



EXPLORING THE KEY DRIVERS OF CSR IN MUMBAI'S FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose of the Research: Family firms often take an active role in socially responsible activities due to the value they place on maintaining strong emotional and social connections with their stakeholders. Their involvement generally tends to go beyond surface-level efforts with a sincere dedication to building social ties which makes a meaningful impact on their communities. The main purpose of this study is to examine the key drivers influencing CSR practices among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai city. The study explores the various key factors that motivates small apparel retailers to engage in socially responsible behavior. The study also throws light on the various challenges and outcomes of their CSR initiatives. This research is an attempt to uncover how intrinsic values and community engagement shape CSR efforts of the small family-owned apparel retail stores in Mumbai city.

Key Findings and Results: The findings of the study reveals that several factors drive CSR efforts in family-owned apparel businesses. Cultural traditions playing a central role as these businesses often inherit values that emphasize giving back to the community, which naturally shapes their approach to social responsibility. Generational leadership transitions also influence CSR activities, as younger leaders bring fresh perspectives which focuses on sustainability and ethical practices. Additionally, a deep-rooted commitment to supporting local communities forms the backbone of many CSR initiatives. The study results also reveal that certain external factors such as compliance with legal frameworks and growing customer awareness also encourage the CSR practices among small retailers to some extent. Unlike large retailers which focus on sustainable initiatives and employee welfare, smaller retailers emphasize localized community support. Limited financial resources, lack of awareness, and difficulties in measuring the impact of CSR activities are the major challenges for family-owned retailer to practice socially responsible activities.

Conclusion and recommendation: Corporate social responsibility can serve as both a strategic tool for enhancing brand reputation and a mechanism for fostering customer loyalty in family-owned apparel retailers. Recommendations include that by leveraging government support and fostering partnerships with NGOs can help family business owners to overcome barriers and strengthen CSR efforts.

KEYWORDS:

FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS, CSR, GENERATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES.

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INTRODUCTION

Family businesses play a pivotal role in India's economy, contributing significantly to its GDP and fostering innovation. Historically rooted in the socio-economic fabric of the country, these enterprises have evolved through various challenges and opportunities. Their influence extends beyond mere economic contributions, as

they embody family values and community engagement, shaping corporate citizenship in India.

Family businesses have been integral to India's corporate landscape since the late 19th century, driven by factors like limited managerial labour and colonial inheritance laws. Post-1950, changes in governance and economic

policies allowed these businesses to adapt and thrive, reflecting a structural instability in their operations (Roy, 2024). Family-owned firms are crucial to the MSME sector, promoting innovation and equitable economic development (Gopalkrishnan, 2020). They significantly contribute to GDP, with concentrated family ownership positively impacting financial performance up to a certain threshold (Pahwa, 2020). Family involvement in management and ownership has been linked to increased R&D investments and patent applications (Ashwin et al., 2015). The stewardship theory suggests that family control fosters a conducive environment for innovation, enhancing competitiveness (Ashwin et al., 2015).

Family-owned businesses have long been acknowledged for their deep-seated commitment to their communities, motivated by both economic imperatives and social responsibilities. Unlike corporate entities, which often approach Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a strategic or compliance-driven measure, family-run enterprises tend to embed social responsibility within their core values and business practices. This characteristic is prominent in the apparel retail sector, where small family-owned businesses cultivate close relationships with their customers and employees. In Mumbai, a city with a diverse and vibrant retail sector, family-owned apparel retailers significantly contribute to local economic growth while actively engaging in socially responsible initiatives. Their CSR endeavours are predominantly guided by intrinsic values rather than regulatory obligations which distinguish them from larger corporate retailers.

The significance of CSR in family businesses is rooted in their distinct governance structures, intergenerational leadership transitions, and community-centric operational models. Unlike multinational corporations that implement broad-scale sustainability programs, family-run businesses tend to focus on localized initiatives that directly benefit their immediate communities. These enterprises perceive social responsibility not only as an ethical duty but also as a means to strengthen their emotional and social bonds with stakeholders. Consequently, their CSR efforts often go beyond superficial engagement, reflecting a genuine commitment to fostering positive social change.

