

## THE EFFECT OF SUSTAINABLE CSR ON BRAND LOYALTY – THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TRUST AND BRAND IDENTIFICATION

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**Abstract.** In an era of increasing environmental awareness and consumer scrutiny, sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a strategic approach for strengthening brand loyalty. This study aims to examine the effect of sustainable CSR on brand loyalty, with trust and brand identification as mediating variables among AQUA consumers. The research adopts a quantitative approach using an associative method. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to 100 AQUA consumers in Banyumas Regency aged 18–35 years, selected using purposive sampling. The data were analysed using path analysis with SPSS version 27. The results indicate that CSR has a significant positive effect on trust, brand identification, and brand loyalty. Trust is also found to have a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, while brand identification does not significantly influence brand loyalty. Furthermore, the mediation analysis reveals that trust successfully mediates the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty, whereas brand identification does not serve as a mediating variable. These findings suggest that consumer trust plays a more critical role than emotional identification in translating CSR initiatives into loyalty, particularly in low-involvement products such as bottled water. This study contributes to the literature by integrating sustainable CSR with trust and brand identification in the context of environmental controversy. Practically, the findings provide insights for companies to prioritise transparent and credible CSR initiatives in order to strengthen consumer trust and maintain long-term brand loyalty.

**Keywords:** sustainable CSR, trust, brand identification, brand loyalty, AQUA consumers

### I. INTRODUCTION

In an era characterised by increasing environmental awareness and heightened consumer scrutiny, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a mere corporate obligation into a strategic imperative for fostering long-term brand loyalty. Sustainable CSR, which emphasises ethical practices, environmental stewardship, and social justice, plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviour, particularly in industries that rely heavily on natural resources (Zanra & Zubir, 2025; Abdullah et al., 2025). Sustainable CSR encompasses initiatives that prioritise environmental protection, community engagement, and ethical resource management, thereby not only mitigating reputational risk but also strengthening long-term relationships with consumers (Andriany & Sari, 2025). This issue is especially relevant to bottled water brands such as AQUA, a leading mineral water producer in Indonesia under Danone, which faced significant controversy following a surprise inspection (sidak) conducted by Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) in October 2025. The inspection of the AQUA factory in Subang revealed that the company's water source originated from deep underground boreholes, drawing from deep aquifers rather than shallow springs as implied in its marketing communications. This discovery sparked widespread public debate regarding sustainability, over-extraction, and corporate transparency. These circumstances underline the importance of examining how

sustainable CSR initiatives can mitigate reputational damage and foster brand loyalty through mediating factors such as trust and brand identification.

The bottled water industry, as represented by AQUA, operates in the midst of growing concerns surrounding water scarcity, pollution, and ethical sourcing in Indonesia (Sovani et al., n.d.). Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned with transparency in resource utilisation, while water scarcity and pollution have emerged as pressing global issues (Zanra & Zubir, 2025). Previous studies have shown that CSR activities focusing on environmental performance, such as responsible water sourcing and community-based initiatives, positively affect brand-related outcomes. In the manufacturing sector, for example, CSR dimensions related to environmental and social responsibility have been found to significantly enhance customer loyalty (Abdullah et al., 2025). Similarly, Lacap et al. (2021) found in the telecommunications industry that CSR directly influences brand loyalty. Le Thanh et al. (2021) also investigated the contribution of CSR to SME performance in Vietnam and found that CSR positively affects company performance through the mediating role of trust and brand loyalty. These findings demonstrate that ethical practices can generate long-term support in both developing and competitive markets. Meanwhile, Edwin and Dwita (2025) found that CSR, as perceived by customers in the airline sector, particularly in Garuda Indonesia, enhances brand reputation but does not

directly mediate loyalty, thereby suggesting the importance of mediating variables such as trust. In the specific context of AQUA, Sovani et al. (n.d.) empirically demonstrated that CSR programmes focusing on community access to clean water and environmental conservation positively affect brand image, trust, and loyalty among local consumers, particularly in areas such as Keboncandi Village. This suggests that targeted sustainability efforts can help counter negative perceptions arising from controversies related to resource management.

