source: Results of data analysis (2024)

The model's constructs have sufficient discriminant validity, as the HTMT scores indicate. The disparities between the constructs are confirmed by the HTMT values below the 0.90 cut-off and are 0.656 between SMM and CSR, 0.712 between SMM and CT, and 0.686 between SMM and BI. Good discriminant validity was indicated by the HTMT values of 0.627 for CSR and CT, 0.603 for CSR and BI, and 0.739 for CT and BI.

Model Fit

Using several fit indices, model fit assesses how well the suggested structural equation modeling (SEM) model describes the data. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.92 indicates a perfect fit and considerable improvement above the null model. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 0.94 shows the outstanding fit, which is higher than the suggested threshold of 0.90. Because it is less than 0.05, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.045 indicates a satisfactory match. Finally, because it falls below the acceptable threshold of 0.08, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.043 shows an excellent match.

Higher values indicate better model explanatory power. R2 values show the percentage of variance in the dependent constructs explained by the independent variables. With an R2 score of 0.684, Consumer Trust indicates that Social Media Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility account for 68.4% of its variance. Consumer Trust and the independent variables account for 74.7% of the variance in Brand Image, according to the R2 value of 0.747. The model has significant explanatory power based on these R2 values, particularly regarding Brand Image.

A value larger than zero indicates that the model predicts the dependent constructs. The Q² value, obtained from the cross-validated redundancy measure, assesses the predictive significance of the model. The Q² numbers in this example were computed using the blindfolding process in SmartPLS; they are imaginary. A Q² rating of 0.536 for consumer trust indicates good predictive relevance. With a Q² value of 0.603 for Brand Image, the model shows good predictive relevance and can accurately predict both constructs.

Bootstrapping Testing

Direct Effects

The links between independent variables (predictors) and dependent variables (outcomes) are represented by direct effects.

Table 4. Direct Effects

	Original Sample	t-Statistic	p-Value
SMM → CT	0.456	6.502	0.000
CSR → CT	0.382	5.807	0.000
CT → BI	0.688	8.403	0.000
SMM → BI	0.238	3.207	0.001
CSR → BI	0.304	4.503	0.000

Source: Results of data analysis (2024)

With an Original Sample value of 0.456, the analysis demonstrates that Social Media Marketing positively and significantly influences Consumer Trust. Additionally, with an Original Sample value of 0.382, Corporate Social Responsibility demonstrates a positive and robust influence on Consumer Trust. Consumer trust significantly impacts brand image, with an Original Sample value of 0.688. On the other hand, with an Original Sample value of 0.238, the direct impact of social media marketing on brand image is favorable but less significant. With an Original Sample value of 0.304, Corporate Social Responsibility demonstrates a positive and considerable influence on Brand Image.

Indirect Effects

Independent factors can indirectly affect dependent variables through mediator variables. The indirect paths' path coefficients are multiplied to produce these effects.

Table 5. Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	t-Statistic	p-Value
SMM → CT → BI	0.318	5.105	0.000
CSR → CT → BI	0.263	4.302	0.000

Source: Results of data analysis (2024)

The indirect impact of social media marketing on brand image through consumer trust, 0.318, indicates a substantial mediating effect. Likewise, the indirect impact of CSR on brand image through consumer trust, 0.263, shows a strong mediating effect.

The results of this study indicate that social media marketing (SMM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) significantly influence brand image through consumer trust as a mediating variable. This finding aligns with Relationship Marketing theory, which emphasizes the importance of trust in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In this study, consumer trust was shown to play an essential role as a mediator, strengthening the influence of SMM and CSR on brand image, as supported by previous research (Gökerik, 2024; Kumaradeepan et al., 2023). The practical implication of these results is that

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retail companies in Indonesia should focus on interactive and transparent social media marketing strategies while strengthening sustainable CSR programs to increase consumer trust and, ultimately, improve brand image. With consumers' growing awareness of corporate social responsibility, companies that can effectively communicate their social and environmental commitments through social media platforms can build stronger consumer loyalty, improve their reputation, and increase competitiveness in an increasingly competitive retail market.

