

Sustainability in a Water Bottle: CSR and Buying Intention of Le Minerale

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on competitive advantage (CA) and buying intention (BI) in the bottled water industry, focusing on Le Minerale in Surabaya, Indonesia. CSR is examined across four dimensions: legal and ethical responsibility, philanthropic and community services, respect for environment, and respect for customers. Using a quantitative approach with purposive sampling, 100 valid responses were collected from consumers-dominantly aged 17-25 who worked in private companies who purchased Le Minerale and are aware of its CSR activities. Data was analyzed through validity, reliability, normality, and regression tests using SPSS. The results reveal that CSR has a significant and positive effect on competitive advantage, explaining 74.5% of its variance. Furthermore, competitive advantage significantly influences buying intention, accounting for 52.3% of its variance. These findings suggest that CSR initiatives not only strengthen Le Minerale's market positioning but also foster consumer trust, which eventually enhances buying intention. However, practical factors such as price and accessibility also shape purchasing decisions. The study highlights CSR as a strategic driver of sustainable competitiveness in a low-involvement market like bottled water.

Keywords - Corporate Social Responsibility, Competitive Advantage, Buying Intention

INTRODUCTION

Businesses have recently begun to realize and evaluated on their commitment to social and environmental concerns in addition to their financial performance as well as how environmental issues affect both their competitive positioning and customer decisions. CSR is becoming more widely acknowledged as a fundamental strategic issue by both academics and practitioners (Karwowski & Raulinajtys-Grzybek, 2021). According to the business case for CSR, ethical business practices may raise a company's worth and boost both its financial and non-financial results (Schaltegger et al., 2019). CSR, or eco-innovation, refers to strategies that provide companies a competitive edge and enable them to deploy resources effectively (Tsai & Liao, 2017). According to this perspective, CSR is a key component of sustainable business strategy, highlighting the necessity for businesses to strike a balance between social contribution, environmental stewardship, as well as profitability (Samaibekova et al., 2021).

In recent years, CSR has emerged as a key component of branding and marketing initiatives (Carrera, 2022). CSR is the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into a company's activities and stakeholder relations, according to the European Commission (2001). According to Lock and Seele (2015), this is consistent with the triple bottom line approach, which places equal priority on people, the environment, and profit. It also demonstrates a company's proactive dedication to moral principles and the welfare of society, going beyond mere regulatory

compliance (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; van Marrewijk, 2003). In actuality, CSR shall be a competitive benefit in a brand's reputation and customer connections, as well as an obligation.

Numerous studies have shown that CSR programs may improve consumer behavior, increase brand trust, improve customer impressions, even engage competitive advantage to that institution. Research indicates that consumers who perceive a company to be socially conscious are more likely to support it, which increases customer happiness, loyalty, trust, and purchase intentions (Khan & Fatma, 2023; Sharma & Jain, 2019; Zhang & Ahmad, 2021). In addition, businesses that engage in CSR initiatives may have a competitive edge over those that do not (Emmanuel & Priscilla, 2022), and this perceived advantage may also have a favorable impact on customer behavior (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021a). The study provides a deeper understanding of how CSR influences short-term transactional behavior.

CSR has a crucial role in determining brand positioning and customer behavior in today's cutthroat market, where consumer values are becoming more in line with ethical and environmental concerns. This is especially noticeable in sectors like the bottled drinking water industry that are directly related to environmental and public health issues. PT Mayora Indah Tbk's owned Le Minerale brand of bottled water was first available in Indonesia in 2015. With the tagline "Rasanya beda" or in english - The taste is different, emphasizing its natural mineral content and fresh taste, it advertises itself as a luxury water that directly competes with well-known brands like AQUA. Le Minerale encourages environmental conservation with the Easy Crush Bottle campaign and stresses hygiene with its sealed top mechanism. Beyond the quality of its products, the company strengthens its reputation as safe, responsible, and healthy by participating in CSR projects including disaster relief water distribution, community health education, and plastic trash awareness. As for an instance, in August 2025, Le Minerale distributed 224,000 liters of humanitarian aid, equivalent to 28 tanks of clean water, to the people of Gaza, in Palestine ("Wujudkan Aksi Peduli Gaza : Le Minerale Dan Baznas Kirim Air Bersih," 2025).

