THE EFFECT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CORPORATE SOCIAL

RESPONSIBILITY ON CUSTOMER RETENTION: A MIXED METHODS

STUDY ON THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

As a beneficial strategy for most organisations, customer retention ensures that an organisation's current customers are secured and maintained. As a joint company and community initiative for the creation of value, the use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a customer retention strategy to enhance an organisation's profits while contributing to the preservation of the environment can be seen as a valuable tool for creating shared value (CSV). This study aims to explore Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (as mediating variables) on customer retention. The researcher has selected the food industry in which to conduct the research as the concept of ECSR is particularly relevant within the industry due to its negative environmental impact. A conceptual framework was devised, whereby concepts from the stakeholder theory and the social exchange theory were used to support the study. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used to answer the main research question of the study: What is the impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on customer behaviour, and how does this affect customer retention? The findings indicate that ECSR enhances customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. However only customer trust and customer loyalty positively mediate the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. These findings provide a theoretical framework how the impact of ECSR on customer behavior affects customer retention. Furthermore, the findings from this research contribute to literature as the researcher uncovered that customers are more accepting of the time inconvenience, decreased taste, and increased cost of food items purchased from organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR, if such purchases result in a benefit to their health and contribute towards environmental preservation. This research contributes to consumer behaviour theories by providing a greater understanding of the role of ECSR in customer retention, particularly with regards to customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty.

Keywords: customer retention, customer loyalty, customer behaviour, customer satisfaction, customer trust, environmental corporate social responsibility

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I, Samantha Lee Worthington, declare that the PhD Thesis entitled The Effect of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility on Customer Retention: A Mixed Methods Study on the Mediating Effect of Customer Behaviour contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

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GLOSSARY

APCO	Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation
C-C Congruence	Company and Consumer congruency
CL	Customer Loyalty
CLV	Customer Lifetime Value
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CO2-eq or CO2e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent
Covid19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CR	Customer Retention
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CS	Customer Satisfaction
CT	Customer Trust
CSV	Creating Shared Value
ECSR	Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FAD	Fish Aggregating Device
GGAS	Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme
GM	Genetically Modified
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HREC	Human Ethics Research Committee
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
LOHAS	Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability
MBA	Master's Degree in Business Administration
MMR	Mixed Methods Research
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSI	Marketing Science Institute
NGER	National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPD	New Product Development
NPV	Net Present Value
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PMCBP	Prime Minister's Business Community Partnership
SOS	Save Our Seafood
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
USQ	University of Southern Queensland
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
Zoom	Cloud-based video communications application

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

As a beneficial strategy for most organisations, customer retention ensures that an organisation's current customers are secured and maintained instead of being replaced by new customers through pricey acquisition methods. Despite existing literature promoting customer retention, it is often overlooked in favour of customer acquisition (Worthington 2020). The importance of servicing and engaging with current customers is becoming increasingly evident from a business profitability and sustainability perspective (Leather 2013). In confirmation, Gartner's (2019) global survey of a broad range of industries revealed that 74% of organisations projected customer experience budgets to increase in 2020, and that this area of focus will continue to be one of the largest areas of investment in the future.

Customers expect socially responsible behaviour from companies, for which they are willing to reward. Research shows an increase in consumers moving away from brands with whom their values disconnect, and a rise in consumers becoming interested with a brand's producer - and how that producer is contributing towards being a better corporate citizen (Szakály et al. 2017; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020). According to Porter and Kramer (2011), business is to lead the unification of society and business, through the proposed solution of Creating Shared Value (CSV). This involves the creation of economic value while generating value for society through tackling its demands and issues. CSV focuses on economic and societal benefits relative to cost. While value creation is a concept commonly recognised by business, organisations have seldom attempted to tackle societal problems from a value point of view. Under the notion of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), an organisation can focus on doing good through citizenship, philanthropy and sustainability. As a joint company and community creation of value, the use of

CSR as a customer retention strategy in order to enhance an organisation's profits while contributing to the preservation of the environment, can be seen as a valuable tool for CSV (Porter & Kramer 2011).

The concept of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) is particularly relevant within the food industry, due to the industry's negative environmental impact. If this impact is reduced, it could have a beneficial financial impact for organisations within the industry, as well as a beneficial environmental impact. While stakeholders believe that ECSR is the most critical facet of any organisation's CSR endeavours (Kassinis & Vafeas 2006; Welford, Chan & Man 2007), a lack of ECSR in the food industry negatively affects an organisation's corporate image and profitability (Maloni & Brown 2006), while the introduction of such ECSR initiatives may combat such negative effects.

A review of the literature by the researcher identified a lack of differentiation between customer loyalty and customer retention, focusing on customer base growth rather than the proactive prevention of customer attrition within the food industry. Therefore, this study addresses the gaps in the literature, and specifically aims to explore ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention.

This chapter explains the background to the research an explanation of the research problem is provided. A brief explanation of the methodological research approach is given, and a justification for the research is discussed. This includes a brief overview of this study's contribution to consumer behaviour theories and the food industry. The chapter closes with a review of the structure of the thesis and a chapter summary.

1.2. Background to the Research

Customer retention enhances brand reputation and ensures that customers are secured and retained rather than replaced. It is a beneficial strategy for most organisations, and it is an important part of business success within competing markets (Leather 2013; Kotler & Armstrong 2010; Orel & Kara 2014; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017; Worthington 2017; Worthington 2018). While the investment required to acquire a new customer is substantially higher than the investment required to retain an existing customer (Dinan 2015; Günther et al. 2014), organisations often overlook the considerable benefits of customer retention in favour of customer acquisition.

CSR commonly encompasses an organisation's self-regulated four responsibilities towards society comprising of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic obligations (Stanaland, Lwin & Murphy 2011; Lee 2017). The significance of CSR in influencing consumer perceptions, is gaining appreciation (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). With today's consumers becoming increasingly aware of, and emotionally connected to global social, economic, and environmental issues, there is growing evidence to suggest that such issues may influence consumer purchase intentions and ultimately, customer retention (Keys, Malnight, & Van der Graaf 2009). Thus, the importance of servicing and emotionally engaging with an organisation's customers is becoming increasingly evident from a business profitability and sustainability perspective.

ECSR pertains to a notion whereby organisations incorporate environmental matters into their business functions and dealings with their stakeholders, without impacting their economic obligations and accomplishments (Rashid, Khalid & Rahman 2015; Williamson, Lynch-Wood & Ramsay 2006; Worthington 2018). According to Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility, ECSR may be categorised within the ethical responsibilities of an organisation, whereby the organisation is obliged to do no harm through their activities, while ensuring that their actions are just, correct and reasonable (Carroll, 1979). Previous studies have researched elements that

encourage customer retention, however, there has been limited exploration on the effects of CSR as a customer retention strategy (Liu, Guo & Lee 2011; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017), and limited study on the impact of ECSR on consumer behaviour (Rashid, Khalid & Rahman 2015). While research connecting the application of ECSR as a customer marketing strategy has not been comprehensively investigated, there is even less exploration on the effects of ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry in Australia and globally (Rashid, Khalid & Rahman 2015).

According to research conducted by Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015) - which specifically focuses on ECSR - it is stated that although numerous studies have been conducted on the exploration of ECSR, these studies focus within the range of corporate governance, and not on the exploration of the influence of ECSR initiatives on consumer behaviour. Rashid, Khalid and Rahman clarify that preceding studies have indicated the positive association between the execution of strategic CSR initiatives and customer loyalty, and prior consumer research has specified that consumers are more inclined to purchase from organisations that display a stronger commitment to environmental protection. Environmental concern encompasses more than simply selling environment friendly products: it also includes the organisation's fundamental corporate culture, practices and policies that are defined by an all-encompassing consideration for environmental protection. Adopting ECSR does more than simply boost an organisation's commitment to a sustainable and holistic business approach – it has the ability to circumvent public skepticism, which would further bolster the organisation's effort in strengthening customer loyalty.

According to Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015), the dimensions of ECSR include environmental philanthropy (e-philanthropy), environmental community involvement (e-community involvement), and environmental customer wellbeing (e-customer wellbeing). As the primary category of CSR activities (Carroll 1991), philanthropy is identified as an organisation's need to encourage the wellbeing of others. With regards to ECSR, philanthropy may be acknowledged as the provision of financial support to execute activities to boost environmental awareness and reactions within the public domain. CSR

initiatives through social and community participation can be achieved with the contribution of community members in any CSR program, including that of ECSR, and an exceptional customer experience is a fundamental contributor towards a successful business. While customer initiatives are intended to create and deliver the best product for customers, inclusive of comprehensive product information and safety, environmental customer wellbeing further encompasses the organisation providing eco-friendly products to customers and ensuring that these products are not harmful to the environment. Based on their research, Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015) suggested that future studies explore a qualitative and grounded theory approach to strengthen these existing dimensions of ECSR.

Globally, the way in which consumers buy their food, from whom they buy their food, and how they want their food packaged, is rapidly becoming a conscious issue, and the food industry is under pressure to increase production to meet increased demand in an eco-friendly manner (Thacker 2019; Kim 2017). With heightened consumer concerns regarding diet-influenced health issues, environmental destruction, climate change and hardship for small-scale food producers (de Cleene 2019), appealing to such concerns through ECSR may provide organisations within the food industry with a beneficial strategy to retain customers, while enhancing their contribution towards environmental preservation, and increasing their profitability and sustainability within a competitive market.

Customer experience is a crucial precursor to customer retention because positive brand association lends itself to the prevention of customer churn (Stahl et al. 2012). This statement is supported by the theory of reasoned action (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1995) and the hierarchy-of-effects models of consumer behaviour (Lavidge & Steiner 1961), which state that consumer attitudes are a predecessor to their actions. A study conducted by Becker and Jaakkola (2020) maintains that when mapping the consumer journey, organisations should be mindful that customer responses also depend on customer, situational, and sociocultural factors. Furthermore, circumstantial factors may influence the outcomes of certain incentives, such as the extent to which a certain reaction leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

There is also a correlation among customer ethical standards, commitment, trust, satisfaction and loyalty, with customer trust and satisfaction being the more important influencing components of customer loyalty.

The search for a solution to the global environmental crisis is the second largest challenge globally, only preceded by the war against terrorism (Camrova 2007). In response, governments and businesses are implored to take action to preserve the global environment, and the appeal for rigorous academic research on the subject is growing.

1.3. The Research Problem

Customer retention results in greater market share, improved profits and decreased acquisition expenditure for organisations (Baron 2001; Farquhar 2005; Worthington 2017). There is robust evidence to suggest that organisations may lose up to 50% of their customer base over a time period of five years (Ganesh, Arnold & Reynolds 2000) and the financial investment required to acquire a new customer is almost twelve times higher than the financial investment required to retain an existing customer (Dinan 2015; Günther et al. 2014; Worthington 2017).

As a major sector for the Australian economy with regards to monetary impact and employment, the food industry is extremely active and motivated by demanding customers wanting variety, excellence, and value (Austrade 2019). Globally, the manner in which consumers buy their food, from whom they buy their food, and how they want their food is packaged, is rapidly becoming a conscious issue (Thacker 2019). The food industry is now under pressure to increase production to meet heightened demand in an eco-friendly manner (Thacker 2019; Kim 2017).

The food industry's environmental impact includes water and soil pollution, food wastage, the destruction of forests, and the ineffective discarding of waste such as plastic packaging (Kim 2017). It is due to these issues that consumers, government, corporate leaders and activists have placed pressure

on the industry to tackle the environmental matters concerned with its activities (Camrova 2007). However, despite stakeholder belief that ECSR is the most critical facet of an organisation's CSR endeavours (Kassinis & Vafeas 2006; Welford, Chan & Man 2007), such initiatives are lacking within the food industry, negatively affecting corporate image and profitability (Maloni & Brown 2006).

Notwithstanding growing industry concern amongst consumers, there has been limited exploration on the effectiveness of ECSR as a customer retention strategy (Liu, Guo & Lee 2011; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017), and even less so within the food industry. An opportunity exists for organisations, including organisations within the food industry, to incorporate ECSR as a customer retention strategy, effectively addressing both the global need for increased environmental preservation and the need for business profitability.

To the best of their knowledge, the researcher has identified minimal previous studies pertaining to an organisation's CSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry. Furthermore, there is limited identified data obtained directly from the consumer within the food industry with regards to effects of ECSR on customer behaviour. For example, a study limited to eyewear factories in Guangdong Province, China by Liu, Guo and Lee (2011) analytically investigated business-to-business organisations, in an effort to improve awareness of the relationships among service quality, relationship quality and customer loyalty from a social exchange theory viewpoint. The findings indicated that service quality is positively associated to relationship quality, relationship quality is positively associated to customer loyalty, and service quality is positively associated to customer loyalty. The researchers suggested that future research could be developed to study various industries from diverse regions. In addition, relationship quality was chosen to be the mediating variable and there is a possibility that other variables may occur between service quality and customer loyalty, such as customer satisfaction. Future studies can explore other variables thus creating further theory improvements to offer guidance to practitioners.

Another study by Ali et al. (2021) investigated the role of perceived CSR in developing customer loyalty by examining the direct and mediated effects of corporate reputation and customer satisfaction in Pakistan's food chains. The findings indicated a substantial positive effect of perceived CSR on customer loyalty, corporate reputation, and customer satisfaction. In addition, customer satisfaction and corporate reputation seemed to mediate the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty. The findings from this study are formed from data gathered from food chains in one country (Pakistan), and as such, the findings can't be generalised to other industries. In addition, this study doesn't include all the variables mediating the CSR–loyalty relationship, therefore there is an opportunity for research to be conducted on other variables such as word of mouth, credibility, and trust as a mediator. In addition, the study does not establish the role of moderating variables on the CSR-loyalty relationship, and future studies could focus on the role of gender, age, culture, government policy, and market orientation as such variables. The study deemed CSR a composite measure and didn't take into consideration its dimensions in the investigation. Future research may contemplate the dimensions of CSR to establish each dimension's influence on customer outcomes, including satisfaction, reputation, and loyalty.

A 2017 study by Park, Kim and Kwon (2017) recognises the congruency between consumer values and the goals of CSR activities and corporate ethical standards as the two key determining factors of CSR quality and commitment. It further examines how consumer perceptions of CSR formed by the two factors enhance consumer loyalty. The study's results indicate that greater ethical standards influence consumers to perceive that the organisation is dedicated to its CSR activities, which stimulates superior consumer satisfaction with, and trust in the organisation, its services and products, which inspires consumer loyalty. However, the lack of generalisability restricts the global applicability of the findings of this study. The survey was administered to retail consumers in South Korea only, and therefore the implications of the findings may not apply in countries with varying retail industry qualities and structures, or to other types of businesses and services. Furthermore, variables such as corporate repute, perceived risk,

and individual variations among consumers (such as age, gender, and education) are well-known to affect how consumers make purchase choices. There is an opportunity to incorporate the moderating effects of these variables into future analysis in order to expand upon this study's findings.

Nguyen and Pervan (2020) conducted a study which examined the impact of retailer CSR on consumers' perceptions and behaviour. The authors produced and justified a model which explored the mediating effects of perceived consumer effectiveness and consumer trust on the relationship between retailer CSR and consumer citizenship behaviour. The findings suggest that retailer CSR is positively linked with consumer citizenship behaviour, and that perceived consumer effectiveness and consumer trust positively mediate this relationship. However, the data for this study was gathered from consumers in one country (China) who had visited hypermarkets and department outlets. Therefore, future research should collect data from consumers from of other sorts of retailing outlets and other emerging economies. While this study concentrates on a single industry (retailing), the findings may not be generalised to other industries. An opportunity exists for future research to expand this study's research model by involving more potential mediators, such as customer loyalty, word of mouth or brand identification.

A 2019 study by Xie, Bagozzi and Grønhaug examined the effect of CSR on consumer advocacy behaviours toward corporate brands. The mediating roles of positive moral emotions (awe, gratitude, and elevation) and attitudes were investigated and the moderating impacts of social justice values and empathy on these mediation procedures were additionally considered. The findings indicated that both positive moral emotions and attitudes mediate the impact of perceived CSR initiatives on brand advocacy behaviours, however social justice values and empathy perform a dissimilar role in regulating the evocation of moral emotions and attitudes, dependent on the category of CSR activities. Future research may enhance the findings of this study based on the idea that the scenarios used may have less of an impact on consumer behaviour than real events and real companies, and thus the findings of this study may be underestimated to the actual impact of CSR on consumer

advocacy behaviours. The authors also call for future research to consider the organisational motives for participating in CSR initiatives. Consumer acknowledgment of altruistic motives versus self-serving motives may affect the degree of experienced moral emotions and attitudes, and therefore consumer brand advocacy behaviours. Furthermore, achieving legitimacy by associating corporate behaviour with stakeholder expectations is required to ensure the organisation's success and therefore, continual existence. Hence, a possible research opportunity may include the study of consumers who provide legitimacy to organisations who position their CSR initiatives with the consumers' expectations.

Another study by Aramburu and Pescador (2019) examined the mediating role of corporate reputation on the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty. The study further examined the part played by bank type in the mediation effect. The findings indicated that corporate reputation partly mediated the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty, however bank type showed no moderation to the mediation effect. Aramburu and Pescador (2019) acknowledge that there may be other processes through which CSR would impact various results, such as the possibility that CSR may affect several customer outcomes through other mediators, therefore boosting brand equity and producing greater levels of identification with the organisation. Therefore, there is an opportunity for further research to be conducted investigating CSR and how it may other customer outcomes through different mediators. In addition, Aramburu and Pescador (2019) suggest a future qualitative study to explore the finding on the relationship between sustainability and consumer loyalty.

In addition, a study by Wei et al. (2018) investigated the influence of CSR claims provided on food packaging on consumers' health benefit perception, taste perception, attitude and behavioural intentions toward the food organisation. The CSR claims tested included: no claim, food manufacturing, employee wellbeing, and environmentally friendly packaging. The food types tested included essential food items and indulgent food items. The findings show that the CSR claim regarding food manufacturing is the most firmly correlated claim with consumers' health benefits perception. The CSR claim

of employee wellbeing is most effectively associated to the customers' taste perception and attitude towards the company. Overall, all the CSR claims were discovered to positively impact consumer purchase intentions and willingness to pay higher prices. However, based on these findings, Wei et al. indicate that future research should take into consideration the possible effects of individual consumers' established motivations on product assumptions. Furthermore, future research could encompass multiple CSR initiatives to offer a more complete interpretation of how each CSR domain impacts consumer inferences. While consumers have varying dietary restrictions and beliefs regarding which food items are essential versus indulgent, there is an opportunity for future research to investigate whether the relationships tested in this study vary with food items of diverse perceived levels of healthiness or tastiness, and/or essential versus indulgent.

According to Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015), the dimensions of ECSR include environmental philanthropy (e-philanthropy), environmental community involvement (e-community involvement), and environmental customer wellbeing (e-customer wellbeing). As the primary category of CSR activities (Carroll 1991), philanthropy is identified as an organisation's need to encourage the wellbeing of others. With regards to ECSR, philanthropy may be acknowledged as the provision of financial support to execute activities to boost environmental awareness and reactions within the public domain. CSR initiatives through social and community participation can be achieved with the contribution of community members in any CSR program, including that of ECSR, and an exceptional customer experience is a fundamental contributor towards a successful business. While customer initiatives are intended to create and deliver the best product for customers, inclusive of comprehensive product information and safety, environmental customer wellbeing further encompasses the organisation providing eco-friendly products to customers and ensuring that these products are not harmful to the environment. Based on their research, Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015) suggest that future studies explore a qualitative and grounded theory approach to strengthen these existing dimensions of ECSR.

Taking into consideration the research gaps present in the prior studies identified, the researcher of this study has the opportunity to develop upon and/or oppose previous findings to investigate this study's research problem with concentration on the constructs used within the identified previous studies. Therefore, this study aims to explore ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (as mediating variables) on customer retention.

1.4. Methodological Research Approach

To obtain answers to this study's research questions, it was necessary to implement the most applicable research approach, which would direct the various parts of the research, including the tools for data collection, the processes for data analysis, and sampling strategies. Therefore, the researcher selected a pragmatic mixed methods research approach for the study (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in a sequential explanatory design, whereby the collection and analysis of quantitative data is conducted prior to the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

The purpose of selecting this approach was to utilise qualitative results to clarify and interpret the findings of the quantitative phase of the study (Creswell 2009). The combination of these two data collection methods provided improvement of the credibility and the reliability of the research results.

For the purpose of this study, quantitative data was collected via an online questionnaire-based survey (via the USQ Survey Tool). Closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to the consumer target population to test the identified theories, which predict that ECSR (independent variable) positively enhances customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), thereby positively mediating the relationship between ECSR and customer retention (dependent variable). The results from

the collected quantitative data were then analysed and used to plan the second phase of the study: the qualitative data collection process.

Thereafter qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews conducted via recorded Zoom and telephonic sessions in an attempt to detail the views from the participants of the sample population. The cloud-based video communications application Zoom and telephonic calls were suitable due to the various locations of the participants which ranged throughout all eight Australian states. Both Zoom and telephone provided a convenient platform for the researcher to conduct the interviews during the Covid19 pandemic whereby travel restrictions were imposed throughout Australia. The applications also allowed the researcher to save on travel time and expenses.

The qualitative data assisted the researcher clarify and interpret the quantitative data results of the study and therefore allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Furthermore, the qualitative data provided the researcher with a better understanding of the participants' perceptions regarding the impact of ECSR (independent variable) on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), and the effect of the impacted customer behaviour on customer retention (dependent variable).

1.5. Justification for the Research

This research can be justified based on its contribution to consumer behaviour theories. The study contributes to a greater understanding of the role of ECSR on consumer behaviour, particularly with regards to customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, and customer retention.

The study provides a theoretical framework for the impact of ECSR on consumer behaviour, and the impact of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention, which can be of use to marketing scholars, and businesses within the food industry.

As a primary outcome of this study, the researcher investigated, with data collected from Australian consumers, whether ECSR positively impacts

customer retention, due to the effect that ECSR has on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. If this research can confirm that customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty positively mediate the relationship between ECSR and customer retention to form a theoretical framework, it is possible to pave a way towards integrating ECSR into an organisation's marketing strategies, and more specifically, into the marketing strategies of food organisations. The outcome from this study can therefore be used to direct and support business leaders and marketing strategists to develop customer retention models with ECSR as a key component, based on the evidence that ECSR results in increased customer retention, which translates to enhanced organisational profits. Such a model will link ECSR programs with customer retention figures, which can then be directly associated with financial figures, and therefore profit benefits for the organisation, thus supporting the motivation for including ECSR into an organisation's strategies from a financial gains point of view. Furthermore, this knowledge may be relevant to environmental preservation strategies.

Empirical research regarding the role of customer experience on customer retention over time is still scarce (Shamsollahi et al. 2020). With regards to prior research conducted on the necessity of CSR in business practice across various industries and countries, literature regarding CSR contribution type, CSR in the food industry, and CSR as a public relations and marketing tool confirm the positive effect CSR provides on business and the mounting pressure from consumers for business to include CSR in their priorities. While previous research has been conducted on CSR and customer loyalty across various industries, studies on the topic, such as research regarding the ridesharing industry (Jeon, Lee & Jeong 2019), the airline industry (Han, Yu & Kim 2019), and the retail sector in South Korea (Park, Kim, & Kwon 2017), lack global applicability of their findings and suggest future research in other countries and industries.

Authors have called for further research to be conducted to advance the understanding of CSR's contribution to customer loyalty, including Inoue, Funk and McDonald (2017), and Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012). In Spain, a study found that CSR positively influences customer loyalty within the hypermarket

environment (Cuesta-Valiño, Rodríguez, & Núñez-Barriopedro 2019), with the authors noting that literature on CSR and customer behaviour is still very much limited.