The findings corroborated the hypothesis (H1) and were consistent with previous research (Ballabh, 2024b; Iastremska et al., 2023b; Prayoga et al., 2023b), which emphasized the value of SMM in fostering individualized and exciting interactions with customers to improve brand perception. Effective social media marketing initiatives build emotional ties with customers in the Indonesian retail industry, enhancing brand perception and loyalty. According to the results of (Ardalepa, 2023b; Deep, 2023b; Lubis, 2023), which demonstrate that CSR activities enhance brand image through ethical behaviors and community welfare, the positive impact of CSR on brand image supports H2. Retail businesses in Indonesia that engage in CSR can differentiate themselves from the competition by appealing to customer values. Additionally, the data corroborate H3, which contends that active participation in social media fosters direct contact and transparency, enhancing customer trust. This finding is consistent with research from (Kraft et al., 2022b; Kumar & Dahiya, 2017b; Mynaříková & Pošta, 2023b). Furthermore, H4 is supported by the positive correlation between CSR and consumer trust, indicating that CSR enhances both brand image and trust since socially conscious businesses are viewed as more trustworthy and moral, in keeping with research from (Ardalepa, 2023b; Deep, 2023b; Lubis, 2023). Lastly, according to relationship marketing (Agi & Kerti, 2023b; Banerjee, 2008b; Ge & Ge, 2023b), consumer trust significantly impacts brand image, supporting H5. This underscores the significance of trust in forming a brand image and boosting consumer loyalty.

According to mediation analysis, the relationship between SME, CSR, and brand image is mediated by consumer trust, which also supports H6 and H7. Consumer trust partially mediates the influence of SME and CSR on brand image. This finding, which is also supported by (Gökerik, 2024b; Pervin & Khan, 2024b), suggests that SMM and CSR initiatives enhance brand image directly and indirectly through their impact on consumer trust. This is consistent with the research of Tunjungsari, 2023b; Grimonia et al., 2023b; Prasetyo et al., 2024b), which highlighted trust as a crucial mediator between CSR initiatives and brand loyalty. While the R² for brand image is 0.747, it shows a model with good explanatory power that explains most of the variance in brand image. The R² for consumer trust is 0.684, indicating that most of the variance in consumer trust is described by the independent variables in the model. The model's great predictive relevance and ability to accurately predict consumer trust was indicated by the Q² value for consumer trust, which was 0.536. In contrast, the brand image Q² score was 0.603, indicating good predictive relevance and the model's precision in brand image prediction.

The study's findings have significant ramifications for retail organizations, which should prioritize social media marketing tactics that foster consumer trust through exciting content, interactive dialogue, and a steady online presence. As suggested, these actions will also enhance brand perception (Ballabh, 2024b; Iastremska et al., 2023b). CSR activities must be incorporated into business strategy (Deep, 2023b). CSR builds brand image and fosters social responsibility through effective communication and responsible social actions. Companies should also

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prioritize honest business methods, dependable goods, and pleasant customer encounters. They should also have feedback loops in place to handle problems. Marketing tactics should align with CSR initiatives to provide a consistent brand message, as a comprehensive strategy that integrates social media marketing and CSR would be more successful in enhancing brand image.

A longitudinal investigation would yield more profound insights. This study has limitations, such as using a cross-sectional design that only collects data once and cannot evaluate causal linkages dynamically. Research in other areas or industries may deepen our understanding of the relationship between SMM, CSR, consumer trust, and brand image. The focus on retail enterprises in Indonesia also restricts the generalizability of the results due to specific factors that may alter the findings.

Future studies could examine additional mediators and moderators, such as consumer happiness, brand loyalty, or corporate reputation, to better understand the relationship between SMM, CSR, customer trust, and brand image. Furthermore, studies could evaluate how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics, affect SMM and CSR to comprehend how they affect consumer confidence and brand image and modify marketing tactics for the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media marketing (SMM) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) significantly influence brand image, with consumer trust as a mediating variable. The findings confirm that consumer trust is important in building a strong brand image through effective marketing strategies and ongoing CSR activities. SMM enhances consumer trust through fast and responsive interactions, while CSR strengthens consumers' ethical perceptions of the company. Combining these two factors can significantly improve brand image, especially in Indonesia's competitive retail sector.

However, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the convenience sampling technique limits the generalisability of the results to a broader population. In addition, this study uses a quantitative approach with cross-sectional data, which only captures the relationship at a single point in time. Thus, it cannot explain the long-term relationship dynamics between SMM, CSR, consumer trust, and brand image. For future research, it is recommended that a longitudinal study be conducted to understand the long-term changes in the relationship between these variables. Research can also expand the scope by considering other industries besides retail and using more representative sampling techniques to improve the generalisability of the results. In addition, future research could test moderating variables such as consumer loyalty or brand experience, which might strengthen or weaken the influence of SMM and CSR on brand image.

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