

Master Thesis

Do Good Ethics Pay Off?

CSR communication and its impact on consumer evaluations
in the fine jewellery industry

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Abstract

Objectives: In recent years the fine jewellery industry has faced increased pressure to demonstrate its commitment to more responsible practices, leading jewellery businesses to engage in ethical and philanthropical initiatives and demonstrating their responsible stand. There is only limited coverage in the CSR mainstream literature on CSR communication in the jewellery industry. Hence it remains obscure if consumers experience a jewellery brand and its products differently when knowing that the brand has behaved ethically and philanthropically. To address the existing knowledge gap, the study focuses on consumer responses towards social responsibility claims in the context of the jewellery industry.

Method: An experimental 2 (ethical CSR claim: present vs absent) × 2 (philanthropical CSR claim: present vs absent) design was conducted to investigate how an ethical and philanthropical CSR claim influence consumers' perceived product quality, consumers' brand attitude, consumers' purchase intention and perceived CSR authenticity in the jewellery context. The sample consisted of 236 participants that were randomly exposed to one of four manipulated conditions of a fictitious jewellery brand's homepage containing either an ethical claim, philanthropical claim, both claims or no claims.

Results: For this study, two multivariate analyses of variance were performed. The first analyses unveiled no significant effects of an ethical and philanthropical claim on the dependent variables: perceived product quality, consumers' brand attitude, consumers' purchase intention. After adapting the research model and turning perceived CSR authenticity into a dependent variable, a second analysis revealed that an ethical and philanthropical claim positively influence perceived CSR authenticity.

Implications: This study adds a body of knowledge to the mainstream CSR literature by examining the impact of CSR claims in the jewellery sector. The findings are primarily of value for brands in the jewellery industry and online marketing specialists to better understand the role of CSR claims by acknowledging that the use of an ethical and philanthropical claim may not necessarily result in favourable consumer outcomes. Additionally, it is suggested for brands to communicate both a philanthropic and an ethical claim to increase their CSR authenticity.

Keywords: *Corporate social responsibility, Jewellery industry, Perceived product quality, Purchase intention, Brand attitude, CSR authenticity*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the vision of sustainable development has become increasingly widespread, and topics like globalisation and climate change are becoming more important to the population (Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2020). Thus, with the change in social values, consumer expectations concerning responsible practices arise (Cheung et al., 2017). On the organisation's side, these expectations are implemented with the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Setó-Pamies & Papaoikonomou, 2020). Furthermore, the rising expectations on the consumer side have resulted in increased pressure over many industries to demonstrate their commitment to more responsible practices, leading them to engage with ongoing issues like climate change and demonstrate their responsible position (Cheung et al., 2017; Singh & Misra, 2021). As a result, there has been a rapid increase of communicated CSR initiatives while consumers are becoming increasingly critical towards responsible actions of organisations and demand more transparent, clear and credible CSR communication (Cheung, Glass, McCarty & Wong, 2017; Cone Communications, 2017).

A sector that is facing increased pressure to adopt a socially responsible orientation is the fine jewellery sector, an industry that produces jewellery from precious metals and gemstones. Like many other sectors, this industry is not immune to discussions around its social and environmental impacts and its role in improving environmental and social wellbeing (Panigyrakis et al., 2019). This is especially down to the supply chain, in particular the natural resource extraction and the growing expectancy that companies should become socially responsible (Carrigan et al., 2017). Yet it remains obscure, to what extent consumers see corporate social responsibility as a central attribute of jewellery products and to what extent it influences their attitudes towards the products and brands. In fact, literature shows that there is observed consumer ambivalence on how the communication of responsible practices is related to jewellery purchases and consumer evaluations (Carrigan, Moraes, Bosangit & Ferreira, 2015). Although some explorations of CSR communication in jewellery advertising exist (Moraes et al., 2017; Carrigan et al., 2017; Pankiw et al., 2020), the research area has not yet been extensively examined, leaving gaps in the understanding of jewellery brands' marketing communication strategies. Hence, consumers' attitudes toward communicated CSR practices in the jewellery industry still presents inconsistent findings and remains a largely unexplored research area. Therefore, the approach to study the effect of CSR claims in the jewellery sector is becoming increasingly relevant, as the adaption of CSR practices may be the key to survival for jewellery businesses in future (Carrigan et al., 2015).

Moreover, in this research, the focus lies on philanthropical and ethical CSR practices since they represent significant dimensions in CSR communication (Pönkänen & Wedendal, 2018). In this study, a philanthropic claim stands for a CSR initiative in which donations are made to causes. At the same time, the ethical claim concerns a company's environmental behaviour, in particular the use of eco-friendly packaging materials.

Since there is only limited coverage of the effect of CSR claims on consumer inferences concerning jewellery brands in the mainstream CSR literature, this study aims to examine how a jewellery brand should use a philanthropical and ethical CSR claim to obtain positive consumer responses. Henceforth, using a 2 x 2 experimental between-subjects design, this research aims to answer the following main research question:

RQ: To what extent do an ethical and philanthropical CSR claim on a company's website influence consumers' perceived product quality, brand attitude, purchase intention, and perceived authenticity in the fine jewellery industry?

This study contributes to theory and practice in several ways. First, jewellery advertising has not been extensively empirically studied, and this study fills gaps in the understanding of jewellery brands' CSR communication strategies (Taylor 2018; Pankiw et al., 2020). Specifically, it adds to the knowledge of use and appropriateness of CSR claims in a jewellery brands context. In addition, it answers the questions to which extent communicated CSR initiatives lead to successful outcomes for jewellery brands. Finally, this study has implications for advertising practice, as it provides potential CSR advertising strategies jewellery brands can use to differentiate themselves and their products from competitors.

This report is organised as follows. After this introduction, a literature review supporting the conceptual framework and hypothesis will be presented. In the next section, the methodological choices are depicted and justified. After that, the analysis of results is elaborated on in the fourth section. The last chapter offers some concluding remarks on the empirical findings, followed by theoretical and practical implications, as well as limitations and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework is drawn out, thereby introducing key concepts and relations between them. Specifically, the theoretical framework will elaborate on CSR in the fine jewellery industry. Then CSR communication with its philanthropical and ethical dimension is introduced. In addition, the chapter clarifies the concepts of perceived product quality, brand attitude, purchase intention and CSR authenticity. Finally, hypotheses are developed, and a conceptual model is presented.

2.1 CSR in the fine jewellery industry

This study investigates the impact of CSR claims on consumer evaluations by using the fine jewellery industry as a context. Therefore, a broad academic overview will be given of the fine jewellery industry with regard to CSR.

To begin with, the term fine jewellery describes any jewellery made from precious metals such as gold, silver, or platinum. Moreover, the fine jewellery sector falls under the category of luxury industries (Pankiw et al., 2020). It consists of many small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) (Carrigan et al., 2017), making this sector highly competitive (Pankiw et al., 2020). As a result, fine jewellery brands seek to differentiate themselves by using CSR as a tool and communicating their CSR practices to their consumers (Pankiw et al., 2020).

Moreover, the fine jewellery industry has enjoyed a respectable profile worldwide but faces global criticism for several reasons. The main reasons are the human and environmental harm occurring due to the extraction of metal and mineral reserves (Gardetti & Coste-Manière, 2020). Another factor is the lack of transparency and traceability in the supply chain (Carrigan et al., 2017). This leads to the fact that social and environmental responsibilities are often not associated with the fine jewellery industry.

Nevertheless, many jewellery brands recently proclaimed that they are sustainable, ecological, and socially responsible today to fulfil consumer exaptation's and differentiate themselves from competitors. Especially in today's corporate social responsibility atmosphere, consumers place their pressure on the demand for ethical jewellery. This is due to the growing understanding on the consumer side that firms must become more socially responsible and deal with environmental and ethical issues. Henceforth, the fine jewellery industry is under pressure to adopt more responsible practices. Thus, the movement has gained momentum over the last few decades, and more sustainable jewellery brands have entered the fine jewellery market. However, to be successful, fine jewellery SME's must understand how consumers may perceive the responsibilities communicated by the business.

Yet, there is limited coverage on the effect of corporate responsibility practices of small jewellery brands in the mainstream CSR literature. While some analyzed if SME's in the jewellery industry initiate CSR practices, others explored how they communicate their CSR initiatives to consumers. For example, Carrigan et al. (2017) investigated how SME's engage in CSR certification programs in the jewellery industry. They state that "there is evidence that institutional forces are coalescing toward a more responsible agenda for the jewellery industry" (p. 693). In addition, Moraes et al. (2017) analyzed how sustainability can become an essential part of such an industry and indicates that if ethical dimensions are integrated into fine jewellery consumption, they must become a fundamental part of the consumption environment, just like fair trade labels. Moreover, they state that consumers have already integrated CSR initiatives into their consumption habits. Thus, there is the possibility that these initiatives can stimulate fine jewellery consumption as well. They propose that this could be achieved through marketing communications that are "ethically oriented" (Moraes et al., 2017, p. 539). Furthermore, Moraes et al., (2017) highlight inconsistencies in ethical consumption in the jewellery industry through a so-called attitude-behaviour gap. Meaning, that in theory consumers show to favour companies with good responsibility records but, in practice, this does not always seem to be the case. Hence researchers have been urged to close this "persisting gap" (Sen et al., 2016, p. 73).

Despite a growing number of sustainable jewellery brands, previous literature is silent on whether communicating CSR activities can benefit SME's in the jewellery industry. Even though research has demonstrated that firms can obtain a competitive advantage and improve long-term profitability through CSR initiatives (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006), it remains questionable if this is also applicable to SME's in the fine jewellery industry. It can thus be seen that research has yet to examine the effect of CSR claims on consumers evaluations in this industry.

2.2 CSR communication

The engagement of companies in corporate social responsibility measures has enjoyed steady popularity for decades. There is hardly any large company that does not set out to do good for society, the environment or its employees and document this commitment in its communication accordingly (Singh & Misra, 2021). The origins of the concept of CSR can be traced back some decades ago (Carroll, 1999). An early comprehensive definition was proposed in 1999, by Carroll which states that corporate social responsibility involves executing a business to be economically profitable, law-abiding, ethical and socially supportive (Carroll, 1999). Since

then, CSR has become one of the most widely accepted concepts among scholars, and various CSR definitions have evolved (Singh & Misra, 2021). Then, in 2011, the European Commission presented a new definition of CSR, where CSR is defined as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society" (European Commission, 2011).

Today literature mentions the concept of CSR communication, which can be defined as the process of providing true and transparent information about a brand's integration of its social and environmental business operations. In other words, it describes the brand's communication about its CSR practices by utilizing means such as advertisements, CSR reports, and websites (Türkel & Akan, 2015). Furthermore, the literature points out that it has become a vital issue in building the legitimacy of a brand in the stakeholder's eye (Türkel & Akan, 2015). Moreover, existing research shows that CSR communication can be seen as a marketing tool affecting consumers' behaviour (Gligor-Cimpoieru & Munteanu, 2014). For example, prior studies found that the communication of CSR initiatives can impact consumer brand attitude (Liu et al., 2020), purchase intentions (Amatulli et al., 2018) and product quality (Chernev and Blair, 2015) when disclosed externally to the consumer.