The second-largest metropolis in Indonesia, Surabaya, offers the perfect setting for this research. Customers that live in Surabaya are more likely to interact with and react to CSR activities because of the city's extremely varied and ecologically conscious populace. With significant community and government involvement in recycling, water conservation, and environmental education, the city is also a center for sustainability initiatives and green movements (R. D. Damayanti & Sagen, 2025; Kartikasari, 2024; Patiung et al., 2024). Additionally, Le Minerale is widely available in Surabaya, which makes it identifiable and accessible to a wide range of demographic groups. Because of these features, Surabaya is a crucial and pertinent study location for assessing how well CSR (environmental concern, legal and ethical responsibility, philanthropy, and consumer orientation) affects competitive advantage compared to another brand and consequently affect an immediate behavioral response (buying intention). It is anticipated that this study would further the theoretical discussion of sustainable marketing while providing useful information to help businesses create effective CSR plans.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Its Dimensions

CSR is a necessity for attaining business sustainability, but it also fosters a balanced environment in which all parties gain (Bian et al., 2021; López-Concepción et al., 2022). According to Hediger (2010), CSR programs seek to enhance stakeholders' well-being in addition to their financial success. According to Emmanuel and Priscilla (2022), CSR refers to businesses' consistent commitment to acting morally, fairly, and responsibly as well as to promoting economic growth by improving the lives of workers and their families, as well as the local community and society at large. Shortly after that, Dyck et al. (2019) added that CSR promotes the creation of long-term, business-friendly opportunities, the alteration of societal expectations and demands, the allocation of resources to social issues, the ethical dedication to socially responsible activities, the growth of human and intellectual capital, and the preservation of security and reputation. Overall, they concluded that a company's competitive advantage based on organizational innovation and social performance, as well as long-term sustainable growth, depend on CSR.

The study by Popa et al. (2022) that separated CSR aspects into the major four integrated activities—legal and ethical (LE), philanthropic and community services (PC), respect for the environment (RE), and respect for customers (RC)—was the inspiration for this study. Ethical responsibility, or LE duty, stresses following laws and regulations and upholding morality, justice, and non-harm, among other social ethics concepts that apply to a wide range of stakeholders, including consumers, employees, shareholders, and society at large. Le Minerale demonstrates its commitment to Legal and Ethical (LE) responsibility by complying with Indonesian health and safety regulations, adhering to BPOM standards, and applying strict quality control. Its patented “double protection seal cap” reflects a strong emphasis on product authenticity, hygiene, and ethical marketing through transparent labeling and responsible advertising (kumparan Studio, 2025). In terms of Philanthropic and Community (PC) services, Le Minerale actively supports disaster relief by donating bottled water during emergencies such as earthquakes, floods, and wars, while also partnering in public health awareness campaigns (“Wujudkan Aksi Peduli Gaza : Le Minerale Dan Baznas Kirim Air Bersih,” 2025). These activities show their dedication to improving community well-being. Regarding Respect for Environment (RE), the company promotes sustainability through doing “Easy Crush Bottle” initiative, which eases the recycle process. The Recycled PET (RPET) as the raw material used to be eco-friendly fashion products, contributing to the circular economy. For instance, Le Minerale vest for street vendors (Imandiar, 2023). Moreover, Le Minerale collaborates with local fashion brands Kivee and Pijak Bumi to upcycle used plastic bottles into T-shirts, pants, and shoes (Naufal, 2024). Lastly, Respect for Customers (RC) is evident through its guarantee of product safety with SNI 3553 (2015) and Food Safety System Certification (FSSC) 22000, clear nutritional labeling, hydration education campaigns, and accessible customer service channels via social media platforms (Winarto, 2024). These initiatives build consumer trust and position Le Minerale as both customer-focused and socially responsible.