In this context, brand trust serves as a key mediator in the relationship between CSR and loyalty because it reflects consumers' confidence in a brand's reliability and commitment to ethical standards (Saputra & Charles, 2023). Trust becomes especially fragile in post-crisis situations, such as the disclosure concerning AQUA's water sources in 2025, where a perceived discrepancy between marketing claims and actual practices may erode consumer confidence. A number of studies indicate that CSR strengthens trust, which subsequently fosters loyalty. For instance, research in educational institutions has shown that CSR positively affects trust, reputation, and image, which in turn indirectly enhance loyalty (Saputra & Charles, 2023). Other studies have similarly revealed that CSR positively influences trust, and that trust acts as a mediator of loyalty (Azhari & Soepatini, 2024; Sari et al., 2024). Agustiningrum and Andjarwati (2021), in their study of the Indonesian e-commerce market, found that trust significantly influences purchasing decisions, indicating that consumer confidence in ethical and secure systems can drive repeat behaviour similar to loyalty. In the sports footwear sector, David and Fahlevi (2022) demonstrated that trust and brand commitment significantly drive loyalty, even in challenging situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the resilience created through ethical practices. Furthermore, brand identification, which refers to the extent to which consumers align their self-concept with brand values, also strengthens this relationship. In the banking sector, Fatma and Khan (2023) found that perceived CSR does not have a significant direct effect on brand loyalty but has a significant indirect effect through brand identification. This indicates that consumers who identify with a brand's CSR values are more likely to develop stronger loyalty because they align their personal values with the brand's ethical commitments. Aji and Samuel (n.d.) further explained that brand identification influences awareness and satisfaction, which may mediate loyalty in creative industries such as interior design services. Likewise, Jalaludin et al. (2023), in their study of ZARA customers in Jakarta, found that customer brand identification does not directly influence loyalty, but it positively influences trust, which then functions as a mediator in the relationship.

Despite the growing body of literature, a research gap remains in the integration of sustainable CSR with mediating variables such as trust and brand identification, particularly in resource-intensive brands facing environmental controversies such as AQUA in the post-October 2025 context. Existing studies on CSR mediation have often focused on variables such as reputation or satisfaction (Fatmawati & Syah, 2026; Qolyubi & Elizabeth, 2024). In addition, studies examining the effect of CSR on corporate reputation and firm value have also been conducted (Afifah et al., 2021; Rachmawati, 2024), yet only a limited number of studies have incorporated trust and brand

identification simultaneously within an environmental controversy context. Therefore, this study seeks to address that gap by investigating both the direct and indirect effects of CSR on brand loyalty among AQUA consumers, with trust and brand identification serving as mediating variables. The study is expected to provide actionable insights for brands facing sustainability-related crises, while also contributing to theoretical development in marketing and practical strategies for strengthening consumer loyalty in Indonesia's competitive market.

This study aims to examine the effect of sustainable CSR on brand loyalty, mediated by trust and brand identification, among AQUA consumers. Based on the problem statement presented above, the objectives of this study are to determine whether CSR influences trust among AQUA consumers, whether CSR influences brand identification among AQUA consumers, whether CSR influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers, whether trust influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers, whether brand identification influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers, whether CSR influences brand loyalty through trust among AQUA consumers, and whether CSR influences brand loyalty through brand identification among AQUA consumers.

#### **Brand Identification**

Brand identification refers to the process by which consumers align themselves with a brand's values, thereby incorporating the brand into their personal identity, particularly through alignment with sustainable CSR practices such as environmental protection and social responsibility (Fatma & Khan, 2023; Melati, 2023). This alignment fosters a strong emotional bond, where consumers perceive that the brand reflects their personal values and self-concept (Saputra & Charles, 2023; Aji & Samuel, n.d.).

In this study, brand identification is measured using several indicators adapted from Fatma & Khan (2023). These indicators capture the extent to which consumers feel emotionally connected to the AQUA brand. Specifically, brand identification is reflected in consumers' feelings of having a strong connection with AQUA, perceiving AQUA as part of their daily identity or lifestyle, considering AQUA's efforts in protecting water sources as personally meaningful, and experiencing a strong sense of belonging towards the brand.

#### **Brand Loyalty**

Brand loyalty is defined as a consumer's commitment to repeatedly purchase and recommend a brand, based on emotional attachment and satisfaction influenced by CSR practices. This commitment persists even when alternative brands are available or when the brand faces controversies, such as issues related to AQUA's water sources (Sofyan, 2017; Fatma & Khan, 2023). Brand loyalty encompasses both behavioural dimensions, such as repeat purchasing, and attitudinal dimensions, such as emotional preference and attachment (Tobing & Setyawan, 2024; Nisa & Singgih, 2019).