In addition, prior studies show that CSR communication is performed through a variety of channels. To begin with, Gligor-Cimpoieru & Munteanu (2014) state that "common forms of external CSR communication like web pages or CSR annual reports new means of social media networks have an increasing importance" (pp.276). Also, Reilly and Larya (2018) note that organizations have increased their use of the Internet for CSR communication. Colleoni (2013) supports this notion by stating that CSR communication is executed through various online social media channels and corporate websites. Expressly, web pages represent a significant platform for conveying socially responsible information (Maier & Ravazzani, 2019). Interestingly, in a study of CSR representations on corporate websites, Basil and Erlandson (2008) found that not only successful organizations include CSR initiatives on their websites, but also small to medium-sized companies do so. This is because websites are an easily accessible tool for several stakeholders. For instance, Gligor-Cimpoieru and Munteanu (2014) assert that communicating CSR practices via a web page offers the benefit of publishing CSR information in an easily accessible way to various stakeholders, which can bring a significant boost of image.

For this reason, this study is explicitly interested in the impact of CSR claims directed at potential consumers, utilizing a fictional jewellery brands' website.

2.2.1 Ethical and philanthropic responsibilities

Furthermore, the literature points out that CSR communication can be divided into four dimensions (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019). To better understand these dimensions, it is reasonable to show Carroll's Pyramid of corporate social responsibility, representing multiple CSR dimensions (see figure 1).

To start with, the basic four components of corporate social responsibility comprise economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 2016; Carroll 1991). These responsibilities are all expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time. The economic component deals with societies expectation that business organizations should be profitable and have enough resources to sustain themselves and continue in operation (Carroll, 2016; Carroll 1991). However, society has not only required businesses to be economic entities, but it also has set basic rules under which businesses are expected to operate. In particular, businesses are required to comply with legal responsibilities such as laws and regulations. An example is a compliance with various federal, state, and local regulations (Carroll, 2016).

The ethical and philanthropic dimensions are relevant to this study since they are significant in the process of CSR communication (Pönkänen & Wedendal, 2018). Not only are consumers more concerned and responsible about environmental and social issues (Brunk & Blümelhuber, 2011) they also demonstrate a preference for CSR practices that include philanthropic and ethical initiatives (Abdeen et al., 2016). To illustrate, philanthropic responsibilities include initiatives executed by businesses that are "right for society", due to which the public does have a sense that businesses will "give back" (Carroll, 2016). This dimension can include initiatives such as funding educational programs, supporting health initiatives, donating to causes, and supporting community beautification projects (Carroll, 2016; Corporate Finance Institute, 2020). Moreover, the literature reveals that organizations are not obligated to engage in philanthropic initiatives such as one-off donations since they are an individual choice of the company (Abdeen et al., 2016).

Apart from economic, legal and philanthropic responsibilities, there are ethical responsibilities. Ethical practices are voluntary initiatives and choices made by the business that are not codified into any laws or regulations (projects (Carroll, 2016; Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019). Precisely, Awan et al. (2018) claim that environmental behaviour can be placed under this dimension since actions aimed to protect the environment are not required legally but are results of proactive behaviour of businesses. Thus, as an example, an ethical CSR initiative that a company could perform is eco-friendly packaging materials (Wei et al., 2018).

The philanthropic and ethical CSR dimensions are an essential part of this study since they form the CSR communication in this study. Specifically, the fictional brand claims to use solely ethical claim packaging materials and contributes to society by donating sales percentages to society. In particular, in this study, the ethical claim of using eco-friendly packaging materials represents an ethical CSR initiative, whereas the donation claim depicts a philanthropic CSR initiative. The literature points out that CSR communication can be divided into four different dimensions (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2019). To better understand these dimensions, it is reasonable to show Carroll's Pyramid of corporate social responsibility which represents multiple dimensions of CSR (see figure 1).

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Figure 1

Carroll's pyramid model of corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1991, p. 42).



2.3 Consumer inferences

A growing body of academic research displays a wide range of benefits that a company can achieve from its engagement in CSR initiatives and its communication (Du et al., 2007; Sen et al., 2006; Bianchi et al., 2019). Former results suggest that the consumer's awareness of a company's CSR initiative can positively influence consumer responses such as brand attitude (Hur, Kim, & Woo, 2014) and perceived product quality (Chernev & Blair, 2015) and purchase intention (Lee & Lee, 2015). Scholars also suggest that perceived CSR authenticity can play a mediative role in the relationship between CSR claims and dependent variables such as purchase intention (Afzali and Kim, 2021). In this research, it is argued that corporate social

responsibility initiatives, particularly the notion of charitable donations and the use of environmental packaging, can positively impact perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude. Perceived CSR authenticity is expected to mediate the relationships.

2.3.1 Perceived Product Quality

To start with Chernev and Blair (2015) found that consumers are experiencing products differently by knowing that a company has behaved ethically. In particular, the authors found that CSR initiatives can make consumers think that products of companies engaged in CSR initiatives are performing better. Chernev and Blair (2015) called this the 'benevolent halo effect'. It describes how positive attitudes toward a company are turned into positive beliefs about the company's products. This effect is based on the underlying psychological mechanism that social psychologists call the 'halo effect' (Forgas & Laham, 2016). It involves making inferences from known characteristics to unknown ones.

Several other studies have begun to explore the relationships between CSR and product quality associations. For example, the Body Shop's products have been associated with high quality due to the firm's engagement in environmentally friendly practices (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen, 2007). Further, Biehal and Sheinin (2007) findings provide empirical support for the influence of CSR messages on product judgments. Also, a more recent study is consistent with the notion that there is an association between consumers' awareness of a firm's engagement in socially responsible initiatives and their product-specific beliefs. In particular, the study of Lemarié and Girardin (2018) shows that through the benevolent halo effect, consumers classify products as less dangerous when the company is engaged in charitable initiatives. This implies that the consumer draws inferences from the company's pro-social behaviour and projects them onto the product attributes.

To put it in a nutshell, it can be said that CSR activities can lead to a change in the consumer perception towards the company's products. Therefore, this study argues that pro-social initiatives, particularly charitable donations and ethical responsibilities such as environmental packaging as part of a jewellery brand's corporate social responsibility, can positively impact the perceived quality of their products.

H1a: Consumers' perceived product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.

H2a: Consumers' product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.

2.3.2 Purchase intention

Companies using CSR initiatives can reap substantial benefits from consumers, whereas one of them is increased purchase intention (Du et al., 2010). At first, it is important to understand that the consumer counts as a key stakeholder who acts as a judge towards companies and their CSR initiatives when making purchase decisions (Mohr et al., 2001; Ozdora Aksak et al., 2016).

The literature provides solid evidence that the evaluation of products and the purchase intentions depend on the nature and amount of the CSR information provided by the company (Mohr et al., 2001). For instance, Lee and Lee (2015) suggested that beliefs about CSR positively affect purchase intention. Likewise, Gatti et al. (2012) reported that CSR practices could influence purchase intentions and thereby providing a competitive advantage. Consistent with these findings, Mueller Loose and Remaud (2013) found that CSR claims that communicate a company's efforts for a better society or environment will increase consumers' purchase intentions and willingness to pay more for the product. Another study by Lee and Shin (2010) supports this claim by revealing that consumers' understanding of CSR initiatives affects their purchase intentions. They report that "consumers seek 'good' CSR initiatives, and they intend to buy products from 'good' companies" (pp.149). Specifically, they show that consumer's awareness of a company's social contribution is positively linked with their purchase intention. In addition, Wigley (2008) hypothesises that exposure to a company's CSR initiative would positively impact consumers' attitudes toward the company and intentions to purchase the company's products. The results show that the hypothesis was supported since subjects exposed to a CSR message reported stronger intentions to purchase the company's products than those exposed to a dummy message. Hence, this study claims that consumers show a higher purchase intention when exposed to CSR claims. The study, therefore, proposes the following hypotheses:

H1b: Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.

H2b: Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.

2.3.3 Brand attitude

Research has long established that firms want to be perceived as socially involved and environmentally friendly to enhance brand attitudes (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla & Paladino, 2013). Henceforth, it is not surprising that a large body of literature found evidence for a positive relationship between CSR initiatives and consumers' brand attitude (Ramesh et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). This is based on the theory that customers recognize the social responsibility of an organization and ultimately positively associate themselves with that organization, which in turn influences their brand attitude for that organization (Cheng et al., 2021). Prior research hypothesized that customers' knowledge that an organization behaves socially responsible directly influences their attitude towards the brand (Kang & Hustvedt, 2013). Likewise, a study by Gosselt et al. (2017) found that an external CSR label induced a more favorable brand attitude. In a similar manner, this study argues that ethical and philanthropical CSR initiatives that are externally disclosed towards potential consumers influence brand attitude.

H1c: Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.

H2c: Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.

2.3.4 Mediating Role of CSR Authenticity

Authenticity is, known as a key variable that contains a positive effect on consumers' attitude towards companies and their products (Ewing et al., 2012). The literature revealed that the consumer acknowledgement of CSR initiatives that appear genuine could lead to positive reactions and favourable attitudes towards those companies (Ewing et al., 2012; Afzali & Kim, 2021).

As the consumers' level of perceived CSR authenticity increases, they react favourably by positively assessing other aspects of the brand. Subsequently, consumers' recognition of CSR authenticity may positively impact their responses, such as purchase intention and product associations (Beckman et al., 2009). In general, Ellen et al. (2006) claim that whether a brand's activity would have positive outcomes depends on the intermediary process. Following this line of thought, a study focusing on the perceived authenticity of CSR activities states that the influence of a brand's CSR activity on consumer responses could be mediated by its authenticity (Yoon et al., 2006). For instance, Alhouti et al. (2016) proved that perceived CSR authenticity has a mediated effect on consumer responses such as purchase intention. This implies that it is not enough for a brand to simply engage in CSR. They must also take into account the extent to which consumers perceive the CSR initiative to be authentic, since it can influence important consumer outcomes such as purchase intention.

Furthermore, some researchers have empirically demonstrated that CSR authenticity has the potential to mediate the relationship between CSR and attitudes towards a brand partially and fully. In particular, a study by Afzali and Kim (2021) found that perceived CSR was positively associated with purchase intention, corporate evaluation and product association. In addition, they found that CSR authenticity mediates the relationship between perceived CSR and the three mentioned CSR customers' responses to CSR. Hence, based on the findings mentioned above, the following hypothesis is established:

H3: The effects of ethical and philanthropical CSR claims on perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude are mediated by perceived CSR authenticity.

2.4 Theoretical research model

Based on the findings from relevant literature a conceptual research model has been developed. Figure 2 depicts this theoretical research model, including the main effects of the independent variables on the study's dependent variables. Furthermore, the expected mediation effect is illustrated in this model. For clarity, Table 1 provides an overview of the research question and the proposed hypotheses of this study.