The researcher has acknowledged that existing studies on CSR and customer loyalty lack differentiation between customer loyalty and customer retention, focusing on customer base growth rather than the proactive prevention of customer attrition. To the best of their knowledge, the researcher has identified limited previous studies pertaining to an organisation's CSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry. Furthermore, there is limited identified data obtained directly from the consumer within the food industry with regards to use of ECSR as a customer retention strategy. This provides an opportunity for research to be conducted on how an organisation's ECSR influences customer retention, and more specifically, on how an organisation's ECSR influences customer retention within the food industry.

1.6. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis shall follow the following structure:

Chapter One: Chapter One of this thesis explains the background to the research and an explanation of the research problem is provided. A brief explanation of the methodological research approach is given, and a justification for the research is discussed. This includes a brief overview of this study's contribution to consumer behaviour theories. The chapter closes with a review of the structure of the thesis and a chapter summary.

Chapter Two: The literature reviewed pertaining to this study is presented. This chapter starts with a description of the general procedure followed for exploring the literature. Then the researcher defines and discusses customer churn and customer retention, specifically the aim of customer retention and customer lifetime value, the importance of retaining the right customers, contributors to customer loss, and the significance of satisfying customer needs. Next, the researcher discusses customer value perception, and the link

between market competition and customer retention. The effect of the social environment on customer retention is evaluated.

The concept of CSR and the notion of creating shared value through CSR is discussed. Then the economic justification of CSR is examined, the link between company image and CSR is analysed, and consumer skepticism towards CSR is assessed and presented. Following this, the researcher addresses the green economy, including emissions and pollution, and energy and resource efficiency. Australia's green economy is then discussed, including the country's major sustainability reporting frameworks.

Literature pertaining to the environmental impact of food production in Australia is scrutinised and presented. This includes supply chains within the food industry, food safety, and societal pressures within the country's food industry. Sustainable agriculture is also explored and presented. The researcher then discusses concepts from theories used to support this study, the identification of gaps in previous research as well as the literature regarding the links among customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. The researcher presents the main research question, the research sub-questions and the hypotheses of this study.

Chapter Three: Chapter Three explains and defines the research methodology applied in this study and its rationale for investigating the effectiveness of ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry. This chapter begins with a reiteration of the purpose of this study, including an overview of the main research questions. The researcher then presents and describes the methodological framework of the study. An overview of the data collection process for this study is stated before the pilot study and the results from the pilot study are presented. The researcher then describes the process of the pilot study reliability analysis.

Thereafter, the researcher presents the data analysis methods deployed for this research study. These include quantitative research data analysis techniques and qualitative research data analysis techniques. The ethical clearance for this research is provided, followed by an explanation of the reliability and validity of the research.

Chapter Four: The purpose of Chapter Four is to present phase one of the study – the quantitative data collection and analysis. This includes the composition of the final online questionnaire-based survey, as well as an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase of the study. The researcher presents the quantitative data collection process. Thereafter the quantitative data results are presented and analysed. This includes both descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis. The researcher then discusses the results from the quantitative data analysis process. Summary tables, charts, histograms, and figures are used to support and illustrate the results from the data gathered from the online questionnaire-based survey. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the key findings.

Chapter Five: In this chapter, the researcher presents phase two of the study: qualitative data collection and analysis. The chapter begins with the researcher presenting the final semi-structured interview questions. Thereafter an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase of the study is be provided. Following this, the qualitative data collection process is described, and the qualitative data results are presented and analysed. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher presents a summary of the key findings. The implications of the qualitative research findings are discussed.

Chapter Six: This chapter presents a summary of the key findings in relation to the main research question, the research sub-questions and the hypotheses of the study. The implications of the study to the body of knowledge, both in in theory and practice are detailed, and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research are presented. The chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

1.7. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher explains the background to the research. An explanation of the research problem is provided, and a brief explanation of

the methodological research approach is given. A justification for the research is discussed. This includes a brief overview of this study's contribution to consumer behaviour theories and to the functional food industry. The chapter closes with a review of the structure of the thesis and a chapter summary. Chapter Two presents the literature review related to the study's research context.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Notwithstanding growing industry concern amongst consumers, there has been limited exploration on the effectiveness of ECSR as a customer retention strategy (Liu, Guo & Lee 2011; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017), and even less so within the food industry. An opportunity exists for organisations, and more specifically, organisations within the food industry, to incorporate ECSR as a customer retention strategy, effectively addressing both the global need for increased environmental preservation and the need for business profitability.

This research aims to explore ECSR as a customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. For the purpose of this study, it is imperative to understand the importance and characteristics of ECSR, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, and customer retention, as well as the existing knowledge regarding ECSR and its impact on customer behaviour and customer retention. A thorough review of the literature was undertaken, incorporating facets of a systematic literature review method. The researcher searched and investigated the existing literature following general guidelines. The review of literature established gaps in the knowledge about the relationships between CSR and more specifically ECSR and customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty and customer retention.

This chapter starts with a description of the general procedure followed for exploring the literature. Then the researcher defines and discusses customer churn and customer retention, specifically the aim of customer retention and customer lifetime value, the importance of retaining the right customers, contributors to customer loss, and the significance of satisfying customer needs.

Next, customer value perception and the link between market competition and customer retention is discussed. The effect of the social environment on customer retention is evaluated,

The concept of CSR and the notion of creating shared value through CSR is explored. Then the economic justification of CSR is examined, the link between company image and CSR is analysed, and consumer skepticism towards CSR is assessed and presented.

Following this, the researcher addresses the green economy, including emissions and pollution, and energy and resource efficiency. Australia's green economy is then discussed, including the country's major sustainability reporting frameworks.

Literature pertaining to the environmental impact of food production in Australia is scrutinised and presented. This includes supply chains within the food industry, food safety, and societal pressures within the country's food industry. Sustainable agriculture is also explored and presented.

The researcher then discusses concepts from theories used to support this study and identified gaps in previous research. Thereafter, the researcher discusses customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. The main research question, sub-questions and hypotheses are presented, and the conceptual of the study is produced.

Figure 1: Structure of the literature review chapter

2.1. Introduction		2.8. Food Production in Australia		2.9. Sustainable Agriculture
2.2. Literature Review Procedure		2.7. Australia's Green Economy		2.10. ECSR and the Food Industry
2.3. Overview		2.6. The Green Economy		2.11 Application of Theoretical Models to the Current Study
2.4. Customer Churn and Customer Retention		2.5. Corporate Social Responsibility		2.12. Current State of Knowledge and its Present Limitation
				2.13. Chapter Summary

2.2. Literature Review Procedure

The researcher of this study previously conducted research on the use of value-added benefits as a customer retention strategy within the financial services industry (Worthington 2017). The researcher has also presented a conference paper on CSR and its effects on customer experience and customer loyalty (Worthington 2018), and the researcher has published a book on customer centricity for business leaders (Worthington 2020). Various databases were searched prior to, and throughout the entire period of this study.

The review of the literature for this study was carried out using a general guiding process where records of the searches were kept as the review progressed (Creswell & Creswell 2018). In conducting the literature review, the researcher followed the steps recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018):

1. The researcher identified key words and phrases in order to find material relevant to this study.
2. The researcher used the key words and phrases to search databases for journals and books relevant to this study.
3. The researcher located an initial group of research articles, chapters and books related to this study.
4. The researcher read through each item to obtain a sense as to whether each article, chapter or book would make a significant contribution to their understanding of the literature.
5. As the initial group of research articles, chapters and books were reviewed, the researcher drafted summaries of the most relevant literature, and the following themes began to emerge –

- Customer churn and customer retention
- Customer satisfaction
- Customer trust
- Customer loyalty
- Food production in Australia
- CSR
- ECSR
- CSR and the food industry
- ECSR and the food industry

6. The researcher then assigned a theme and a code to any relevant texts. The thematic analysis revealed that there was a gap within reviewed literature regarding the use of ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry, despite the existing literature confirming the

benefits of CSR initiatives on customer loyalty within various other industries.

In the following sections of the literature review, the main themes in the literature are discussed in detail.

2.3. Reiteration of the Main Research Question

Rapid shifts in the economic, political, social and technical environments are taking place on an international scale. Along with these changes, the majority of businesses can anticipate uncertainty, and demanding consumers who want the satisfaction of their needs and desires. To build a sustainable competitive advantage in today's market, an organisation needs to ensure that their customers are at the centre of their strategy (Worthington 2020; Simões & Nogueira 2022).

Customers are becoming more knowledgeable about their options and buying power, and business leaders are beginning to realise the importance of combining the powers of both proactive and reactive marketing approaches. A theme of proactive retention is emerging, whereby there is a greater need of discovering ways in which to secure loyal customers by taking pre-emptive action using predictive metrics, rather than relying on current metrics supplied by previously serviced customers (Larsson & Broström 2020). Organisations are now able to ensure success by understanding the macro- and micro-environments, from which they are able to manage precursors for customer satisfaction (proactive approach), and move towards agility and innovation, in the pursuit to outsmart competitors and deal with customers' issues quickly (reactive approach).

Global customer trends have surfaced, including an emphasis on retaining a business' high-value customers. Customer retention has now become a multilayered and significant issue for businesses and ensuring customer retention and decreasing customer churn are some of the most critical strategic concerns of any profit-driven organisation, as each new customer brings with them the possibility of a lifetime of revenue to the business

(Bernstel 2002; Worthington 2020; Cambra-Fierro et al. 2021). Not only does customer retention positively enhance an organisation's profitability and sustainability (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017; Heal 2008; Urip 2010; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016; Bernstel 2002), it also attracts investor interest (Chen & Lee 2017) and increases customer admiration through bolstering an organisation's reputation (Deng, Kang, & Low 2013; Lee 2017; Griffin 2008; Worthington 2018).

Globally, the manner in which consumers buy their food, from whom they buy their food, and how they want their food packaged, is rapidly becoming a conscious issue (Thacker 2019). The food industry is under pressure to grow production to meet amplified demand in the most eco-friendly way possible (Thacker 2019; Kim 2017).

According to Rou and Singal (2020) there is a positive association between customers' perceptions and an organisation's environmental programs, and as the call for environmentally friendly products and practices surge, CSR researchers are more inclined to explore consumer, employee and investor responses to such practices and programs. With heightened consumer concerns regarding diet-influenced health issues, environmental destruction, climate change and hardship for small-scale food producers (de Cleene 2019), appealing to such concerns through ECSR may provide organisations within the food industry a beneficial strategy retain customers, while enhancing their contribution towards environmental preservation, and increasing their profitability and sustainability within a competitive market.

Consumer awareness of unethical, cruel and scandalous activities within the food industry is becoming more prominent through media and non-government organisation (NGO) exposure. Despite organisations being pressed to take notice of consumer demands or risk facing diminishing competitiveness (Hancock 2005; Boudouropoulos & Arvanitoyannis 2000), research on the customer retention opportunities of CSR, and more specifically ECSR within the food industry is lacking.

Therefore, the literature review shall explore themes relevant to the main research question of this study:

What is the impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on customer behaviour, and how does this affect customer retention?

2.4. Customer Churn and Customer Retention

In recent years, the consumer has been the centre of much attention. Business leaders and academics have ascertained that not only is the consumer growing in importance, but without them, a business ceases to exist. No matter how innovative the product, how talented and experienced the staff, and how unique the organisation' s intellectual property, it is the company's customers that make their business successful (Pardo-Jaramillo & Osuna 2020; Worthington 2020)

Customer-centric marketing started during the direct marketing revolution of the 1960s, and the concept has been principally credited to the marketer Lester Wunderman (Wunderman 1997). As direct marketing gained popularity, marketing specialists began to shift their focus from reaching the maximum number of potential consumers, to reaching individual consumers in the most effective and significant way possible.

During the 1980s and 1990s, new technology and innovation offered businesses the opportunity to examine the behaviour of their customers, while tailoring their messaging and product or service offerings. In the 1990s, the internet and e-commerce increased recognition and popularity, and generated a revolution in the possibilities available to organisations for customer-centric marketing initiatives. Companies were now able to gain insight into the buying behaviour of their customers, and a whole new world opened to marketing professionals, academics, entrepreneurs and business leaders (Worthington 2018).

The impediment to a business becoming customer-centric is the traditional mindset of product-centricity, which many businesses still follow to boost profits, despite rising evidence proving the power held by an organisation's customers. Until recently, it has been believed that a brand offers a business superior value, far more than that of the customer. However, with growing customer demands and heightened market competition, businesses now need to look further than their products and services to create a sustainable competitive advantage, through the satisfaction of their customers' needs and desires (Worthington 2020).

Today's market is characterised by what products and services are purchased, and by whom. The increasingly competitive business climate, and the growing range of platforms and channels available for consumers to purchase an array of services and products, is giving consumers more choice than ever before. With enhanced consumer choice comes increased market competition, and there is clear evidence that states that companies can lose up to 50% of their customers over a period of five years (Ganesh, Arnold & Reynolds 2000). One strategy to avoid such detrimental losses, and to maintain and increase profitability, is for a company to focus on enhancing their customer retention and decreasing their customer turnover (Murphy 1996; Worthington 2020).

It must be noted that while customer loyalty may be focused on customer base growth, customer retention is focused on customer base maintenance and the prevention of attrition (Leather 2013), and the decision taken by a consumer to remain an organisation's customer is based on rationality and logic (Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). Customers use organisational, product and service comparisons to make their decisions and thus customer retention is the degree of the continuance of a relationship between a customer and a firm where the customer makes the decision to stay with the organisation due to an enhanced value perception held in the mind of the customer regarding the products and services of the organisation (Liu & Wu 2007; Worthington 2017). While customers are often observed as submissive targets of the value generated by organisations, it is now vital for organisations to see the value of their customer as an ongoing relationship where the value is uninterruptedly co-created between the organisation and the customer, rather than transferred

only at the moment of purchase (Bettencourt, Lusch & Vargo 2014; Worthington 2017).

To confirm the importance of customer retention, Drucker (1973) stated that the only goal of all business is to generate customers and to avoid suffering the loss of such customers to industry competitors. Profitable customers are essential to every enterprise, and the needs and desires of these customers ought to be understood and managed if a business is to succeed. Meeting the needs and desires of customers results in customer satisfaction, and organisations are required to adopt resources to safeguard customer satisfaction, because without it, customers will look for more attractive products and services, resulting in customer loss (also known as customer churn) and ultimately business loss.

This direct relationship between customer loss and business loss has welcomed much interest from academics, business leaders and management professionals, with organisations identifying the financial benefit of increasing customer retention and reducing customer churn. Not only does customer churn result in less revenue for a business, but it also negatively affects a company's brand image and decreases their market share. Therefore, the development of models based on consumer behavioural patterns to forecast customer churn have become a crucial area of interest and analysis for many organisations and academics alike (Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). In terms of forecasting, most organisations receive a substantial proportion of their annual sales from their current customers. This indicates that customer retention is not only highly profitable, but it also allows an organisation to anticipate future profits (and business success) based on their current customer base.

As stated by Carter (2008), and Kumar and Rajan (2009), customer retention may be even more valuable to an organisation than customer acquisition, and this makes it a critical function for overall business success. A minor increase in customer retention may significantly increase an organisation's profits (Reichheld & Detrick 2003) by providing the organisation with the opportunity to recover customer acquisition costs, and with the prospect to upsell and

cross sell to its customers. Customer retention also alleviates the strain put on an organisation's customer acquisition department to replace churning customers, while ensuring a less saturated market of previous and dissatisfied customers (Kumar & Rajan 2009; Worthington 2017).

2.4.1. The Aim of Customer Retention: Increased Customer Lifetime Value

Customer lifetime value (CLV) correlates to the monetary value of a customer to an organisation during the length of time that the customer is acquiring services or purchasing products from the organisation (Permana, Indratno & Pasaribu 2014). The main aim of customer retention is the achievement of null customer churn of a company's most valuable customers, resulting in greater market share, increased profits, and reduced acquisition outlay (Farquhar 2005). A customer retention strategy requires an organisation to be proactive with their customers, observing them for signs of abandonment and engaging practical policies to generate customer commitment towards repurchase, and ultimately, enhanced customer lifetime value (Worthington 2017).

As a precise and long-term customer profitability metric, CLV is able to calculate a customer's individual worth as a financial value. This is defined as the total of the net present value (NPV) of a customer's future money contribution into the organisation (Kotler 1974; Haenlein, Kaplan & Schoder 2006; Park & Han 2014). This financial value is defined by rates of retention, and the preliminary sale and profit margins (Stahl et al. 2012; Farris et al. 2006). CLV can also be used for customer relationship management (CRM) (Gupta et al. 2006), where a customer's potential and current behaviour is evaluated and documented for strategic purposes (Worthington 2017).

Fader, Hardie & Ka Lok (2005) and Pfeifer, Haskins & Conroy (2005) agree that CLV is the present value of the expected cash flow projected from a customer, and that CLV measures should be used to predict upcoming actions rather than previous behaviours, which may provide valuable information to business leaders. For example, based on such forecasts, it may become

obvious that a consortium of customers with a low future lifetime value may still present a highly profitable collective sum (Worthington 2017).

As the customer-centric approach to business becomes more of a trend, interest in measuring and analysing CLV has also intensified. According to Fadar, Hardie and Ka Lok (2005), CLV can be examined by classifying individual customers with varying buying histories and similar future values, and then customer profitability can be premeditated from the expected quantity of forthcoming transactions between the customers and the company as depicted in figure below:

Figure 2: Approach to customer lifetime value measurement

| Recurring revenues minus recurring costs | Gross contribution margin minus marketing costs | Net margin multiplied by the expected number of purchases over 3 years | Accumulated margin minus acquisition costs | **Customer Lifetime Value** |
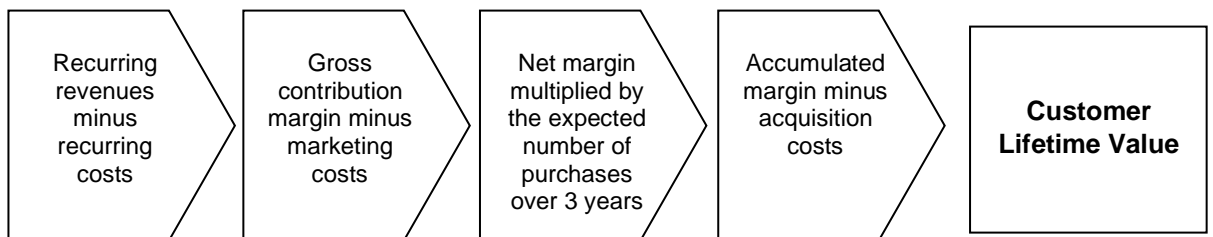
If the notion of long-term customer profitability is built on the NPV of the customer's current and potential profits, as stated by Kotler (1974), then CLV and customer retention are crucial aspects of a firm's profitability. Nevertheless, CLV is only associated with retention rates if the organisation's other business activities result in a profit for the company, and sales that end in shortfalls are eliminated (Worthington 2017).

2.4.2. Retaining the Right Customers

It can cost an organisation up to twelve times more to acquire a new customer than it does to retain a current customer (Gunther et al. 2014). However, despite this avoidable cost, organisations are often not placing enough importance on customer churn avoidance research and strategies. According

to a study by Kolajo and Adeyemo in 2012 on customer churn within the telecommunications industry, the failure to separate the churning customer from the non-churning customer has become problematic for businesses. The study emphasises the importance of categorising churning customers and explains that without this competence, a business has only two options to ensure customer success: the business can either direct incentives to all its customers – both the churners and non-churners; or it can focus on its customer acquisition strategy rather than a more cost-effective customer retention strategy. Both of these options affect the finances of the organisation unfavourably, which directly and negatively impacts their profitability. While this conclusion is highly relevant to the importance of customer churn and retention from a financial standpoint, Kolajo and Adeyemo's study fail to seek out the causes and motivations as to why customers churn in the first place.

While customer retention is a crucial strategy in realising business success, organisations should be proactive in the decision as to whether the cost to retain a customer is worth the economic value that they bring to the organisation through their forthcoming purchases or their referrals, as not all customers are alike in value (Kumar & Rajan 2009; Ekinci, Ulengin & Uray 2014; Worthington 2020).

According to Abbasimehr, Setak and Soroor (2013), the churn of low value customers has a negative impact on the company's profits to a lesser extent than the churn of high value customers. As per the Pareto Principle, 80% of business is likely to be a result of 20% of customers (Krajewski, Ritzman & Malhotra 2013). The Pareto Principle was developed by Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto in 1896. It states that for many outcomes, approximately 80% of outcomes come from 20% of sources. The theory emphasises the implication of retaining an organisation's high value customer group as an essential strategic advantage (Worthington 2020). For example, Evans (2002) states that 53% of the value of the United Kingdom's retail financial services market is gained from as little as two of its eight segments.

By distinguishing the right type of customer from the beginning of the customer journey, CRM can be optimised. To demonstrate this statement, Permana,

Indratno and Pasaribu (2014) researched the retention potential of a previous customer who returned to their provider as a current customer. Their research was based on the study of behaviour and determination of a customer's lifetime value using the Markov chain model. They found that the profit collected by the company from the previously lost customer throughout the customer's lifetime was drastically lessened due to the customer's retention and acquisition costs (Worthington 2017).

By identifying and protecting customers who are at a risk of churn, and seeking out their reasons for possible churn, an organisation is able to ascertain the needs and desires of their customers, thus enabling them to align their products and services with these needs and desires. This results in enhanced customer satisfaction, decreased customer loss, and ultimately, enhanced profitability (Abbasimehr et al. 2013).

2.4.3. Contributors to Customer Loss

Organisations are increasingly interested in how much value they can anticipate from a customer. This is because a customer's net value forecast throughout their lifetime with that organisation can be used to make marketing programs more effective, assisting the company with positioning their resources with the customers who they believe to be the most lucrative. This makes the detection and management of high value and long-term customers a critical endeavour for businesses who aim to safeguard a profitable future. Understanding the contributors for customer loss is the first step to such an endeavour (Estrella-Ramon et al. 2013; Borle, Singh & Jain 2008; Kumar & Rajan 2009).

It is no longer practical for firms to rely on a steady customer base. It is simple for customers to shift away from their preferred product or service provider, and market competitors are continually growing as customers are becoming more aligned with their ever-increasing options and buying power (Gunther et al. 2014).

Identifying and understanding the influencers of customer behaviour may assist organisations in appealing to customer needs and ultimately, preventing customer loss. According to Kon (2004) and Vaughn (2008), experience, values, lifestyles, and demographics influence customer behaviour, which are further motivated by product expectations such as the cost of the item/service, how easy it is to purchase the item/service, the quality of the item/service, and access to information regarding the organisation and its products and/or services. While customer retention management models designed to handle and restrict customer churn are limited despite their importance, they can be used to detect and monitor customer behaviour and predict reasons for customer loss based on the identification and monitoring of these customer behaviour influencers. This offers organisations the option of being proactive in reducing micro- and macro-environment precursors to customer loss (Evans 2002; Worthington 2017).

The macro-environment is a major contributor to customer loss when it comes to market competitors: customer churn occurs when a customer decides to cancel their relationship with their current provider, in order to change to a competitor or because their need for that service or product is no longer applicable (Gunther et al. 2014). This decision is often preceded when the quality of a customer's experience with their current provider falls below a certain level of satisfaction. When this customer experience occurs due to competition within the macro-environment, it is known as comparison churn due to the influence of the macro-environment influence. Micro-environment contributors include frustration churn. This occurs when the quality of a customer's experience with their current provider drops below the customer's own expectations. It is often symptomatic of a negative event experienced by the customer within their relationship with their current provider (Kon 2004).