In this study, brand loyalty is measured using indicators adapted from Prawira & Setiawan (2021). These indicators include behavioural measures, reflected in consumers' routine purchase of AQUA as their daily drinking water; switch cost, which indicates consumers' difficulty in switching to other brands despite existing issues; satisfaction, which reflects consumers' overall satisfaction with AQUA products despite

negative information; and brand liking, which indicates consumers' preference for AQUA compared to other brands even after being aware of the controversy.

**Hypothesis**

Based on the theoretical framework and previous studies, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- H1: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences trust among AQUA consumers.
- H2: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences brand identification among AQUA consumers.
- H3: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers.
- H4: Trust influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers.
- H5: Brand identification influences brand loyalty among AQUA consumers.
- H6: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences brand loyalty through trust among AQUA consumers.
- H7: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) influences brand loyalty through brand identification among AQUA consumers.

**II. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed an associative research design with a quantitative approach to examine the relationships among sustainable corporate social responsibility (CSR), trust, brand identification, and brand loyalty. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables the measurement of relationships between variables and facilitates hypothesis testing using statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2019; Hair et al., 2019). The associative method is appropriate for identifying causal relationships and determining the influence of independent variables on dependent variables.

The population of this study consisted of AQUA consumers in Banyumas Regency aged 18–35 years who had previously purchased AQUA products. This age group was selected because it represents active consumers who are generally more aware of environmental issues and sustainability practices. A total of 100 respondents were selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which respondents are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This technique ensures that the selected sample represents consumers who are directly affected by environmental issues and have sufficient experience with the product.

Primary data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) to measure respondents' perceptions of CSR, trust, brand identification, and brand loyalty. The use of a Likert scale is widely accepted in behavioural research for measuring attitudes and perceptions quantitatively (Likert, 1932). The measurement indicators for each variable were adapted from prior validated studies to ensure content validity and reliability, particularly from Fatma & Khan (2023) and related literature.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27. The analytical technique applied was path analysis, which allows for the examination of both direct and indirect relationships

among variables, including mediation effects (Hair et al., 2019). Path analysis was chosen because this study involves multiple dependent relationships and aims to assess the mediating roles of trust and brand identification in the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Validity Test**

Validity testing is conducted to determine the extent to which a questionnaire accurately measures the intended variables. This is done by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient (r-calculated) with the critical value (r-table). If the value of r-calculated is greater than r-table, the indicator is considered valid; otherwise, it is deemed invalid. In this study, the validity test results for all variables, including Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Trust, Brand Identification, and Brand Loyalty, are presented in a unified table below.

Table 1. Results of the Validity Test

Variable	Item	r-calculated	r-table	Significance	Notes
CSR	1	0.839	0.196	0.000	Valid
	2	0.650	0.196	0.000	Valid
	3	0.855	0.196	0.000	Valid
	4	0.637	0.196	0.000	Valid
Trust	1	0.804	0.196	0.000	Valid
	2	0.703	0.196	0.000	Valid
	3	0.818	0.196	0.000	Valid
	4	0.809	0.196	0.000	Valid
Brand Identification	1	0.767	0.196	0.000	Valid
	2	0.744	0.196	0.000	Valid
	3	0.742	0.196	0.000	Valid
	4	0.805	0.196	0.000	Valid
Brand Loyalty	1	0.773	0.196	0.000	Valid
	2	0.759	0.196	0.000	Valid
	3	0.639	0.196	0.000	Valid
	4	0.811	0.196	0.000	Valid

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on the results presented in Table 1, it can be concluded that all items across the variables have r-calculated values greater than the r-table value of 0.196 ( $df = 100 - 2$ ;  $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Additionally, all significance values are below 0.05. These findings indicate that all measurement items are valid and suitable for use in analysing the research data.

**Reliability Test**

A reliability test was conducted to assess the consistency of the measurement instrument used in this study. Reliability refers to the extent to which a set of indicators consistently measures a construct. In this research, reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A variable is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.60, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The results of the reliability test are presented in Table 2 below.

Based on the results presented in Table 2, all variables in this study have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than the critical value of 0.60. This indicates that all measurement items are reliable and demonstrate a high level of internal

consistency. Therefore, the research instrument is considered suitable for further data analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Critical Value	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
CSR	0.60	0.743	Reliable
Trust	0.60	0.792	Reliable
Brand Identification	0.60	0.765	Reliable
Brand Loyalty	0.60	0.736	Reliable

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

### Hypothesis Testing: t-Test

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the t-test to evaluate the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable in each regression equation. The test was performed at a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). The decision criteria are based on comparing the calculated t-value (t-count) with the critical t-value (t-table), as well as the significance value (p-value). If the calculated t-value is greater than the critical t-value and the significance value is less than 0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted, indicating a significant effect.

