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ABSTRACT
In today's dynamic business landscape, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is considered as an important strategic initiative for attaining sustainable competitive advantage. The present study aims to examine (i) the influence of consumer's perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and consumer trust on perceived CSR activities of the firm and (ii) the mediating role of perceived CSR in the relationship between (iia) consumer's perceived firm innovativeness and purchase intention (iib) consumer trust and purchase intention. Four hypotheses were tested with the primary data ($n = 287$) collected through a structured questionnaire. The regression analysis revealed that CPFI and consumer trust have direct positive impacts on the perceived CSR. Further, perceived CSR mediates the relationship between CPFI and purchase intention. However, perceived CSR does not play a mediating role between Consumer Trust and Purchase Intention. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that engagement in the CSR activities tend to reduce the perceived risk associated with innovation and consequently, influence the purchase intention among consumers. Theoretical and managerial implications are further discussed.

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Corporate social responsibility; consumer's perceived firm innovativeness; consumer trust; purchase intention; firm innovativeness

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is primarily considered as a corporate issue proactively taken to maintain a firm's and society's long-term prosperity (Hawn & Ioannou, 2016; Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Murphy, 2013). CSR has been widely studied across all broad management domains i.e. marketing, strategy, finance and operations. Majority of past research on CSR focused largely on managerial perspective and discussed about which CSR initiatives tend to enhance corporate performance (Basu & Palazzo, 2008). To mention a few, the extant literature covers the impact of CSR in terms of brand equity, corporate performance, market value, corporate reputation and firm's sustainability (Hur, Kim, & Woo, 2014; Korschun, Bhattacharya, & Swain, 2014; Malik, 2015; Wang, Chen, Yu, & Hsiao, 2015). A few studies highlighted that it is important that consumers should discern the CSR activities of the firm in a right manner (Lee, Park, & Lee, 2013; Öberseder et al., 2013). The importance of innovative firms is increasing day by day as innovation is positively related to increased profitability (Hausman & Johnston, 2014). However, when the firm is innovative, consumers

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are sceptical about the firm. This is because an innovative firm does not convey detailed information about its innovation to consumers. Therefore, there is always information asymmetry in the market. Further, the innovative firms differ from other firms in terms of financial, technological, strategic and consumer orientations (Aghion, Bond, Klemm, & Marinescu, 2004). Therefore, it would be interesting to explore how consumers perceive CSR activities of innovative firms i.e. whether it is important for innovative firms to engage in CSR activities? There have been a few attempts to understand how consumers perceive the CSR activities of a firm (Mejri & Bhatli, 2014; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013). But no study has explored consumers' perception of CSR initiatives in the case of innovative firms. The present study is an attempt to fill up this gap.

Innovative firms introduce information asymmetry in the market (Jeon & Menicucci, 2008), therefore, consumers feel risky while purchasing a product or service from such innovative firms (Bouncken & Kraus, 2013). The signals given by the firm in the form of CSR activities will act as messages for consumers. If the consumers have trust on firm, then these messages will be taken more positively by the consumers. The present work aims to shed light on this issue by exploring the role of consumer trust and consumers' perceived innovativeness on the perceived CSR activities. The previous literature has focused on the negative impacts of firm innovativeness in terms of information asymmetry and risk. The reasons of innovation failures are discussed by previous studies. However, the solution to reduce these negative impacts has not yet been explored by any study. The present study is as attempt to contribute in this void. It aims to test whether CSR activities performed by the firm can act as alleviator reducing the risk and information asymmetry introduced by firm innovativeness in the market. Therefore, the present study aims to examine (i) the influence of consumer's perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and consumer trust on perceived CSR activities of the firm and (ii) the mediating role of perceived CSR in the relationship between (iia) consumer's perceived firm innovativeness and purchase intention (iib) consumer trust and purchase intention.

The rest of the article is structured as follows. The next section will present the conceptual background of CPFI (consumers' perceived firm innovativeness), CSR, and consumer trust followed by hypotheses development. Then, we shall describe the research method followed by results and discussion. Finally, the paper will be concluded with theoretical and managerial implications, limitations and scope for future studies.