This study aims to examine the key factors influencing CSR practices among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. By exploring the motivations, the research seeks to identify key drivers that encourage socially responsible behaviour among small apparel retailers in Mumbai city.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been widely studied across various business sectors. There is a growth in literature emphasizing the relevance of CSR in family-owned enterprises. The adoption of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices among small family-owned apparel retailers is influenced by several key factors. Economic motivations, external pressures, and the intrinsic values of the entrepreneurs affect CSR practices

among retailers. In their study, **Rahim, (2023)** states a notable change in consumer behaviour, with a growing demand for businesses to engage in sustainable practices. This shift is influenced by factors such as social media and increased awareness of resource scarcity, making CSR initiatives more critical for both small businesses and large corporations. **Chelliah et al., (2017)** identifies four main factors that influence CSR adoption among SMEs: profit maximization, philanthropy responsibility, external pressure, and moral responsibility. Each of these factors plays a vital role in shaping how SMEs approach their CSR initiatives, ultimately contributing to their overall impact on social and economic development in Malaysia. **Battaglia et al., (2014)** in their study found a significant positive correlation between corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices and innovation performance among small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the fashion industry. This correlation was particularly strong for environmental CSR practices, which were linked to both technical and organizational innovations. Another study found that CSR initiatives in family firms are often driven by intrinsic motivations such as ethical values, community ties, and long-term sustainability objectives (**Berrone et al., 2010**). Unlike corporate entities that primarily engage in CSR for regulatory compliance or reputational benefits, family businesses tend to integrate socially responsible practices into their core identity (**Dyer & Whetten, 2006**).

Cultural and traditional values significantly influence CSR practices within family-owned businesses. **Baldo (2013)** conducted a thorough analysis of existing literature on business ethics and CSR within the context of SMEs. The paper describes a qualitative investigation that focuses on multiple case studies of two Italian SMEs. The findings reveal that the entrepreneurs of these SMEs align their objectives with both economic and social goals. This dual focus is driven by their virtues, suggesting that personal values play a significant role in shaping business practices. Studies by **Jamali et al. (2009)** highlight that family enterprises, particularly in emerging economies, often draw upon deeply embedded cultural norms that prioritize community welfare.

Intergenerational leadership transitions significantly influence the prioritization of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives within organizations. As leadership changes, the values and priorities of new leaders can reshape CSR strategies. **Fernández-Muñoz et al., (2022)** emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of leadership gender and generational differences in CSR practices. Successor leaders (those who take over from founders) tend to engage their companies more in normative CSR activities than founding leaders. Interestingly, successor leaders also encourage more instrumental CSR activities, which was contrary to the researchers' initial expectations. **Basco and Pérez Rodríguez (2011)** examine how intergenerational leadership transitions impact CSR strategies, with younger successors introducing sustainability initiatives while

preserving the firm's legacy of social responsibility. The findings of the study performed by **Hatami et al., (2023)** suggest that fostering an emerging sense of co-responsibility among employees and stakeholders is crucial for achieving social sustainability. This sense of shared responsibility is argued to be a key driver for companies to engage meaningfully in corporate volunteering initiatives.

The role of external pressures, including consumer expectations and legal mandates, has also been widely explored. **Freeman et al. (2010)** suggest that rising consumer awareness regarding ethical sourcing and environmental sustainability compels small retailers to adapt their CSR approaches. Additionally, regulatory compliance and government incentives act as crucial external motivators for CSR adoption among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (**Jenkins, 2006**).

Despite the clear advantages of CSR engagement, numerous challenges persist in its implementation. **Gonçalves et al., (2024)** identified the top 15 barriers that are most significant in hindering the implementation of sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). Among these, economic and financial barriers were highlighted as the foremost challenges. The lack of funding and capital was particularly noted as a major obstacle for SMEs trying to incorporate sustainability into their operations. A major issue is the difficulty in assessing the impact of CSR initiatives, which limits businesses' ability to refine their strategies and demonstrate tangible social contributions (**Carroll & Shabana, 2010**). Furthermore, research highlights the importance of collaboration, indicating that partnerships with NGOs and governmental bodies can significantly enhance the effectiveness and reach of CSR programs (**Porter & Kramer, 2011**).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the factors influencing CSR practices among small family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai.
2. To identify the role of cultural traditions and inherited values in shaping CSR initiatives in small family-owned apparel stores.
3. To analyse the effect of generational gaps and transitions on CSR and sustainability practices.
4. To investigate the impact customer awareness on CSR efforts of small apparel retailers.
5. To identify the major challenges faced by small family-owned apparel retailers in implementing CSR activities.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. H_{01} : Cultural traditions and inherited values do not have a significant influence on CSR initiatives in small family-owned apparel stores.
2. H_{02} : Generational gaps and leadership transitions

do not significantly affect CSR and sustainability practices in small family-owned apparel businesses.