Figure 2

Conceptual model

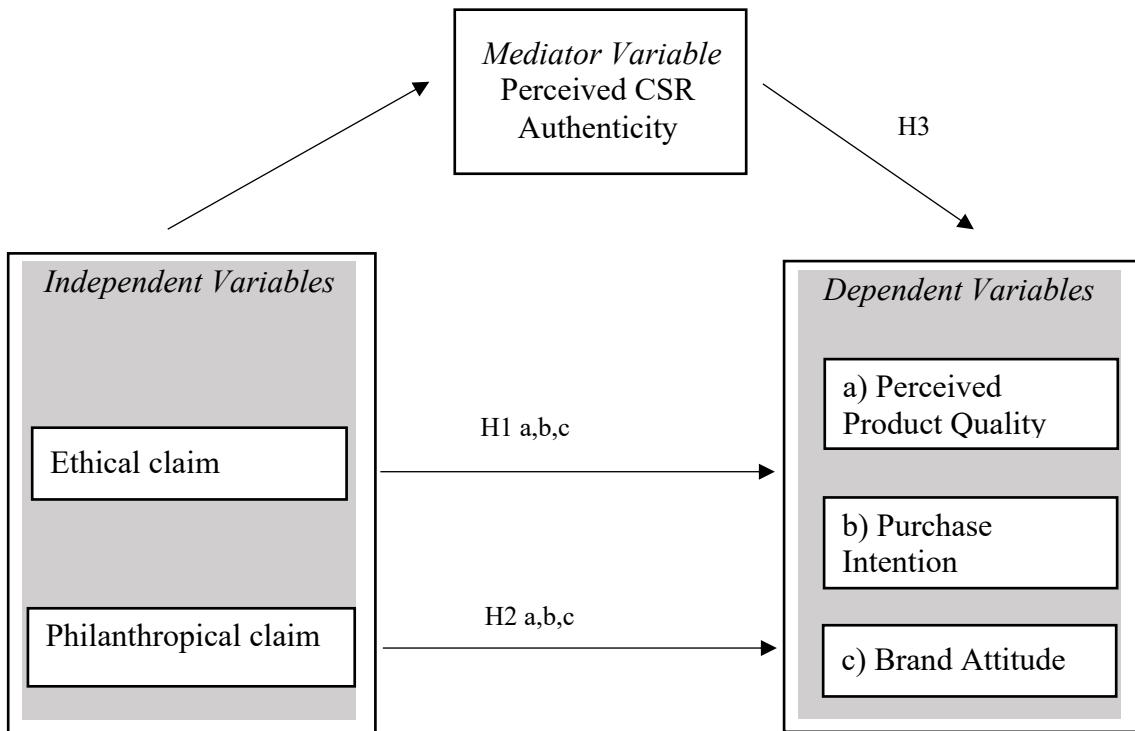


Table 1*Overview of proposed hypotheses and research questions*

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>
H1 a	Consumers' perceived product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.
H1 b	Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.
H1 c	Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.
H2 a	Consumers' perceived product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.
H2 b	Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.
H2 c	Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.
H3	The effects of ethical and philanthropical claims on perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude are mediated by perceived CSR authenticity.

3. Method

In the following, the chosen method of the present study is presented. First, a general overview of the study design is given, followed by a description of the chosen stimulus material and the manipulation check. Then, the study elaborates on the pre-test, procedure of the main study. Subsequently, sample characteristics are presented. Lastly, the used measurements, together with their validity and reliability, are depicted.

3.1 Design

To test the hypotheses on the effect of external CSR claims on perceived product quality, brand attitude, and purchase intention, a 2 x 2 between-subjects experiment was conducted. The independent variables included ethical claim (present vs absent) and philanthropical claim (present vs absent). The dependent variables of this study are the perceived product quality, consumers' brand attitude, and consumers' purchase intention. A mediator variable called 'Perceived CSR authenticity' is expected to mediate the effects between the independent and dependent variables. The ethics committee of the University of Twente has granted the permission to conduct the research in this specific manner.

3.2 Stimulus Materials

Before the actual materials for this study were designed, a decision on a specific product had to be made. Notably, a gender-neutral product had to be chosen since the study aimed to investigate the general public's opinion. The final decision has been made to use jewellery since it is a timeless product for men and women (Armano & Joy, 2021).

Hence, a fictitious jewellery brand was created for this study. Subsequently, the visuals for the brand's website were designed. To fully present the fictional brand and its products to the respondents, it was decided to show the participants four different web pages: the homepage, the product categories, a product overview and a detailed product page. The different websites pages can be found in Appendix A.

The two independent variables 'ethical claim' and 'philanthropical claim' were each manipulated for the four different homepages. The manipulations of the ethical claim and philanthropical claim were thereby incorporated into the brands' website. Specifically, the fictive CSR claims were presented on the home page of the fictive jewellery brand in order to increase the credibility and visibility of the presented content. Hence to carry out a 2x2 experiment, four non-identical homepages communicating a different CSR involvement of the brand have been designed. More specific, one homepage containing an ethical claim: "we use

100% eco-friendly packaging materials", one containing a philanthropical claim "we donate 5% of our revenue to charities", one containing both claims and one containing no claim we designed. The choice for using these particular claims as manipulations was based on the literature review, in particular Carroll's Pyramid of corporate social responsibility, representing the ethical and philanthropical CSR dimensions.

To put it in a nutshell, the ethical and philanthropical elements were either absent or present. The ethical message was integrated into the brands homepage by incorporating a CSR claim relating to an eco-friendly behavior of the company. This was expressed by using the claim "we use 100% eco-friendly packaging materials". In the absent condition, the brand did not communicate its involvement in using eco-friendly packaging material. On the other hand, the philanthropical claim, was expressed on the homepage by the statement " we donate 5% of our revenue to charities". In the absent condition, the brand did not communicate its charitable donation. Below, two of the four manipulated homepage conditions are presented. Figure 3 presents the ethical claim condition, and Figure 4 demonstrates the condition for which a philanthropical claim was used. The other two manipulated homepages can be found in Appendix A.

Figure 3

Homepage condition (ethical claim)

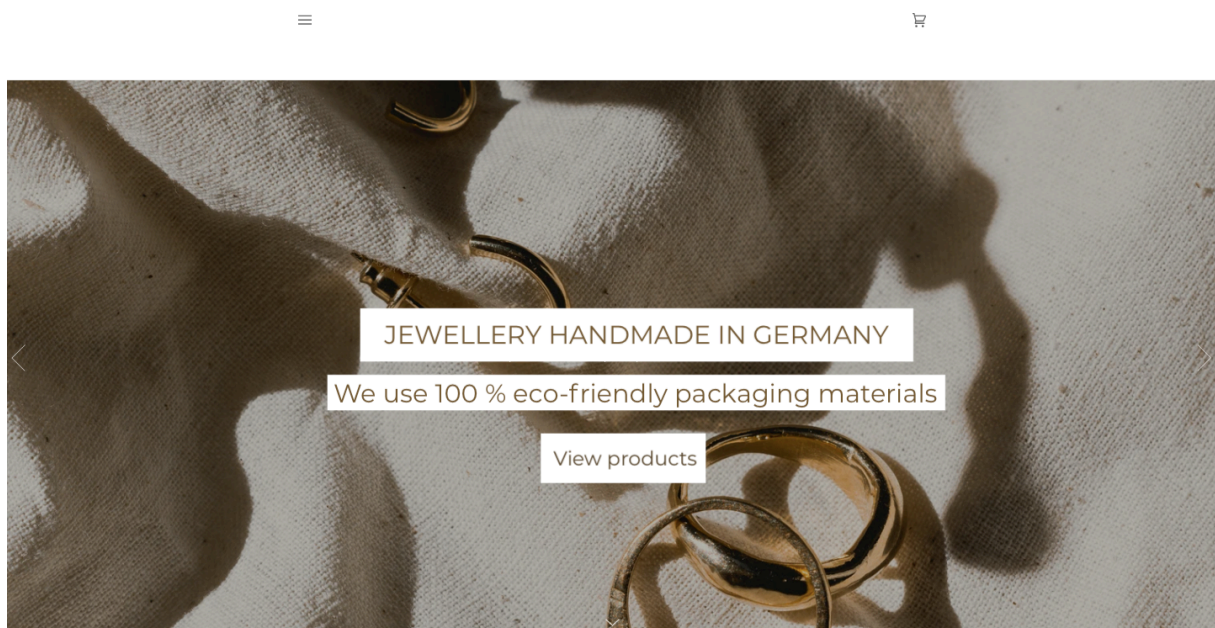
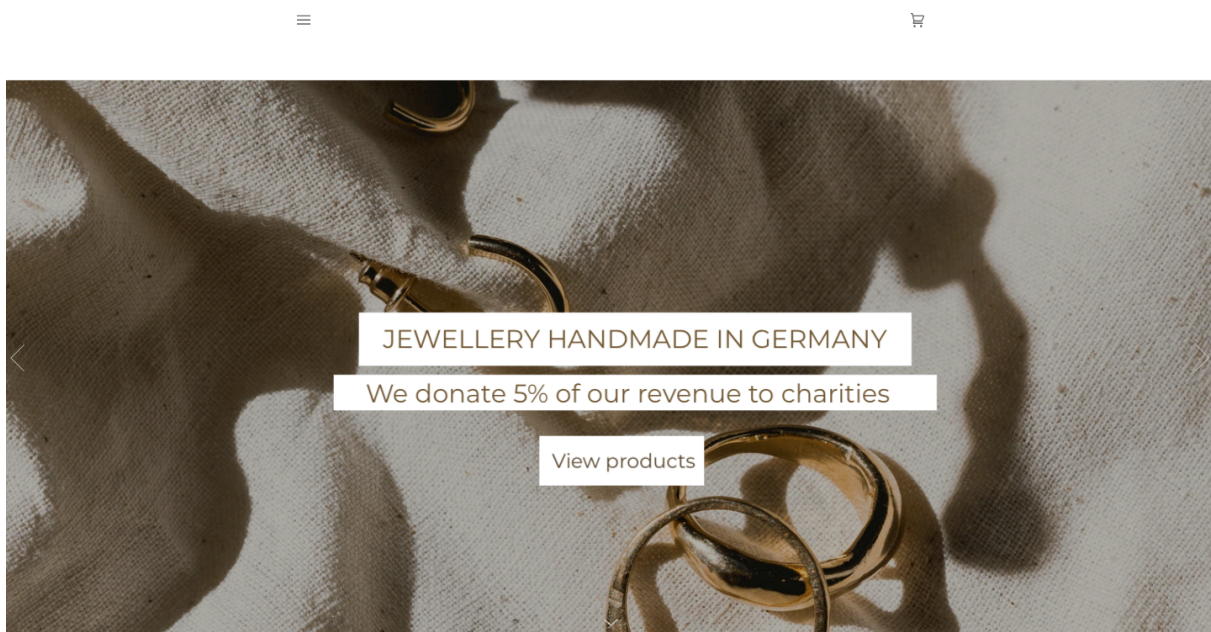


Figure 4

Homepage condition (philanthropical claim)



3.2.1 Manipulation Check

Manipulation check questions were asked during the main study and were analyzed by an independent samples t-test. For the two variables a significant difference was found. The results revealed a significant difference for the independent variable ethical claim ($t(234) = -4.28, p = .000$) with in the present condition ($M = 0.46, SD = 0.16$) and within the absent condition ($M = 0.38, SD = 0.12$). A significant difference was also found for the Philanthropical claim ($t(234) = -6.10, p = .00$) within the present condition ($M = 0.47, SD = 1.70$) and the absent condition ($M = 0.36, SD = 0.09$), indicating that respondents could clearly identify the different CSR commitment and thus the condition.