Literature review and hypotheses development

CPFI and perceived CSR

Consumer perceived firm innovativeness

Although the terms 'innovation' and 'innovativeness' are often used interchangeably in marketing and management research, there is a key difference between the two concepts (Kunz, Schmitt, & Meyer, 2011). Innovation deals with outcomes of firm activity. However, 'Innovativeness' refers to the capability of the firm to be open to new ideas and work on new solutions (Crawford & Di Benedetto, 2003). In the context of consumer's perception of firm innovativeness, CPFI is conceptualized as 'a consumer's perception of an enduring firm capability that results in novel, creative, and impactful ideas and solutions for the market' (Kunz et al., 2011). It is viewed as the product of years of successful innovative tracks in the consumer's mind, which takes time to create (Henard & Dacin, 2010). Certain firm characteristics are observed by consumers over time and further judged by them based on information, knowledge and experience. In order to build up a consistent image of firm innovativeness in consumers' mind, these firm characteristics need to be stable over time (Brown & Dacin, 1997). Recent studies have conceptualized CPFI as a term to refer to what consumers think of the firm's capability to introduce innovations into the market (Pappu & Quester, 2016).

Although, novelty has been identified as a central aspect of 'Innovativeness' (Crawford & Di Benedetto, 2003), introducing new things alone does not make a firm innovative. Consumers are more likely to view a firm as innovative if its novel and creative efforts have market impact (Kunz et al., 2011). Consumer-centric perspective of firm innovativeness is very important as finally consumers are the end users for whom firms take all the efforts. Therefore, it is crucial to understand what consumers think about firm innovation. With respect to firm innovativeness, consumers are interested in capability of firm's new products to satisfy their current needs and satisfaction of their needs in the present (Rubera & Kirca, 2017). Using a consumer-centric perspective, creativity broadly includes all kind of company efforts and activities that are seen as unique from the competition and as meaningful to the consumer (Amabile, 1988; Im & Workman, 2004). In sum, we say that consumers don't perceive a firm as 'innovative' if it does not have creative and novel ideas that succeed in marketplace.

Corporate social responsibility

Contemporary society expects firms to act responsibly and sustainably which has led to the development of concept 'Corporate social responsibility (CSR)' (Zentes, Morschett, & Schramm-Klein, 2017). Corporations are increasingly held responsible for activities up and down their value chains but outside their traditional corporate boundaries (Schrempf-Stirling, Palazzo, & Phillips, 2016). CSR is a broad area that attempts to answer a question whether firms should voluntarily perform additional functions that benefit other members of society (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). It generally addresses the proper relation between business and society and the extent to which firms have responsibilities beyond the pursuit of their economic self-interest and compliance with the law (Carroll, 1979; Davis, 1973; Jones, 1980; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Stone, 1975). Considering the complexity of the term 'Corporate social responsibility', several conceptualizations of CSR are available in the literature: as a social obligation, as a stakeholder obligation, as ethics-driven and as a managerial process (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Among all these perspectives, stakeholder perspective has become widely popular for research as it offers help in identifying to whom corporations are responsible (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Jones, 1995). The Hooghe (2001) defined CSR as 'a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis' (Hooghe, 2001). Campbell (2007) conceptualized CSR focusing more on centrality of stakeholders. He suggested that companies must not do anything that could harm their stakeholders and if corporations do cause harm to their stakeholders, they must then rectify it whenever the harm is discovered and brought to their attention.

Although, innovation in the form of a unique and superior combination of firm resources may bring considerable benefits to the focal firm (Schumpeter, 1934), it may also induce information asymmetry between the firm and its stakeholders. According to Signalling theory, a marketplace is characterized by information asymmetry or imperfect information (Spence, 1974, 2002). Information asymmetry is inherent in the nature of innovation (Millar, Udalov, & Millar, 2012). Even despite patent protection, the innovator will normally release only as much information about how the innovation is achieved as is necessary (Jeon & Menicucci, 2008). Thus, stakeholders of innovative firm have very little idea about the innovations done by the firm. This information asymmetry between a firm and its stakeholders intensifies as the firm becomes more innovative. Second factor that is inherent to innovation is 'Risk'. Innovation is inherently highly risky (Drucker, 1985). Innovation is related to novelty which in turn increases risk (Bouncken & Kraus, 2013). As the firm becomes more innovative, its innovativeness acts as a booster to induce feeling of risk in the minds of customers. In this regard, they may develop a strong concern over any further transaction with the firm.