A company's incompetence to manage their customer churn will result in its downfall. Therefore, it is critically important that customer churn is understood, predicted, and prevented through the identification and management of customer behaviour influencers. There is a need for organisations to skill themselves in strategies to effectively retain their customers through eradicating or reducing both macro- and micro-environment customer

behaviour influences. Organisations that understand these behaviour influences – which are precursors for customer satisfaction and therefore customer retention – are able to not only harness and measure customer satisfaction, but they are also able to manage it. The outcome is a proactive approach to customer churn management and the opportunity to identify customers with the greatest potential to impact company profits (Evans 2002; Worthington 2017).

2.4.4. The Significance of Satisfying Customer Needs

According to Nunes, Yardley and Spelman (2015), roughly one third of business growth leaders have attained their growth by reacting to the needs arising from shifting consumer behaviour. These businesses interpret the disruptions caused by changing consumer behaviour as opportunities to realign their business, products and services with such needs. The organisational mind set of embracing change ensures that these businesses provide quick innovative responses to their customers' needs and desires, greatly outsmarting their competitors (Worthington 2020).

Customer choice is pivotal for organisational success (Bettencourt, Lusch & Vargo 2014). The degree to which a customer believes an organisation's products or services to be suitable for their needs, affects the level of relevance the product or service holds in the customer's mind. This indicates that the lower the level of product or service relevance in the mind of the customer, the greater the negative influence it has on customer retention (Stahl et al. 2012). In agreement, Tripathi (2014) notes that a customer will not be motivated to buy a product or service if they do not have a need for it, irrespective of how desirable the product or service is. A customer will only purchase a product or service if it is the best choice for them, when evaluated against their needs at that particular moment in time (Worthington 2017).

Customers vary in terms of their needs and the economic value they offer an organisation (Estrella-Ramon et al. 2013). Therefore, the successful management of customer relationships considers the various needs of an

organisation's customer base, as well as the products and services that satisfy the core requirements of a customer that are more likely to be considered for purchase by the customer (Stahl et al. 2012). Such products and services offer higher acquisition and retention rates, a higher tendency to pay from customers, and therefore higher profit margins for the organisation.

Varying customer needs can complicate, and often render customer retention strategies invalid. However, such strategies can be adjusted and enhanced by New Product Development (NPD) and the creation of products that support the changing needs of the organisation's current and future customers (Farquhar 2005). As stated by Liu and Wu (2007) customer information can be used to deliver products that satisfy a customer's specific needs, which enhance customer retention strategies. However, Farquhar (2005) notes that customer needs fulfilment only occurs when the customers themselves offer valuable insight into NPD, resulting in innovative products and services aligned with how a customer perceives value, and allowing the company to develop products and services that are outside of their current comfort boundaries.

2.4.5. Perceived Value

Customers are more likely to continue with their provider if they believe that the relationship is advantageous to their needs and wellbeing (Oliver 1999). If organisations are to achieve customer value, they need to concentrate on providing products that will attract and preserve their customers. Such products involve a sincere appreciation of how customer value is created, and how customers perceive value (Worthington 2020).

According to Prasetyo Tejo (2021), the concept of perceived value has recently received much attention from marketers due to its role in maintaining long-term relationships between customers and their providers. The notion of perceived value can be defined as the consumer's complete appraisal of the use of a product or service based on the consumer's perception of what is received by the consumer from the organisation. The greater the perceived

value, the greater the repurchasing intention concerning the product or service offered, resulting in customer loyalty. This highlights the significance of perceived value and the importance of maintaining it in order to ensure long-term customer loyalty (Haghkhah & Asgari 2020).

Value is co-created through a unique blend of the customer's and the organisation's resources (Vargo & Lusch 2008). The customer and the organisation are therefore resource partners in value creation, with the organisation making a value proposition rather than delivering or disseminating value. Companies create and distribute the resources that assist their customers in creating value, and customers establish this value by merging the organisation's products and services into their personal lives. It is therefore necessary for organisations to concentrate on what customers want to achieve by using their products, while at the same time, knowing that the product alone, is not the value. The capabilities that the product provides to the customer, is the value potential, or rather the value-enabler. Value is therefore, not achieved during the actual purchase of the product, but instead throughout the customer's use of the product (Worthington 2017).

The customer is not a passive target of the value, but rather an active participant in value co-creation (Scherer, Wünderlich & von Wangenheim 2015). Therefore, an organisation's strategic advantage cannot be determined by its products, but instead by their knowledge of how their customers can benefit from their products through the actual use of their products.

Bettencourt, Lusch and Vargo (2014) confirm that the point of exchange between an organisation and its customer is not where value is produced, and that by assuming a service-focused approach, organisations are able to understand what is actually being traded between the two parties, the motive for the exchange, and what value is essentially being formed during the exchange. The result is enormous product prospects, as well as an understanding of what is really important to the customer, and an organisation more informed and well prepared to bolster their endeavours on satisfying the needs and desires of their customers (Worthington 2020).

2.4.6. The Effect of Market Competition on Customer Retention

A study conducted by Carter (2008) revealed that most organisations stated that their best five customers had bought products and/or services from their rivals in the last three years, even though the organisations were anticipating these customers' orders. This lapse in planning and judgment may be due to the fact that business leaders classify their competitors too scarcely, noting only their industry's competitors, instead of the additional competition from the other four competitive forces, such as customers, suppliers, potential entrants and substitute products (Porter 2008).

Figure 3: The five forces that shape industry competition
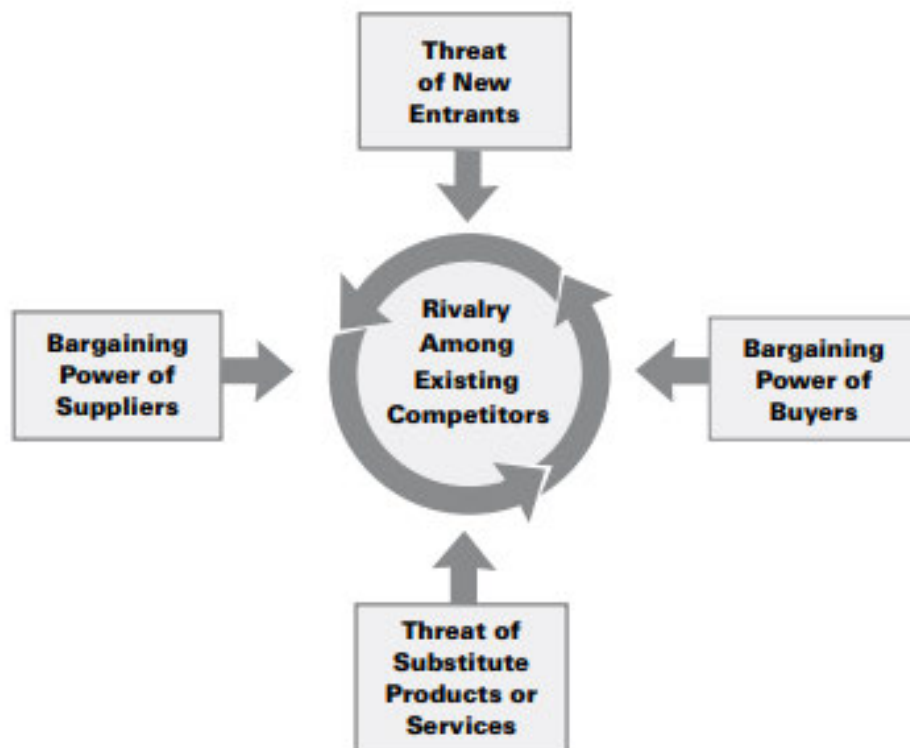
While research supports the notion that customer satisfaction improves customer retention, which is vital to organisational success, Voss and Voss

(2008) contend that organisations should rather boost their performance by moving away from customer retention strategies and focus on customer acquisition strategies instead. Voss and Voss (2008) explain that when market competition density is decreased, customer retention improves a firm's performance, nevertheless, when market competition density is increased, customer acquisition that concentrates on innovation is better for advancing the firm's performance.

Voss and Voss (2008) further note that a company's product value is dependent on the competitive density of the market. Fluctuating levels of competitive density relate to fluctuating trends of customer buying preference. In steady markets, customers are concerned with product variety to a lesser extent and therefore they demonstrate behaviour conducive to customer loyalty. In this kind of market, companies are more lucrative when maintaining profitable customers through a customer retention strategy. On the contrary, in a dynamic market, customers enthusiastically seek variety, and are less interested in staying loyal to any specific organisation's brand.

This notion is supported by Cambra-Fierro et al. (2021), who state that change at the market level (also known as market turbulence) plays a role in influencing customer retention. For example, the launch of a new product (Lin, Pazgal & Soberman 2021) or the entry of a new competitor (Barari, Ross & Surachartkumtonkun 2020) may prompt customers to switch providers. The idea of market turbulence is founded on the idea of change, ambiguity, intricacy and unpredictability of the market and environment for an organisation's products (Cui & Wu 2017). The literature implies that increases in market turbulence result in increased uncertainty with regards to organisational planning, growth and outcomes. In 2020, the Marketing Science Institute emphasised the significance of market turbulence, despite its limited studies in relation to retailing (Dekimpe et al. 2011). From a practical perspective, organisations consistently struggle to comprehend fluctuating market trends and create revived products in turbulent markets. This is because many factors are out of the organisation's control, due to market turbulence being determined by intense competition and the unpredictable introduction of technological advances (Wang et al. 2015).

2.4.7. The Effect of the Social Environment on Customer Retention

Customer behaviour and their tolerance of latest trends and innovations are significantly influenced by their social interactions. Organisations that are mindful of this phenomenon, understand its effects for evaluating and predicting customer loss (Worthington 2017). Although most of the marketing-related analysis on customers' social environments and interactions are largely centered around customer acquisition, it is evident that this social effect also has a significant influence on customer retention (Nitzan & Libai 2011).

Social influence stems from the information exchange among interconnected people. This information could include positive or negative debates regarding brands, service providers, and products, thereby persuading customers to use a particular service, purchase a certain product or specific brand, or to cancel a service (Nitzan & Libai 2011). Despite customer retention being crucially important to an organisation's financial success, and the fact that customer retention should be a crucial characteristic of a firm's profitability model (Bolton, Lemon & Verhoef 2004), inter-customer dynamics have been mostly overlooked while constructing customer churn predictability models and investigating the reasons for customer loss (Nitzan & Libai 2011; Worthington 2017). The forecast of customer churn should be a strategic interest for firms, and a clearer interpretation of inter-customer dynamics may improve the predicative capability of customer churn models (Neslin et al. 2006; Worthington 2017).

Negative word of mouth is more powerful with regards to customer decision-making than positive word of mouth within the social environment (Nam, Manchanda & Chintagunta 2010; Worthington 2017; Worthington 2020), and Nitzan and Libai (2011) explain that customer loyalty may guard customers from customer churn due to undesirable social effects. This is based on the understanding that loyal customers are influenced, to a lesser extent, by service defaults and price increases (Srinivasan, Anderson & Ponnavolu 2002), and customers who have been with their provider for extended periods of time, or who are considerable users of their provider's products, are less

inclined to be influenced by their social group's disappointments from the same provider. It is therefore of the utmost importance for an organisation to identify and understand their customers' social networks when endeavouring to calculate customer churn and achieve customer retention (Worthington 2017).

2.5. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Businesses first employed the term stakeholder in the late 1960s. A stakeholder was specified as those who were in any way affected by the company's activities. Thereafter the term Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR came into use. The goal of CSR is for a company to take responsibility for its actions, and to have a positive impact on its environment, communities, employees, and consumers (Bhaduri & Selarka 2016; Worthington 2018).

While definitions for CSR have differing opinions, the phrase commonly implies an organisation's activities beyond their legal responsibilities, such as their workforce, communities and the environment (Kong 2012; Carroll & Shabana 2010; Schaefer, Terlutter & Diehl 2020). According to Tsai and Hsu (2008), and Brown and Dacin (1997), CSR is a company's obligations and actions to enhance the social condition of life. First implied in Howard R. Bowen's 1953 publication of *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman,* the concept of CSR earned momentum with the expansion of multinational corporations and the improvement of living standards via economic development (Lee, Kim & Roh 2019; Bilinelli 2015). Thereafter Carroll formalised the concept by concentrating on the four requirements that society expects from business. These four requirements consist of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll 1979).

According to Carroll (1979), the most essential social responsibility of business institutions is that of economic responsibility. This is based on the premise that business organisations are the key producers of goods and services within society. Legal responsibility is the requirement of business organisations to conduct economic activities within the framework of legal regulations. Ethical responsibility is the obligation of business organisations to conduct

themselves beyond their required legal conditions, and philanthropic responsibility is the social expectancy of businesses to satisfy social duties for the other three responsibilities (Schaefer, Terlutter & Diehl 2020).

Figure 4: Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR has several functions, which range from strict stakeholder focus to volunteering initiatives. These functions are primarily divided into three groups: value creation; risk management; and corporate philanthropy. As a self-controlled element of a business model that is recognised by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO), CSR is regarded as a crucial part of a firm's strategy, and vital for ensuring long-term success and profits by reducing risks and inefficiencies, while improving brand image and reputation, and employee motivation and commitment (Bhaduri & Selarka 2016; Worthington 2018; Schaefer, Terlutter & Diehl 2020).

In 2021, a study conducted by Osakwe and Yusuf used attribution theory and collected data from 435 retail bank customers in Nigeria to examine a proposed model that CSR beliefs have an indirect impact on customer loyalty

by means of brand trust and reputation within the banking sector. The findings suggested a sequential mediation of reputation and trust in respect to the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty towards the organisation. The research enabled a richer debate of the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty by associating brand trust and bank reputation as significant mediators. However, CSR is a controversial topic. Critics, such as the economist Milton Friedman, contend that CSR is diverting to business and that societal improvements in health and wealth are mostly due to economic growth as a result of the free market. On the contrary, the free market is also viewed as hampering human liberty through issues such as child labour, and it is seen as the predecessor to economic and cultural imperialism in many nations. Nevertheless, as with many ethical issues, most firms operate in between these two opposing views (Friedman 1970; Iacono 2014; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020; Agarwal 2022). In addition, a 2020 study by Fukuda and Ouchida examined the effects of CSR behaviour on economic wellbeing and the environment. The findings indicated that CSR promotion consistently enhances social welfare, however when environmental damage is serious and the cost proficiency of emission reduction is low, then a unadulterated profit-maximising monopolist has some motivations for acting as a socially responsible business to enhance its net profit. The findings also stated that CSR can generate increased emissions, which is not always advantageous for the environment.

The most important stakeholder group to any profit driven business is the customer, and customers expect socially responsible behaviour from companies, for which they are willing to reward. Consumers are actively seeking organisations with sustainable products and production methods. This new consumer has become the focal point of research by social and economic scientists, including the LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability). The LOHAS study the behaviour of the socially conscious consumer on an international scale, and their research has shown an increase of consumers moving away from brands from which their values disconnect. Such consumers now turn to a brand's producer, and they are interested in what

that producer is doing to become a better corporate citizen (Szakály et al. 2017; Worthington 2020).

The relationship between CSR and the financial accomplishments of a business may be a controversial topic, but research suggests that CSR may improve a company's reputation thus attracting more customers. As a strategic marketing tool, the importance of CSR has been recognised since the 2000s, and growing evidence suggests that consumers have positive attitudes towards companies that follow ethical standards (Latapí Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir & Davídsdóttir 2019). Furthermore, Aramburu and Pescador (2019) state that CSR activities can now serve as a strategic tool that organisations can use to manage their relationships with customers, since these activities support the organisation in gaining admiration by conveying the right indicators to stakeholders and thereby influencing their reputational perceptions.

2.5.1. Creating Shared Value Through Corporate Social Responsibility

According to Porter and Kramer (2011), business is to lead the unification of society and business through the proposed solution of Creating Shared Value (CSV). This involves the creation of economic value while generating value for society through tackling its demands and issues. Such practices are to enhance the competitiveness of an organisation while at the same time evolving the economic and social conditions in the surrounding community. CSV focuses on economic and societal benefits relative to cost, and while value creation is a concept commonly recognised by business, organisations have rarely attempted to tackle societal problems from a value point of view.

There are various ways in which business can address societal concerns, including water use, environmental impact, energy usage, supplier access and viability, employee skills, worker safety, and employee health (Porter & Kramer 2011). While CSV focuses on economic and societal benefits relative to cost, CSR is focused on doing good through citizenship, philanthropy and sustainability. CSV is essential to business competition and profit

maximisation, realigning the entire company's budget with an organisational specific agenda. As a joint company and community value creation, the use of CSR as a customer retention strategy in order to enhance an organisation's profits while contributing to the preservation of the environment can be seen as a valuable tool for CSV (Porter & Kramer 2011).

Consumers see a brand is the link between their current or actual self and their future self, where their problems have been resolved by a solution provided by that brand (Worthington 2018). According to Schwartz (1994), human values underpin an individual's thoughts and behaviours, and each consumer's set of values is constituted individually because values are made and reinforced by an individual's distinctive experiences with the world around them. This personalised set of values is then used by the individual as an instrument to evaluate other things and other individuals (Kahle 1996; Jansson 2010). When a company's products or services reflect a person's distinctive set of values, it is more plausible that the person will assess the organisation, and therefore the brand, as positive (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

Preceding studies have found that consumer responsiveness and the assessment of an organisation's CSR initiatives are primarily determined by their own distinctive set of values (Basil & Weber 2006; Podnar & Golob 2008). Customer awareness of a company's CSR activities influence their purchase intentions, and purchase intentions influence customer loyalty and retention (Moon, Lee & Oh 2015; García Alvarez & Atristain-Suarez 2020). However, this only occurs when a company's CSR activities connect with the customer's personal value system. It is therefore possible to assume that consumer perceptions of an organisation's CSR initiatives, benefits, and obligations are enhanced when the consumer's distinctive and personal set of values is aligned with an organisation's CSR objectives and initiatives (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

According to a case study completed by Linnaeus University on the effects of CSR on customer loyalty within the Swedish chocolate market, the researchers identified four primary drivers for customer loyalty, including customer satisfaction, product quality, customer trust and company image.

They measured the effects of CSR on these drivers and discovered that CSR had a definite and positive effect on all four drivers, with the greatest effect on customer trust (Van den Berg & Lidfors 2012).

A case study carried out within the banking industry in Spain found that the perceptions of customer-centric CSR initiatives positively and continuously influenced customer identification with the banking establishment, in addition to satisfaction, recommendation and repurchase behaviours (Pérez & Bosque 2015).

In the tourism sector in 2018, South Africa's uShaka Marine World, Africa's largest theme park, had six main CSR programs that were founded on the premise that the organisation is part of the natural eco-system, where human beings, water and animal's lives should be protected and prosper. Their CSR programs maintained the organisation's brand equity considerably, and this has been confirmed through several customer surveys. Their past Marketing Director, Ms. Mpume Mthembu, states that the organisation's CSR program and their customers' loyalty were clearly linked. She believes that uShaka Marine World's customers' personal values were mirrored by the organisation through their CSR programs, and that this alignment of private sector contribution and community support towards social and environmental upliftment is the future of business in not only South Africa, but globally (Mthembu, M 2018, pers. comm.1 February; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020).

In the education sector in 2018, Beka Foundation South Africa provided social upliftment through skills development as their CSR program. Their director at the time, Mr. Neil Wilson, states that corporate spend towards skills development and CSR initiatives enhance a company's brand image, particularly when the CSR initiative is supported by the values of the organisation's customers. The outcome is enhanced customer loyalty, and enhanced financial performance (Wilson, N 2018, pers. comm., 31 January; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020).

Mr. Simon Bray, the past CEO of tech giant Private Property, South Africa's leading property online portal, states that their website had approximately two

million browsers a month, and although it was easy to view these customers as just a number, by seeing them as individuals with unique needs, situations and motivations, enabled the organisation to align their strategies, including their CSR program, towards exceptional customer experience, which resulted in enhanced customer loyalty, enhanced customer retention, and business profitability (Bray, S 2018, pers. comm., 1 February; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020).

Studies conducted on CSR and its effect on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty have identified some useful results for business leaders. According to Weber (2008) CSR improves a company's public image and their profit margins. A socially responsible company demonstrates that it incorporates ethical practices into its business activities, and with customers becoming more aware of global environmental issues, their purchase decisions are considerably motivated by such issues (Australian Organic Limited 2021).

Another study conducted by Rivera, Bigne and Curras-Perez in 2016 confirmed that environment-specific CSR initiatives have a positive impression on customer satisfaction. This finding supports Miles and Covin (2000) who substantiate the relationship between environmental responsibility and economic effect on the consequences of environmental social initiatives on organisational reputation, as the sum total of credibility, trust, reliability and responsibility.

CSR allows an organisation to develop its assets, which include goodwill, honesty, trust and a good reputation, and consumers feel that purchasing from an organisation that is committed to CSR initiatives brings them safety (Lombart & Louis 2014; García Alvarez & Atristain-Suarez 2020). Furthermore, CSR improves a company's dynamics: employees are more likely to feel motivated at work when they think that their employer is contributing to the greater good of humanity and the environment (Bhaduri & Selarka 2016).

CSR also contributes to the improvement of communities by presenting solutions to social issues. Most people have an intrinsic moral urge to help others, and businesses are in a powerful position to greatly support the

communities that they service through their leadership and public identity alone. In addition, CSR enhances an organisation's investment appeal: potential investors often assess a company's social responsibility program, using it as one of their measures when deciding whether or not invest their funds (Chen & Lee 2017).

Because ethical standards hold a dominant position in enhancing consumer loyalty (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017), increased corporate ethical levels encourage customers to believe that an organisation is dedicated to its CSR. Once this perception is formed, customers' satisfaction levels rise and their trust levels are improved, resulting in consumer loyalty towards the company. While customer loyalty and satisfaction are influenced by the practical elements of CSR, customer trust is influenced by the moral elements of CSR (Stanaland, Lwin & Murphy 2011; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017; Pivato, Misani & Tencati 2008). This is confirmed by Lee, Kim and Roh (2019), whereby it is determined that CSR activities may enhance firm reputation, which contributes to enhanced firm performance, enhanced employee job satisfaction, and increased organisational trust (Brammer, Millington & Rayton 2007). Furthermore, CSR activities may enhance a company's image (Weber, 2008) and raise customer purchase intention (Sen & Bhattacharya 2001).

2.5.2. The Economic Justification for CSR

CSR initiatives have shifted from being an optional company activity to being recognised as an action to be carried out to enhance company results in both the short term and the long term. (Porter & Kramer 2006). The driving force behind this shift is the transformation of consumer expectations. As uncovered by the 2013 Cone Communications/Echo Global CSR Study, 94% of consumers expect companies to go further than economic performance and to be a significant contributor to enhancing social and environmental wellbeing.

According to Jones (1995), CSR can be contributory in accomplishing an organisation's bottom-line financial performance. Based on this notion, various

business management researchers and academics have endeavoured to assess the connection between CSR and its influence on an organisation's performance, including profitability, market return, brand image, customer fulfilment and allegiance, employee job gratification and performance, and regulatory behaviour (Malik 2015).

Initially, CSR was viewed from the standpoint of management, and soon after marketing scholars began to investigate the concept from the position of the consumer (Ellen, Mohr & Webb 2000; Sen & Bhattacharya 2001). This approach by marketing scholars has mostly concentrated on two major areas: the use of CSR activities to affect consumers' perceptions regarding the company's social responsibility by creating a connection with a cause (cause-related marketing), and by enhancing consumer awareness about their initiatives (advocacy advertising). Through such campaigns, marketers aim to generate and retain long term relationships with their customers based on the premise that consumers translate the company's behaviour as committed to other social issues other than just their own interests (Sen & Bhattacharya 2001).