3. H_{03} : Customer awareness does not have a significant impact on CSR efforts of small apparel retailers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive research design is employed to investigate the key drivers influencing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. The research aims to systematically examine the association of cultural values, generational differences and customer awareness with CSR engagement in small family-owned businesses. A quantitative approach has been utilized to analyse correlations between key variables, while qualitative insights have been taken to understand the key challenges, motives and contribution of small family-owned retailers.

SAMPLING METHOD

A stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was divided into strata based on different geographical areas of Mumbai, including South Mumbai, Western Suburbs, Central Suburbs, Eastern Suburbs, and Navi Mumbai. Random selection within each geographical stratum was followed for a balanced representation of businesses across Mumbai city.

SAMPLE SIZE

The study initially targeted 200 family-owned apparel retailers across Mumbai. However, due to incomplete responses, only 156 fully completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis.

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire to collect information regarding CSR practices, cultural influences, generational shifts, and customer awareness. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended and Likert scale-based questions to facilitate quantitative analysis, along with a few open-ended questions to obtain qualitative insights into CSR motivations and challenges.

DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical methods employed included descriptive statistics to summarize CSR engagement trends. Spearman's Rank Correlation was used to examine relationships between CSR engagement and key drivers such as values, generational shifts, and customer awareness. To assess associations between categorical variables such as generational transitions and CSR engagement Chi Square test was applied. Further Cramér's V and Phi Coefficient was employed to evaluate the strength of nominal associations between variables.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE.1: DURATION OF FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS IN MUMBAI

Duration	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 5 yrs	2	1.3
5 to 10 yrs	7	4.5
10 to 15 yrs	14	9.0
More than 15 yrs	133	85.3
Total	156	100.0

The above table (Table.1) presents the distribution of family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai based on their years of operation. A significant majority (85.3%) have been in business for more than 15 years. Retailers with 10 to 15 years of operation account for 9.0%, while those operating for 5 to 10 years constitute 4.5% of the sample. Only 1.3% of businesses have been in existence for less than five years.

TABLE.2: CSR ENGAGEMENT AMONG FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS

CSR Engagement	Frequency	Percent
Yes	93	59.6
No	63	40.4
Total	156	100.0

The table illustrates the level of CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. A majority of the retailers (59.6%) actively participate in CSR initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to social and community responsibilities. However, 40.4% of retailers do not engage in CSR activities which may be attributed to factors such as financial constraints and lack of awareness.

TABLE.3: INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL VALUES ON CSR ENGAGEMENT

Correlations				
			CSR Engagement	Values
Spearman's rho	CSR Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.174*
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.030
		N	156	156
	Values	Correlation Coefficient	.174*	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.030	
		N	156	156

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table (Table.3) analyses the relationship between cultural values and CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. This correlation analysis is conducted to test the hypothesis that cultural traditions and inherited values do not significantly influence CSR initiatives. The findings reveal a weak yet statistically significant positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.174, p = 0.030). The result suggests that while cultural values contribute to CSR engagement, their impact is relatively modest. The statistical significance at the 0.05 level implies that values do influence CSR participation to some extent but other factors may also play a crucial role.

TABLE.4: IMPACT OF GENERATIONAL TRANSITIONS ON CSR ENGAGEMENT

Correlations				
			CSR Engagement	Values
Spearman's rho	CSR Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.206**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.010
		N	156	156
	Values	Correlation Coefficient	.206**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	
		N	156	156

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table (Table.4) examines the relationship between generational gaps and CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. The correlation analysis tests the hypothesis that generational gaps and leadership transitions do not significantly affect CSR and sustainability practices. The findings indicate significant positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.206, p = 0.010). Though there is a weak correlation between the variables yet it suggests that generational transitions have an influence on CSR engagement.