Competitive Advantage (CA)

When enterprises hold competitive advantage, it means not only high-quality products or services they have, but also, they have CSR involving in strategies (Marakova et al., 2021). The phrase “competitive advantage” describes what a business does very well in terms of its assets or

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operations, areas where it outperforms rivals and that are strategically significant to the business (Aaker & Moorman, 2023). Since it is known that businesses who prioritize CSR activities for their entire operations typically obtain a competitive edge, CSR efforts are a potential for becoming a competitive advantage for businesses (Emmanuel & Priscilla, 2022). The phrase of “A key impetus for firms to engage in strategic CSR” is the strengthening of a company’s competitive advantage (Du et al., 2011). Compared to businesses that do not engage in CSR activities, customers respond more favorably to a firm when they are aware of its CSR initiatives (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021b).

Buying Intention (BI)

Purchase intention, often known as buying intention, refers to what customers hope to acquire in the future (Zhang & Ahmad, 2021b). Because it forecasts the likelihood that a customer will make a purchase within a specific time frame, it is seen as a crucial signal for businesses (Bianchi et al., 2019) and is utilized as a stand-in for actual consumer behavior (Farris et al., 2010). BI is the propensity to buy a brand and is usually based on how well the reasons for buying match the attributes of the brand in question (Kurniawan et al., 2022; Singhal et al., 2019). BI emerge once the customer receives an incentive from the product shown, which leads to an urge to try the product, ultimately resulting in a desire of purchasing (Septiano & Sari, 2021). Purchase intention displays consumers’ short-term behavior toward future purchase decisions (E. V. Damayanti & Waskito, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative research technique with a causal research design to investigate the impact of CSR on consumer behavior, especially CA and BI, among Le Minerale consumers in Surabaya. The goal of this study is to assess the extent to which consumers’ views of CSR—across multiple dimensions—influence brand competitiveness, and how this trust influences their propensity to buy. The study also implicitly assumes that CSR has a major impact on Buying Intention via Competitive Advantage.

The target audience consists of Le Minerale customers living in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia—specifically, those who are aware of or have been exposed to Le Minerale’s CSR campaigns such as the double protection seal cap, the collaboration between Le Minerale and Baznas to send water to Gaza, eco-friendly fashion products made from Le Minerale plastic bottles, and SNI and Food Safety Certification.

The sample approach employed is non-probability purposive sampling, which selects respondents aged 18 and above who have consumed Le Minerale products regularly in the last three months and are aware of at least one CSR effort of the brand. The data was collected using an online questionnaire circulated via WhatsApp groups and social media channels, with the help of community-based influencers.

The questionnaire included Likert-scale items that assessed views of CSR aspects, competitive advantage, and buying intention. The scale has five agreement levels: strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The obtained data will be examined with SPSS version 22. Again, this research paradigm allows for the examination of both immediate behavioral reactions (such as purchase intention), resulting in a more comprehensive knowledge of how CSR programs foster competitive advantage between Le Minerale and other brands and affect customer commitment. After completing the survey, researchers received 116 questionnaires, but only 100 respondents were qualified.

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RESULTS

The investigation seeks a better understanding of the impact of Le Minerale's CSR dimensions—legal and ethical responsibility, philanthropic and community services, respect for environment, and respect for customer—on competitive advantage and purchasing intention. Before beginning the primary analysis, a validity test was run to see how well each measuring item represented the desired construct. Using 100 samples and a significance level of $\alpha = 0,05$, the computed r-table value is 0,1638.

Table 1. Validity Test

Variable	Dimension	Item	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	Marked
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Legal and Ethical Responsibility (LE)	LE1	0,667	Valid
		LE2	0,826	Valid
		LE3	0,866	Valid
		LE4	0,880	Valid
		LE5	0,787	Valid
	Philanthropic and Community Services (PC)	PC1	0,769	Valid
		PC2	0,861	Valid
		PC3	0,856	Valid
		PC4	0,893	Valid
		PC5	0,545	Valid
		PC6	0,555	Valid
		PC7	0,526	Valid
		PC8	0,687	Valid
	Respect for Environment (RE)	RE1	0,602	Valid
		RE2	0,654	Valid
		RE3	0,648	Valid
		RE4	0,613	Valid
		RE5	0,593	Valid
		RE6	0,717	Valid
	Respect for Customer (RC)	RC1	0,483	Valid
		RC2	0,843	Valid
		RC3	0,781	Valid
		RC4	0,704	Valid
Competitive Advantage (CA)		CA1	0,776	Valid
		CA2	0,607	Valid
		CA3	0,360	Valid
		CA4	0,731	Valid
		CA5	0,713	Valid
		CA6	0,721	Valid
Buying Intention (BI)		BI1	0,829	Valid
		BI2	0,766	Valid
		BI3	0,827	Valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