As a guide for the social responsibility of organisation, the ISO 26000 (ISO 2010; Bilinelli 2015) defines CSR as:

> ... the responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development, including health and welfare of society, takes into account expectations of stakeholders, is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour and is integrated throughout and practiced in an organization's relationships.

This description of CSR expresses the basic principle of ethics in that "ought implies can". Credited to Immanuel Kant, "ought implies can" indicates that if morally required to carry out a particular activity, one must reasonably be able to perform it. Furthermore, if the moral law demands that we ought to be better

human beings now, it inevitably indicates that we must be competent of being better human beings (Henderson 1966).

From an economics perspective, Friedman states that a company's sole social obligation is to expand profits within the confines of the legal framework, and that CSR is a mishandling of the company's resources by management and therefore an indicator of moral risk towards the business' shareholders (Friedman 1970). Based on this criticism, the pursuit for an economic justification of CSR is prevalent, and the motivation to shift consumers, employees or investors from solely monetary positions to emotional and social qualities permits profit enhancement to be a positive argument in support of CSR (Kitzmueller 2008).

Often described as strategic CSR (Wood 2010), consumers may honour companies for their CSR initiatives through the purchase (and repurchase) of their products and services, and companies may attract further shareholders who take preference to responsible corporate initiatives. This incentivises companies to contend for principled consumers through the differentiation of their products and services via their CSR activity. Furthermore, companies that participate in CSR initiatives are more capable than their competitors in enticing ethically motivated customers, employees, and supply chain associates, reducing ethical threats, and reducing costs (Frank 2004).

2.5.3. The Impact of CSR on Company Image

According to Turban and Greening (1997), a company's corporate ability is very much connected to its capacity to deliver products and services. However, CSR activities may significantly impact a company's image and its overall reputation by providing consumers an awareness and understanding of the company's values. In order for companies to select a social cause for their CSR investment, research on consumer responses to the organisation's social activities may provide guidance (García-Jiménez, Ruiz-de-Maya & López-López 2017). The manner in which companies conduct their CSR initiatives to place them in the market is significant, as it guides consumers'

understanding as to how the company creates a point of distinction in their industry's competitive environment, limits doubt around the company's business and its products or services, and enhances consumers' purchase intentions (Du, Bhattacharya & Sen 2007).

It has been noted that consumers' attitudes toward a company are positively bolstered as a result of improved evaluations of the company and its products or services when companies participate in CSR activities (Barone, Miyazaki, & Taylor 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen 2004). However, according to García-Jiménez, Ruiz-de-Maya and López-López (2017) there is a lack of a generally accepted model of consumer responses to CSR initiatives. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) note that research has implied that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience or quality, and when there is no additional cost in terms of price. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) further note that although all consumers are affected by negative information on CSR, only consumers who are genuinely motivated in the direction of social behaviour are affected by company activities associated with social welfare. However, consumers are more likely to stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if they discover that the organisation conducted unethical practice within the environment (Pradhan 2018).

An organisation's CSR activities may enhance their customers' identification of, and trust in the company's image (Maignan & Farrell 2004; Su et al. 2017), increase customer satisfaction levels (Martinez & del Bosque 2013), and improve brand loyalty (Garcia de Leaniz & Rodriguez Del Bosque Rodriguez 2015). Furthermore, a study by Hur, Moon and Kim (2020), confirms that the positive association between customers' CSR perception and customer-company identification is more prominent when CSR credibility was greater than when it was at a lower level. CSR credibility also moderates the indirect effect of customers' CSR perception and CSR participation intent via customer-company identification. In addition, research conducted by Siu, Zhang and Kwan (2014) identified CSR as a valuable tool to counteract the adverse effects of service malfunction, whereby it encouragingly increased customer satisfaction levels among restaurant patrons post incident.

While CSR beneficially influences customer perceptions of a company's image, numerous studies have concluded that without the appropriate communication strategy, the benefits of CSR activities are decreased (Rhou, Singal & Koh 2016). Furthermore, not all CSR communication is effective in achieving the desired outcome for the company. CSR initiatives need to be matched with brand fit in order to increase brand loyalty among customers, and different CSR initiatives vary in impact (Kim, Kang & Mattila 2012; Cha, Yi & Bagozzi 2016).

The compelling influence of CSR on a company's image is built upon company and consumer congruency (C-C congruence), whereby the consumer's positive responses to a company's CSR activities may be dependent on the extent to which consumers correspond their characteristics with the company, in relation to the company's CSR efforts (Kristof 1996; Bergami & Bagozzi 2000). According to Bigné, Currás-Pérez and Aldás-Manzano (2012), a key factor that influences the way consumers react to CSR is attributed to the congruence between the social initiative and the company's central activity.

This aligns with the congruity theory. According to this theory, consumers recall and take preference to thought coherence and consistency (Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955). As applied to this study, Lucke and Heinze (2015) identified that consumers show increased integrity and trustworthiness to company social campaigns which indicate congruence. In addition, Cha, Yi and Bagozzi (2016) analysed the influence of corporate social responsibility-brand fit on service brand loyalty and discovered that CSR-brand fit enhances personal and social brand identification, therefore enhancing consumers' service brand loyalty.

Prior literature has stated varied results on which activities a company must concentrate when investing in CSR. Evidence indicates that in particular situations where the company conducts CSR activities, consumers deduce a selfish motivation when business and causes are interconnected, however authentic philanthropic behaviour is recognised when the company's activities and the social cause are not linked (Ellen, Mohr & Webb 2000). In contradiction, further research maintains that campaign results are enhanced

when the social initiative and the company's primary action are congruent (Lee & Jeong 2014; Lucke & Heinze 2015; Speed & Thompson 2000).

According to Sen and Bhattacharya (2001), congruence is defined as the extent of connection consumers perceive between a company's CSR campaign and its core business. Previous literature has associated congruence with cause-related marketing activities. This input is founded on the Persuasion Knowledge Model and the pivotal idea that consumers use the information about a company's persuasion attempts to conclude the reasons that direct the company to conduct such activities (Friestad & Wright 1994). The sum of information they recall affects consumers' feelings and beliefs regarding the primary interests of the company, which results in the efficacy of the company's marketing strategies.

Furthermore, Webb and Mohr (1998) identified signals that consumers rate social initiatives carried out externally of the company's core functions more favourably. This is based on the idea that consumers construe that the company's motivations are connected to society's wellbeing and not to the benefits the company expects to receive something in return for their actions. Confirming this, Nan and Heo (2007) indicate that a cause-related marketing campaign with elevated congruence, in comparison to a cause-related marketing campaign with minor congruence, is not more effective. Furthermore, Barone, Miyazaki and Taylor (2000) revealed that consumers take preference of a company's link with a genuinely philanthropic motivation above that of a comparable company whose projects indicate self-seeking motivation.

Based on these findings, despite a lack of positive impacts due to high congruence, there were no negative impacts identified. However, according to García-Jiménez, Ruiz-de-Maya and López-López (2017) these findings may be influenced by the circumstance that they concentrate on cause-related marketing, and the negative influence of congruence may be based on the connection between the involvement of a social cause with a purchase. Furthermore, cause-related marketing is part of a greater set of CSR programs (Robinson, Irmak & Jayachandran 2012) and the outcome of congruence

between a CSR program and a company's core business may be unalike to those observed with cause-related marketing activities.

In contradiction, another series of related research papers on the topic based on the Theory of Associative Networks (Bower 1981), reinforces the positive correlation between congruence and consumers' responses. The research is principally applied to examine the impacts of sponsorship programs. The theory implies that enhanced levels of consistency in the perceived association concerning the actual event and the sponsoring company increases the consumers' positive beliefs and feelings toward the company based on the fact that the consumers believe the company's actions to be fitting (Dean 1999, 2002; Gross & Wiedmann 2015; Speed & Thompson 2000).

According to Dean (1999), low level congruence necessitates further explanation to instill the context and consumer association, which impedes the process of consumer connection and results in the establishment of questionable principles regarding the motivations of the company. This notion was confirmed by Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006), who revealed comparable results and exhibited the negative impact of low congruence. In agreement, Rodgers (2013) noted that the majority of observed research analyses on sponsorship presume that associations between companies and causes are more successful when they stimulate congruence versus when their partnerships are incongruent.

With regards to CSR, Lucke and Heinze (2015) identified that consumers show increased integrity and trustworthiness to company social campaigns which indicate congruence. In addition, Cha, Yi and Bagozzi (2016) analysed the influence of corporate social responsibility-brand fit on service brand loyalty and discovered that CSR-brand fit enhances personal and social brand identification, therefore enhancing consumers' service brand loyalty. Furthermore, Gupta and Pirsch (2006) note that an increased congruence level between the company and the cause is more likely to result in a positive assessment of the company's products and services, resulting in a subsequent rise in consumer purchase intention.

Founded on the research evidence identified that supports the assured impact and influence of congruence, it is rational to anticipate that enhanced congruence levels between a company's CSR initiatives and their core business function will result in a more positive consumer response due to the fact that consumers deduce authentic altruistic motives, excluding the prospect of self-seeking conduct on the part of the company. The enhanced congruence level between the prospects, awareness, connotations, activities, and accountabilities of the company's actions and the CSR opportunity, ensure an easily cohesive message into the consumers' perceptions, bolstering the link between the company and CSR. This is true with regards to consumer responses to the CSR campaign itself and consumer responses towards the company. Therefore, congruence leads to enhanced CSR associations, enhanced consumer attitude with regards to the CSR campaign, and enhanced motivation to buy and endorse the company's product and services (García-Jiménez, Ruiz-de-Maya & López-López 2017). However, it must be noted that prior research conducted by Deng and Xu (2015) emphasises the need of long-term organisational attention when it comes to CSR. The allure of CSR is not simply boosting an organisation's short-term benefits, such as consumer's purchase intention, but more importantly, is it to sustain a long-term and positive relationship between the organisation and its customers, which may result in positive word-of-mouth marketing and customer loyalty, which are the most appreciated intangible assets for the organisation and a basis for competitive advantage formation.

2.5.4. Consumer Skepticism and CSR

Consumer skepticism has been theorised as an indicator that influences people to doubt the authenticity and legitimacy of particular methods of marketing communication, creating a negative stance regarding the intentions of a company (Obermiller & Spangenberg 1998). Skepticism may occur as a consumer response to a company's activities, whereby the consumer is more likely to distrust, suspect and question the motives of an organisation

(Skarmeas & Leonidou 2013). According to previous research conducted on the concept of CSR, it has been proposed that skepticism associated with CSR initiatives occur when consumers connect a self-seeking impetus to the company. Skepticism also occurs when consumers find it challenging to authenticate a company's CSR initiatives and actions (Campbell & Kirmani 2000; Forehand & Grier 2003).

According to Friestad and Wright (1994), the degree of consumer skepticism fluctuates between consumers, which impacts on the influence of the CSR initiative on consumer behaviour. A consumer's previous experience regarding a company's efforts may influence their level of skepticism, and a common characteristic of skeptical consumers is that they may vary their level of skepticism when they receive authenticated evidence. Therefore, the more value a company can convey around their CSR initiatives, the more positive the consumers' attitude (Skarmeas & Leonidou 2013).

Company credibility with regards to CSR campaigns is enhanced when the organisation's principal message is social, and their communication efforts are openly related to non-economic concerns (Priester & Petty 1995). This is confirmed by the Cognitive Theory, which states that a credible message results in positive consumer attitudes and responses (Petty & Cacioppo 1986). The more skeptical the consumer, the more they question and inspect the company's CSR activities. When consumers do not trust CSR initiatives and they connect a self-centered motive to the company, they will react negatively to the CSR campaign and to the company's core business function (Campbell & Kirmani 2000; Forehand & Grier 2003).

However, it has been noted that congruousness between the core business function of a company and its CSR actions activate consumer education via the processing of influential information. This enhances the awareness and status of the company, which decreases skepticism, pushing the allocation of the relationship between the cause and the company, which results in a more favourable consumer attitude toward the CSR campaign (Dean1999) and enhanced CSR associations (Menon & Kahn 2003). According to García-Jiménez, Ruiz-de-Maya and López-López (2017), this results in consumers

who are less skeptical creating further CSR connections when the company's activities are congruent with their CSR campaign, and consumers who are more skeptical indicating a less than positive response to the CSR campaign and towards the company itself.

2.6. The Green Economy

Environmental sustainability has gained prominence since the late 1980s. Issues such as resource exploitation, pollution, and species extinction have promoted environmental issues to the forefront of global politics, resulting in responses from conservationists and environmental economics representatives alike (Du Pisani 2006). Both businesses and consumers now face environmental regulations on elements such as water, air, biodiversity and waste, amongst others, and yet natural resources are continuingly being exploited and biodiversity is on the rise. The search for a solution to the global environmental crisis is the second largest challenge globally, only preceded by the war against terrorism (Camrova 2007), and in response governments and businesses are implored to take action to preserve the global environment.

The term 'green economy' may have originated from the radical environmentalism experienced in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period the term was used as a call to action for a transformation of economic relationships, therefore aligning them with limited natural resources and ecological ideals. The green economy may be described as an approach to economics which supports the symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship between humans and their environment. It states that all economic decisions are to consider the ecosystem. Income growth and employment is to be supported by investments from both the public and private sector, carbon emissions and pollution are to be reduced, and energy and resource efficiency are to be reinforced. The prevention of biodiversity and ecosystem decline is to remain a priority, and natural capital is to be sustained and promoted as a

crucial economic and public asset (Geary 2022; Worthington 2018; Worthington 2020).

Key approaches to sustainable development were established after the first Rio Summit in 1992, however criticism was received on the basis that such approaches did not sufficiently contest the capitalist industrialising model. Rather than effectively tackling the environmental crisis, it is argued that these approaches tried to simply regulate capitalism in the quest of environmental goals (Castro 2004). In response, the World Bank began promoting and guiding resources towards the concept and initiatives of green growth in 2003 (Worthington 2018).

The United Nations has featured the green economy as part of their sustainable development agenda, where the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) clearly expressed its point of view in their 2011 report *Towards a Green Economy*. The report, compiled by UNEP's Green Economy Initiative in collaboration with global economists and experts, demonstrates that the greening of economies is not a strain on growth but rather a new engine of growth. It states that it is a net creator of jobs, and that it is also a vital strategy for the eradication of poverty. The report identified the great misallocation of global capital as a result of the ineffective assignment of market value to environmental initiatives, and further stated that minimal investment had been made in renewable energy, energy efficiency, public transport, sustainable agriculture, ecosystem conservation, biodiversity and water resources. It proposed targeted investment essential for the creation of the new green economy, as well as interventions that advocated more effective methods of valuing the environment to encourage markets to mobilise capital in more sustainable avenues. According to UNEP, its aim is to enable a quick and effective movement towards greener focused development and social justice, rather than development for growth's sake only (UNEP 2011).

The green economy is concerned with the achievement of the triple bottom line, which ensures that the environment is to be sustainable, society is to be just, and production is to be local. It is therefore imperative to explore and evaluate the interdependencies of the economy, society and the environment.

With regards to sustainability, the environment is a closed system with constrained resources. If human existence is under risk due to limited resources, its prosperity is irrelevant. It is therefore essential for nations to safeguard a mutually beneficial relationship between sustainability and economics. With this in mind, all countries and global businesses, are expected to address their emissions and pollution reduction, their energy and resource efficiency, and the impact that these aspects will have on local employment and economic growth.

2.6.1. Emissions and Pollution

According to the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022), the growth of industrial establishments has intensified the volume of greenhouse gases within the atmosphere, therefore increasing the speed of the natural process of climate change. These emissions are released when fossil fuels are burned for energy objectives, producing a blanket effect that inhibits heat from escaping the earth's atmosphere. This causes the heat to return to the earth, rising its temperature. This is defined as the greenhouse effect (Worthington 2020).

The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) (2010) declares that this change of the global climate system is caused by emissions is an outcome of human activity. The notion attracts vast attention due to its widespread impact on the global ecosystem and its effect on business. It is now a business concern due to reporting obligations, heightened regulations, pressure from investors, energy costs, costs due to climate change directly, and the consumer demand for environmentally friendly production methods (Worthington 2020).

Findings from a broad range of climate model simulations indicate that our planet's average temperature could increase by between 1.1 to 5.4°C by the year 2100 as a result of climate change caused directly by emissions and polluted air. The outcome includes soaring sea levels, submerged coastal cities and areas, and melting glaciers which will limit water supply. Unpredictable weather patterns and extreme weather events will result in

serious, repeated and prolonged droughts, storms, and floods (Herring 2021; Worthington 2020).

Human health and climate change are strongly interconnected, and changes in weather patterns due to climate change affect human health. Dangerous weather events triggered by climate change will adversely impact vulnerable global communities with regards to the availability of food, jeopardising their resistance to infection and illness. Dangerous weather events are linked with water borne diseases, and drought, flood and temperature increases are associated to disease outbreaks within lower income regions where close living proximity is observed (Worthington 2020).

Climate change is the predecessor to long term seasonal disturbances in weather patterns, which will have a direct bearing on the movement and circulation of pollutants in the environment. Rain is a crucial instrument for the eradication of pollutants from the environment. Nevertheless, in some nations, the extreme decrease in rain patterns in combination with advanced evaporation rates due to amplified temperatures will reduce stream flows and limit water availability for pollutant eradication (Thambiran & Diab 2010; Worthington 2020).

Organisations and investors are becoming increasingly aware of the negative impact that climate change may have on their success. The consequence of climate change on business includes increasing raw material costs, supply chain interruptions, a decrease in labour availability, and an adjustment in customer demand. Such ramifications are confirmed by the UNGC (2010) as major risks that business leaders are required to review.

2.6.2. Energy and Resource Efficiency

The prolonged pressure on natural resources endangers national and global economies and societies. It is contended that over one billion people suffer from food shortages, limited clean drinking water, and limited access to electricity (Kell 2012; Worthington 2020).

While energy is as an important driver of an economy, some electricity production methods affect the environment more adversely than others. Electricity technology development may provide the potential of job creation, which is necessary for economic growth; but this growth demands more electricity and therefore, an additional demand on energy resources (Worthington 2020).

Decreased water resources as a result of climate change will endanger human health and agriculture in the near future. This is currently clear in areas within Africa and Australia, where diminished food production and restricted water availability is evident. Extreme weather disparities result in deteriorating crop harvests, and reduced food and water resources will result in famine (Worthington 2020). According to Burke (2015) the impact of climate change may cost the global economy approximately 20% of the world's gross domestic product by the year 2100.

As water and food resources diminish and conventional global energy resources decrease due to the inability to self-regulate, a heightened awareness around energy and resource efficiency has become evident. In terms of sustainability, a green economy is necessary for humans to survive within the parameters of local resources, with policies for trading safeguarding the environment (Worthington 2020).

2.7. Australia's Green Economy

The environment is a significant topic in Australia, and the effects of climate change are prevalent throughout the states which have encountered various natural disasters including major flooding and bushfires. The Australian Bureau of Meteorology's State of the Climate Report (2020) indicates concern, highlighting an increase in the country's temperature, drought and floods occurrences, bushfires and greenhouse gases.

Starting from 1993 and every three years since, KPMG issues the state of sustainability reporting at an international level (Bilinelli 2015). According to its

latest 2020 report, the average reporting rate worldwide is at 80%, and Australia's national rate of sustainability reporting has increased from 77% (as of 2017) to 92% (as at 2020). This indicates a clear and continuous increase in corporate reporting in Australia as in 2005 the reporting rate was only at 23%, in 2011 it was at 57%, and in 2015 it at was 80% (KPMG 2020).

According to Visser et al. (2010), the reduction of their carbon footprint, resource management, and waste reduction have been essential in the CSR agenda of Australian businesses. Such initiatives encompass the lessening of energy consumption and water use, increased waste recycling avenues, and the enhanced utilisation of materials increasing production revenue. Government legislation and pricing may be the primary motivators behind these initiatives. For example, in practice, the Australian corporate sector has recognised CSR as a leading concern and several indicators have been established to assess the social performance of organisations, including the St James Ethics Centre's Corporate Responsibility Index, the Reputex SR Index, and the Australian CSR Standard. Such indicators are supported by numerous industry bodies, including the Australian Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability, and Models of Success and Sustainability (Truscott 2007; Bilinelli 2015).

In addition to government support through the Prime Minister's Business Community Partnership (PMCBP) awards, the Australian Government Corporations and Markets Advisory Committee and the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services provide investigation into CSR practice. Government departments have also included CSR in their commissioned reports (Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage) and CSR inspired events are common throughout the country, highlighting the relevance of the concept (Truscott 2007; Bilinelli 2015).

With regards to energy, companies in Australia are required to report their yearly fossil fuel and electricity use. This information is provided in the national reporting of carbon emissions, which is available to the general public and

mainstream media. The report offers a poor representation of Australia's carbon emissions when assessed with those from other developed countries in that Australia's per capita emissions are amid the highest on a global scale due to the state of the economy and the country's heavy dependance on coal for power production (The World Bank 2022).

According to the Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources' Long Term Emissions Reduction Plan, the country is aiming to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 in an applied and accountable manner that will take advantage of new economic prospects while enduring to attend to traditional markets. The plan concentrates on technology, and provides the Technology Investment Roadmap as its basis, prioritising technologies that will support Australia in reducing emissions and at the same time generating employment and developing the country's economy (Australian Government Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources 2021).

The Long-Term Emissions Reduction Plan is a great development forward for the Australian Government, who refused the endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol prior to late 2007 due to the cost of reducing energy emissions that would be necessary in the second commitment period. This decision compelled local governments to respond, and in the mid to late 2000s the South Australia government introduced compulsory water restrictions on farmers who were acquiring water from the Murray River by increasing rates, forcing some farmers to sell their assets and exit the farming sector. In 2003, New South Wales introduced the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme (GGAS) to decrease the emissions associated with the electricity used by the retail industry. Other states introduced their own greenhouse gas emission measurement schemes (including Victoria, Tasmania and Queensland) and local initiatives for environmental preservation. These included the prohibition of plastic bags in grocery shopping (South Australia) and the introduction of a 10-cent deposit for every drink can or bottle (Northern Territory and South Australia) (Bilinelli 2015).

These state specific schemes were difficult to follow for national businesses, and in response, the national government introduced the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting (NGER) Act in 2007. This provided a single and complete protocol for greenhouse gas emissions and legislated objectives to achieve Australia's international reporting commitments, to inform policy making and the Australian public, and to provide one national reporting framework for energy and emissions reporting (Bilinelli 2015).

In addition, the Australian Packaging Covenant was introduced. The project aims to design more resource efficient and recyclable packaging, while increasing the recycling of previously used packaging from homes and away-from-home sources, and reducing the effect of litter (Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation 2022). With over 1500 members, the obligations that arise from this covenant are compulsory and businesses risk legal action if they fail to meet their responsibilities.

2.7.1. Sustainability Reporting in Australia

Sustainability reporting is a main concern regarding corporate environmental practice for management professionals as it significantly contributes towards enhanced social and environmental performance. In addition to allowing companies to develop an understanding of their social and environmental impacts, sustainability reporting enables them to identify solutions to impending issues (Herzig & Schaltegger 2006). As consumers become more conscious of their choices and power within the marketplace, more transparency from organisations is required, and this can be achieved by sustainability reporting (Bilinelli 2015).