On the basis of signalling theory, we argue that with the aid of CSR activities as signals, firms attempt to convey information about their sustainability to consumers. CSR activities of firm can act as reducing agents in abbreviating information asymmetry and feeling of risk in consumers' mind and thereby ensuring them about sustainability of firm. Signalling theory further suggests that effective signals must meet two interrelated criteria: first, they must be observable; second, they must be sufficiently costly so that only the truly sustainable firms can afford to give them (Spence, 1974; Bergh & Gibbons, 2011). CSR activities conducted by a firm can fulfil both the criteria and thus serve as effective signals. First, firms with a good CSR record are able to establish a good social image in the eyes of stakeholders through accumulating moral capital (Godfrey, 2005). Accumulating moral capital through CSR engagement can attract more positive attention from all kinds of stakeholders (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009). Therefore, CSR activities are observable. Also, CSR is costly and requires a lot of firm resources (Freeman, 1984). Some existing findings suggest that CSR may actually hurt a firm's short-term market value (Di Giuli & Kostovetsky, 2014). These evidences from literature corroborate that CSR activities are costly and thus cannot be carried out by unsustainable firms. On the other hand, in case of a sustainable firm, the benefits from CSR activities will outweigh these costs in the long run. Therefore, sustainable firms can afford CSR activities and use them as indicators of sustainability to relieve consumers from risk.

In sum, we argue that innovative firms generate information asymmetry in marketplace. Risk is an inherent factor in CPFI. In order to reduce information asymmetry and alleviate risk in consumers' minds, CSR activities are carried out by firms. These CSR activities act as indicators of firms' sustainability to consumers. Thus, we can formulate Hypothesis 1 as:

H1: CPFI has positive effect on perceived CSR.

CPFI-CSR-PI

Olsen (1977) proposed cue utilization theory which suggests that specific characteristics of the target object can become a cue for other attributes of the target, if they have predictive and credence value. Based on the theory, prior empirical studies have shown that consumers use associations to infer specific attributes when specific information is missing (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Gurhan-Canli & Batra, 2004). Innovation leads to information asymmetry in the market as the innovative firm does not release entire information about its innovation in the market (Jeon & Menicucci, 2008). Due to this information asymmetry, some information about innovation is missing for consumers. Based on the evidences from literature and 'Cue utilization theory' (Olsen, 1977), we argue that in order to deal with such missing information about innovation, consumers treat CSR activities of the firm as characteristics of target object and use them as a cue for missing information. Therefore, here, we provide more parsimonious explanation for the firm innovativeness-perceived CSR relationship using cue utilization theory and therefore support our arguments in the previous section. Further, we argue that if CSR activities are acting as a cue for consumers to infer missing information, consumers may infer that firm will sustain in a long run and it will perform its tasks effectively. This will cause the consumers to feel less risky about the firm and increases purchase intension. Thus, we conclude that perceived CSR must transmit the impact of firm innovativeness onto consumers' purchase intensions from the firm.

If the positive relationship between consumers' perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and perceived CSR holds, the extensive support observed in marketing for a positive relationship between CSR and purchase intension (PI) implies a mediating role for perceived CSR in the relationship. If a consumer perceives the firm as highly engaged in CSR activities, it acts as a strong reason for him/her to develop purchase intension from the firm. Firms that fail to signal their CSR activities are thus unlikely to translate the benefits of high innovativeness into purchase intensions. That is, perceived CSR is a necessary condition for innovativeness perceptions toward a firm to translate into purchase intension. Hence, we offer a hypothesis for the intervening role of perceived CSR in the relationship between consumers' perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and purchase intension (PI), in the absence of any empirical evidence about this relationship in the existing literature.

H2: Perceived CSR mediates the positive relationship between CPFI and PI.

Consumer trust

Trust is based on consumers' expectations that the seller will not havean opportunistic attitude and take advantage of the situation (Chari, Christodoulides, Presi, Wenhold, & Casaletto, 2016).Trust generally is viewed as an essential ingredient for successful relationships (Berry, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust is a set of socially learned and socially confirmed expectations that people have of other people or organizational entities (Barber, 1983). Trust develops as a result of a firm belief that the trustee is reliable, honest and benevolent (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Further, Morgan and Hunt (1994) stated that trust can be conceptualized as a belief that trustee will behave in a favourable manner. From a consumer perspective 'Trust' can be defined as the consumer's belief that a corporation will perform in a manner consistent with expectations regarding its expertise, integrity and goodwill (Park, Lee, & Kim, 2014). Customer's trust in a firm can be captured as the customer confidence in quality and reliability of the services offered by the firm (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). Trust is defined as "the expectations held by the consumer that the service provider is dependable and can be relied on to deliver on its promises" (Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002).