3.3 Pre-test

A pre-test was conducted to ensure that the independent variables 'ethical claim' and 'philanthropical claim' were successfully manipulated and recognized correctly by participants. For this, an online survey with closed-ended question items was created using the tool Qualtrics. For data collection, fifteen participants were selected utilizing convenience sampling and were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The main aim of this pre-test was first to analyze whether individuals could identify the different CSR claims to assure that the

manipulations were measured correctly and secondly to recognize any flaws in the questionnaire.

The pre-test consisted of a total of 32 questions. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four manipulations. The participants were first asked to look at the screenshots of a jewellery website containing the homepage, product categories and product details. After looking at the images, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their perception of the product quality, purchase intention, brand attitude and CSR authenticity. All question items had to be answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 7 = 'strongly agree'. Afterwards, participants were asked to answer a manipulation check question. The manipulation question was asked in the form of a multiple-choice question. Participants had to indicate whether the jewellery brand claims to contribute to society by donating money to charities, claims to use solely eco-friendly packaging materials, claims none of the above-mentioned activities or both. At the end of the study, participants were asked to give feedback.

Finally, the sample consisted of fifteen participants, six male and nine females, aged between 18 and 30 years. Based on the feedback given by the participants and a researcher, it was decided to adapt the font sizes of the website screenshots to make the claims more visible. Moreover, results revealed that the manipulation was successful. All participants could identify the CSR commitment claimed by the fictional brand. Accordingly, no further changes, apart from spelling mistakes, needed to be corrected for the final study.

3.4 Procedure

In this study, participants were approached via the researcher's social media channels over a period of four weeks from June till July 2021. Precisely, the channels Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and WhatsApp were used. The online survey tool "Qualtrics" allowed participants to participate in this research on their mobile, desktop or tablet devices. Once participants were introduced to the study by an informed consent presenting the study's purpose, risks and participant rights, they were asked to comply. In particular, the participants were told that this study would aim to analyze peoples' first impressions of a new jewellery brand and its website. Participants were then presented with one of the four conditions, each containing website images of a fictional jewellery brand with different CSR messages. Concretely, participants were given either an ethical claim, philanthropical claim, both claims or no claims on the fictional brand's homepage. Notably, the conditions were assigned randomly to participants using a randomizer option. After the stimulus material was presented, all participants were asked to answer the same set of questions regarding the dependent variables and demographics,

including their age, gender, highest education and current employment status. At the end of the survey, participants were thanked for their participation and the real purpose of the study, namely measuring the effect of different CSR claims on perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude, was revealed.

3.5 Participants

Participants were gathered using the convenience and snowball sampling technique. The survey link was distributed using the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Whatsapp. In total, 301 participants filled in the online survey. Of the 301 participants, 65 participants did not proceed adequately with filling in the survey. Henceforth, these participants were removed from the primary sample before further analysis was conducted. Thus, the remaining sample consisted of 236 and was split across the four experimental conditions in this research. The distribution of responses for each experimental condition was relatively balanced, with each condition including at least 50 participants (Table 2).

When analyzing the research sample, it could be observed that the majority of participants were female (62,3%) and the minority male (35,2%). Six individuals did not feel comfortable mentioning their gender. When looking at nationality, most of the participants were German. In total, 58.1% of the participants reported German nationality and 14.4% Dutch nationality. However, responses were also collected from participants all over Europe, Asia and South America, accounting for a percentage of 27,5 %. All respondents were aged between 18 to 58 years with a mean age of 24.76 (SD = 6.59), the most occurring age being 24. In addition, the level of education within the research sample was analyzed. As demonstrated in Table 2, most participants indicated having a university degree. Henceforth, it can be stated that the research sample includes a majority of highly educated individuals. Regarding their employment status, the analysis revealed that the majority of participants indicated to be either studying (n= 132) or to be employed full-time (n= 58).

Finally, when taking a closer look at the characteristics of each experimental group some conclusions can be drawn. In general, it is apparent that the number of participants in each group is not equivalent, with the second condition having the lowest number of participants (n= 54) and the fourth condition having the highest number of participants (n= 65). Nevertheless, the number of participants is still fairly similar. Thus, the groups are comparable to each other. Also, the gender distribution is similar in each condition and participants turn out to be on average equally old in all condition. Regarding education it becomes apparent that percentage-wise group two and four seem to hold the most Bachelor and Master students. Hence,

it can be concluded that these two experimental groups hold participants that experienced on average a higher education. With regard to employment status, it can be stated that the second experimental condition consists of a majority of students, while the third experimental condition has the most full-time employers in comparison to the other groups. Hence it cannot be excluded that the factors such as unequal education and employment status across the experimental conditions might influence the results of the study. Table 2 depicts the sample characteristics per each experimental condition.

Table 2

Distribution of sample characteristics across experimental conditions

		<i>Condition</i>			
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
		philanthropical claim	ethical claim	both	none
N (% of total)		<i>N=57(24)</i>	<i>N=54(23)</i>	<i>N=60(25)</i>	<i>N=65(28)</i>
Gender	Female	33 (58)	33 (61)	39 (65)	42 (65)
(% of group)	Male	21 (37)	21 (39)	20 (33)	21 (32)
	Others	2 (4)	0	1 (2)	0
	Prefer not so say	1 (2)	0	0	2 (3)
Mean Age (SD)		25.25 (7.77)	25.33 (7.43)	23.90 (3.45)	24.65 (6.93)
Nationality	German	30 (53)	36 (67)	38 (64)	33 (50)
(% of group)	Dutch	6 (10)	6 (11)	7 (12)	15 (23)
	Other	21(37)	12 (22)	15 (25)	17 (26)
Education	No education	3(5)	0	0	1 (2)
(% of group)	Elementary school	0	0	0	2 (3)
	High school	12 (21)	10 (19)	8 (13)	12 (19)
	College	7 (12)	5 (10)	10 (17)	6 (9)
	Bachelors	22 (39)	29 (54)	30 (50)	31 (48)
	Masters	10 (18)	7 (13)	9 (15)	12 (19)

	Others	3 (5)	3 (6)	3 (5)	1 (2)
Employment status	Student	30 (53)	36 (67)	30 (50)	36 (55)
(% of group)	Self-employed	2 (4)	3 (6)	5 (8)	3 (5)
	Employed full-time	15 (26)	12 (22)	16 (27)	15 (23)
	Employed part-time	5 (8)	1 (2)	3 (5)	7 (11)
	Freelance	1 (2)	1 (2)	3 (5)	2 (3)
	Retired	0	1 (2)	0	0
	Prefer not to say	1 (2)	0	2 (3)	0
	Other	3 (5)	0	1 (2)	2 (3)

3.6 Measurements

The dependent variables tested in this study include perceived product quality, purchase intentions and attitude toward the brand, while the mediator variable aims to test perceived CSR authenticity. In order to measure these variables, several studies were reviewed to incorporate and adapt appropriate measurement items from existing CSR literature. An overview of the incorporated measurement items for this study's questionnaire can be found in Appendix B. A factor analysis was carried out to demonstrate validity among the constructs. The factor analysis results, and the Cronbach's alpha of the dependent and mediating variables are demonstrated in table 3 below.

First, the perceived product quality construct is based on the conceptualization of Liu et al. (2020) and Bagozzi et al. (2016). Perceived product quality was measured using four items (1) "I think that the quality of this jewellery brand's products is high", (2) "I think products of this jewellery brand are well made", (3) "I think the products of this jewellery brand have better quality than other brands' products", (4) "In terms of overall quality, I would rate the products of this jewellery brand as an exceptionally good". The reliability of this construct depicted a Cronbach's alpha of .90.

Second, to measure purchase intention, a scale developed by Barber, Kuo, Bishop and Goodman (2012) was adopted. The scale consists of four items: (1) "I would consider

purchasing products from this jewellery brand ", (2) "I am interested in trying products from this jewellery brand ", (3) "I intend to try products from this jewellery brand, (4) "I would plan on buying products from this jewellery brand", (5) "The probability that I would consider buying products from this jewellery brand is high", (6) This construct reliability resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .96.

Thirdly, attitude towards the brand was measured using a four-item scale adopted from Spears and Singh (2004). This construct proved to be reliable in this study with a Cronbach's alpha of .95. The scale includes bipolar adjectives such as (1) dislike/like, (2) unfavourable/favourabl, (3) negative/positive, and (4) socially irresponsible/socially responsible.

Brand authenticity was measured by a 6-item scale, aligned on the constructs used by Afzali and Kim (2021) and Kim and Lee (2019), yielding a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha of .84. The scale was slightly modified to fit the context of the research. The scale involved items such as (1), "The jewellery brand is a socially responsible company", (2) "The jewellery brands' social responsibility activities are genuine", (3) "The jewellery brand is being true to itself with its social responsibility activities", (4) "The jewellery brand cares about its environmental impact", (5) "This jewellery brand is committed to social welfare through social responsibility activities". Also, one reversed item (6) "I think that the jewellery brand's social responsibility activities are artificial " has been used.

Table 3

Results of the factor analysis with VARIMAX rotation of items

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings			
		1	2	3	4
Perceived Product Quality ($\alpha=.897$)	I think that the quality of this jewellery brand's products is high				.822
	I think products of this jewellery brand are well made				.794
	I think the products of this jewellery brand have better quality than other brands' products				.675
Purchase Intention ($\alpha=.962$)	In terms of overall quality, I'd rate the products of this jewellery brand as good				.823
	I would consider purchasing products from this jewellery brand	.821			
	I am interested in trying products from this jewellery brand	.857			
	I intend to try products from this jewellery brand	.847			

	I would plan on buying products from this jewellery brand	.856	
	The probability that I would consider buying products from this jewellery brand is high	.808	
Brand attitude	(1) unappealing/appealing		.808
	(2) bad/good	.	.810
	(3) unpleasant/pleasant		.855
($\alpha=.952$)	(4) unfavorable/ favorable		.790
	(5) unlikable/likeable		.871
Perceived CSR authenticity	The jewellery brand is a socially responsible company	.845	
	The jewellery brands' social responsibility activities are genuine	.832	
($\alpha=.836$)	The jewellery brand is being true to itself with its social responsibility activities	.874	
	The jewellery brand cares about its environmental impact	.838	
	This jewellery brand is committed to social welfare through social responsibility activities	.826	
	I think that the jewellery brand's social responsibility activities are artificial	.998	

Note: The factor analysis was set to a fixed number of four factors and small coefficients lower than 0.40 are suppressed.