#### Equation 1

The first regression equation examines the effect of CSR on Trust. The results of the t-test for Equation 1 are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Results of the t-test for Equation 1

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.141	0.811	-	2.638	0.010
CSR	0.769	0.067	0.759	11.539	0.000

Dependent Variable: Trust

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 3, the calculated t-value for CSR is 11.539, which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98447 ( $df = 98$ ). Additionally, the significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, CSR has a significant positive effect on Trust, and Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted.

#### Equation 2

The second regression equation examines the effect of CSR on Brand Identification. The results of the t-test for Equation 2 are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Results of the t-test for Equation 2

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	4.041	0.942	-	4.291	0.000
CSR	0.629	0.077	0.635	8.140	0.000

Dependent Variable: Brand Identification

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 4, the calculated t-value for CSR is 8.140, which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98447 ( $df = 98$ ). The significance value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, CSR has a significant positive effect on Brand Identification, and Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted.

#### Equation 3

The third regression equation examines the effects of CSR, Trust, and Brand Identification on Brand Loyalty. The results of the t-test for Equation 3 are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Results of the t-test for Equation 3

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	2.384	0.959	-	2.486	0.015
CSR	0.270	0.115	0.279	2.345	0.021
Trust	0.469	0.115	0.490	4.063	0.000
Brand Identification	-0.055	0.099	-0.056	-0.553	0.582

Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 5, the results can be interpreted as follows. First, CSR has a calculated t-value of 2.345, which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98498 ( $df = 96$ ), and a significance value of 0.021, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that CSR has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty, and Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted.

Second, Trust has a calculated t-value of 4.063, which is greater than the critical t-value ( $4.063 > 1.98498$ ), with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that Trust has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty, and Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted.

Third, Brand Identification has a calculated t-value of -0.553, which is smaller than the critical t-value ( $-0.553 < 1.98498$ ), with a significance value of  $0.582 > 0.05$ . This indicates that Brand Identification does not have a significant effect on Brand Loyalty, and Hypothesis 5 (H5) is rejected.

### Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup> Test)

The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) test is used to measure how far the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable. In this study, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value is used to provide a more accurate estimate of the model's explanatory power.

#### Equation 1

The coefficient of determination for Equation 1 is presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Results of the R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
1	0.759	0.576	0.572	1.72597

Predictors: CSR

Dependent Variable: Trust

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 6, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.572, indicating that CSR explains 57.2% of the variance in Trust, while the remaining 42.8% is influenced by other variables outside the model.

#### Equation 2

The coefficient of determination for Equation 2 is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Results of the R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
1	0.635	0.403	0.397	2.00288

Predictors: CSR Dependent Variable: Brand Identification

Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 7, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.397, indicating that CSR explains 39.7% of the variance in Brand Identification, while the remaining 60.3% is influenced by other variables outside the model.

Equation 3

The coefficient of determination for Equation 3 is presented in Table 8 below.

Table 8. Results of the R<sup>2</sup> Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
1	0.688	0.473	0.456	1.85804

Predictors: CSR, Trust, Brand Identification  
 Dependent Variable: Brand Loyalty  
 Source: Data processed using SPSS, 2026

Based on Table 8, the Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.456, indicating that CSR, Trust, and Brand Identification jointly explain 45.6% of the variance in Brand Loyalty, while the remaining 54.4% is influenced by other variables outside the model.

Path Analysis: Path Coefficients

Path analysis was conducted to examine the direct and indirect relationships among variables based on the standardized beta coefficients obtained from the regression results. The structural equations are derived from the standardized coefficients, while the error terms (e) are calculated using the formula  $\sqrt{(1 - R^2)}$  for each equation.

Equation 1

The first structural equation examines the effect of CSR (X) on Trust (Z1). The regression equation is derived from the standardized beta coefficient, and the error term is calculated based on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = 0.576$ ).

The error term is calculated as follows:

$$e_1 = \sqrt{(1 - 0.576)} = \sqrt{0.424} = 0.651$$

Thus, the regression equation is:

$$Z_1 = 0.759X + 0.651$$

This indicates that CSR has a positive effect of 0.759 on Trust, while the remaining variance is explained by other factors represented by the error term of 0.651.