In addition to the ethical responsibilities of environmental preservation, there are noteworthy cost savings to be gained from energy consumption and waste generation. However, in the past such corporate reporting has been corrupted with scandalous statements that have overemphasised an organisation's sustainability initiatives, deceiving the public with false reporting and resulting in consumer skepticism due to the undermining of public trust. Scandals such

as that of Volkswagen (Mačaitytė 2018), deepen consumer skepticism around reporting integrity with many consumers believing that if a large and popular brand such as Volkswagen is prepared to swindle their environmental reporting to enhance the image of their products, it is highly possible that other brands may do the same.

CSR has stimulated the introduction of the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) G3.1 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, the UN Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights, and the United Nations Global Compact, with initiatives centered on three major areas: animal wellbeing, labour issues, and the environment (Truscott 2007; Hobill & Sanderson 2017). These initiatives provide organisations with guidelines to report on their sustainability and are used by the majority of Australian companies (Bilinelli 2015).

2.7.1.1. The GRI's G3.1 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines

The Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) G3.1 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines provide a standard of generally accepted reporting guidelines for organisations to report on their sustainability. There are three parts in the GRI/G3. Part one includes the reporting principles, which explain in detail what companies need to report. Part two provides guidance on reporting including the organisation's strategy and company profile, its management approach and its performance indicator (which includes social, environmental and economic performance), and part three involves standard disclosures (Global Reporting Initiative 2022).

In January 2023, the (GRI) will be setting a new global benchmark for sustainability reporting through their revised Universal Standards. These standards shall represent the most considerable update since the GRI transitioned from providing guidance to setting standards in 2016. The Universal Standards reinforce the basis of all reporting through GRI, ensuring the maximum level of transparency for organisational impacts on the economy, environment, and people (Global Reporting Initiative 2022).

2.7.1.2. The United Nation's Guiding Principles on Businesses and Human Rights

These principles include three pillars including government's responsibility to protect human rights, company's responsibility to ensure employee minimum rights, and the legal process involved when a company fails to respect human rights (United Nations 2011; Bilinelli 2015).

2.7.1.3. The United Nation's Global Compact

The third main reporting framework in Australia is the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), which specifies ten principles responsible businesses should follow to achieve a minimum set of values. As the leading global CSR initiative, with signatories from over 160 countries, these principles advocate four areas that responsible companies are encouraged to adhere to according to the United Nation's (UN) standard. These include human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption (United Nations Global Compact 2010)

The first responsibility is that of human rights, which is the social element of CSR. Members of the UN Global Compact are required to respect human rights as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and cannot be involved in any human right abuses. The second responsibility is that of labour and the eradication of discrimination in the workplace. The third responsibility is that of the environment. Members of the UNGC are required to use environmentally friendly technology and innovation, and adopt a preventative approach to environmental challenges (United Nations Global Compact 2010). Such prevention measures include sustainable production methods, research initiatives, appointing staff for environmental risk assessments, and instituting a code of conduct for good environmental practices. The final responsibility of the UNGC is that of anti-corruption. This area is vital for corporate reputation as a corruption scandal considerably and

negatively affects company reputation and brand trust, and carries increased legal consequences. It is suggested that organisations prevent against corruption by adopting internally corruption policies and by communicating and disclosing their anticorruption best practices publicly.

While these guidelines are a positive attempt to control the sustainability reporting of global organisations, they remain voluntary and there is no real penalty in the case of non-compliance, other than in the case of human rights abuse. However, when a company publishes their sustainability report, it connects their actions with the numbers provided in their report. This establishes a positive and fruitful dialogue between the company and its external stakeholders, ensuring enhanced company credibility and trust (Priester & Petty 1995). Companies are then able to better realise the needs of their external stakeholders, resulting in enhanced innovation to meet these needs while enhancing the company's reputation as a responsible business, and contributing to the company's brand positioning by increasing its competitive advantage (Bilinelli 2015).

2.8. Food Production in Australia

The food industry significantly impacts, and greatly relies on human, natural and physical reserves (Genier, Stamp & Pfitzer 2009), however a major challenge facing the industry today is ecosystem degradation (Hartmann 2011). In addition, food is a basic human need, and people have robust opinions about what they consume. The result is a complicated collection of obligations for the food industry regarding the production of the raw materials, environment and social requirements, the entire value chain, and the quality, healthiness and safety of products (Maloni & Brown 2006).

2.8.1. The Environmental Impact of Food Production in Australia

In 2000, the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, introduced the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Its aim was to evaluate the effects of ecosystem transformation for human well-being and the scientific basis for action required to improve the preservation and sustainable use of those systems and their support of human well-being (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005). The results of the report indicate that in the last fifty years, humans have altered ecosystems more swiftly and more significantly than in any equivalent period of time in human history. The risk is non-reversible effects on the ecosystem, which will have serious consequence for business (Bilinelli 2015).

As reported by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), the majority of ecosystems are being distorted by human activity in extraordinary ways mostly due to agriculture. As a concerning and continuing crisis, environmental ruin is escalating due to the progression of climate change, increased Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) levels, pollution, the melting of the Artic and the rise of the sea levels, species extinction, and deforestation.

When considering the food industry specifically, the sector directly and negatively impacts on greenhouse gases and environmental ruin through activities such as deforestation. According to Howden (2019), emissions from land use (mostly agriculture, forestry and land clearing) make up approximately 22% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. When considering the entire food chain (including fertiliser, transport, processing, and sale), this percentage increases up to 29%.

According to a study on food waste by RMIT University, in Australia alone, 4.2 million tons of food waste is dumped in landfill annually. The food service industry is the leading contributor to landfill waste at approximately 661,000 tons a year, followed by food manufacturing and food retail (Verghese et al. 2013; Bilinelli 2015).

With the growing demand for food projected to increase by 70% by 2050 (Linehan et al. 2012), there is a need for companies within the food industry to

identify activities that can meet food demands without further impairing the environment or the integrity of the food supply chain. Such challenges pressuring businesses and society make CSR essential in the effort of resolving these obstacles by offsetting society's needs for natural resources with the environment's ability to supply them.

The processing of food and beverage is Australia's leading manufacturing industry. As a major sector for the Australian economy with regards to monetary impact and employment, the food industry is extremely active and motivated by demanding customers wanting variety, excellence, and value. As a globally focused industry, it provides exports to in excess of 200 markets. (Austrade 2019).

To assess how the Australian food industry is affecting the ecosystem, we can evaluate the data provided by the agriculture sector. This does not provide an overall analysis of the impact of the food industry on the environment; however, it may offer some information regarding the ramifications that the food industry has on the ecosystem.

According to the Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (2022) agriculture accounts for over half of Australia's land use, and the sustainable management of this land is a highly relevant topic for both farmers and the public. To date, there are various sustainable land practices that have become standard for Australian farmers including many broadacre cropping farms now retain stubble (85% of farms), minimise tillage (68% of farms) and optimise the use of (and reduce reliance on) pesticides or fertiliser (65% of farms). Many livestock farms are now using various grazing management systems such as cell, strip or rotational grazing (61% of farms) and setting a long-term groundcover requirement (61% of farms) to protect the deterioration of the land and its ability to regenerate.

However, according to Granwal (2022), forecasts indicate a steady increase in the use of fossil fuels within the agriculture industry, with the annual consumption volume in Australia in 2020 to be around 2.75 billion liters, an increase from 2.7 billion liters in 2019. While greenhouse gas calculators often show that farm energy use is a small portion of overall farm emissions,

methane is the main greenhouse gas produced in grazing systems. The microbes in the rumen of livestock (in particular cattle, sheep, and goats) produce methane (from the fermentation of feed) which is then belched out. Livestock rumen accumulation, nitrogen fertiliser applications, and atmospheric nitrogen fixed by legumes are the major contributions of reactive nitrogen to soil for grazing enterprises. Livestock manure (dung and urine) contains a high concentration of nitrogen, and around 80% of all nitrogen consumed by ruminant livestock is excreted in dung and urine (Agriculture Victoria 2021).

In Australia, agriculture contributes approximately 13% towards greenhouse gas emissions per year. 42% of the agricultural sector's emissions are methane from livestock, fertilisers used for vegetable crops, and waste, including manure and decaying vegetable matter (Climate Council 2021).

Land clearing for pastures and grazing is an additional source of emissions related to agriculture. While the climate impact of land clearing is partially counterbalanced by land restoration initiatives somewhere else, it still adds substantially to Australia's overall emissions. Australia has constantly been recognised as a global leader for land clearing, which is mostly conducted to accommodate and accelerate the growth of the agricultural sector.

In an attempt to refer to greenhouse gases as a group (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide) carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2-eq or CO2e) is used to refer to all greenhouse gases by reducing them to a single metric that can be used more simply in conversation. The issue with this collective phrase is that methane and carbon dioxide are both greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, but they each have different properties, potencies and lifetimes. Methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide being 28 to 100 times more powerful than carbon dioxide. The use of this straightforward metric implies that one ton of methane released into the atmosphere will produce a similar amount of heating to between 28 and 100 tons of carbon dioxide over any given period (Climate Council 2021).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2022), agriculture production is extremely dependent on water and

increasingly subject to water threats. It is also the leading water using sector and a key water polluter. Enhancing agriculture's water management is thus crucial to a sustainable and productive agriculture industry. With regards to water consumption in Australia, farms used a total of 6.5 million megaliters of water taken from various sources for the financial period 2019 – 2020. While this has declined from previous years due to drought and bushfires, the sector still remains the largest water consumption of any industry, and the efficient management of this water is of utmost importance.

2.8.2. Supply Chains Within the Food Industry in Australia

As the move from the single-firm level organisations to supply chains and networks within the food industry grow, large retailers and food processors are progressively faced with growing obligations (Hartmann 2011). Issues can occur throughout the food supply chain, from the start of the chain with the farmers or at the end of the chain with the retailers (Bilinelli 2015).

Supply chain complexities are especially pertinent within the food industry when dealing with natural produce that can deteriorate over time and the incapacity to halt farm production. The food supply chain commences with product grown or produced on a farm, using natural ecological resources such as sunlight, soil and water. In addition, production may also necessitate imported goods or services such as fertilisers, pesticides, expertise, and seeds, which all have their own intricate supply chain that most likely spans over various continents. Thereafter, the product may be required to undergo additional processing by one or more third parties before arriving at its destination of consumption. With consumers expecting their food products to be obtainable all year round regardless of the fact that certain agricultural products are seasonally grown and produced, food supply chains have become increasingly complex to manage (Bilinelli 2015).

In 2001, the World Health Organisation published a report on food safety strategy, noting that fluctuating practices in agriculture, amplified urbanisation, varying food consumption patterns, and the globalisation of the food trade,

have contributed to the heightened risk of foodborne disease (WHO 2001). In 2015, the Hepatitis A virus was discovered in a batch of mixed frozen berries in Australia. When investigation followed, it was found that the supply chain of the mixed frozen berries was highly intricate in that the berries were grown in one country (either South or North America), processed in another country (China), and then sent to Australia as a retail food product. Therefore, the cause of the contamination may have originated in four different countries. With heightened media coverage, consumers began to replace their preference for imported frozen berries with locally grown fresh berries, and retailers responded with stocking their shelves with the consumers' new preference of berries. When the Australian Government issued a statement on their website regarding the contamination and recall of the frozen berries, they stated that they were unable to identify, with absolute certainty, from where the berries originated. In the minds of the Australian consumer, this raised significant fears around the ability of the retailer to distinctly distinguish and trace their imported food items within the global supply chain (Bilinelli 2015).

While companies within the food industry attempt to maintain low costs by transferring the production of food items to developing countries, they increase the possibilities of being threatened by food safety issues, and on an environmental level, it has a much greater carbon footprint due to the involvedness of logistics.

In Australia's agriculture industry, there is evidence of poor social issues and the abuse of human rights abuse (Bilinelli 2015). For example, farm fruit and vegetable pickers, who are often in Australia on a Working Holiday Visa programs have reported underpayment and poor working conditions (Meldrum-Hanna, Russell & Christodoulo 2015). Unfortunately, many of these employers are independent farmers who do not have a connection to larger businesses and therefore they are less likely to have a dedicated and suitable CSR program to prevent such issues from occurring. This then rests the accountability onto the food retailers to ensure that the food products that they purchase are sourced from reputable suppliers who are able to prove that are meeting their commitment to protecting human rights. For example, Woolworths have a sustainability strategy which outlines their expectations

from suppliers. It states that the products that they provide on their shelves for purchase by the Australian public must be produced in a way that respects and supports the human rights of labourers, and that the environmental impacts of production are achieved according to relevant Australian and international standards. While Woolworths may state their expectations clearly in their sustainability strategy, it has proven difficult for them to enforce, and they have been linked to food producers that have been accused of abusing the human rights of their labourers in the past (Meldrum-Hanna, Russell & Christodoulo 2015). The concern is that if suppliers continue to abuse the human rights of their labourers regardless of their customers sustainability strategies, it can be presumed that the environmental impacts of their production are also not achieved according to relevant Australian and international standards.

A possible answer to gain expertise on social issues within the food industry is Ethical Trade, which aims to safeguard conditions within value chains. Ethical Trade is not a certification but rather it can be used for organisations to gain relevant expertise and training, including strategies, which will allow them to achieve a positive social standard in complicated supply chains. The Ethical Trade Initiative states that pressure from consumers plays a pivotal part in exposing issues and driving change in business conduct. With ethical consumerism on the rise, and increasing demand for ethical products, organisations are being forced to pay attention and meet these demands (Ethical Trade Initiative 2022).

2.8.3. Societal Pressure and the Food Industry in Australia

Food is a basic human need and consumers have robust opinions about what they eat, whether it be due to taste, comfort, entertainment, or health purposes. This places pressure on the food industry with regards to the production of the raw materials, the environmental, and social conditions throughout the value chain (Hartmann 2011).

The rise of the responsible consumer is evident with 55% of global consumers stating that they are willing to pay more for products and services offered by organisations that are dedicated to positive social and environmental impact (Nielsen 2014). The inclination to purchase socially responsible brands is more evident in Asia-Pacific (64%), and Australian consumers are willing to pay more for responsible products than Europeans by 40%. According to a Nielsen survey (2014) 52% of the global respondents noted that they check product labels before they purchase products to ensure that the brand they are purchasing is committed to positive social and environmental impact. This is confirmed by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment. Furthermore, Yeh (2015) states that CSR enhances customer advocacy and consumers are more likely to encourage their friends and relatives to purchase from a provider who is committed to CSR initiatives.

As the media and NGOs continue to expose the negative impact of product production, the more the informed, aware and educated consumer chooses to not support organisations involved in cruel and environmentally devastating production methods. This may result in food production organisations being forced to adjust their production processes, change products, or modify their strategy entirely. For example, in 2012 Animal Australia introduced a campaign to prohibit the production of caged eggs. Robustly supported by consumers who boycotted caged eggs, the campaign had a major effect on the industry with Australia's big retailers switching or starting to switch from caged to free range eggs (Animals Australia 2013). Furthermore, the campaign forced McDonald's Australia to shift from caged eggs to free range eggs after publicly exposing the fast-food leader to Australian consumers. After the campaign went viral, McDonald's announced, under the mounting NGO and public pressure, that it would stop using caged eggs by 2017 (Donelly 2014; Bilinelli 2015).

Societal pressure can occur in several ways, however there are two types of strategy that consumers often implement to change the behaviour of food production companies: positive strategies or negative strategies. Positive strategies involve the evolution of green markets and socially responsible consumption. This is evident in the rise of the organic market and social labels such as Fair Trade which provide a commitment to proper working conditions and reasonable pricing. Negative strategies involve consumers withdrawing their support for certain products by non-purchase, directly affecting the company's profits (Craine et al. 2008).

According to the 2021 Australian Organic Market Report, the amount of certified organic operations in Australia has grown by 38% since 2011, and the Australian organic industry currently contributes over $2 billion to the nation's economy every year (Australian Organics Limited 2021). The report found that nine million Australian households purchased an organic product in 2021, and 13% of households spent 50% or more of their household food allocation on organic products in 2021, which is an increase from 10% in 2019. With regards to financial constraints, 8% of organic shoppers said they had cut back their household food allocation to organic products due to financial constraints and reduced availability due to Covid19, and price/value for money remains the number one barrier to buying organic products. With regards to certification, more than 50% of organic shoppers check for certification marks on organic product labels, and 31% of consumers who purchased an organic product in 2021 believe that they have been previously misled by organic claims on product packaging.

Australian consumers mostly purchase organic goods due to the belief that the products are of a better quality, contain no (or fewer) chemicals, involve less packaging, are fresher, and support local farmers. They note that they consider organic products to be better for their health and for the health of the planet (Australian Organics Limited 2021). In addition, research conducted by Pradhan (2018) states that consumers feel a sense of pride when purchasing from a socially responsible company, because it gives them the opportunity to support humanity and their nation, despite their busy lifestyles.

The growing market share of organic products in Australia reflects consumers' preferences for cruelty free products and environmentally friendly socially responsible products produced in a sustainable way. This trend is expected to rise with indicators suggesting an increase in household annual spend on organic products (an increase of 12.8%) and 565 000 additional households purchasing organic products since 2019 (Australian Organics Limited 2021).

By choosing not to buy certain brands or products or through participation in consumer boycotts (negative strategies), consumers are able to convey their concern over socially or environmentally irresponsible practices conducted by food production organisations. This strategy is often supported by NGOs and can have a serious impact on the food industry. NGOs identify CSR as an opportunity to attract interest to their causes (Moon 2014). By publicly exposing irresponsible corporate behaviour, NGOs encourage consumers to boycott products, sign petitions, and/or stop buying a brand's items.

For example, in 2012 Greenpeace Australia launched a campaign to modify John West's fishing practices, which they believed to be environmentally damaging. Twenty thousand Australian consumers supported the campaign to force the company to move away from Fish Aggregating Device (FAD) fishing methods. Greenpeace further highlighted fishery sustainability issues by providing a tuna ranking guide to educate consumers on the sustainability of tuna products, thereby giving consumers the choice to purchase sustainably sourced tuna, and to boycott tuna products that are not sustainably sourced (Greenpeace 2016). Another NGO also raising public mindfulness on non-sustainably sourced tuna is the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and its SOS (Save Our Seafood) campaign (Bilinelli 2015).

According to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) (2014) the demand for sustainable seafood is growing internationally and nine consumers out of ten believe that ocean sustainability is of vital importance. Now more than ever, consumers are conscious of the danger fish supplies are under, which gives them the motivation to demand sustainably sourced fish products, and places pressure on the fisheries to meet these demands.

2.9. Sustainable Agriculture

With over seven billion people alive on earth, there is sincere concern regarding our capacity to produce enough food in order to feed the increasing number of people. The Census Bureau estimated a 0.2% growth rate from New Year's Day 2021 to New Year's Day 2022 (Business Standard 2021) and as the demand for food keeps mounting, businesses will need to discover ways to have less impact on the environment while increasing food supply to keep up with demand, and still achieving economic success.

According to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005), if the existing trend persists, ecosystem services that are freely available today, will discontinue or become more expensive in the future. This is already evident within the fishing industry, where there has been an obvious overutilisation of the oceans. The dwindling catches are clear symptoms of a seriously disturbed ocean ecosystem, which is no longer able to deliver the full range of services that it once did in the past, including the supply of food.

As these challenges become apparent, an increasing number of businesses are changing their strategy to sustainable agriculture and ECSR, which have been identified as the key to avoiding declining resources and to feed the world's growing population.

According to the UC Davis Agricultural Sustainability Institute (2022), sustainable agriculture integrates three main goals – environmental health, economic profitability, and social and economic equity. It encourages sustainable farming practices, which preserve the environment in which we live, is socially and ethically responsible, and delivers business profitability for producers, while ensuring that future generations will not suffer with environmental issues being created now.

Sustainable agriculture is still a new concept and practice, and there are other strategies reacting to the impending food challenge that do not involve sustainability. An example of such as strategy is the use of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds. In a progressively competitive industry, farmers are choosing Genetically Modified products, which are foods that have had their

DNA artificially modified to provide them with particular attributes including drought and pest resistance, enhanced yield and quicker life cycles.

Despite ongoing debate regarding the ethical position of GM food products, they are considered by certain individuals as the solution to the heightened need for food and the dwindling resources accessible to farmers. Regardless of ethical debates, there are also serious concerns regarding the fact that the modified pest resistance may encourage a new tougher breed of insect, which might be unmanageable in the future. A further worry is the cross pollination of genetically modified food products and regular crops, whereby the modified DNA passes into the food chain, without completely understanding the long-term effect of these genes on humans (Nawaz et al. 2019).

There is also a significant financial danger to farmers who use GM foods. Regular seeds grow into crops, which are harvested and produce seeds for new crops. GM seeds do not yield crops that produce seeds, and therefore farmers are forced to buy new seeds at an increased price when compared to regular seeds. The danger is that if the GM seeds do not deliver the promised result due to outside factors such as drought or floods (which are prevalent in Australia), the economic loss to these farmers could be substantial (Bawa & Anilakumar 2013).

Regardless of the risks involved, businesses within the food industry that forge forward innovative technologies or integrative business strategies in expectation of the impending challenges the sector faces, will gain the competitive advantage when new policies are put in place (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).

2.10. ECSR and the Food Industry

The concept of ECSR is particularly relevant within the food industry. The food industry's negative environmental impact includes water and soil pollution, food wastage, the destruction of forests, the ineffective discarding of waste, food packaging, service wares waste, and global warming from methane (Kim

2017; Devin & Richards 2018). The industry's costs to the environment include energy and water consumption, which if reduced, could have a beneficial financial impact for organisations within the industry, as well as a beneficial environmental impact.

Furthermore, The World Bank has confirmed that climate change is an approaching risk for agriculture and food practices, with growing water limitations adding to food system challenges (Thacker 2019). It is due to these issues that consumers, government, corporate leaders and activists have placed pressure on the food industry to tackle the environmental matters concerned with their industry.

To combat the food industry's negative environmental impact, authors have suggested the following ECSR initiatives: environmentally friendly products; responsible environmental care practices within the supply chain (Maloni & Brown 2006); biodegradable materials for packaging (Marsh & Bugusu 2007); pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices); waste audits; food donation programs; energy and water conservation strategies; and the promotion of consumer product packaging recycling (Kim 2017).

While stakeholders believe that ECSR is the most critical facet of an organisation's CSR endeavors (Kassinis & Vafeas 2006; Welford, Chan & Man 2007), a lack of ECSR in the food industry negatively affects an organisation's corporate image and profitability (Maloni & Brown 2006) and the introduction of such ECSR initiatives may combat such negative effects. When customers trust an organisation, their confidence levels in that organisation's product and service quality are enhanced, and these enhanced confidence levels result in customer repurchase behaviour and customer retention (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

2.11. Theoretical Underpinning

In support of expanding upon pre-conceived perceptions and assumptions, the researcher of this study has identified the underpinning theories (Lacey 2010), whereby concepts from these theories are used to support the study rather than full theories. This research is to be based on concepts from the following two main theories, and reference will be made to various concepts from other theories throughout the study:

2.11.1. The Stakeholder Theory

Carroll (1998) highlighted that the benefits of CSR should not only comprise of financial performance but also the interests of, and impacts on an organisation's stakeholders. There is a natural appropriateness between the concept of CSR and an organisation's stakeholders (Carroll 1998).

Created by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, the stakeholder theory proposes that the purpose of a business is to create value for its various stakeholders, which includes its customers (Freeman 2010). The stakeholder theory perspective contemplates with and for whom value is generated, what constitutes value in each stakeholder relationship, and how it is produced. Furthermore, a company is described as a collection of relationships among individuals or groups who affect or are affected by its business functions (Freeman 1984; Freeman 2010). These individuals or groups are vital to the company's operations.