4. Results

To test the established hypotheses, a MANOVA was executed by using the program SPSS. Through this analysis, two groups of each independent variable have been compared on their outcome on the study's dependent variables. In the following, the results of the conducted analysis will be reported by elaborating the main effects of the two independent variables on the three dependent variables and discussing the interaction and mediation effect. Subsequently, an additional MANOVA was executed after adjustments were made to the research model.

4.1 MANOVA Main effects

To test the hypotheses displayed in the theoretical framework, one MANOVA was conducted. A MANOVA serves to compare two groups of the independent variable on their outcome on the dependent variables of the study. The following paragraphs will elaborate on the direct effects as well as the interaction effects. Table 4 presents the overall multivariate test results.

Table 4

Multivariate Test Results

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Wilks Lambda</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Partial eta squared</i>
Ethical claim	.993	.541	3,230	.66	.007
Philantrophical claim	.984	1.245	3,230	.29	.016
Philantrophical claim*Ethical claim	.993	.522	3,230	.67	.007

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

4.1.1 Ethical claim

In total, no significant effects could be found of the independent variable ethical claim on the dependent variables (Wilks' Lambda: $p = .66$). Thus, participants in the present ethical claim condition did not have different outcomes than participants in the condition where the ethical claim was absent. Therefore, Hypothesis 1a, 1b and 1c are rejected as there are no significant effects of the ethical claim on the dependent variables. Table 5 depicts a more detailed overview of the descriptive statistics.

Table 5*Descriptive statistics ethical claim*

<i>Dependent measures</i>	<i>n</i>	Present		Absent	
		<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>n</i>
Perceived product quality	114	5.32 (1.11)	122	5.48 (1.01)	
Purchase intention	114	4.80 (1.56)	122	4.95 (1.54)	
Brand attitude	114	5.65 (1.26)	122	5.73 (1.37)	

*All scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree / 7 = Strongly agree)

4.1.2 Philanthropical claim

Regarding the independent variable philanthropical claim, results unveil no significant difference between the groups that received a philanthropical claim and those who did not (Wilks' Lambda: $p = .29$), meaning that participants in the present condition did not perceive the brand and its products differently compared to participants in the absent condition. Based on these outcomes, hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c cannot be supported either. Table 6 present the descriptive statistics.

Although none of the hypothesized effects is significant, it can be pointed out that reported purchase intention was on average highest for the condition in which participants were only exposed to the philanthropical claim ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.45$) and lowest for the group that was exposed only to the ethical claim ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.60$). Also, perceived product quality scored on average highest for the condition in which participants were solely exposed to the philanthropical claim ($M = 5.57$, $SD = 1.03$) and lowest for the group exposed only to the ethical claim ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 1.12$). The same can be observed for brand attitude. Participants reported the highest brand attitude in the only philanthropical claim condition ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.43$). Consequently, it can be concluded that participants being only exposed to the philanthropical claim, perceived the brand and its products in general as more positive. However, the differences are little and thus statistically non-significant.

Table 6*Descriptive statistics philanthropical claim*

<i>Dependent measures</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Present</i>		<i>Absent</i>	
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>n</i>
Perceived product quality	117	5.51 (1.05)	119	5.29 (1.13)	
Purchase intention	117	4.94 (1.50)	119	4.80 (1.60)	
Brand attitude	117	5.70 (1.39)	119	5.69 (1.26)	

*All scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree / 7 = Strongly agree)

4.1.3 Interaction effect

The interaction between the independent variable's ethical claim and the philanthropical claim was found not to have a significant effect on the dependent variables as a group (Wilks' Lambda: $p = .67$). The descriptive statistics can be found in table 7.

Table 7*Descriptive Statistics ethical claim x philanthropical claim*

<i>Dependent measures</i>	<i>Ethical claim</i>	<i>Philantrophical claim</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Perceived Product Quality	absent	absent	5.41 (1.13)
		present	5.57 (1.03)
		Total	5.48 (1.08)
	present	absent	5.15 (1.12)
		present	5.47 (1.08)
		Total	5.32 (1.10)
	Total	absent	5.29 (1.12)
		present	5.51 (1.05)
		Total	5.40 (1.09)
Purchase intention	absent	absent	4.84 (1.60)
		present	5.05 (1.45)
		Total	4.94 (1.53)
	present	absent	4.76 (1.60)
		present	4.83 (1.53)
		Total	4.79 (1.56)
	Total	absent	4.80 (1.59)

		present	4.93 (1.49)
		Total	4.87 (1.54)
Brand attitude	absent	absent	5.68 (1.33)
		present	5.78 (1.43)
		Total	5.73 (1.37)
	present	absent	5.68 (1.17)
		present	5.63 (1.35)
		Total	5.65 (1.26)
	Total	absent	5.68 (1.26)
		present	5.70 (1.38)
Total		5.69 (1.32)	

*All scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree / 7 = strongly agree)

4.1.4 Mediation analysis

For mediation to apply, specific criteria's have to be met. In particular, Collins, Graham and Flaherty (1998) claim that the effects of both the independent variables 'ethical claim' and 'philanthropical claim' and the mediator perceived CSR authenticity on the dependent variables should be significant. Also, the effect of the mediator on the dependent variables should be significant. However, in this study, the criteria for mediation were not met since no direct effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables could be obtained. Thus, the mediation effect could not be tested.

4.2 Adjusted research model

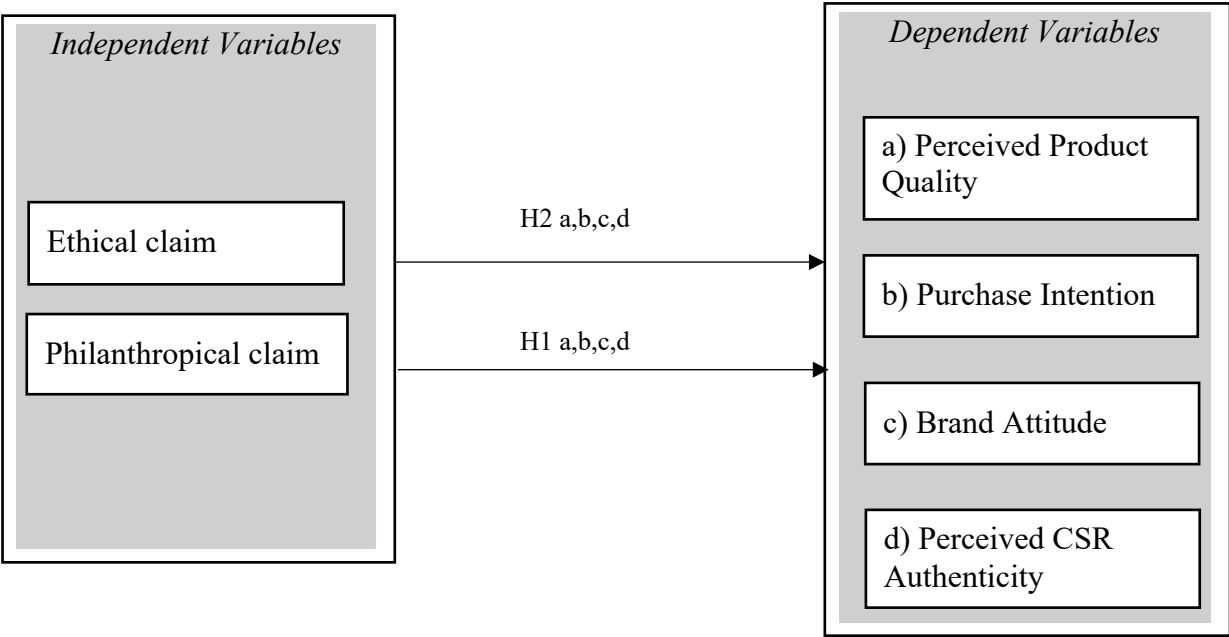
As previously mentioned, the mediation analysis could not be carried out due to insignificant direct effects between the independent and dependent variables. Therefore, it was decided to investigate the direct relationship between the independent variables and perceived CSR authenticity. Henceforth the research model has been adapted, and CSR authenticity, originally the mediator variable, has been turned into a dependent variable. The adjusted research model is shown in Figure 5. Furthermore, the above-mentioned hypotheses concerning perceived CSR authenticity have been adapted.

H1d: Consumers' perceived CSR authenticity towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.

H2d: Consumers' perceived CSR authenticity towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.

Figure 5

Adjusted research model



4.2.1 MANOVA effects of independent variables on perceived CSR authenticity

A MANOVA was conducted once again in order to test the adapted hypotheses concerning perceived CSR authenticity. The MANOVA aims to determine the direct effect of the independent variables ethical claim and philanthropical claim on the dependent variable perceived CSR authenticity.

By conducting the MANOVA analysis a second time, it has been found that there was a significant main effect of ethical claim on the dependent variables as a group (Wilks' Lambda: $p = <.004$). It was thereby found that the ethical claim has a statistically significant main effect on CSR authenticity, $F(1, 232) = 5.85, p < .01$, implying that a jewellery brands website with a present ethical claim will result in higher perceived CSR authenticity ($M = 4.99, SD = 1.00$) than with an absent ethical claim ($M = 4.66, SD = 1.01$).

Furthermore, it has been found that there was a significant main effect for the philanthropical claim on the dependent variables as a group (Wilks' Lambda: $p = .005$). In particular, results portrayed a significant difference between participants who received a philanthropical claim and those who did not $F(1, 232) = 11.48, p < .001$, illustrating that a present philanthropical claim on a jewellery brands' website leads to higher perceived CSR authenticity ($M = 5.05, SD = .94$) than when there is no philanthropical claim present ($M = 4.60, SD = 1.04$). Additionally, it is noteworthy to mention that participants perceived the jewellery brand's CSR activities as most authentic when both claims were present ($M = 5.21, SD = .94$) and least authentic when no claims were present ($M = 4.47, SD = 1.01$). Hence, it can be concluded that participants perceive a brands' CSR initiatives as most genuine when both an ethical and a philanthropical claim are present. Moreover, results unveil that participants perceive the CSR initiatives of a brand as slightly more authentic when a single philanthropical claim is present ($M = 4.87, SD = .93$) than when a single ethical claim is present ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.02$).

As there was a significant influence of ethical claim and philanthropical claim on perceived CSR authenticity, hypotheses 1d and 2d are supported. The Tables below provide an adjusted overview of the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variables, including perceived CSR authenticity.