Equation 2

The second structural equation examines the effect of CSR (X) on Brand Identification (Z2). The regression equation is derived from the standardized beta coefficient, with an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.403.

The error term is calculated as follows:

$$e_2 = \sqrt{(1 - 0.403)} = \sqrt{0.597} = 0.773$$

Thus, the regression equation is:

$$Z_2 = 0.635X + 0.773$$

This indicates that CSR has a positive effect of 0.635 on Brand Identification, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables represented by the error term of 0.773.

Equation 3

The third structural equation examines the simultaneous effects of CSR (X), Trust (Z1), and Brand Identification (Z2) on Brand Loyalty (Y). The regression equation is derived from the standardized beta coefficients, with an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.473.

The error term is calculated as follows:

$$e_3 = \sqrt{(1 - 0.473)} = \sqrt{0.527} = 0.726$$

Thus, the regression equation is:

$$Y = 0.279X + 0.490Z_1 - 0.056Z_2 + 0.726$$

This indicates that CSR and Trust have positive effects on Brand Loyalty, while Brand Identification has a negative and insignificant effect. The remaining variance is explained by other factors represented by the error term of 0.726.

Sobel Test

The Sobel test was conducted to examine the mediating role of intervening variables in the relationship between CSR and Brand Loyalty, namely Trust and Brand Identification.

Mediation of Trust

Table 9. Results of the Sobel Test (CSR → Trust → Brand Loyalty)

Path	Test Statistic	Std. Error	P-Value	Notes
CSR → T → BL	3.84287917	0.09385177	0.0001216	Mediating

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on the results presented in Table 9, the Sobel test statistic is 3.842, which is greater than 1.96, and the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Trust significantly mediates the relationship between CSR and Brand Loyalty.

Mediation of Brand Identification

Table 10. Results of the Sobel Test (CSR → Brand Identification → Brand Loyalty)

Path	Test Statistic	Std. Error	P-Value	Notes
CS → R → BI → BL	-0.5542752	0.06241484	0.57939052	Does not mediate

Source: Processed data, 2026

Based on the results presented in Table 10, the Sobel test statistic is -0.554, which is less than 1.96, and the p-value is 0.579, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Brand Identification does not mediate the relationship between CSR and Brand Loyalty.

Path Diagram

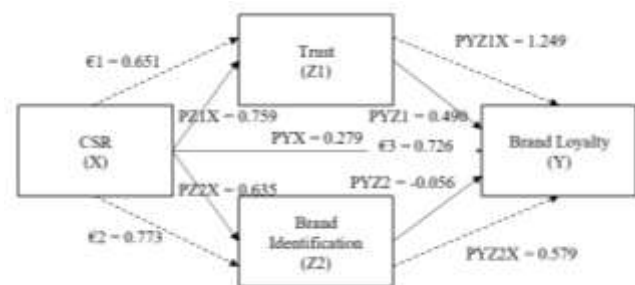


Figure 1. Path Diagram

Based on the path diagram above, it can be seen that the effect of CSR on Trust is 0.759, or 75.9%. The effect of CSR on Brand Identification is 0.635, or 63.5%. The direct effect of CSR on Brand Loyalty is 0.279, or 27.9%. The direct effect of Trust on Brand Loyalty is 0.490, or 49%. The direct effect of Brand Identification on Brand Loyalty is -0.056 or -5.6%.

Error 1 of 0.651 indicates that Trust cannot be explained by the CSR variable and is therefore ignored or set to zero. Error 2 of 0.773 indicates that Brand Identification cannot be explained by the CSR variable, which is ignored or equal to zero. Error 3 of 0.726 indicates that Brand Loyalty cannot be explained by the CSR, Trust and Brand Identification variables, which are ignored or equal to zero.

#### **The Effect of CSR on Trust**

Based on the results of the t-test, CSR has a calculated t-value of 11.539, which is greater than the critical t-value ( $11.539 > 1.98447$ ), and a significance value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05 ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). This indicates that CSR has a significant positive effect on Trust. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is accepted.

These findings are consistent with previous studies by Saputra and Charles (2023), Azhari and Soepatini (2024), and Sari et al. (2024), which show that CSR positively influences consumer trust and acts as a foundation for building loyalty. In the context of AQUA, this indicates that consumers in Banyumas Regency respond positively to CSR initiatives, particularly those related to ecosystem restoration and improving access to clean water for local communities.