Freeman defined a stakeholder as 'any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives' (Freeman 1984). These stakeholders offer resources, influence the industry environment, benefit from the organisation, and influence both its productivity and impact (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Therefore, it is the combined efforts of the stakeholder network that are the foundation of value creation (Haslam et al. 2015) and the revocation of stakeholder support can jeopardise the

sustainability of a business (Freeman 2010). From the perspective of the stakeholder theory, a shared purpose ought to result from the shared values of an organisation and its stakeholders, therefore serving as a robust motivator for joint value creation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund 2017). Joint value creation suggests that the relationships between a business and its stakeholders should be greater than transaction-oriented interactions (Freeman 2010) and according to Theodoulidis et al. (2017), a business ought to involve all its stakeholders (investors, employees, their community, customers, etc.) in its decision making.

The stakeholder theory of CSR implies that a company's success is reliant on both the monetary and non-monetary benefits of CSR that are presented to all stakeholders (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García & Marchante-Lara 2014; Brown & Forster 2013). This reinforces that stakeholders anticipate businesses to participate in social and CSR initiatives for various monetary and non-monetary advantages (Wolter & Cronin 2017). As applied to this study, organisations are driven to expand upon their objectives over and above profit expansion. Organisations that adopt ECSR as a manner in which to encourage socially responsible behaviours are in a favourable position to successfully act in response to customer requirements.

2.11.2. The Social Exchange Theory

Developed by George Homans in 1958, the theory indicates that human behaviour is an exchange of both physical and unquantifiable activity, specifically that of cost and reward (Homans 1958; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). The theory proposes that social behaviour is the outcome of an exchange process (Emerson 1976; Skidmore 1975) and interpersonal interactions comprise of exchanges of resources. Furthermore, satisfaction is predominantly influenced by the economic and social results of these exchanges. Therefore, the customer perceptions of a company can be influenced by various internal processes and interpersonal variables. According to Sierra and McQuitty (2005), in the case of a close interaction

between an organisation and a customer, the manner in which the company and its representatives behave is frequently more significant than what is actually delivered (Ozment & Morash 1994). In social exchange, customers and organisations realise a level of shared responsibility, and the success or failure of the outcome results in an emotional response (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005).

As applied to this study, the theory holds that the researcher would expect the independent variable of ECSR to positively influence the mediating variables of customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, which then positively influence the dependent variable of customer retention. This is because a business cannot exist without profits attained from satisfied customers, and customers expect an organisation to be an ethical corporate citizen, resulting in more favourable perceptions of the organisation. When this is not fulfilled by the organisation, the consumer no longer feels that the exchange is mutually beneficial. Since this exchange is characterised by reciprocation, customers who feel that they are not receiving ethical commitment from an organisation through its CSR initiatives, believe that this reciprocation is violated, and therefore they will choose to end their relationship with the organisation (Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016; Ho 2017).

2.12. Identification of Research Gaps

The researcher has identified prior research conducted on the necessity of CSR in business practice across various industries and countries, including the agriculture industry in India (Wani & Raju 2018), the European market (Maon, Swaen & Lindgreen 2015), the hospitality industry (Rhou & Singal 2019), the Vietnamese seafood industry (Vu et al. 2019), the tobacco industry (McDaniel, Lown & Malone 2018), the gambling industry (Leung & Robin 2017), the oil industry (Beck & Woolfson 2005), packaged foods (Wei et al. 2018), the automobile industry (García-Madariaga & Rodríguez-Rivera, 2017), and the banking industry (Mcdonald & Rundle-Thiele 2008).

Further literature regarding CSR contribution type (Hildebrand et al. 2017), CSR in the food industry (Hartmann 2011), and CSR as a public relations and marketing tool (Rahman, Rodríguez-Serrano & Lambkin 2017) confirms the positive effect CSR provides on business and the mounting pressure from consumers for business to include CSR in their priorities.

While previous research has been conducted on CSR and customer loyalty across various industries, studies on the topic, such as research regarding the ridesharing industry (Jeon, Lee & Jeong 2019), the airline industry (Han, Yu & Kim 2019), and the retail sector in South Korea (Park, Kim, & Kwon 2017), lack global applicability of their findings and suggests future research in other countries and industries.

Authors have called for further research to be conducted to advance the understanding of CSR's contribution to customer loyalty, including Inoue, Funk and McDonald (2017), and Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012). More recently in Spain, a study has found that CSR positively influences customer loyalty within the hypermarket environment (Cuesta-Valiño, Rodríguez, & Núñez-Barriopedro 2019), with the authors noting that literature on CSR and customer behaviour is limited. Despite the identified literature, the researcher has acknowledged that existing studies on CSR and customer loyalty lack differentiation between customer loyalty and customer retention, focusing on customer base growth rather than the proactive prevention of customer attrition.

For the purpose of this study, it is essential to appreciate the difference between customer retention and customer loyalty: Customer retention is a gauge of whether an existing customer continues to purchase products or services from a particular brand or business, while customer loyalty is the measure of a customer's inclination to choose a brand or business as their first choice. This implies a refusal to products and services from the brand or business' competitors. Customer loyalty is a behavioural tendency that implies that a customer will constantly react positively towards a brand or organisation, and it implies the willingness of the customer to engage with the brand or organisation on a continuous basis. This distinction between customer loyalty

and customer retention is significant, because a customer who continues to purchase services and products from a particular brand or service, may be retained, but may not necessarily be loyal (Vision Edge Marketing n.d).

To the best of their knowledge, the researcher has identified minimal previous studies pertaining to an organisation's CSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry (Pérez & Bosque 2015). Furthermore, there is limited identified data obtained directly from the consumer within the food industry with regards to use of ECSR as a customer retention strategy. This provides an opportunity for research to be conducted on how an organisation's ECSR influences customer retention within the food industry.

In the below summary table of past research, the researcher has summarised various prior studies, including their identified research gaps which provide justification for this research study. The prior studies identified offer the researcher the opportunity to expand upon and/or contradict findings in order to address this study's research problem with focus on mediated relationships of variables, including those used within the identified previous studies.

Table 1: Summary of prior studies and identified research gaps

Prior Studies	Study Focus	Research Gaps Identified
Corporate social responsibility and sustainability in the tourism sector: A systematic literature review and future outlook (Madanaguli, Srivastava, Ferraris & Dhir 2022)	This review describes conceptual, qualitative and quantitative empirical studies and separates them into themes based on two typologies: (1) the direct impact of CSR on employees, customers and business performance; and (2) the moderated and mediated relationships of variables, containing customer trust, identification, trust and value with CSR. The findings result in a framework emphasising the significance of CSR employment in constructing relationships with a variety of stakeholders in the tourism industry.	This review progresses a research framework for the reference of future researchers and practitioners, therefore it gives structure to the topic and encourages future research in the area. Opportunities exists for future research to be conducting in other industries, including the food industry with focus on moderated and mediated relationships of variables, including those used within this framework.

The Australian Organic Market Report (Australian Organic Limited 2021)	The 2021 report gives findings and insights into Australian organic businesses, domestic market value, Australian organic consumers and households, and the international organic market.	An opportunity exists for future research to expand upon these findings regarding the perceptions and bahaviour of Australian organic consumers in order to identify opportunities for a market competitive advantage for organisations within the food industry.
Corporate social responsibility and customer loyalty in food chains— Mediating role of customer satisfaction and corporate	This study investigated the role of perceived CSR in developing customer loyalty by examining the direct and mediated effects of corporate reputation and customer satisfaction in Pakistan's food chains. The findings indicated a substantial positive effect of perceived CSR on customer loyalty, corporate reputation, and customer satisfaction. In addition, customer satisfaction and corporate reputation seemed to mediate the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty.	The findings from this study are formed from data gathered from food chains in one country (Pakistan), and as such, the findings can't be generalised to other industries. In addition, this study doesn't include all the variables mediating the CSR–loyalty relationship. There is therefore an opportunity for research to be conducted on other variables such as word of mouth, credibility, and trust as a mediator. In addition, the study does not establish the role of moderating variables on the CSR-loyalty relationship, and future studies could focus on the role of gender, age, culture, government policy, and market orientation as such variables. The study deemed CSR a

reputation (Ali et al. 2021)		composite measure and didn't take into consideration its dimensions in the investigation. Future research may contemplate the dimensions of CSR to establish each dimension's influence on customer outcomes, including satisfaction, reputation, and loyalty.
Retailer corporate social responsibility and consumer citizenship behavior: The mediating roles of perceived consumer effectiveness and consumer	The study examines the impact of retailer CSR on consumers' perceptions and behaviour. The authors produce and justify a model which explores the mediating effects of perceived consumer effectiveness and consumer trust on the relationship between retailer CSR and consumer citizenship behaviour. The findings suggest that retailer CSR is positively linked with consumer citizenship behaviour, and that perceived consumer effectiveness and consumer trust positively mediate this relationship.	The data for this study was gathered from consumers in one country (China) who had visited hypermarkets and department outlets. Therefore, future research should collect data from consumers from of other sorts of retailing outlets and other emerging economies. While this study concentrates on a single industry (retailing), the findings may not be generalised to other industries. An opportunity exists for future research to expand this study's research model by involving more potential mediators, such as customer loyalty, word of mouth or brand identification.

trust (Nguyen & Pervan 2020)		
The impact of corporate social responsibility on consumer brand advocacy: The role of moral emotions, attitudes, and individual differences (Xie, Bagozzi	The study examines the effect of CSR on consumer advocacy behaviours toward corporate brands. The mediating roles of positive moral emotions (awe, gratitude, and elevation) and attitudes are investigated and the moderating impacts of social justice values and empathy on these mediation procedures are additionally considered. The findings indicate that both positive moral emotions and attitudes mediate the impact of perceived CSR initiatives on brand advocacy behaviours, however social justice values and empathy perform a dissimilar role in regulating the evocation of moral emotions and attitudes, dependent on the category of CSR activities.	The study suggests the use of real events and real companies for future studies due to the fact that the research was conducted through the use of scenarios to provoke emotional and evaluative responses. Xie, Bagozzi and Grønhaug (2019) indicate that such future research may enhance the findings of this study based on the idea that the scenarios used may have less of an impact on consumer behaviour than real events and real companies, and thus the findings of this study may be underestimated to the actual impact of CSR on consumer advocacy behaviours. The authors also call for future research to consider the organisational motives for participating in CSR initiatives. Consumer acknowledgment of altruistic motives versus self-serving motives may affect the degree of experienced moral

& Grønhaug 2019)		emotions and attitudes, and therefore consumer brand advocacy behaviours. Furthermore, achieving legitimacy by associating corporate behaviour with stakeholder expectations is required to ensure the organisation's success and therefore, continual existence. Hence, a possible research opportunity may include the study of consumers who provide legitimacy to organisations who position their CSR initiatives with the consumers' expectations.
Impact of a retailer's CSR activities on consumers' loyalty (Louis, Lombart & Durif 2019)	This research states that the influence of a retailer's CSR initiatives on consumer loyalty fluctuates based on the dimensions measured (philanthropic activities, respect for the environment, the consumers and the workers), completely or partly mediates by consumer trust in the organisation and/or organisation's perceived brand equity, and changes according to the groups of consumers measured. The findings also indicate that consumer trust in the organisation is a full mediator of the relationship between the environmental dimension of a	The study indicates that when CSR is considered in terms of its dimensions, their influences on consumer loyalty towards the firm may differ. This provides an opportunity for future research to be considered with regards to the environmental dimension of an organisation's CSR initiatives for the purpose of a possible customer retention strategy.

	retailer's CSR initiatives and consumers' loyalty towards this retailer (for the very socially conscious consumer). (Louis, Lombart & Durif 2019)	
The effects of corporate social responsibility on customer loyalty: The mediating effect of reputation in cooperative banks versus commercial banks in the Basque country	The study examined the mediating role of corporate reputation on the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty. The study further examines the part played by bank type in the mediation effect. The findings indicated that corporate reputation partly mediated the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty, however bank type showed no moderation to the mediation effect.	This research explores the mediating role of corporate reputation in the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty. Aramburu and Pescador (2019) acknowledge that there may be other processes through which CSR would impact various results, such as the possibility that CSR may affect several customer outcomes through other mediators, therefore boosting brand equity and producing greater levels of identification with the organisation. Therefore, there is an opportunity for further research to be conducted investigating CSR and how it may other customer outcomes through different mediators. The research focused on consumers in the Basque Country. Future research has the opportunity to examine customers in other countries or include cross-national studies to generalise

(Aramburu & Pescador 2019)		this result. In addition, Aramburu and Pescador (2019) suggest a future qualitative study to explore the finding on the relationship between sustainability and consumer loyalty.
Role of CSR in the consumer decision making process – The case of India (Pradhan 2018)	The study focused on the decision-making process of consumers when purchasing from socially responsible organisations. An exploratory approach was selected to obtain insight of the consumers' evaluation of their perceptions of a firm's CSR during the purchasing activity. 60 consumers were interviewed throughout India. Each interview was transcribed, and the responses were analysed using content analysis. The findings of the study support the concept of legitimacy theory, because most respondents stated that it was the responsibility of an organisation to give back to the society.	The study included only qualitative studies, and therefore the results cannot be generalised. The researchers suggest that quantitative methods can be designed for future research in the field. It is further stated that a cross-cultural study would offer greater insights and avenues for future analysis for the identification of diverse factors. In addition, the findings suggest that in a standard emerging market, the consumer is averse to paying a higher price for products manufactured by environmentally friendly organisations. An opportunity exists for research to be conducted within developed countries to further explore price sensitivity and CSR.

		In India, it is compulsory for organisations to allocate funding on CSR activities. However, in other countries where no such laws exist, Pradhan asks how such organisations can be motivated to take on CSR. There is an opportunity for research to be conducted on such organisational motivators. For the purpose of this research, the organisational motivator researched is that of financial gain through customer retention.
Consumer inferences of corporate social responsibility (CSR) claims on packaged foods (Wei et al. 2018)	This study investigated the influence of CSR claims provided on food packaging on consumers' health benefit perception, taste perception, attitude and behavioural intentions toward the food organisation. The CSR claims tested included: no claim, food manufacturing, employee wellbeing, and environmentally friendly packaging. The food types tested included essential food items and indulgent food items. The findings show that the CSR claim regarding food manufacturing is the most firmly correlated claim with consumers' health benefits perception. The CSR claim of employee wellbeing is most	According to Wei et al. (2018), future studies should take into consideration the possible effects of individual consumers' established motivations on product assumptions. Furthermore, future research could encompass multiple CSR initiatives to offer a more complete interpretation of how each CSR domain impacts consumer inferences. While consumers have varying dietary restrictions and beliefs regarding which food items are essential versus indulgent, there is an opportunity for future research to investigate whether the relationships tested in this study vary with food items of diverse

	effectively associated to the customers' taste perception and attitude towards the company. Overall, all the CSR claims were discovered to positively impact consumer purchase intentions and willingness to pay higher prices.	perceived levels of healthiness or tastiness, and/or essential versus indulgent.
Consumer responses to the food industry's proactive and passive environmental CSR, factoring in price as a CSR tradeoff (Kim 2017)	The study explores consumer reactions to the food industry's ECSR by varying levels of CSR and price as CSR tradeoffs. Findings show that proactive CSR programs produce increased positive consumer attitudes towards, and a greater intention to buy from the organisation when compared to passive CSR programs. In addition, strong communication intention enhances with CSR level in the lower price bracket. With regards to the influence of price, respondents indicated more optimistic mindsets towards an organisation that offers lower prices generally. Nonetheless, when an organisation shows proactive ECSR initiatives, respondents did not differentiate between prices and demonstrated overall positive intent to support as well as	This study explored one topic to represent an ECSR program in a single industry. Furthermore, the sample was restricted to college students with a scenario-based experiment design and a hypothetical organisation with limited external validity. There is an opportunity to research topics other than service wares and packaging issues with a wider selection of consumers (age, occupation, location) in order to generalise the study's findings. In addition, Kim (2017) calls for future research using a survey method to test stakeholders' reactions toward real companies and their ECSR programs.

	intention to buy from the organisation. When an organisation applies passive CSR initiatives and offers products at a lower price point, respondents demonstrated the lowest supportive and purchase intentions.	
Corporate social responsibility as a determinant of consumer loyalty: An examination of ethical standard, satisfaction, and trust	This study recognises the congruency between consumer values and the goals of CSR activities and corporate ethical standards as the two key determining factors of CSR quality and commitment. It further examines how consumer perceptions of CSR formed by the two factors enhance consumer loyalty. The study's results indicate that greater ethical standards influence consumers to perceive that the organisation is dedicated to its CSR activities, which stimulates superior consumer satisfaction with, and trust in the organisation, its services and products, which inspires consumer loyalty.	The lack of generalisability restricts the global applicability of the findings of this study. The survey was administered to retail consumers in South Korea only, and therefore the implications of the findings may not apply in countries with varying retail industry qualities and structures, or to other types of businesses and services. Furthermore, variables such as corporate repute, perceived risk, and individual variations among consumers (such as age, gender, and education) are well-known to affect how consumers make purchase choices. There is an opportunity to incorporate the moderating effects of these variables into future analysis in order to expand upon this study's findings. Park, Kim and Kwon (2017) suggest that future studies obtain data from a

(Park, Kim & Kwon 2017)		more diverse sample and examine the possible moderating effects of these variables to offer a more thorough framework forecasting the role of CSR in business achievement.
The status of corporate social responsibility research in public relations: A content analysis of published articles in eleven scholarly journals from	The study is a content analysis of 133 articles published in eleven academic journals regarding trends in CSR research in public relations. Lee (2017) indicates that while qualitative and quantitative research is apparent, an increase in mixed-method approaches is clear. Furthermore, the study states that research topics concerning the role of public relations and stakeholder perceptions have decreased.	With a decrease in research topics concerning the role of public relations and stakeholder perceptions, this study indicates an opportunity for further CSR research to be conducted on stakeholder (consumer) perceptions, attitudes and beliefs in order to add to the body of knowledge of CSR research. While an increase in mixed-method approaches has been acknowledged, an opportunity exists for future studies to follow this approach. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data allows the researcher to benefit from both the detailed, contextualised insights of qualitative data and the generalisable, externally valid insights of quantitative data.

1980 to 2015 (Lee 2017)		
Environmental corporate social responsibility (ESCR): Exploring its influence on customer loyalty (Rashid, Khalid & Rahman (2015)	According to Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015), the dimensions of ECSR include environmental philanthropy (e-philanthropy), environmental community involvement (e-community involvement), and environmental customer wellbeing (e-customer wellbeing). As the primary category of CSR activities (Carroll 1991), philanthropy is identified as an organisation's need to encourage the wellbeing of others. With regards to ECSR, philanthropy may be acknowledged as the provision of financial support to execute activities to boost environmental awareness and reactions within the public domain. CSR initiatives through social and community participation can be achieved with the contribution of community members in any CSR program, including that of ECSR, and an exceptional customer experience is a fundamental contributor towards a successful business. While	Based on their research, Rashid, Khalid and Rahman (2015) suggest that future studies explore a qualitative and grounded theory approach to strengthen these existing dimensions of ECSR.

	customer initiatives are intended to create and deliver the best product for customers, inclusive of comprehensive product information and safety, environmental customer wellbeing further encompasses the organisation providing eco-friendly products to customers and ensuring that these products are not harmful to the environment.	
Corporate social responsibility and service innovation on customer loyalty. An empirical investigation in wealth management	Yeh (2015) states that related literature indicates that insufficient studies have established the implications of CSR and service innovation. Consequently, the roles of CSR and innovation were examined in this study to assess how these factors impact customer loyalty in a wealth management context. The findings reveal that relationship quality and value are positively associated with customer loyalty, and customer advocacy is positively connected to both relationship quality and value. Furthermore, CSR and service innovation are positively linked to customer advocacy.	The research was limited to gathering data associated to certain service providers. Yeh (2015) suggests that research be carried out in other countries to test the vigor of the theoretical model.

services (Yeh 2015)		
Customer satisfaction and engagement – customer retention strategies for brand manager (Tripathi 2014)	This study investigates the numerous components of customer satisfaction and customer engagement, the strategies used by organisations to connect with customers and its significance to current marketing. The findings sates that benefits are realised when consumers are engaged, resulting to enhanced customer satisfaction, which can lead to in enhanced frequency of purchase, sales, profits, customer retention, positive word-of-mouth and improved market share.	An opportunity exists for future research to expand upon these findings regarding customer engagement and customer satisfaction as a strategy for customer retention within various industries and countries, including the food industry and Australia.
A study of the impact of corporate social	This study examines the influence of a retailer's CSR policy and its price image on retailer personality. Furthermore, it examines the impact of these two variables on the outcomes of retailer behaviour, such as	Lombart and Louis (2014) note that this research has limitations and opportunities for future research include reproducing the study over a more diversified sample of consumers. The generalisability of the findings is limited due

responsibility and price image on retailer personality and consumers' reactions (satisfaction, trust and loyalty to the retailer) (Lombart & Louis 2014)	consumer satisfaction, trust and loyalty toward the retailer. Findings reveal that perceived CSR and price image have a considerable positive/negative effect on retailer behaviour, with CSR having a substantial positive effect.	to only one food distribution retailer being studied, and an opportunity exists for future researchers to consider other food retailers. This study was conducted in a store laboratory and respondents established their evaluation of the retailer on two simulated shopping experiences and a single communication approach for the retailer's CSR policy. An opportunity to extend this research exists through conducting studies in real stores.
Global consumers are willing to put their	The Nielsen Global Survey on CSR surveyed 30,000 consumers in 60 countries to examine how concerned consumers are about sustainable practices when it relates to their purchase deliberation; which consumer	The findings from the Nielsen Global Survey (2014) indicate that the majority of consumers (52%) confirm that they have purchased a product from a socially responsible organisation within the last six months, however the findings also indicate

| money where their heart is when it comes to goods and services from companies committed to social responsibility (Nielsen 2014) | segments are the most supportive of ecological or other socially responsible initiatives; and which social issues attract the most alarm. The findings state that 52% of global respondents declare that they have bought at least one product or service in the past six months from a socially responsible organisation. The survey confirmed that sustainability and CSR efforts can bolster a company's profits, and 52% of global respondents stated that their purchase decisions are based on the fact that they check product labeling before purchase to ensure the brand is dedicated to achieving a positive social and environmental impact.

The findings of this survey also reveal that two-thirds of the "sustainable mainstream" population (a cluster of three of the five segments) will purchase products from sustainable suppliers rather than conventional products. Furthermore, these consumers are more prone to purchase products constantly from an organisation if they | that age is a determining factor in consumer purchasing behaviour when it comes to products produced by socially responsible companies. Younger consumers are much more likely (up to twelve times more likely) to be persuaded to purchase a product produced by a firm that conducts CSR initiatives when compared to older generations. Therefore, future research should take into account this determining factor when conducting research on the impact of CSR on consumer purchasing behaviour. A future study that uses a population sample reflective of the age demographic of the population under observation will most likely obtain overall findings that are skewed towards the responses of the younger age demographic, and therefore the findings will not be accurately indicative of the impact of CSR initiatives on the purchasing behaviour of the older age demographic. |

	are aware that the organisation is conscious of its effect on the environment and society. It is noted that Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), are more receptive to sustainability initiatives. Millennials represent 51% of consumers who will pay more for sustainable products and 51% of consumers who review packaging labels for information on sustainable practices. Regionally, there are large disparities between younger and older consumers in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East/Africa regions. In these developing countries, Millennial consumers who support sustainability actions are three times more agreeable to sustainability actions when compared to Generation X consumers (born between 1965 and 1980) and 12 times more agreeable than Baby Boomer consumers (born between 1946 and 1964).	