Table 8

Multivariate Test Results

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Wilks Lambda</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Partial eta squared</i>
Ethical claim	.935	3.951	4,229	.004	.065
Philantrophical claim	.938	3.773	4,229	.005	.062
Philantrophical claim*Ethical claim	.993	.409	4,229	.802	.007

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

Table 9

Test of between subject effects - Ethical claim on dependent variables including CSR authenticity

<i>Dependent measure</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Partial eta squared</i>
Perceived product quality	1.53	.22	.007
Purchase intention	.57	.45	.002
Brand attitude	.21	.65	.001
Perceived CSR authenticity	5.85	.02	.025

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

Table 10

Test of between subject effects of Philanthropical claim on dependent variables including CSR authenticity

<i>Dependent measure</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>Partial eta squared</i>
Perceived product quality	2.74	.10	.012
Purchase intention	.48	.49	.002
Brand attitude	.01	.90	.000
Perceived CSR authenticity	11.48	.001	.047

*Significant effect: $p < 0.05$

Table 11

Means and standard deviations - Perceived CSR authenticity

<i>Condition</i>	<i>Philanthropical claim</i>	<i>Ethical claim</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Absent	4.60 (1.04)	4.66 (1.01)
Present	5.05 (.94)	4.99 (1.00)

*All scales were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree / 7 = strongly agree)

4.3 Pearson Correlation

A Pearson correlation was conducted in order to further investigate the relations between the dependent variables. In the results, six significant correlations could be identified. The most vital relationship displayed was between perceived product quality and purchase intention, with a score of 0.61, indicating a strong positive correlation between the two variables. Comprehending this, it can be concluded that participants who reported high perceived product quality also showed high purchase intentions for the products of the jewellery brand. Followed by that, the correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relation between brand attitude, perceived product quality and perceived CSR authenticity.

Moreover, the variables purchase intention and brand attitude show a high correlation with 0.59, indicating that participants who report a high purchase intention also hold a favourable brand attitude. The correlation between these variables is positive, which indicates that as purchase intention increases, also brand attitude is expected to increase. Lastly, results unveil a significant relationship between purchase intention and CSR authenticity as well as a relationship between brand attitude and CSR authenticity, meaning that the participants who indicated a high brand attitude also reported high CSR authenticity. Table 12 depicts the correlations between the dependent variables.

Table 12

Pearson correlation between dependent variables

	Perceived product quality	Purchase intention	Brand attitude	Perceived CSR authenticity
Perceived product Quality	1			
Purchase intention	.61**	1		
Brand attitude	.57**	.59**	1	
CSR authenticity	.51**	.52**	.43**	1

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

4.4 Hypothesis overview

After having obtained all results, Table 13 gives an overview of the accepted and rejected hypotheses. In total, two hypotheses could be supported.

Table 13*Overview of accepted and rejected hypotheses*

<i>Nr.</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Result</i>
H1 a	Consumers' perceived product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H1 b	Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H1 c	Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H1 d	Consumers' perceived CSR authenticity towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the ethical claim than those who are not.	<i>Accepted</i>
H2 a	Consumers' perceived product quality towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H2 b	Consumers' purchase intention towards the jewellery brands products will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H2 c	Consumers' brand attitude towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.	<i>Rejected</i>
H2d	Consumers' perceived CSR authenticity towards the jewellery brand will be greater among the participants who are provided with the philanthropical claim than those who are not.	<i>Accepted</i>
H3	The effects of ethical and philanthropical claims on perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude are mediated by perceived CSR authenticity.	<i>Rejected</i>

5. Discussion

The objective of the study was to find out to what extent external CSR claims on a jewellery brand's website influence consumers' product quality perception, purchase intention brand attitude and perceived CSR authenticity. In the following, the results of this research are discussed, compared to results from previous studies and interpreted. Although this study revealed mainly insignificant results, the study also revealed some unexpected significant results after adjustments had been made to the research model.

5.1 Main effects

5.1.1 Ethical claim

Firstly, the effects of the ethical claim "we use 100% eco-friendly packaging materials" towards the dependent variables were explored. In line with findings from recent and relevant literary work on the use of CSR claims, it was hypothesized that the consumers' perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude towards the jewellery brands products would be higher if they are being exposed to an ethical claim.

The study at hand, however, found that a company's ethical claim of using eco-friendly packaging material did not lead to a more positive perceived product quality, purchase intention and attitude toward the brand than when there is no claim present. This means that the results opposed this study's expected effects.

A reason for this can perhaps be explained by the fact that participants may experience the website-based ethical claim as greenwashing. Greenwashing can be described as the act of intentionally misleading consumers with false claims about a firm's environmental practices and impact (Nyilasy et al., 2013). Following this line of thought, consumers are becoming very sceptical of brands making environmental claims as many firms profess to protect the environment but fail to take action. According to Braga, Martínez, Correa, Moura-Leite, and Da Silva (2019), a product and brand lose its perceived satisfaction when greenwashing is identified and lowers the consumers' purchase intention. Also, the results of De Vries, Terwel, Ellemers and Daamen (2013) demonstrate that people quickly suspect greenwashing when a company invests in environmental measures and frames their activities as 'green'. Perhaps then, when consumers are confronted with an ethical claim, they may engage in a line of reasoning such as 'the company only frames their activities as green to look environmentally friendly but does not actually care'.

In addition, results unveiled that the reported perceived product quality, brand attitude and purchase intention was on average lowest for the condition in which participants were only

exposed to the ethical claim alone. This could be explained by the fact that ethical claims are overused nowadays and lose their meaning. To illustrate, researchers discovered that the terms such as green, eco-friendly and sustainable are on the list of overused and empty terms and thus often become meaningless to the consumer (Study Finds, 2021).

Lastly, a factor explaining the insignificant results of the study could be the lack of personal relevance regarding the CSR messages. Personal relevance in the field of CSR communication can be defined as CSR messages that are connected to people's personal life or their personal interests (Kim & Ferguson, 2016). Specifically, scholars argued that the success of CSR claims is highly related to the personal relevance the consumers experience when being exposed to CSR messages interests (Kim & Ferguson, 2016). This implies, that consumers are more likely to accept CSR messages and respond positively towards them if they feel that the message is applicable to their personal life or interests. Hence, it might be the case that the CSR claims shown on the homepage of the jewellery website were not relevant to the participants, since they are not concerned about environmental issues or social welfare. In sum, the choice of terms for the study's claim, perceived greenwashing or the lack of personal relevance could be reasons for the insignificant findings.

5.1.2 Philanthropical claim

Secondly, it was hypothesized that the presence of a philanthropical claim on the jewellery brands homepage would lead to higher perceived product quality, brand attitude, and purchase intention, as compared to an absent claim. Despite previous research claiming that consumers are judging products better by knowing that a company has behaved ethically (Chernev and Blair, 2015), the results of this research have shown that utilizing a philanthropical claim did not lead to significantly higher perceived product quality, brand attitude and purchase intention.

The non-significant results, meaning that a philanthropical claim did not lead to significantly higher perceived product quality, brand attitude, and purchase intention, could be related to consumer scepticism concerning the companies claim. Although research has shown that charitable actions promoted by a company are generally favourably perceived by consumers and offer ultimate benefits to the brand (Lee & Johnson 2019; Melero & Montaner 2016; Howie et al., 2018), the results of this study cannot connect to this. It could be the case that consumers who face a claim of charitable actions with a substantial donation may not believe that the brand will actually donate (Müller et al., 2014).

Researchers also state that the size of the claimed donations could have a negative effect and provoke a behaviour of scepticism on the consumer side. Mimouni Chaabane and Parguel

(2016), for instance, concluded in their research that large donations affect consumer scepticism which in its turn negatively affects attitudes towards the retailer. Also, more current research of Tsiros and Irmak (2020) found that size matters and that consumers often react more favourably to a low donation amount rather than a high donation amount. This leads to the conclusion that the size of claimed donation can trigger scepticism in consumers. Another reason could be insufficient information. Chaabouni et al. (2020) point out that the promotion of charitable actions can be perceived as selfish and socially irresponsible when the available information is insufficient.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that consumers' individual awareness and understanding of a CSR activity play a crucial role in the outcomes of the study. In fact, consumers' lack of awareness about CSR activities has been identified as one of the critical hindrances to maximize organizational benefits via CSR communication (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004). Precisely, former studies stated that negative consumer reactions such as scepticism often result from a lack of CSR knowledge concerning the outcomes of CSR practices (Singh et al., 2009). Hence, lack of CSR knowledge and understanding can be considered as an impediment of benefits that were expected to result from the organization's CSR communication.

It can be concluded that lack of information, understanding and awareness or a high amount of donation can stimulate scepticism in the consumers. Scepticism in turn may trigger doubts and questions in the consumer and eventually negatively affect the attitude toward the brand and products. Hence in this study, it may be that the participants, who faced the philanthropical claim, experienced scepticism and thus did not believe the claim and therefore did not experience the products and brand as significantly better than participants who did not face a donation claim.

5.1.3 Perceived CSR authenticity

Furthermore, the study's results suggest that an ethical claim (as opposed to no claim) and a philanthropical claim (as opposed to no claim) enhance perceived CSR authenticity, meaning that consumers perceive the CSR initiatives of a company as more genuine if an ethical claim and a philanthropical claim are present than if no claim is present. Arguably, this is because the presence of those claims in itself acts as a cue, implicitly communicating a company's sincere intentions. In other words, this indicates that the consumer being exposed to a claim trusts in the CSR behaviour of the company and believes the company's CSR activities are not just a selfish act and part of the pursuit of corporate profits, but rather a genuine act. The findings of

this study are in line with Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz (2006), who pointed out that when a brand directly promotes CSR initiatives to the consumer, consumers are likely to perceive the motives as pure.

Interestingly, in this study, participants perceived the jewellery brand's CSR activities as most authentic when both claims were present and least authentic when no claims were present. Hence the assumption can be made that consumer perceive CSR actions of a company as an authentic expression and more genuine when being exposed to more than one CSR claim. Kim and Lee (2019) state that when consumers assess the degree of authenticity of CSR, they observe various factors provided by the brand since they need specific conditions or evidence to recognize the sincerity of CSR activities. Hence, the number of claims recognized by the participants could influence the sincerity and authenticity of CSR initiatives. Therefore, this study gives reason to assume that consumers might perceive a brand's CSR activities as more genuine when multiple CSR claims are present.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

Many academics are focusing their theoretical and empirical research on CSR. However, the subject of CSR initiatives in the jewelry business has received little attention within that agenda. As a result, this study intended to fill this gap in the literature, resulting in a richer understanding of the impact of CSR claims in a previously understudied industry context. Hence, the findings add value to the working body of literature on CSR claims in the jewellery industry.

The first theoretical contribution of this study is the extension of the benevolent halo effect and its application to the fine jewellery industry. The framework of this study builds on the benevolent halo effect coined by Chernev and Blair (2015) called. They found that consumers are experiencing products and brands differently by knowing that a company has behaved ethically. In particular, this study contributes to the theory of the benevolent halo effect by testing the effect of CSR claims in the online context instead of the offline context and by applying this effect to the jewellery industry. However, the results of this study contradict the finding of Chernev and Blair (2015), who state that knowing that a company has behaved ethically can cause consumers to perceive the company and its products as better. This implies that the benevolent halo effect might not be applicable to all industries, such as the jewellery industry.

Next, by testing the adjusted model with four dependent variables, this study addresses a concept called CSR authenticity raised by other scholars (Yoon et al., 2006; Alhouti et al., 2016). A firm's CSR strategy must consider the extent to which consumers perceive the CSR initiative to be authentic since its CSR actions need to be credible if the company expects to reap the rewards. The results of the study display that the presence of an ethical and philanthropic CSR claim on a company's website increases the perceived CSR authenticity, implying that when multiple claims are present, consumers think that the promoted CSR behaviour of a company is genuine. Hence, these results help to broaden our understanding of this concept.