#### **The Effect of CSR on Brand Identification**

Based on the t-test results, CSR has a calculated t-value of 8.140, which is greater than the critical t-value ( $8.140 > 1.98447$ ), with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that CSR has a significant positive effect on Brand Identification. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted.

This finding supports Fatma and Khan (2023), who found that perceived CSR significantly influences brand identification. Consumers who perceive strong CSR values tend to align their personal values with the brand. In this study, AQUA's CSR initiatives have succeeded in creating an emotional bond with consumers, where they perceive that the brand reflects their personal values related to sustainability.

#### **The Effect of CSR on Brand Loyalty**

The results show that CSR has a calculated t-value of 2.486, which is greater than the critical t-value ( $2.486 > 1.98498$ ), and a significance value of  $0.021 < 0.05$ . This indicates that CSR has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted.

This result is consistent with Abdullah et al. (2025) and Lacap et al. (2021), who found that CSR significantly enhances customer loyalty. In the context of AQUA, consumers remain loyal despite the controversy surrounding water sources, as long as the CSR activities are perceived as responsible and meaningful.

#### **The Effect of Trust on Brand Loyalty**

Based on the t-test results, Trust has a calculated t-value of 4.063, which is greater than the critical t-value ( $4.063 > 1.98498$ ), with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that Trust has a significant positive effect on Brand Loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted.

This finding supports David and Fahlevi (2022), who showed that trust is a key driver of loyalty. In this study, trust in AQUA's reliability and ethical commitment plays a crucial role in maintaining consumer loyalty, even in the presence of negative information.

#### **The Effect of Brand Identification on Brand Loyalty**

The results indicate that Brand Identification has a calculated t-value of -0.553, which is smaller than the critical t-value ( $-0.553 < 1.98498$ ), and a significance value of  $0.582 > 0.05$ . This indicates that Brand Identification does not have a significant effect on Brand Loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 (H5) is rejected.

This finding differs from Fatma and Khan (2023). In this study, consumers have not fully integrated AQUA into their personal identity. Although they recognise the brand's CSR efforts, this is not sufficient to create strong emotional identification. This may be due to the nature of bottled water as a low-differentiation product, where consumers prioritise functional attributes such as price, availability, and quality.

#### **The Effect of CSR on Brand Loyalty Mediated by Trust**

The Sobel test results show that the test statistic value is 3.842, which is greater than 1.96, and the p-value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This indicates that Trust significantly mediates the relationship between CSR and Brand Loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 (H6) is accepted.

This finding is consistent with Edwin and Dwita (2025), who suggest that CSR influences loyalty through intermediary variables such as trust. In this context, CSR strengthens loyalty indirectly by first building consumer trust, which then leads to stronger commitment to the brand.

#### **The Effect of CSR on Brand Loyalty Mediated by Brand Identification**

The Sobel test results indicate that the test statistic value is -0.554, which is less than 1.96, and the p-value is  $0.579 > 0.05$ . This indicates that Brand Identification does not mediate the relationship between CSR and Brand Loyalty. Therefore, Hypothesis 7 (H7) is rejected.

This finding differs from Fatma and Khan (2023), particularly in the banking sector. The difference may be attributed to product characteristics, as bottled water is a basic necessity with low differentiation. Consumers tend to prioritise functional benefits rather than emotional identification with the brand.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results and discussion presented in this study, it can be concluded that sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a significant role in influencing consumer perceptions and behaviour toward the AQUA brand. CSR is proven to have a significant positive effect on both trust and brand identification among AQUA consumers, indicating that sustainability initiatives are capable of strengthening consumers' cognitive and emotional connections with the brand. In addition, CSR also has a direct positive effect on brand loyalty, suggesting that responsible business practices can maintain consumer commitment even in the presence of environmental controversies. Furthermore, trust is found to have a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, highlighting

its crucial role as a key determinant in maintaining long-term consumer relationships. However, brand identification does not have a significant effect on brand loyalty, indicating that consumers do not necessarily integrate the AQUA brand into their self-identity when making purchasing decisions. In terms of indirect effects, this study confirms that trust successfully mediates the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty, meaning that CSR enhances loyalty primarily through building consumer trust. Conversely, brand identification does not mediate the relationship between CSR and brand loyalty, suggesting that emotional alignment with the brand is not a dominant factor in influencing loyalty in this context. Overall, these findings emphasize that trust is the most critical mechanism through which sustainable CSR contributes to strengthening brand loyalty among AQUA consumers.

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