Martín, Camarero, and José (2011) suggested that the role of consumer involvement in the formation of trust is significant. Thus, we suggest that the consumer having trust on firm is highly involved with the firm. As discussed previously, signalling theory (Spence 1974, 2002) suggests that with the aid of CSR activities, firms attempt to convey information about their sustainability to consumers. According to theory of social judgement (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), a highly involved individual who agrees with a message will interpret it more positively than it actually is. Therefore, when a consumer is highly involved with a firm agrees with the message given by firm, he or she interprets the message more positively .This reaction represents assimilation effect. On the same basis, we claim that the signals given by the firm in the form of CSR activities will be taken more positively by highly involved customer who trusts the firm. Therefore, when customers trust firm, CSR activities by the firm are perceived more positively by them. Thus, we assume that

H3: Trust has positive effect on perceived CSR.

Trust-CSR-PI

Past research has found that consumers' responses to CSR are complex (Foreh & Grier, 2003; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006). Sometimes, consumers don't take CSR activities performed by the firm in a positive manner as they are sceptical about motives behind CSR activities (Park et al., 2014). Godfrey (2005) argued that corporate reputation of a firm among consumers can be achieved through CSR activities only when these activities performed by a firm are perceived positively by consumers. When a firm has good reputation in consumer's mind, purchase intention of consumer automatically increases.

Based on the discussion in previous section on consumer trust and our hypothesis about positive relationship between consumer trust and CSR, we argue that if consumers trust firm, CSR activities performed by the firm are perceived positively by them. This in turn leads to purchase intention. Therefore, consumer trust leads to purchase intension and this relationship is mediated by CSR activities of the firm. We hypothesize that

H4: Perceived CSR mediates the positive relationship between Consumer trust and PI.

The findings of the previous studies are summarized in the Table 1 and the conceptual framework is depicted in the Figure 1.

Research method

Measures

All the measures used in the study, comprised multiple items and were adopted from the previous studies. For measuring Consumer perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI), we have adapted the items developed by Kunz et al. (2011). Perceived CSR was measured with Brown and Dacin (1997) scale items. Trust was measured with the items developed by Garbarino and Johnson (1999). All the items for CPFI, Perceived CSR and Trust were measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale with anchor points: 1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree. The purchase intension scale was taken from the study by MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986). Respondents were asked to rate their purchase intention with three seven-point semantic differential scales with anchor points: scale 1: 1 = unlikely, 7 = likely; scale 2: 1 = impossible, 7 = possible; scale 3: 1 = improbable, 7 = probable. All the measures used in the present study have proven their applicability across various contexts, but, we checked the content/face validity of all the items in the present study context with a panel of thirty respondents. The panel comprised of 15 consumers and 15 marketing professionals.

Table 1. Summary of previous literature.

Study	Context	Independent variable (IV)	Dependent variable (DV)	Theoretical framework	Main findings
Kunz et al. (2011), JBR	Perceived firm innovativeness	Perceived firm innovativeness (PFI)	Consumer loyalty	Functional-cognitive route and affective-experiential route	Development and validation of PFI scale. Firm needs to consider consumer perceptions as a whole and not just new products and technologies and take into account functional-cognitive perspective as well as consumer emotions and experiences
Maignan and Ferrell (2004), JAMS	Corporate social responsibility	CSR initiatives	Stakeholder support	Relationship between CSR initiatives and stakeholder support	Conceptualization of CSR. Depiction of CSR activities as actions undertaken to display conformity to both organizational and stakeholder norms. CSR initiatives generate increased stakeholder support
Korschun et al. (2014), JM	Corporate social responsibility	Perceived management support for CSR, perceived customer support for CSR	Job performance	Model linking CSR to job performance among frontline employees	Frontline employees identify with the organization and with the customers as a function of how much the employees perceive management and customers to support the company's CSR activities
Basu and Palazzo (2008), AMR	Corporate Social Responsibility	Cognitive, linguistic, conative dimensions of CSR activities	CSR activities	Process model of organization sense making	How managers think, discuss and act with respect to their key stakeholders and the world at large
Bouncken and Kraus (2013), JBR	Innovation	Coopetition	Revolutionary innovation, radical innovation	Coopetition and innovation	Coopetition, the simultaneous pursuit of coopetition and competition has a varying impact on innovation of SMEs. Coopetition is advantageous under greater technological uncertainty
Chari et al. (2016),JBR	Consumer trust	Benevolence, integrity, ability, propensity to trust	Trust	Trust Facebook friends-UGBR trust	Higher levels on trust in user generated brand recommendations (UGBR) are associated with high levels of trust with Facebook friends and provide support for moderating role of ad scepticism
Danneels and Kleinschmidt (2001), JPIM	Innovation	Product innovativeness	Project selection and performance	Product innovativeness-project selection and performance	New product practitioners are encouraged to evaluate new product opportunities primarily in terms of their fit with their firm's resources and skills rather than the extent to which they are 'close to home'
Garbarino and Johnson (1999), JM	Consumer trust	Satisfaction, attitude	Future intentions	Satisfaction, attitude- future customer intentions via trust and commitment	For the low relational customers, overall satisfaction is the primary mediating construct between the component attitudes and future intentions. For the high relational customers, trust and commitment, rather than satisfaction, are the mediators between component attitudes and future intentions
Moorman et al. (1993), JM	Trust	User trust in researcher	Utilization of market research information		Interpersonal factors are the most predictive of trust