TABLE.5: ANALYSIS OF GENERATIONAL INFLUENCE ON CSR ENGAGEMENT

	Generation	CSR Engagement
Chi-Square	55.038 ^a	5.769 ^b
Df	8	1
Asymp. Sig.	0.000	0.016

- a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 17.3.
- b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 78.0.

The results of a Chi-Square test assessing the relationship

between generational transitions and CSR engagement in family-owned apparel businesses are shown in the above table. The analysis examines whether generational shifts significantly impact CSR participation. The test results show a Chi-Square value of 55.038 (df = 8, p < 0.001) for the generational variable and 5.769 (df = 1, p = 0.016) for CSR engagement. Since the p-values are below the standard significance levels, the findings suggest a statistically significant relationship between generational shifts and CSR practices.

TABLE.6: CRAMÉR'S V ANALYSIS

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.610	<0.001
	Cramer's V	0.610	<0.001
No. of valid cases	156		

Cramér's V value of 0.610 (p < 0.001) indicates a strong association between generational transitions and CSR engagement in family-owned apparel businesses. This suggests that leadership succession significantly influences corporate responsibility priorities.

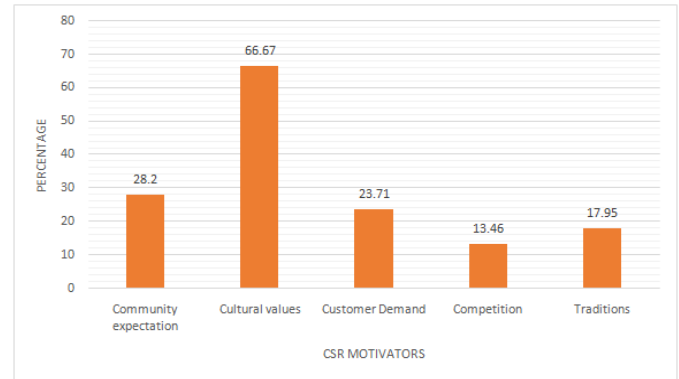
TABLE.7: CORRELATION BETWEEN CUSTOMER AWARENESS AND CSR ENGAGEMENT

Correlations				
			CSR Engagement	Awareness
Spearman's rho	CSR Engagement	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.276**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	156	156
	Awareness	Correlation Coefficient	.276**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	156	156

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

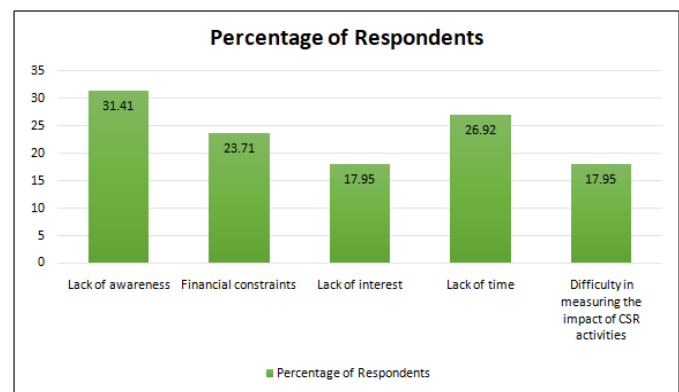
The correlation analysis tests the hypothesis that customer awareness does not have a significant impact on CSR efforts. The results indicate a positive correlation (Spearman's rho = 0.276, p = 0.000), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that as customer awareness increases, CSR engagement among these businesses also tends to rise.

FIGURE.1: CSR MOTIVATORS AMONG FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS IN MUMBAI



Respondents were asked about the key motivators behind CSR practices. The bar chart illustrates the primary factors influencing CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. The most prominent motivator is cultural values, cited by nearly 68% of respondents. Community expectations and customer demand also play significant roles, with approximately 28% and 23% of respondents, respectively. This indicates that external pressures from society and consumers drive CSR participation. Conversely, competition emerges as the least influential factor, with only 10% of retailers acknowledging it as a driver for CSR engagement. Traditional business practices also appear to influence approximately 18% of retailers. These results indicate that CSR participation in small family-owned apparel businesses is predominantly driven by cultural and ethical considerations rather than competitive forces or long-standing business traditions.