The results of the validity test show that the estimated correlation values for each variable indicator surpass the r-table value of 0,1638 (with $n = 100$). This demonstrates that all the indicators used in this study are valid for measuring the targeted constructs. After the validity test, a reliability test was performed as the following step. The overall reliability evaluation was conducted with the same sample size of 100 respondents.

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Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha	Marked
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	Legal and Ethical Responsibility (LE)	0,865	Reliable
	Philanthropic and Community Services (PC)	0,869	Reliable
	Respect for Environment (RE)	0,708	Reliable
	Respect for Customer (RC)	0,676	Reliable
Competitive Advantage (CA)		0,744	Reliable
Buying Intention (BI)		0,800	Reliable

Source: Data processed, 2025

Referring to the reliability table's test results, all the variable indicators have Alpha Cronbach values greater than 0,6. As a result, we may infer that each variable indicator employed in the study is credible.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination, F-test, and Hypothesis test/ t-Test

Model / Variable	R	Adj R ²	F _{sig}	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t _{sig}	Hypothesis
CSR *CA	0,864	0,745	0,000			
CSR				0,864	0,000	Accepted
CA *BI	0,726	0,523	0,000			
CA				0,726	0,000	Accepted

Source: Data processed, 2025

Several important correlations between the study variables are shown by the regression analysis, which is based on the data shown in Table 3. First, there is a somewhat high positive association between CSR and competitive advantage, as indicated by the R value of 0,864. The study's CSR dimensions account for 74,5% of the variation in Brand Trust, according to the adjusted R² of 0,745. The model is statistically valid with a significance level F_{sig} of 0,000, and the standardized coefficient (Beta = 0,864) further demonstrates that CSR significantly and favorably influences the development of competitive advantage in the Le Minerale brand. This hypothesis is accepted.

Second, a R value of 0,726 and an adjusted R² of 0,523 are obtained from the examination of the relationship between Competitive Advantage and Buying Intention. This suggests that the degree of competitive advantage accounts for 52,3% of the variance in short-term buying intention. A somewhat favorable effect is confirmed by the model's beta coefficient of 0,726 and statistical significance (F_{sig}=0,000). Thus, competitive advantage is a major factor in influencing respondents' intentions to buy Le Minerale items, particularly those who are well-educated, have professional jobs, and are financially secure. This theory is also accepted.

The results of the t-test show a hypothesis that states:

1. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) which consists of Legal and Ethical (LE), Philanthropic and Community Services (PC), Respect for Environment (RE), and Respect for Customer (RC) had a significant effect on Competitive Advantage (CA) received at a sig. level of 0,000 < t sig. 0,05
2. Competitive Advantage (CA) had a significant effect on Buying Intention (BI) was accepted

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at the sig. level of $0,000 < t \text{ sig. } 0,05$

DISCUSSION

The study's findings support the first hypothesis, which holds that Competitive Advantage (CA) is significantly impacted by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). With a normalized beta coefficient of 0,864 and a significance level of 0,000, the Adjusted R² value of 0,745 shows that CSR accounts for 74,5% of the variation in Competitive Advantage. This research shows that competitive advantage in Le Minerale is significantly impacted by CSR programs like LE, PC, RE, and RC. Most responders are between the ages of 25 and 30, have college degrees, work for private companies, and make more than IDR 5 million a month. This group assesses businesses based on their ethical and social obligations in addition to product quality and is often more conscious of CSR efforts. By following Indonesian health and safety laws, BPOM standards, and guaranteeing authenticity with its proprietary double protection seal cap, Le Minerale continuously exemplifies Legal and Ethical (LE) responsibility. The company's commitment to social welfare is demonstrated by its active participation in health awareness campaigns and disaster relief initiatives under the Philanthropic and Community (PC) services category. The "Easy Crush Bottle" campaign and the conversion of recycled PET into eco-friendly fashion items, including partnerships with regional firms Kivee and Pijak Bumi, are examples of respect for the environment (RE). Last but not least, its stringent safety certifications, clear labeling, hydration education, and prompt customer service all demonstrate Respect for Customers (RC). Le Minerale's reputation as a responsible and customer-focused brand is strengthened by these CSR activities, which are important sources of brand trust among young, educated, and socially sensitive consumers.