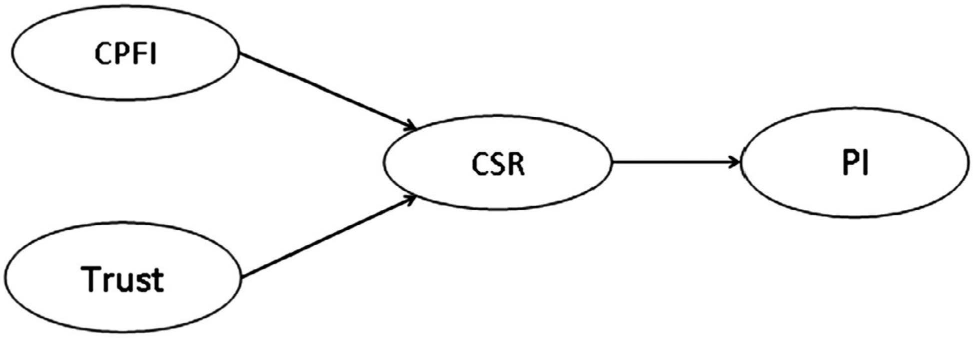

Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

Sample and data collection

The population of this study was composed of shoppers aged 18 years and above. The sampling frame was comprised of students and working professionals. A questionnaire was designed to measure the constructs of the study and demographic details of the respondents (See Appendix 1 for items of the constructs). The questionnaire was sent to 310 respondents through email. Response rate was 98.06% (304 out of 310 respondents responded). After removing incomplete questionnaires and outliers, the final sample size considered for testing the hypotheses was 287. The sample size meets the minimum sample size for running the multivariate data analysis techniques like regression analysis (e.g. Dennis, Newman, Michon, Brakus, & Wright, 2010; Shukla, 2009).

Data analysis and results

The sample and descriptive statistics and reliability of the constructs

The socio-demographic profile of the sample and descriptive statistics of the constructs are represented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that almost half of the respondents are female (49%); 51% respondents are graduate, 42% are post graduate and 7% hold Ph.D or equivalent degree. Mean age of the respondents is 28 years and mean monthly household income is Rs. 55645. 54% of the respondents are students, 8% are businessman and 38% are employed. The mean scores and standard deviations of CPFI scale items range from 5.439 to 5.899 and 1.09 to 1.44, respectively. The same for perceived CSR range from 4.272 to 4.875 and 1.259 to 1.33, respectively. The mean scores and standard deviations of Trust range from 2.199 to 5.889 and 1.166 to 1.676, respectively. The same for purchase intention range from 5.362 to 5.519 and 1.371 to 1.524, respectively. The reliability statistics (Cronbach alpha values) of the four constructs are .875, .793, .753, .926 for CPFI, Perceived CSR, Trust, Purchase intention, respectively.

Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses of this study were examined with a sophisticated multivariate statistical technique namely regression analysis. The results are presented in Table 3. Conceptual framework is depicted in the Figure 1 which represents several interdependent relationships.

Table 2. The sample and descriptive statistics of the construct items.