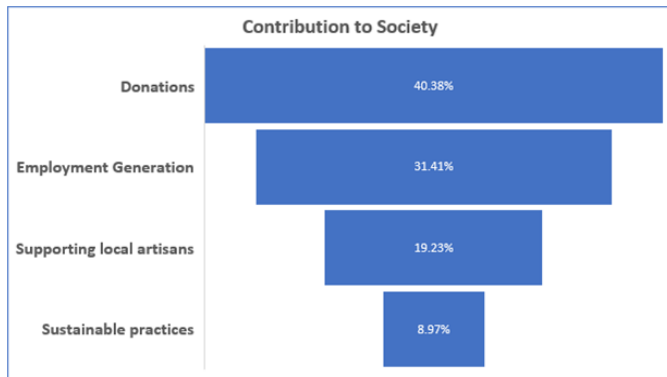
FIGURE.2: CHALLENGES IN PRACTICING CSR AMONG FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS



The most commonly reported barrier is lack of awareness, with 31.41% of respondents indicating that they are either unfamiliar with CSR concepts or uncertain about their relevance to their business operations. Lack of time (26.92%) emerges as another significant constraint, suggesting that business owners may prioritize daily operations over long-term CSR commitments. Additionally, financial constraints (23.71%) present a substantial challenge, as smaller retailers may struggle to allocate

funds for social responsibility initiatives. Furthermore, lack of interest (17.95%) and difficulty in measuring the impact of CSR activities (17.95%) indicate additional barriers that hinder CSR adoption. The latter suggests that businesses may be hesitant to engage in CSR due to the absence of clear, quantifiable benefits or metrics for evaluating their efforts (Figure.2).

FIGURE.3: CONTRIBUTIONS OF FAMILY-OWNED APPAREL RETAILERS TO SOCIETY



The above figure shows the various ways in which family-owned apparel retailers contribute to society. The findings indicate that donations constitute the most prominent form of societal contribution, accounting for 40.38% of responses. This suggests that many businesses prefer financial or material assistance as a means of fulfilling their social obligations. Additionally, 31.41% of retailers contribute to employment generation, signifying their role in fostering economic growth by providing job opportunities. This underscores the importance of small businesses in sustaining livelihoods and enhancing the local economy. The chart further reveals that 19.23% of retailers actively support local artisans, emphasizing their role in preserving traditional craftsmanship and promoting sustainable livelihoods. This contribution aligns with broader CSR objectives of community development and cultural heritage preservation.

Lastly, sustainable practices account for 8.97% of contributions, indicating that while environmental considerations are recognized, they are not yet a primary focus for most family-owned apparel retailers.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the factors influencing CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers in Mumbai. The research establishes that generational shifts, cultural traditions, and customer awareness play significant roles in shaping CSR practices among family-owned apparel retailers. The study results confirm a strong association between generational leadership transitions and CSR engagement, highlighting how younger generations prioritize socially responsible business practices. Moreover, while cultural values have a moderate influence on CSR participation, customer awareness serves as a key driver, encouraging retailers to adopt more responsible practices.

- H1: Generational shifts significantly influence CSR engagement- Accepted (supported by chi-square and Cramér's V analysis).
- H2: Cultural traditions and inherited values have a significant impact on CSR participation -Partially Accepted (weak but significant correlation found).
- H3: Customer awareness positively correlates with CSR engagement- Accepted (implying that retailers respond to consumer expectations regarding ethical business practices).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this research offers valuable insights but several limitations must be acknowledged. The study is geographically confined to Mumbai which limits the generalizability of findings to other regions. Other limitation is the reliance on self-reported data by retailers. This introduces the potential for response bias, as participants may overstate or understate their CSR engagement.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE STUDY

Future research on CSR engagement among family-owned apparel retailers can explore broader geographical regions to compare trends across different markets. Additionally, incorporating qualitative insights through interviews and case studies can provide deeper context to motivations and challenges faced by businesses. Analysing the direct impact of CSR initiatives on business performance, consumer behaviour, and brand perception would offer valuable managerial implications. Comparative studies between family-owned retailers and corporate retail chains can highlight sector-specific differences in CSR strategies. Furthermore, investigating the role of digital platforms and social media in CSR awareness and engagement can provide insights into evolving communication practices. Lastly, assessing government policies and regulatory influences on small business CSR adoption can inform future policy recommendations.

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