Corporate social responsibility and stakeholder value maximization: evidence from mergers (Deng, Kang & Low 2013)	This study uses a wide-ranging sample of mergers in the United States to determine whether CSR creates value for acquiring firms' shareholders. The findings state that high CSR acquirers achieve greater merger announcement returns, greater announcement returns on the value-weighted portfolio of the acquirer and the target, and greater increases in post-merger long-term operating performance, when compared with low CSR acquirers. It was further stated that mergers by high CSR acquirers are quicker to complete and are more likely to succeed than mergers by low CSR acquirers. This suggests that acquirers' social performance is a crucial determining factor of merger performance and the probability of its completion.	This study contributes to the body of knowledge of public relations research into CSR, indicating the mounting importance of CSR research in public relations and suggesting areas for development in future research, including the role of public relations and stakeholders' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. This provides an opportunity for further CSR research to be conducted on consumer perceptions, attitudes and beliefs within other industries in order to add to the body of knowledge of CSR research.
The effect of perceived CSR on customer	According to Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012), business and marketing scholars have investigated the effects of CSR on customer behaviour to understand its efficacy as a marketing tool. CSR was noted to enhance customer	The study focuses only on organisations within the Swedish chocolate industry. Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012) note that the findings may vary depending on the industry and country in which the research is conducted and suggest that future

loyalty: an empirical study into consumer behavior on the Swedish chocolate market (Van den Berg & Lidfors 2012)	perceptions towards organisations and their products via company assessments, purchasing behaviour and loyalty in certain research studies, however these findings are not validated by all studies. It is further stated that an inadequate amount of data is available for feasible implications. This research study offered understanding into the effects of CSR activities on customer behaviour within the chocolate industry. Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012) studied customer loyalty and concentrated on measuring these effects via four primary predecessors of customer loyalty: customer satisfaction, product quality, customer trust, and company image. The findings indicate that CSR has a positive effect on all of the four predecessors, with the strongest effect on customer trust.	research is to accomplish the same study in diverse industries and geographical locations in order to confirm the findings. This offers an opportunity for future research to be conducted on the effects of CSR on customer purchasing behaviour and loyalty in other countries and industries, by measuring some, or all of the identified primary antecedents of customer loyalty: customer satisfaction, product quality, customer trust, and company image.
The effects of relationship quality and switching	This study analytically investigates business-to-business organisations based in Guangdong province, China, in an effort to improve awareness of the relationships among service quality, relationship quality and customer loyalty	The study was limited to eyewear factories in Guangdong Province, China. Future research could be developed to study various industries from diverse regions. In addition, relationship quality was chosen to be the mediating variable.

barriers on customer loyalty (Liu, Guo & Lee, 2011)	from a social exchange theory viewpoint. The findings indicate that service quality is positively associated to relationship quality, relationship quality is positively associated to customer loyalty, and service quality is positively associated to customer loyalty.	There is a possibility that other variables may occur between service quality and customer loyalty, such as customer satisfaction. Future studies can explore other variables thus creating further theory improvements to offer guidance to practitioners.
Does serving the community also serve the company? Using organizational identification and social exchange theories to understand employee	In this study, hypotheses obtained from organisational identification and social exchange theories were tested to explain why employees might respond in a positive manner to their employer's socially responsible program. The findings indicated that support was observed for mediated effects demonstrating that the employees' attitudes towards the socially responsible program predicted outcomes in due course via its impact on organisational identification. The implications of these findings indicate that socially responsible business practices may benefit organisations and their employees.	According to Jones (2010), the study's sample size of 162 employees is a limitation of this research. In addition, the measures were operationalised through self-report. With regards to social exchange, Jones (2010) explains that the existence and intensity of the effects in other situations are most likely comparable to the perceived benefit the employees receive from the socially responsible program. Furthermore, the effects relating to organisational identification are most likely proportional to the employees' beliefs concerning, and values correlating to the impact of the socially responsible program. An opportunity exists for future research to expand upon the findings of this study to include other stakeholders' (consumers') beliefs concerning, and values correlating to the

responses to volunteerism programme (Jones 2010)		impact of socially responsible programs conducted by organisations, and the organisational benefit of appealing to these beliefs and values for the purpose of competitive advantage.
New strategies for reputation management: Gaining control of issues, crises & corporate social responsibility (Griffin 2008)	Griffin (2008) explains that few organisations really understand the concept of company reputation management in a consistent manner, believing rather that it involves social programs, image enhancement, or issues management. It is further noted that simply knowing that they need to manage their reputation, does not mean that organisations are actually doing it.	An opportunity exists for research to be conducted on consumer perceptions, attitudes and beliefs with regards to company reputation in order to add to the body of knowledge regarding the impact of CSR.
Food packaging	The article explores the role of food packaging in the food supply chain, the varying material types used in	While the researchers insist that the primary purpose of food packaging must continue to be the maintenance of the safety,

and its environmental impact (Marsh & Bugusu 2007)	food packaging, and the environmental impact of food packaging.	integrity and quality of food, it is noted that the environmental impact of food packaging waste can be minimised by carefully choosing materials, following Environmental Protection Agency guidelines, and reviewing expectations of packaging in terms of environmental impact. Informed efforts by the food industry, government, and consumers will encourage sustained improvement with regards to minimising the negative environmental impact of food packaging wastage. There is an opportunity for further research to be conducted exploring the perceptions of informed consumers regarding the environmental impact of food packaging wastage, and the possibility of motivating an organisation within the food industry to adhere to minimise the environmental impact of their food packaging wastage in order to appeal to consumer preferences.
Corporate social responsibility	The paper draws upon previous research and evolving industry trends to create a thorough framework of supply chain CSR. The framework describes distinctive CSR	The framework provides the groundwork for further research in the food industry to investigate supply chain CSR components. For example, there is a need to analytically test

in the supply chain: An application in the food industry (Maloni & Brown 2006)	efforts in the food supply chain involving animal welfare, biotechnology, environment, fair trade, health and safety, and labour and human rights. Common supply chain CSR topics such as community and procurement are also reviewed. The framework provides a comprehensive tool to assist food industry practitioners and researchers in the evaluation of strategic and operational supply chain CSR methods.	the framework presented in this paper with surveys and case studies of practitioners, consumers, and other stakeholders. Furthermore, there is an opportunity for research to be conducted on whether or not industry representatives are actively performing to their set level of supply chain CSR standards and how such organisations can use supply chain CSR as a source of competitive advantage.
The myth of the ethical consumer - Do ethics matter in purchase behavior? (Carrigan & Attalla 2001)	In this study, Carrigan and Attalla (2001) identified that the majority of consumers have little regard for ethical concerns in their purchase decision-making behaviour. The findings suggest that the interest in social responsibility and marketing ethics by academics and practitioners is both misplaced and misguided. Furthermore, the connection between CSR and consumer purchase behaviour is unproven. The study states that acquiring information regarding and organisation's unethical behaviour does not essentially result in a consumer to reject the unethical company or its	Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggest that research should be conducted into which ethical issues really concern consumers, specifically issues that offer the greatest impact on their behaviour. Such issues are noted to attract consumer sympathy and organisational profits more than ethical issues which consumers perceive to be hopeless causes. The researchers state that organisations should recognise that their ethical behaviour might only provide them a good reputation, but that this in itself has virtue and benefit. Furthermore, the researchers agree that in the future the dynamics of business ethics may alter this position, and ethical

	products. In addition, the majority of consumers are ignorant about both corporate ethical behaviour and corporate unethical behaviour. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggest that ethical marketing information has to be delivered in a way that does not confuse or push away consumers in order to be effective. Consumers convey an interest in purchasing ethical products as long as they are not inconvenienced in the purchasing process. According to this study, price, quality and value are more important to consumers than ethical principles in purchase behaviour, and consumers need to be persuaded that their purchase will make an ethical difference in order to buy.	behaviour may become an essential business requirement. There is an opportunity for future research to investigate the findings of this study further, especially within an industry that contributes significantly to environmental degradation, and relies upon the environment for its raw materials simultaneously.
Source attributions and persuasion: perceived	Priester and Petty (1995) investigated if a communicator's perceived honesty determines the extent to which attitude change is based on the analysis of the essence of the persuasive message. The findings state that honesty was	An opportunity exists for future research to expand upon these findings regarding consumer attitudes towards organisational messaging. More specifically, future research is able to build upon the findings of this study by investigating consumer

honesty as a determinant of message scrutiny (Priester and Petty 1995)	identified to be the source characteristic most connected with delivering an accurate message.	attitude change based on the analysis of the fundamental nature of a firm's messaging within the food industry.

Taking into consideration the identified research gaps present in the prior studies identified in the above table, the researcher has the opportunity to develop upon and/or oppose previous findings to investigate this study's research problem with concentration on the relationships between variables, including those used within the identified previous studies. For example, Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012) studied customer loyalty and concentrated on measuring these effects via four primary predecessors of customer loyalty: customer satisfaction, product quality, customer trust, and company image. The findings indicate that CSR has a positive effect on all of the four predecessors, with the strongest effect on customer trust. In addition, Ali et al. (2021) investigated the role of perceived CSR in developing customer loyalty by examining the direct and mediated effects of corporate reputation and customer satisfaction in Pakistan's food chains. The findings indicated a substantial positive effect of perceived CSR on customer loyalty, corporate reputation, and customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer satisfaction and corporate reputation seemed to mediate the relationship between perceived CSR and customer loyalty. Furthermore, research conducted by Louis, Lombart and Durif (2019) state that the influence of a retailer's CSR initiatives on consumer loyalty fluctuates based on the dimensions measured (philanthropic activities, respect for the environment, the consumers and the workers), completely or partly mediates by consumer trust in the organisation and/or organisation's perceived brand equity, and changes according to the groups of consumers measured. The findings also indicate that consumer trust in the organisation is a full mediator of the relationship between the environmental dimension of a retailer's CSR initiatives and consumers' loyalty towards this retailer (for the very socially conscious consumer).

This study aims to explore ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour. From the prior studies examined for the purpose of this literature review, the researcher of this study has selected the three constructs of customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty based on the research gaps identified in previous research. For the purpose of this study, the constructs shall be defined as follows:

Table 2: Conceptual definition of constructs

Construct	Conceptual Definition
Customer Satisfaction	A customer's feeling of pleasure or disappointment which followed the evaluation of a product's apparent performance or outcome against their expectations of that product (Özkan, Süer, Keser & Kocakoç, 2019)
Customer Trust	According to Patrick (2002), customer trust is the collection of beliefs, attitudes, emotions and actions revealed when customers feel that an organisation can be depended upon to act in their best interest when the customer gives away their own personal control.
Customer Loyalty	Lam et al. (2004) define customer loyalty as the recurring support of a service or product provider by the customer, and the commendations of that provider to other customers.

2.13. Customer Behaviour: Customer Satisfaction, Customer Trust and Customer Loyalty

According to literature, trust, commitment, and satisfaction are among the most critical features of traditional relationship marketing. As a multi-dimensional construct, relationship quality is associated with a customer's overall evaluation of their relationship with a service provider at a certain time founded on all prior interactions with that provider (Garepasha, Aali, Zendeh & Iranzadeh 2019; Keating, Alpert, Kriz & Quazi 2011). Notwithstanding the lack of agreement on the dimensions and elements of quality, there is common understanding that satisfaction, trust, and commitment are key elements of relationship quality (Brun et al. 2014; Wang, Liang & Wu 2006).

The goal of customer retention is the development of long-term, profitable and sustainable relationships between an organisation and their current customers, which gradually expands and progresses over time. Continuous revenue due to reduced customer churn has a positive effect on an organisation's profitability, and

organisations are progressing from product-centric environments to customer-centric environments to gain the competitive advantage while satisfying their current customers.

The theory of reasoned action (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1995) and the hierarchy-of-effects models of consumer behaviour (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961) state that consumer attitudes are a predecessor to their actions. Therefore, customer experience is a crucial precursor to customer retention because positive brand association lends itself to the prevention of customer churn (Stahl et al. 2012). Although customer experience is a crucial marketing notion, existing literature on the topic is divided. However, in a study conducted by Becker and Jaakkola (2020), it is indicated that organisations should go beyond creating a positive customer experience, and rather they should define their intended customer experience with clearer distinctions. When mapping the consumer journey, organisations should be mindful that customer responses also depend on customer, situational, and sociocultural factors. Furthermore, circumstantial factors may influence the outcomes of certain incentives, such as the extent to which a certain reaction leads to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.

Customer loyalty indicates that the customer holds a favourable perception toward the continuation of a long-term relationship with the organisation, which is based on the customer's beliefs and perceptions regarding the value that the organisation delivers (Kim & Son 2009). Loyal customers offer organisations higher economic value than disloyal customers, and they cost less to satisfy (Kumar & Rajan 2009). In addition, loyal customers entice new potential customers by boosting the reputation of their service or product provider via positive word-of-mouth. Whether customers persist with their service or product providers for the long term is determined, to a certain degree, by the initial experience that they have with the organisation, and therefore it is evident that customer retention is not necessarily determined by price, but rather by the way the customer feels when they interact with the organisation (Bernstel 2002).

Incessantly growing market rivalry has encouraged organisations and business researchers to identify opportunities to ensure organisational sustainability. As a result, a considerable focus toward customer loyalty has emerged. A 2017 study conducted by Leninkumar in the commercial banks of Sri Lanka discovered a

considerable and positive connection between customer trust and customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, and customer satisfaction and customer trust. Leninkumar (2017) identified customer satisfaction as a critical influencer on customer loyalty and discovered that customer trust directly affected customer satisfaction, confirming that customer satisfaction is a precursor to customer trust. Furthermore, it was identified that an indirect correlation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty existed, through customer trust. This concept was further confirmed by Gul (2014), who noted that when a customer trusts a product or service, that customer is loyal to that product or service. According to Ranaweera and Prabhu (2003), trust is a more powerful emotion than satisfaction and therefore it is a more accurate predictor of loyalty.

2.13.1. Customer Satisfaction

According to Cavaliere et al. (2021), customer satisfaction is an important contributor towards organisational success. Without customer satisfaction, company profitability would cease. Therefore, as a key component of an organisation's marketing efforts, customer satisfaction has been examined significantly by numerous researchers. Findings have confirmed that the achievement of customer satisfaction within competitive markets results in greater market share and enhanced customer retention (Rust, Zahorik & Keiningham 1995; Fornell et al. 1996).

Satisfaction is an emotional state of mind which is created as the result of a customer's assessment of an organisation's services and products (Westbrook 1987). The level of satisfaction is mainly ascertained by the quality of the customer's experience with the organisation; however, it is also affected by the price and quality of the service or product, and the customer's personal attributes such as gender and age (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

Satisfaction positively influences consumer loyalty, and as indicated by Lee, Huang and Hsu (2007) and Cavaliere et al. (2021), increased levels of satisfaction generate binding links between a customer and an organisation. This indicates that when a customer is satisfied with an organisation and its behaviour, it is anticipated that they will be faithful to that organisation's products and services (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

Customer satisfaction occurs when products and services exceed the customer's expectations. However, according to Tripathi (2014), customer satisfaction alone does not guarantee customer loyalty and retention. A business must ensure that its customers are continuously engaged throughout the process of purchase to repurchase as this creates an emotional and psychological investment for the customer with the brand. Business-to-customer communication initiatives reduce customer anxiety, and frequent purchasing enables the customer to connect with their service or product provider more regularly, strengthening their positive attitude towards the organisation, while building loyalty. It is therefore vital that such interaction between the customer and their provider remain positive, in order for brand loyalty to be ensured.

2.13.2. Customer Trust

A common definition for trust is the anticipation that the trustee is inclined to preserve agreements and to uphold and initiate responsibilities. This anticipation is related to the principled nature, competency, truthfulness, and goodwill of the trustee (Rotter 1971; Dwyer, Schurr & Oh 1987; Blomqvist 1997; Hagen & Chloe 1998). According to Patrick (2002), without trust, all social relationships would fail or function poorly. It is stated that customer trust is the collection of beliefs, attitudes, emotions and actions revealed when customers feel that an organisation can be depended upon to act in their best interest when the customer gives away their own personal control.

Developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), the commitment-trust theory states that when consumers trust an organisation, their confidence levels in that organisation's product and service quality are enhanced, and enhanced confidence levels result in consumer repurchase behaviour (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). The principle of commitment implies the desire to maintain a cherished relationship, and more precisely, a trade relationship between the company and its customer. The factor of trust includes the customer's evaluation of the company's reliability and integrity, which boosts the customer's assurance in the organisation's upcoming actions and initiatives, while reciprocity norms include the customer's internal beliefs and expectations of the organisation's accountabilities to the customer. Exchange efficiency is the valuation of

the time, and the resources and effort necessary to sustain the relationship between the customer and the organisation (Palmatier 2008). Therefore, organisations should strengthen their efforts on customer relationship building that creates trust between the organisation and its customers, while guaranteeing impeccable service levels and the product delivery expected from such customers.

Trust becomes a valuable factor in the development of a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship between a customer and an organisation (Liu & Wu 2007), and customers are more likely to purchase from a brand that they perceive as having minimal risk (Stahl et al. 2012). In terms of customer retention, customers who are accustomed to a certain brand and its product or service, are more likely to connect value to its features. This perceived value of the brand's products offers the customer certainty in their decision to buy from the same brand in the future.

Similarly, Prasetyo Tejo (2021) confirms that trust is an essential aspect of the relationship between a customer and their provider, thus it is a key component for positive relationship commitment, customer loyalty, and ultimately customer retention (Bricci, Fragata & Antunes 2016). In contrast, a study conducted by Milan, Eberle and Bebber (2015) found that trust did not have a direct and positive effect on customer retention. This confirms the results from an earlier study conducted by Han and Hyun (2013), who verified that higher trust does not automatically result in customer retention or future repurchase behaviour.

In contrast, Liu and Wu (2007) agree that customer trust and satisfaction are intermediating features in customer retention, and Tripathi (2014) states that it is essential for a customer to have confidence in their service or product provider. Trust is a necessary element of the customer relationship, which retains a customer to a brand, and so a provider must always deliver on the promises that it makes to the market. The satisfaction of customers' needs, and the uninterrupted accumulation of value are crucial company actions for developing trust with customers. This creation of trust in the relationship is a critical communication objective for a company, which positively influences customer retention (Blocker et al. 2012; Worthington 2017).

2.13.3. Customer Loyalty

Lam et al. (2004) define customer loyalty as the recurring support of a service or product provider by the customer, and the commendations of that provider to other customers. Customer loyalty is a key factor which leads organisations to gain a competitive advantage over other companies within a highly competitive and dynamic environment.

As a multidimensional concept, customer loyalty is founded upon two elements: attitude and behaviour (Leninkumar 2017). It has been defined as a buyer's promise to purchase certain products, services and brands from a company throughout a regular time period, irrespective of competing products, services and brands (Leninkumar 2017; Oliver 1999). As the significance of the notion of customer loyalty increases, organisations are investing more towards programs and initiatives to retain their existing customers (Lakshman & Faiz 2021).

There is a correlation among customer ethical standards, commitment, trust, satisfaction and loyalty, with customer trust and satisfaction being the more important influencing components of customer loyalty. While trust boosts customer loyalty, customers with enhanced trust in an organisation are even more dedicated to that organisation's services and products (Srivastava & Singh 2021; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017; Wagner & Rydstrom 2001; Lee, Huang & Hsu 2007), and a customer without brand trust is incapable of developing customer loyalty (Ahmed et al. 2014). Loyal customers equal profitability, but loyalty is more than just repeat purchases: it is about the customer's personal belief regarding a company's brand, which is created by customer satisfaction and customer trust (Gunther et al. 2014), and often the CSR initiatives of an organisation positively influence the way customers perceive the company and its brand, by appealing to their levels of satisfaction, trust and loyalty (Maignan, Ferrell & Hult 1999; Christopher & Luke 2013; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

Therefore, the researcher has proposed the following main research question, sub-questions and hypotheses for this study. The conceptual model of the study is also provided.

Table 3: Main research question, sub-questions and hypotheses for this study

Main Research Question	
What is the impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on customer behaviour, and how does this affect customer retention?	
Sub-Questions	**Hypotheses**
RQ1: What is the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction?	**H1:** *ECSR enhances customer satisfaction.*
RQ2: What is the effect of ECSR on customer trust?	**H2:** *ECSR enhances customer trust.*
RQ3: What is the effect of ECSR on customer loyalty?	**H3:** *ESCR enhances customer loyalty.*
RQ4: What is the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, due to ECSR, on customer retention?	**H4:** *Enhanced customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.* **H5:** *Enhanced customer trust positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.* **H6:** *Enhanced customer loyalty positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

Figure 5: Conceptual framework of the study
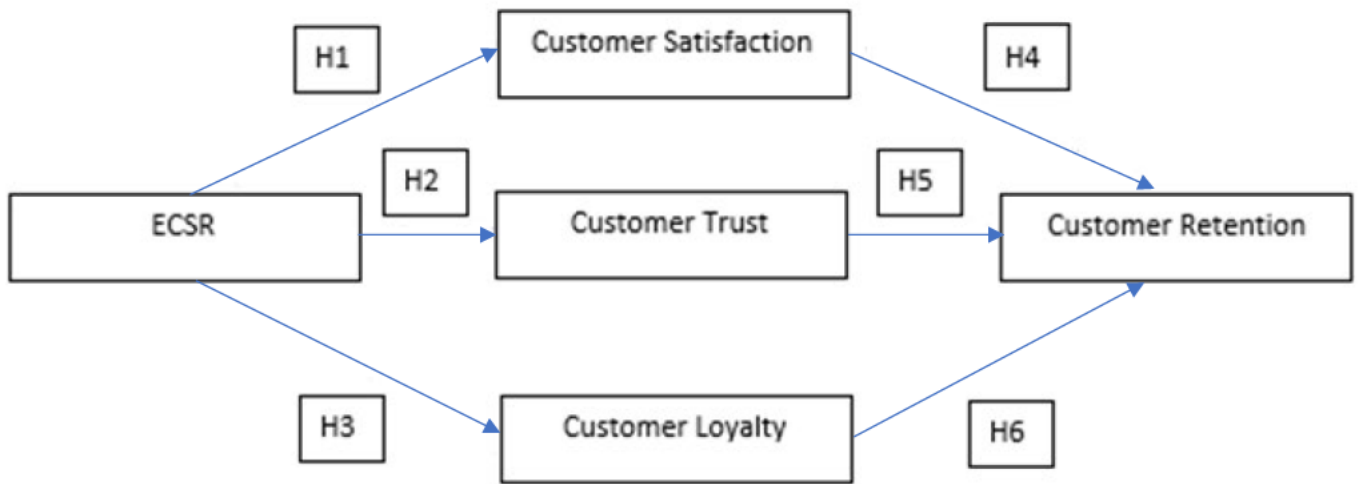
2.14. Chapter Summary

As stated by Tripathi (2014), an organisation that is focused on acquiring and retaining their customers can no longer rely on unique products, cost reductions and improved customer service alone. It is imperative that such organisations engage with their customers in a proactive way in which customer needs are more effectively anticipated. It is stated that the emotional aspect of a product or service bonds the customer to their service or product provider, and organisations need to accept and understand that this is a crucial key to customer retention.

This chapter started with a description of the general procedure followed for exploring the literature. Then the researcher defined and discussed customer churn and customer retention, specifically the aim of customer retention and customer lifetime value, the importance of retaining the right customers, contributors to customer loss, and the significance of satisfying customer needs.

Next, it discussed customer value perception, and the link between market competition and customer retention. The effect of the social environment on customer retention was evaluated,

The concept of CSR and the notion of creating shared value through CSR was discussed. Then the economic justification of CSR was examined, the link between company image and CSR was analysed, and consumer skepticism towards CSR was assessed and presented.

Following this, the researcher addressed the green economy, including emissions and pollution, and energy and resource efficiency. Australia's green economy was then discussed, including the country's major sustainability reporting frameworks.