However, since several contradictions with previous literature could be identified, it is suggested that consumer outcomes are influenced by other factors such as greenwashing perceptions. For example, Braga et al. (2019) found that when greenwashing is identified, it lowers the consumers evaluation such as purchase intention. Investigating the impact of corporate social responsibility on perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude by measuring perceived greenwashing is a promising direction for further research. Thus, future studies should provide a more exhaustive and systematic framework through which the influence of perceived greenwashing is included.

In sum, it can be said that the results have shown that in this specific context consumers do not evaluate the perceived product quality, brand attitude and purchase intention as more positive when they are exposed to an ethical or philanthropic claim. Hence, from a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to research on inference making, by depicting that CSR information do not necessarily influence consumers' product and brand evaluations positively.

5.3 Practical implications

This study offers several significant implications for practitioners. In practice, companies could use the findings of this study to draw inferences on the use of website-based CSR claims. The results reveal what type of CSR claim would be most beneficial on a website for their performance and how companies can increase their CSR authenticity.

In fact, companies attempting to gain positive effects through the use of CSR claims need to be careful about the correct usage. Specifically, companies that are planning to incorporate CSR claims on their website have to consider that promoting their CSR activities might be inefficient and even provoke scepticism. The presence of an ethical and philanthropic CSR claim seems to cause consumers to take on a sceptical standpoint towards the company, resulting in less favourable attitudes. Looking at the current results, it appears

that the most efficient strategy for a company is to choose and promote a philanthropical claim solely since purchases intention, product quality, and brand attitude was on average highest for the condition in which participants were solely exposed to the philanthropical claim and lowest for the group that was exposed solely to the ethical claim. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the difference was only minimal and hence not significant.

Next, this study provides new insights for companies concerning the potential of CSR claims for perceived CSR authenticity. These findings are of particular significance given that they provide preliminary evidence to suggest that CSR claims may be an effective tool or essential marketing strategy for all companies to increase their CSR authenticity. In particular, it is suggested to use multiple CSR claims to enhance the authenticity of the companies' socially responsible behaviour. This is arguable because the presence of a CSR claim in itself acts as a cue, communicating a company's sincere intentions.

From a managerial standpoint this research also emphasizes the relevance of the company's methods for raising awareness of its socially responsible actions. The findings suggest that a company's homepage may not be the most effective way to inform customers about the company's philanthropic and ethical efforts. Therefore, it can be argued that philanthropical or ethical information portrayed on other means such as social media channels are more likely to persuade the public of the company's goodwill and may facilitate a positive influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on consumer evaluations.

The study's last practical contribution is to embed responsible practices into jewellery businesses as an integral part of the organization by establishing certifications, rather than using CSR cues solely on the jewellery brand's website, which might raise suspicions and consumer scepticism. Hence, certification bodies should establish ethical certifications, such as the fair-trade label in other industries, for the jewellery industry and draft policies that draw on ethical practices in the jewellery businesses, which may help to make CSR claims more trustworthy for consumers. Those certifications may also steer consumers to create the link between ethical performances already undertaken in other realms of consumers' everyday lives, such as commitment to Fairtrade consumption (Carrigan et al., 2017). Hence, certification labels in the jewellery industry might potentially symbolize ethical performances in the fine jewellery consumption and stimulate consumer consumption for more ethical jewellery.

Finally, the results of this study help to encourage investments in finding the right socially responsible practices. This is due to the fact that this study states that doing good does not automatically translates into doing better as a company. Consequently, in order to warrant that benevolent organization are rewarded for their prosocial behavior further investigations are

needed to disclose effective communication strategies. This research also suggests that companies employing online CSR communication should not do so half-heartedly. To benefit from online CSR communication, companies need to be aware that many factors such as the type of socially responsible activity, its perceived authenticity, the choice of terms and perceived greenwashing, or persona factors can play an important role as well.

5.4 Limitations and future research

When interpreting the findings of this study, a number of limitations can be acknowledged. To begin with, this research focuses on one specific product context, the jewellery sector, which leads to the assumption that not all participants have been equally interested in this specific product category. This, in turn, might have influenced the participants' answers and thus the outcome of the experiment. Hence, it is recommended that future experiments concentrate on investigating this topic within other sectors. However, follow-up studies in this sector could zoom into different aspects such as greenwashing or CSR authenticity. In particular, finding significant effects of CSR claims on perceived CSR authenticity in the current study indicates that this concept is worth exploring. Furthermore, as perceived greenwashing might be something to consider when making CSR claims, it is worthwhile to investigate how, for instance, the level of perceived greenwashing would influence perceptions of a company and its products. Consumers might generally perceive an ethical claim made by a company as more 'greenwashed' than a philanthropical claim. Hence, it would be worth investigating how perceived greenwashing regarding CSR claims affect consumer responses towards brands.

A second limitation concerns the selection and formulation of the CSR claims. For this study, an ethical and philanthropical claim has been chosen. Both of the claims were differently worded. Depending on the choice of words and the extent of information provided, consumers evaluation may vary. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that design flaws have affected the results of this study. For instance, differences in the design of the homepage, information density or the proximity of elements might have all been influential factors. Especially information density and element proximity can lead users to experience a cognitive overload, which in turn, can impact on the user experience and consumer perceptions (Webdesigner Depot, 2017; (Todorovic, 2008). Also, the font size of the text in the designs was relatively small and might have led to low visibility of some information, especially on a smartphone. This might have triggered perceptions of the participants and affected, therefore, the outcome (Webdesigner Depot, 2017).

Related to the preceding, the experiment's setting was online and, therefore, not entirely realistic. Participants have been only exposed to screenshots and were not able to scroll through the website freely. Neither were they able to experience the products in real life. Presenting jewellery products alongside a CSR claim in a natural context (e.g., a market or shopping mall) may cause participants to process the products differently and make different judgments about, for instance, the product quality. Even though the study aimed to present the used materials in a realistic by using screenshots of a website, the setting stays artificial. Henceforth future research could investigate the influence of different CSR claims on measurements such as perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude in an offline and more realistic setting.

6. Conclusion

This study is among the first to investigate the interplay between absent and present CSR claims in the jewellery context. Henceforth, the present study's findings offer valuable insights on the use of CSR claims and their effects on consumer inferences in the jewellery sector.

In particular, this study aimed to answer the following research question: *To what extent do an ethical and philanthropical CSR claim on a company's website influence consumers' perceived product quality, brand attitude, purchase intention, and perceived authenticity in the fine jewellery industry?* In general, it can be concluded that in this study, the presence of an ethical and philanthropical CSR claim seems not to be an essential factor influencing consumer responses such as perceived product quality, purchase intention and brand attitude. Even though previous literature stated otherwise, results surprisingly unveiled no significant difference in the outcome variables between consumers who received an ethical and philanthropical claim and those who did not. However, it has become apparent that the presence of a philanthropical and ethical claim positively influence perceived CSR authenticity, meaning that the consumer exposed to a claim perceives the CSR behaviour of the company as more authentic than consumers not being exposed to a claim. Especially when both claims are present, the perceived CSR authenticity is highest. This implies that when a brand communicates CSR initiatives, the choice and number of claims must be carefully considered.

Even though the expected hypotheses could not be supported, this study stresses the importance for organizations to provide CSR information efficiently, as brands sooner or later would have to adopt environmentally friendly production methods due to the change in social values and expectations on the responsible actions of companies (Cheung et al., 2017). While consumers may not be caring or actively demanding that responsible business practices be at the centre of every piece of jewellery they buy, the industry cannot afford to become complacent as being responsible may be the solution to survival.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Stimulus material