The second hypothesis, which posits that Competitive Advantage (CA) has a significant effect on Buying Intention (BI), is also accepted, as indicated by a standardized beta coefficient of 0,726 and a significant value of 0.000. However, the Adjusted R² value of 0,523 shows that CA explains more than a half or 52,3% of the variation in BI. This finding suggests that Le Minerale's competitive advantages, namely its superior product quality, favourable brand image, increasing market share, stronger position compared to competitors, unique features that are hard to imitate, and distinctive packaging design—play an important role in shaping consumers' intention to buy. For young consumers aged 25–30 years, holding undergraduate degrees, employed in the private sector, and earning above IDR 5 million, purchasing bottled water is not merely about hydration but also about choosing a brand that provides trusted quality, innovation, and differentiation. In this context, Le Minerale's competitive advantages not only enhance its positioning in the market but also strengthen consumers' purchase intentions.

All in all, the research confirms that CSR significantly enhances competitive advantage (CA), which in turn influences short-term outcomes like buying intention. However, the strength of the relationship varies. CSR explains a substantial portion of CA, highlighting that initiatives in legal compliance, community engagement, environmental responsibility, and customer respect strongly shape consumer perceptions of Le Minerale. Buying intention, though positively affected by CA, is moderately influenced, as consumers also consider practical factors such as price, accessibility, and lifestyle fit. Nevertheless, Le Minerale's unique quality, favourable image, and hard-to-imitate features establish differentiation that reinforces purchase intentions among young, educated, and socially aware consumers. Therefore, Le Minerale must continue to integrate authentic CSR initiatives with sustained innovation in product and packaging design to maintain its competitive edge and secure stronger buying intentions in a highly competitive bottled water market.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research was conducted to deepen the understanding of how consumers perceive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and how these perceptions influence short-term outcomes—buying intention, through competitive advantage (CA) in Le Minerale product. The findings from regression analysis indicate that CSR significantly affects competitive advantage, with 74,5% of the variance in CA explained by CSR activities. This suggests that consumers, particularly those who are young, well-educated, and socially aware, respond positively to ethical and responsible business practices. Moreover, CA has a moderate yet significant effect on buying intention, highlighting that while product quality and unique features are essential, practical considerations such as price, accessibility, and lifestyle compatibility still play a role in shaping consumer purchase decisions. In the short term, Le Minerale's CSR activities—such as environmental initiatives, water safety programs, and community engagement—enhance its market positioning, strengthen its favorable image, and support unique product features (e.g., mineral-rich water, secure packaging) that drive buying intention. From a strategic perspective, the findings suggest that CSR should be viewed not merely as a philanthropic activity but as a core driver of competitive advantage and buying intention. For Le Minerale, integrating CSR with sustained innovation in product design, packaging, and digital communication will strengthen its leadership and secure competitive advantage in consumer eyes in a bottled water category.

However, this study has limitations. First, it is geographically limited, future research should expand to multiple regions in Indonesia for broader generalizability. Second, the model explains variance in consumer behavior, suggesting that other constructs—such as Green Awareness, Environmental Concern, and Brand Image—could enrich the analysis.

For future research, it is recommended to explore generational differences (millennials or baby boomers) in CSR perception. In addition, examining the role of digital platforms in communicating CSR initiatives into how CSR-driven CA for fosters long-term loyalty in the digital era.

In conclusion, CSR emerges as a strategic enabler of competitive advantage, influencing buying intention. For Le Minerale, the ability to deliver authentic, transparent, and sustainable CSR programs—while reinforcing its unique product attributes—will drive short-term purchase decisions, securing its position as a trusted and competitive brand in bottled water market.

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