Gender	Male	51%
	Female	49%
Education	Graduate	51%
	Post graduate	42%
	Ph.D or equivalent	7%
Occupation	Students	54%
	Businessman	8%
	Employed (government/private/self)	38%
Age	Mean age	28 years
Monthly Household Income (MHI)	Mean MHI	Rs. 55645

Constructs and their items	Mean	SD
Consumer's Perceived Firm Innovativeness (CPFI)		
CPFI1	5.791	1.118
CPFI2	5.798	1.18
CPFI3	5.899	1.09
CPFI4	5.652	1.368
CPFI5	5.599	1.23
CPFI6	5.439	1.44
CPFI7	5.815	1.139
Perceived CSR		
CSR1	4.498	1.292
CSR2	4.526	1.33
CSR3	4.875	1.259
CSR4	4.272	1.323
Trust		
T1	5.672	1.181
T2	5.889	1.168
T3	2.728	1.625
T4	5.868	1.166
T5	2.944	1.676
T6	2.199	1.426
Purchase intention		
PI1	5.362	1.524
PI2	5.519	1.371
PI3	5.488	1.396

Table 3. Hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Relationship	CS	Assessment
H1	CPFI->CSR	.522*	Supported
H2	CPFI->CSR->PI	.351*	Supported
H3	Trust->CSR	.267*	Supported
H4	Trust->CSR->PI	.067	Not supported

Notes: CS = completely standardized path coefficients.
*$p < .05$.

In order to test the impact of CPFI on perceived CSR, we carried out regression analysis with dependent variable as 'Perceived CSR' and independent variable as 'CPFI.' The results of the test ($\beta = .522$, $t = 10.33$, $p < .05$) show that CPFI has positive effect on Perceived CSR. These results led us to accept hypothesis H1. Thus, CSR activities of the firm act as indicators of firm sustainability to consumers alleviating the risk associated with firm innovativeness. Also, CSR activities mitigate the information asymmetry introduced by firm innovativeness. To check, the mediating role of Perceived CSR in the relationship between CPFI and Purchase intention (PI), we considered four-step approach of mediation analysis recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). In step 1, simple regression analysis is carried out with CPFI as independent variable and Purchase intention (PI) as dependent variable. The results of the test ($\beta = .425$, $t = 7.92$, $p < .05$) show that Beta value is significant. In step 2, we carried out simple regression analysis with CPFI as independent variable and Perceived CSR as dependent variable. The results of the test ($\beta = .522$, $t = 10.33$, $p < .05$) show that beta value is significant. In step 3, we carried out simple regression analysis with Perceived CSR as independent variable and Purchase intention (PI) as dependent variable. The results of the test ($\beta = .324$, $t = 5.789$, $p < .05$) show that Beta value is significant. After examining significance of coefficients in all three steps, we carried out step 4 in which we performed multiple regression analysis with CPFI, Perceived CSR as independent variables and Purchase intention (PI) as dependent variable. The results of the test (CPFI: $\beta = .351$, $t = 5.623$, $p < .05$; CSR: $\beta = .141$, $t = 2.261$, $p < .05$) show that partial mediation has occurred as both the coefficient values are significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986). This leads us to accept hypothesis 2 stating that perceived CSR activities of a firm mediate the effect of CPFI on PI. Further, to test hypothesis H3, we carried out simple regression analysis with Trust as independent variable and Perceived CSR as dependent variable. The results of the test ($\beta = .267$, $t = 4.679$, $p < .05$) show that Trust has positive effect on Perceived CSR. This leads us to accept hypothesis H3. In order to study mediating role of Perceived CSR in the relationship between Consumer trust and Purchase intention (PI), we followed the same four step approach recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). In step 1, simple regression analysis is carried out with Consumer trust as independent variable and Purchase intention (PI) as dependent variable. The results of the test ($\beta = .067$, $t = 1.128$, $p > .05$) show that Beta value is not significant. This result is indicating that consumer trust does not have any impact on Purchase intention (PI). As we did not get significant direct relationship between Consumer trust and Purchase intention (PI) in the first step itself, we did not proceed to further steps in the method proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). As the direct relationship between Consumer trust and purchase intention (PI) is not significant, the mediation role of CSR in the same relationship can't be checked. This leads us to reject our hypothesis H4. The possible reasons for this rejection of hypothesis H4 are discussed in detail in the next section.

In sum, the results of the present study showed that consumers' perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and consumer trust have positive effects on perceived CSR. Perceived CSR mediates the positive relationship between CPFI and purchase intension (PI). In other words, perceived CSR is a necessary condition for innovativeness perceptions toward a firm to translate into purchase intension. In addition, perceived CSR does not mediate the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention.

Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore the impacts of Consumer's perceived firm innovativeness (CPFI) and consumer trust on perceived CSR activities of the firm. The study also tried to explore the mediating role of perceived CSR activities of the firm on two relationships. The first one is the relationship between CPFI and purchase intention and second one is the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention. The conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 was tested using regression analysis. The results of regression analysis support hypothesis H1 signifying that CPFI has positive effect on perceived CSR. This is in line with our idea of role of CSR activities in mitigating information asymmetry and perceived risk in consumer's mind due to firm innovativeness. This finding supports signalling theory

(Spence, 1974) in the previous literature which suggests that either tangible or intangible assets of the firm can act as signals for reducing information asymmetry in market. Here, we claim that CSR activities of firm acted as signals to reduce information asymmetry. Further, the results support hypothesis H2 suggesting the mediating role of CSR activities of the firm in relationship of CPFI and purchase intention. Therefore, based on these results, we can argue that CSR activities of the firm act as signals for the consumers informing them about firm sustainability. These results are in line with previous literature which suggests that CSR activities are costly (Bergh & Gibbons, 2011; Freeman, 1984). Therefore, if the firm is engaged in CSR activities, consumers perceive the firm as sustainable. If such firm is engaging itself in innovative ideas, then the risk attached with firm innovativeness is alleviated by CSR activities. Also, the information asymmetry in the market introduced by firm innovativeness is mitigated by CSR activities. The results of regression analysis also support hypothesis H3 proposing the positive impact of consumer trust on CSR activities. Thus, if a consumer trusts firm, CSR activities performed by the firm are taken more positively by him or her. This is in line with the social judgement theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961) which suggests that a highly involved individual who agrees with a message will interpret it more positively than it actually is. Therefore, a consumer having trust on the firm will take CSR activities of the firm more positively as compared to the consumer who does not trust the firm.

When we tried to check the mediating role of perceived CSR in the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention based on Baron and Kenny (1986) test, in the first step itself, the hypothesis H4 got rejected. According to four step approach suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), in the first step, we checked the direct impact of consumer trust on purchase intention. We found that this relationship that we checked in the first step is non-significant. Baron and Kenny (1986) argued about the stepwise approach to be followed in testing the mediating role of any variable. As the first step itself is not meeting the criterion, we could not proceed to next steps. Rejection of hypothesis H4 suggests that consumer trust does not have any direct impact on purchase intention (PI). This might be the case due to the fact that even if consumers trust firm, it does not lead them to purchase a product or service provided by that firm. Many other factors such as perceived value, service quality, customer satisfaction have direct impacts on purchase intention (Chang & Wildt, 1994; Taylor & Baker, 1994). Therefore, in context of any firm, instead of having direct impact on purchase intention, consumer trust may lead to customer satisfaction or perceived value which in turn leads to purchase intention. As our framework does not include these constructs, we call future research to focus on this aspect. There must be some other reasons due to which there is no direct impact of consumer trust on purchase intention in context of firm. Therefore, we invite future research to investigate the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention in the context of firm.

Theoretical contribution

Our study has explored the direct impacts of 'Consumer perceived firm innovativeness' (CPFI) and 'Trust' on perceived CSR. In addition, it has explored the mediating role of perceived CSR in the relationship between CPFI and purchase intention (PI). Both the direct impacts are positive and significant. In addition, the mediating role of perceived CSR in the relationship of CPFI and PI is also well supported. These findings contribute significantly to consumer behaviour theory as such linkages have not been explored earlier. Based on the stronger mediating effect of perceived CSR, we argue that intent to purchase a product/service from innovative firm can be best encouraged through CSR activities rather than just the direct influence of firm innovativeness. So far, studies have found the impact of consumer trust and perceived innovativeness on purchase intention. However, our study is the first to identify the direct positive impacts of consumer trust and perceived firm innovativeness on perceived CSR. Also, previous studies have not suggested anything about mediating role of perceived CSR on perceived firm innovativeness-purchase intention relationship. Our study fills this gap based on empirical findings. Consumer behaviour theory can be enriched with these findings. As there is a dearth of research of finding some way-out for reducing the risk associated with innovative firms, our research tries to fill this gap and suggests crucial importance of CSR activities for the innovative firms. It also suggests the mechanism through which the innovative firms can reduce feeling of risk among consumers thereby increasing their purchase intentions. Further, as consumer trust has positive impact on perceived CSR, CSR activities of firm are taken more positively by consumers if they trust the firm. However, trust does not necessarily imply purchase intention.