Figure 6

Homepage both claims present

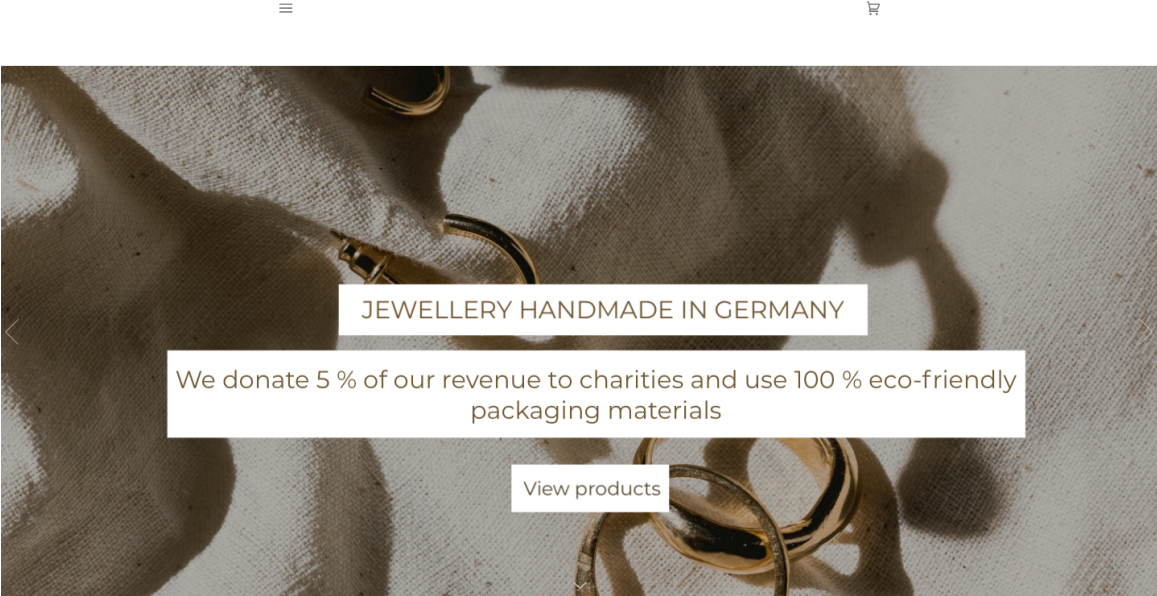


Figure 7

Homepage no claims present

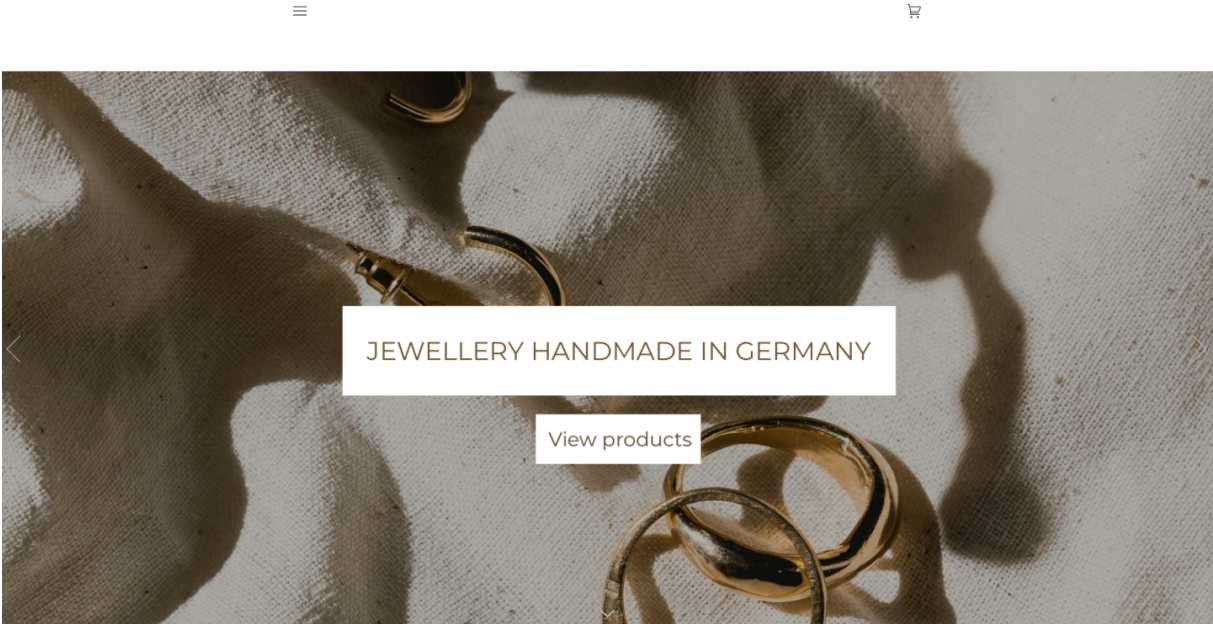


Figure 8

Product categories

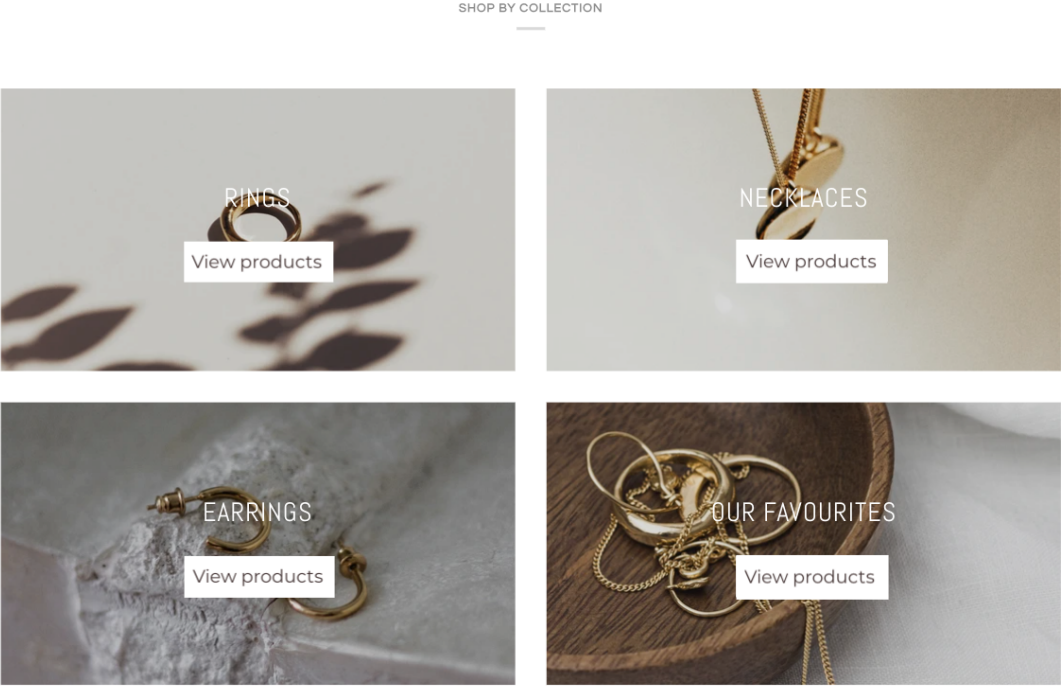


Figure 9

Product overview

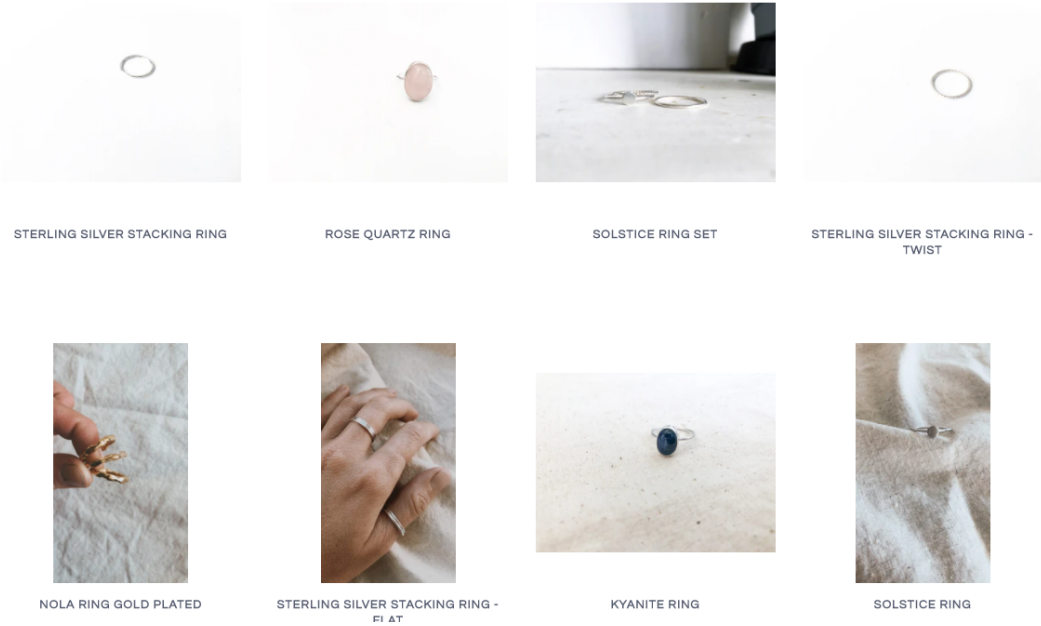



Figure 10


Product details

☰ 🛒

HOME > STERLING SILVER STACKING RING - FLAT



<>



STERLING SILVER STACKING RING - FLAT

Every piece is handmade,
therefore no two are alike -
similar but unique in their
own way

[Determine your
correct ring size here](#)

SIZE
3 ⌵

- 1 +

ADD TO CART

BUY IT NOW

Appendix B: Measurement items

Table 14

Measurements per construct

Construct/ Variables	Definition	Items per construct	Item scale	Source
Perceived Product quality	The participants perception of the quality of the jewellery products	<p>“I think that the quality of this jewellery brand’s products is high”</p> <p>“I think products of this jewellery brand are well made”</p> <p>“I think the products of this jewellery brand have better quality than other brands' products”</p> <p>“In terms of overall quality, I'd rate the products of this jewellery brand as good”</p>	7 Point Likert Scale	Liu et al. (2020) and Bagozzi et al. (2016)
Purchase Intention	The participants intention to buy jewellery products from this brand	<p>“I would consider purchasing products from this jewellery brand”</p> <p>“I am interested in trying products from this jewellery brand”</p> <p>“I intend to try products from this jewellery brand”</p> <p>“I would plan on buying products from this jewellery brand”</p> <p>“The probability that I would consider buying products from this jewellery brand is high”</p>	7 Point Likert Scale	Barber, Kuo, Bishop and Goodman (2012)
Brand attitude	The participant’s	(1)unappealing/appealing, (2) bad/good,	7-point bipolar scales	Spears and Singh (2004)

	attitude and overall feelings towards the jewellery brand	(3) unpleasant/pleasant, (4) unfavorable/ favorable (5) unlikable/likeable.		
CSR Authenticity	The participant's perception that the jewellery brand's CSR actions are a genuine and true expression of the brand's beliefs and values.	<p>“The jewellery brand is a socially responsible company.”</p> <p>“The jewellery brands' social responsibility activities are genuine”</p> <p>“The jewellery brand is being true to itself with its social responsibility activities”</p> <p>“The jewellery brand cares about its environmental impact”</p> <p>“This jewellery brand is committed to social welfare through social responsibility activities”</p> <p>“I think that the jewellery brand's social responsibility activities are artificial” (reverse item)</p>	7 Point Likert Scale	Afzali and Kim (2021), Kim, & Lee (2019).

Appendix C: Online Survey



Welcome!

You are being invited to participate in a study for a master thesis conducted by Marina Wenning (Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, University of Twente).

The aim of this research is to analyse people's first impressions towards a new jewellery brand and its website. The study will take you approximately **5-10 minutes** to complete. The data will be used for the researcher's master thesis only.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study. To the best of our ability your answers in this study will remain confidential and anonymously. We will minimize any risks by deleting the data after use. Personal identifiable data will not be collected.

Study contact details for further information:

Name Researcher: Marina Wenning

E-Mail: m.wenning@student.utwente.nl



Imagine you are shopping online and come across a jewellery website. You start scrolling through the homepage a bit and checking out the various product categories.

Please carefully take a look at the following screenshots of the jewellery brand's website. If necessary, you can zoom in to see all the details.

Please keep in mind that once you continue, you will not be able to go back.



Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
"I think that the quality of this jewellery brand's products is high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I think products of this jewellery brand are well made"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I think the products of this jewellery brand have better quality than other brands' products"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"In terms of overall quality, I would rate the products of this jewellery brand as good"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
"I am interested in trying products from this jewellery brand"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I intend to try products from this jewellery brand"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I would consider purchasing products from this jewellery brand"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"I would plan on buying products from this jewellery brand"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"The probability that I would consider buying products from this jewellery brand is high"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please describe your overall feelings towards the jewellery brand

unappealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	appealing
bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	good
unpleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	pleasant
unfavorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	favorable
unlikable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	likable



Please indicate to which extent you agree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
"This jewellery brand is a socially responsible company."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"This jewellery brands' social responsibility activities are genuine"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"This jewellery brand is being true to itself with its social responsibility activities"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"This jewellery brand cares about its environmental impact"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Please finish the following sentences (multiple answers are possible).

This jewellery brand ...

- claims to contribute to society by donating money to charities.
- claims to use solely eco-friendly packaging materials.
- claims none of the above mentioned activities.



What is your gender?

- Male
 - Female
 - Other
 - Prefer not to say
-

How old are you?

What is your nationality?

- Dutch
- German
- Other, please specify

What is your highest level of education?

- No education
- Elementary
- High School
- College
- Bachelors or equivalent
- Masters or equivalent
- Doctoral or equivalent
- Other, please specify

What is your current employment status?

- Student
- Self-employed
- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Freelance
- Retired
- Prefer not to disclose
- Other, please specify



The true purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of different corporate social responsibility claims on consumers product perception, purchase intention and brand attitude. For more information about this study and/or the results you can contact the researcher at any time.

m.wenning@student.utwente.nl

Please click on the " → " button to save your answers!