Managerial implications

This study has several managerial implications too. Regarding the hypotheses H1 and H2, this study has proved that consumers' perceived firm innovativeness and consumer trust have positive impacts on perceived CSR. In addition, while testing the mediating role of perceived CSR through the method suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), we also tested the impact of perceived CSR on Purchase intention. The results suggested the positive impact of perceived CSR on purchase intention. Thus, higher the consumers' perceived firm innovativeness and consumer trust, higher is perceived CSR and purchase intention. Although, the innovative firms do not have direct control on the information asymmetry in market caused by their innovative steps, the firms can engage more in CSR activities in order to reduce this information asymmetry. Further, although the firms are engaged in CSR activities, sometimes, those activities are unknown to consumers. The firms should take all the possible efforts to make their CSR activities visible to customers. Once the customers perceive the firm as engaged heavily in CSR activities, this perception about the firm will act as a positive signal by the firm about its sustainability. This signal will automatically reduce the information asymmetry and perceived risk in innovation. Thus, finally, it will increase purchase intention of customers.

In summary, this study provides a solution for the innovative firms to reduce information asymmetry introduced in the market due to their innovations. In today's world, most of the successful firms are highly innovative. However, these firms always face a challenge of information asymmetry in the market about their innovations. Also, these innovative firms are unable to control the perceived risk by consumers due to innovation. Our study presents the solution to both the problems of information asymmetry and perceived risk introduced due to firm innovations. Further, our study encourages firms to engage more in CSR activities by suggesting that if the customers perceive the firm as engaged heavily on CSR activities, their purchase intention from the firm increases significantly. Therefore, by engaging heavily in CSR activities and making the CSR activities visible to customers, the innovative firms can increase customers' purchase intention. In this way, our study suggests a way for the innovative firms to mitigate perceived risk among consumers. Further, the firms should focus on the fact that although consumers trust firm, it does not necessarily get converted into purchase intention. Therefore, in addition to build trust among consumers, firms should focus on some other ways in order to increase purchase intention among consumers. Here, as we have suggested role of perceived CSR to mitigate risk and information asymmetry introduced by innovation, firms can have some other way to increase purchase intention among consumers if they trust the firms. Firms can implement certain ways to boost conversion of consumer trust into purchase intention. We call future research to explore these ways.

Limitations and future scope

This study has several limitations. The study has focused on two constructs namely consumers' perceived firm innovativeness' (CPFI) and consumer trust and investigated their impacts on perceived CSR. However, these constructs are treated independently while investigating their impacts. There is a possibility that the impact of interaction between two constructs on perceived CSR is different. Future research can focus on this aspect by using 2 (High CPFI vs. Low CPFI) * 2 (High trust vs. Low trust) experimental design to study the interactive effects of these constructs. Further, certain demographic variables can also have significant impact on these relationships. We invite future research investigating how these linkages established in the present study vary with respects to demographic variables such as age and gender.

As mentioned in the previous sections, we did not get the direct impact of consumer trust on purchase intention in the context of firm. As the other constructs such as perceived value, customer satisfaction are not included in our study, we call future research to investigate the relationship between consumer trust and purchase intention in the context of firm by incorporating all the constructs which are beyond the scope of this study. This investigation may lead to appropriate reasoning of rejection of our hypothesis H4 which states that perceived CSR mediates the positive relationship between consumer trust and PI.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix 1. Constructs

Consumers' Perceived Firm Innovativeness (Kunz et al., 2011)

(1) The company is dynamic
(2) The company is very creative
(3) The company launches new products and creates market trends all the time
(4) The company is a pioneer in its category
(5) The company constantly generates new ideas
(6) The company has changed the market with its offers
(7) The company is an advanced, forward-looking firm

Responses were taken on 7 item Likert – scale

Corporate Social Responsibility (Brown & Dacin, 1997)

(1) I think this company has a legitimate interest in this cause
(2) This is a socially responsible company
(3) This company is a good corporate citizen
(4) Helping others appears important to this company
(5) This promotion benefits research more than it benefits this company. *Responses were taken on* seven-*item Likert -scale*

Trust (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999)

(1) Always meet expectations
(2) Can be counted to be good
(3) Reliable
(4) Cannot always be trusted
(5) Consistently high quality
(6) Not worth the money
(7) Waste of time

Responses were taken on seven-*item Likert type scale*

Purchase intention (MacKenzie et al., 1986)

If you want to buy a product that the firm you selected above is providing, please use the following scales to indicate your probability to purchase the product offered by Firm the next time you want to buy the product. (Please answer all three questions):

(1) Unlikely – Likely
(2) Impossible – Possible
(3) Improbable – probable

(seven-point semantic differential scale)