Literature pertaining to the environmental impact of food production in Australia was scrutinised and presented. This included supply chains within the food industry, food safety, and societal pressures within the country's food industry. Sustainable agriculture was also explored and presented.

The researcher then discussed concepts from theories used to support this study and identified gaps in previous research. Thereafter, the researcher discussed customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. The main research question, sub-questions and hypotheses were presented, and the conceptual of the study was produced.

In Chapter Three, the research methodology for this study shall be presented.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Three explains and defines the research methodology applied in this study and its rationale for investigating the effectiveness of ECSR as a customer retention strategy. The chapter begins with a reiteration of the purpose of this study, including an overview of the research questions and hypotheses. The researcher then presents and describes the methodological framework of the study. Mixed method research was selected for this study to explore the effect of ECSR (independent variable) on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty (mediating variables), and the influence of enhanced customer satisfaction, enhanced customer trust and enhanced customer loyalty on customer retention (dependent variable) within the food industry through the participants' perspectives.

An overview of the data collection process for this study is stated before the pilot study and the results from the pilot study are presented. The researcher then describes the process of the pilot study reliability analysis. Thereafter, the researcher presents the data analysis methods deployed for this research study. These include quantitative research data analysis techniques and qualitative research data analysis techniques. The ethical clearance for this research is provided, followed by an explanation of the reliability and validity of the research.

Chapter Four shall present phase one of the study, which includes quantitative data collection and analysis.

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Figure 6: Structure of chapter three - research methodology

3.1. Introduction	3.6. Data Analysis Methods	3.7. Ethical Clearance
3.2. Reiteration of the Purpose of the Research	3.5. Pilot Study - Quantitative Study	3.8. Reliability and Validity of the Research
3.3. Methodological Research Approach	3.4. Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis Process of This Study	3.9. Chapter Summary
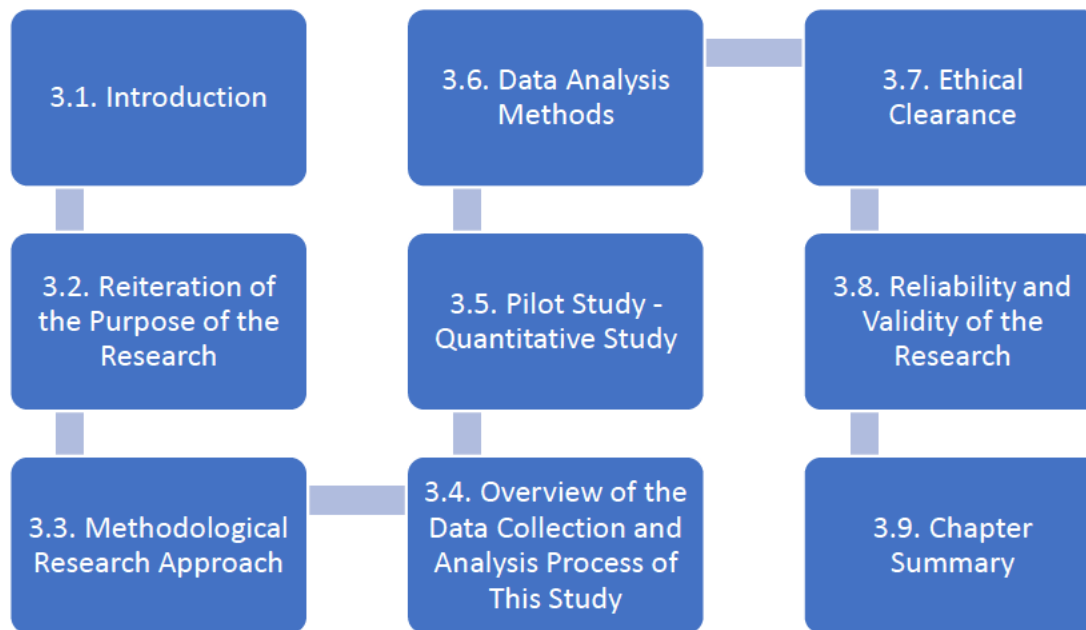
3.2. Reiteration of the Purpose of the Research

A review of the literature pertaining to this study identified a lack of differentiation between customer loyalty and customer retention, focusing on customer base growth rather than the proactive prevention of customer attrition. To the best of their knowledge, the researcher has identified limited previous studies pertaining to an organisation's CSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry. Furthermore, there is limited identified data obtained directly from the consumer within the food industry with regards to the use of ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy. This provides an opportunity for research to be performed on how an organisation's ECSR influences customer retention, through conducting such research within the food industry. In addition, there is an opportunity for the researcher to clarify contradicting findings in previous research conducted on CSR and customer loyalty: A study conducted by Chen Mccain et al. (2019) stated that a casino's CSR philanthropic and legal responsibilities had fluctuating influences on consumer loyalty,

while its economic and ethical responsibilities did not considerably influence consumer loyalty. In contrast, another study conducted in the cellular industry in Pakistan discovered no relationship between the perception of CSR and the purchase intentions of consumers (Ali et al. 2010), while research conducted by Robinson and Wood (2018) stated that CSR has a negative influence on the perceived product performance of new brands.

This study aims to explore ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. As a primary outcome of this study, the researcher intends to confirm H1, H2, H3, H4, H5 and H6 with data collected from Australian consumers. The outcome from this data can therefore be used to direct and support business leaders and marketing strategists to develop customer retention models with ECSR as a key component, based on the evidence that ECSR results in increased customer retention, which translates to enhanced organisational profits. Such a model will be able to link ECSR programs with customer retention figures, which can then be directly associated with financial figures, and therefore profit benefits for the organisation, thus supporting the motivation for including ECSR into an organisation's strategies.

As an anticipated secondary outcome of the study, the researcher intends to encourage organisations within the food industry to make a significant investment towards the sustainability of the planet by appealing to their need for business profit.

3.2.1. Research Questions

The main research question for this study is: What is the impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on customer behaviour, and how does this affect customer retention?

The sub-questions for this study are as follows:

RQ1: What is the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction?

RQ2: What is the effect of ECSR on customer trust?

RQ3: What is the effect of ECSR on customer loyalty?

RQ4: What is the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, due to ECSR, on customer retention?

3.3. Methodological Research Approach

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) philosophical ideas influence the practice of research. Worldviews are general philosophical orientations concerning the world and the kind of research that a researcher provides to a study. The four key worldviews include postpositivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

3.3.1. The Postpositivist Worldview

Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that postpositivists support a deterministic philosophy whereby cause determines effects or outcomes. Therefore, the research problems studied by postpositivists signify the requirement to detect and evaluate the causes that influence outcomes, for example those observed in experiments. This worldview is reductionistic in that the intention is to decrease concepts into a small distinct set to test (such as variables that consist of hypotheses and research questions). It is concerned with empirical observation and measurement, and the verification of theories (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

3.3.2. The Constructivist Worldview

Constructivism is a typical approach to qualitative research, whereby individuals pursue understanding of the world around them. These individuals create subjective meaning to their experiences, and these meanings are diverse and numerous. The researcher looks for the intricacy of views rather than restricting ideas into limited categories or ideas. The objective of the research is to depend on the participants' views of the phenomenon being studied. This worldview is concerned with theory generation, and social and historical construction (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

3.3.3. The Transformative Worldview

The transformative worldview developed during the 1980s and 1990s when individuals sensed that the postpositivist assumptions forced structural laws and theories that did not appeal or suit marginalised persons in society, or that matters of power and social justice, discrimination and oppression required review. This worldview embraces that research should be combined with politics and a political change agenda to challenge social oppression. The research encompasses an action agenda for restructure. It is collaborative and change-orientated (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

3.3.4. The Pragmatic Worldview

This worldview evolves out of actions, situations and consequences rather than precursor circumstances. Rather than focusing on methods, researchers emphasise the research problem and question, and use all existing approaches to comprehend the problem. As a philosophical foundation for mixed methods studies, it concentrates on the research problem in social science research and makes use of varied approaches to obtain understanding about the problem. This worldview is interested in the outcomes of actions. It is problem-centred and real-world practice orientated (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

To obtain answers to this study's research questions, it was necessary to implement the most applicable research approach, which would direct the various parts of the research, including the tools for data collection, the processes for data analysis, and sampling strategies. Therefore, the researcher selected a pragmatic worldview, mixed methods research approach for the study (Creswell & Creswell 2018). This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in a sequential explanatory design, whereby both the collection and analysis of quantitative data is conducted prior to the collection and analysis of qualitative data.

The purpose of selecting this approach is to utilise the results from the qualitative data to clarify and interpret the results from the quantitative phase of the study (Creswell 2009). The combination of these two data collection methods provides improvement of the credibility and the reliability of the research results. Bazeley (2003) states that mixed methods research requires the researcher to conduct quantitative research for one phase of a study and qualitative research for another phase of that same study. In agreement, Kemper, Stringfield and Teddlie (2003) specify that mixed methods research comprises both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in comparable practice.

3.3.5. The Case for Mixed Methods Research

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), mixed methods research (MMR) has various definitions. Creswell (2009) describes MMR as a study that comprises the collecting and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a specific study, and the combination of the data at one or more stages in the research process. Kemper Stringfield and Teddlie (2003) define MMR as a method that includes both quantitative data and qualitative data collecting and analysis in a comparable manner. Bazeley (2003) describes MMR as the usage of mixed data (numerical data and text) and various instruments (statistics and analysis), but employing the same technique. The researcher applies a quantitative research model for one stage of a study and a qualitative research design for another stage of the same study.

According to Creswell (2009), MMR allows the researcher to collect qualitative feedback to explain and develop the results from the quantitative data. Furthermore,

the qualitative data collection process ought to enhance and explain the statistical outcomes by exploring the participants' perceptions in detail (Robson 2011). Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) explain that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches allows the researcher to understand the world in which they exist. Furthermore, the mixture of both approaches provides a range of viewpoints from which a specific phenomenon can be studied. Both quantitative data and qualitative data approaches also share a general responsibility to understanding and to improve the human condition, which is the aim of propagating knowledge for practical use.

By employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the researcher is able to offer triangulation, which is the amalgamation of two of more sources of data to study the same phenomenon. This enables to researcher to achieve a comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon. In addition, by employing both approaches, the researcher is able to utilise the strengths of one approach to enrich the other approach (Sale, Lohfeld & Brazil 2002).

For this study, an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was selected as a two-phase mixed methods design whereby the qualitative data assists the researcher of this study to clarify the quantitative data results (Creswell 2009). In an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design, the researcher of this study initially collected and analysed quantitative data. The results of the quantitative data were then used to inform the qualitative data collection and analysis as shown in the figure below (Wu 2011). In the explanatory sequential research design, precedence is given to the quantitative data during both the data gathering and interpretation stages (Creswell 2003; Creswell 2009). The researcher selected this research design to use the findings from the qualitative phase to explain and provide a more comprehensive contextualisation of the findings and interpretations drawn from quantitative phase (Othman, Steen & Fleet 2020). The justification for this approach is that the quantitative data and its ensuing analysis offer a wide-ranging understanding of the research problem. The qualitative data and its analysis enhance and clarify the statistical results by exploring the respondents' perceptions in more depth (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick 2006; Creswell 2003). The strengths and weaknesses of this particular mixed-methods design have been extensively debated in literature (Creswell 2009; Ivankova, Creswell & Stick 2006; Creswell 2003). Its advantages comprise of

directness and prospects for the evaluation of the quantitative results in more detail. This research design can be particularly valuable when unanticipated results arise from the quantitative study (Morse 1991). The design's limitations are extensive time and the practicality of resources to collect and analyse both types of data.

Successful PhD theses that have employed the sequential explanatory mixed methods research design were reviewed by the researcher. Upon review of these completed PhD studies, the researcher confirmed the research design to be suitable for this aim of this study (Alotaibi 2021; Jeffs 2020; AlKhamisi 2019; Bhaludra 2019; Adams 2017; Patrice 2012).

Figure 7: Sequential explanatory mixed methods design
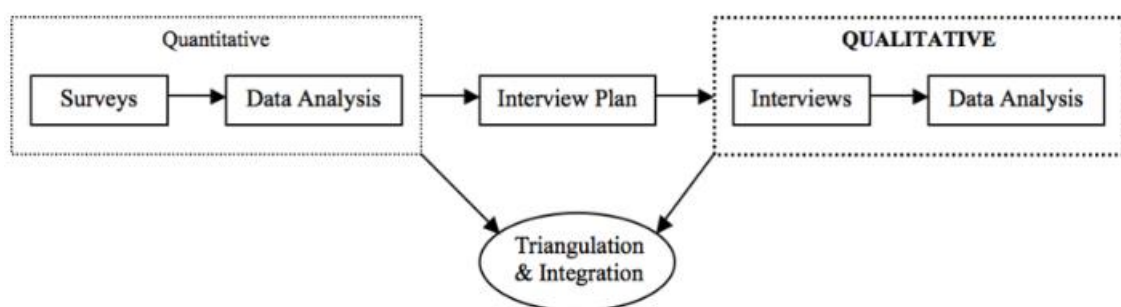
In this study, the explanatory design was conducted by the collection and analysis of quantitative data via an online questionnaire-based survey, followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data via semi-structured interviews to get a complete overview of the consumers' perceptions regarding ECSR as a viable retention strategy within the food industry (Shwikar, Steen & Fleet 2020; Creswell & Plano-Clark 2011).

3.4. Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis Process of This Study

For the purpose of this study, quantitative data was initially collected via an online questionnaire-based survey (via the USQ Survey Tool). Closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to the consumer target population to test the identified theories, which predict that ECSR (independent variable) may positively influence

customer behaviour, specifically satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), thereby positively influencing customer retention (dependent variable). According to Hague (2022), an acceptable and reasonable length of time for a respondent to complete a questionnaire would be approximately 15 to 20 minutes. The maximum number of questions for a questionnaire that takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete, is approximately 30 to 40 questions. Hague (2022) further states that questionnaires that are too long jeopardise the quality of the study and can result in the respondents failing to complete the survey or giving the same answer to questions in order to complete the survey faster.

This study involved a survey of Australian consumers in order to collect their opinions. The researcher identified two research participant recruitment agencies - the Online Research Unit and Qualitative Research Recruitment - as suitable service providers to identify appropriate respondents with the correct demographics for this study, and to distribute the survey to these respondents throughout the eight Australian states. The research participant recruitment agencies offered encouragement incentives to the potential respondents for their participation in the form of gift cards as agreed to by the researcher.

The survey instrument comprised of a total of 35 closed ended questions on a Likert-scale distributed across six (6) sections, from which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to several statements in the range of 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree).

The questionnaires were distributed to 913 eligible Australian respondents between June 2021 and August 2021. Of the total number of 913 participants, 463 completed the survey, indicating a response rate of 50%. Prior to the actual surveys, the respondents received a participant information sheet explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants provided consent. See Appendix A - Participant Information Sheet: Online Questionnaire-Based Survey.

The results from the collected quantitative data were then analysed and used to plan the second phase of the study: the qualitative data collection process. The researcher identified one of the two research participant recruitment agencies previously used in the first phase of this study - Qualitative Research Recruitment - as a suitable service provider to identify appropriate respondents with the correct demographics for this

study. Twenty-two (22) participants for the qualitative data collection phase of the study were purposefully selected and interviewed from the convenience population sample used for the quantitative data collection phase. According to Creswell (1998) for research using a grounded theory approach, 20 to 30 qualitative interviews are suggested. Although the participants who agreed to participate in the online questionnaire-based survey, also agreed to being interviewed, upon contacting more than 30 participants, only 22 participants accepted the invitation to be interviewed.

The researcher selected participants who allowed for a representative sample of the Australian population. According to .id informed decisions (2022), in 2021, the largest age group in Australia was 30- to 34-year-olds, and the age group that increased the most since 2016, was the 35- to 39-year-olds, growing by 277133 individuals. Furthermore, the group that increased the second most, was the 70- to 74-year-olds, growing by 273054 individuals. This was followed by the 75- to 79-year-olds, growing by 169244 individuals and the 60- to 64-year-olds, growing by 168697 individuals. This growth indicates a trend of an expanding group of older Australian consumers. The country also saw increased growth in the 10- to 14-year-olds group, which increased by 190877 people, however this was not taken into consideration for this study, due to the age requirement of the participants to be over the age of 18 years old.

All participants were sent an invitation and incentive email with information outlining the nature of the research, aims, and assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity, which also clearly stated that participants had the right to extract at any stage from the research. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants provided consent.

Qualitative data was collected via semi-structured interviews conducted via recorded Zoom and telephonic sessions in an attempt to detail the views from the participants of the sample population. The researcher chose to conduct the interviews via the cloud-based video communications application Zoom and telephone sessions due to the various locations of the participants which ranged throughout all eight Australian states. Both Zoom and telephone provided a convenient platform for the researcher to conduct the interviews during the Covid19 pandemic whereby travel restrictions were imposed throughout Australia. The applications also allowed the researcher to save

on travel time and expenses, and many of the participants selected telephone calls over Zoom sessions due to convenience.

The qualitative data collected helped explain the quantitative results of the study and allowed the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Furthermore, the qualitative data collected provided the researcher with a better understanding of the participants' perceptions regarding ECSR (independent variable), customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), and customer retention (dependent variable) within the food industry.

3.5. Pilot Study (of the Quantitative Study)

A pilot study was conducted before the actual research was carried out, to decrease bias and ensure that the chosen data collection instrument was ready to be implemented. The pilot study was conducted to establish a preliminary evaluation of the internal consistency of the questionnaire items, and to enhance the questions, format and instructions of the questionnaire survey. The pilot study additionally provided an opportunity for the researcher to establish how long the study may take, while detecting any possible matters with participant fatigue (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

As stated by Bryman (2012), research instruments ought to be pre-tested before employing them to the actual study. Conducting a pilot study enhances the validity and reliability of the research as it enables the researcher to check the tools and questions from the data collection instruments before conducting the actual research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007).

The pilot study conducted for this study, specifically intended to verify the comprehensibility and consistency of the questions, while determining the extent to which the respondents would interact with questionnaires.

The pilot study's online questionnaire-based survey was composed in straightforward and simple wording for easy understanding by the participants to prevent misinterpretation. The purpose of the pilot study was to monitor the data collection instrument for any ambiguities, confusing instructions, misunderstanding of the items,

confusion over the meaning of words, appropriateness and ease of the questionnaire as a data collection instrument, the relevance of questions, and any other vital and unforeseen matters that might affect the carrying out of the future research.

Quantitative data was collected via a questionnaire-based online survey via the USQ Survey Tool. Fifty (50) closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to a consumer target population to test the hypotheses, which state that ECSR (independent variable) has a positive effect on customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), which then positively mediate the relationship between customer retention (dependent variable) and ECSR (independent variable) within the food industry.

The questionnaire-based online survey included fifty (50) closed-ended questions in the form of a Likert Scale. A seven-point scale was selected for increased reliability (Kline 2013). The constructs of ECSR, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty and customer retention were measured via seven-point scale poles from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Forty-one (41) respondents completed the questionnaire. Based on the researcher's analysis plans and time constraints, a convenience population sample was selected based on availability.

The pilot study was carried out from October 2020 to December 2020. The participants were approached on the basis of their availability and readiness and nominated using a convenience sampling technique (Johnson & Christensen 2012). The pilot study participants received invitation emails indicating that their participation in the research was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the online survey at any time without any consequences.

Questionnaire items were adapted from validated research studies to propose an online survey to measure the importance of ECSR as perceived by the participants, and the role of ECSR with regards to customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, and customer retention.

The table below provides the list of questionnaire items used in the pilot study based on validated research studies.

Table 4: Questionnaire items of the pilot study

Construct	Description	Source
Demographics	D1: Please select your age group	
	D2: Please select your gender	
	D3: Please select your marital status	
	D4: Please select your family size	
	D5: Please select your highest education level	
	D6: Please select your current employment status	
	D7: Please select your household annual income	
	D8: Please select your state	
ECSR	ECSR1: Issues relating to the environment are very important to me	Kim (2017)
	ECSR2: I believe that an organisation within the food industry has a responsibility to protect the environment	
	ECSR3: I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment.	Pradhan (2018)
	ECSR4: I believe that organisations within the food industry that spend their resources on environmentally friendly initiatives are wasting their money and time, and should rather focus on maximising their profits.	Friedman (1970)
	ECSR5: I am indifferent to environmentally friendly initiatives by	Pradhan (2018)

		organisations within the food industry.	
		ECSR6: I am indifferent as to the type of social responsibility an organisation within the food industry chooses. As long as they are giving back to society in some way, I will support them.	Ellen, Mohr and Webb (2000)
		ECSR7: It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly.	Maloni and Brown (2006)
		ECSR8: It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.	
		ECSR9: It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.	Marsh and Bugusu (2007)
		ECSR10: It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices).	Kim (2017)
		ECSR11: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits.	
		ECSR12: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products partakes in food donation programs.	

	ECSR13: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products adheres to energy and water conservation strategies.	
	ECSR14: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling.	
Customer Satisfaction	CS1: My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision.	Park, Kim and Kwon (2017)
	CS2: I believe that my purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation.	Pradhan (2018)
	CS3: I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.	
	CS4: I respect organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.	Aramburu and Pescador (2019); Deng, Kang, and Low (2013); Lee (2017); Griffin (2008)
	CS5: I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.	

	CS6: I believe that food products from an organisation that protects the environment have a higher quality level.	Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CS7: I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment.	Jones (2010)
Customer Trust	CT1: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not.	Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012). Lombart and Louis (2014)
	CT2: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not.	
	CT3: I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety.	
	CT4: I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option	Wei et al. (2018), Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CT5: I believe an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company.	Priester and Petty (1995)

Customer Loyalty	CL1: I am indifferent whether an organisation within the food industry is environmentally friendly or not. My purchasing decisions are not influenced by a company's environmental efforts.	Chen Mccain et al. (2019)
	CL2: I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products.	Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CL3: I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.	Yeh (2015)
	CL4: I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.	Park, Kim and Kwon (2017); Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CL5: If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store.	Tripathi (2014) Carrigan and Attalla (2001)
	CL6: I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment	Pradhan (2018)
	CL7: I always say positive things about organisations within the food industry that protect the environment	Yeh (2015)

Customer Retention	CR1: If an organisation within the food industry does something wrong, I would be more likely to remain their customer if they were environmentally friendly.	Pradhan (2018)
	CR2: If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation.	Lombart and Louis (2014)
	CR3: If the taste of the food product from an environmentally friendly organisation is not as appealing as that of a food product from an organisation that is not environmentally conscious, I will not switch to brands based on taste alone.	Lombart and Louis (2014)
	CR4: I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry, if it was committed to protecting the environment.	Nielsen (2014)
	CR5: I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.	Park, Kim and Kwon (2017)
	CR6: It makes no difference to me whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly. I will remain	Carrigan and Attalla (2001)

	a customer of a certain food product for as long as I like it based on taste.	
	CR7: It makes no difference to me whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly. I will remain a customer of a certain food product for as long as it is within my budget.	
	CR8: Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	Jones (2010) Carrigan and Attalla (2001)
	CR9: I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012). Lombart and Louis (2014) Carrigan and Attalla (2001)

3.5.1. Findings and Analysis of The Pilot Study

Once the online survey was completed by all the participants, the feedback regarding the pilot study was collected by the researcher. It was noted that the participants reported no remarkable difficulty in understanding the questionnaire items or instructions. The findings and analysis of each question from the pilot study are provided and described below.

3.5.1.1. Pilot Study Section One: Demographics

The first eight (8) questions of the survey pertained to the respondents' demographics. This included the respondents' age group, gender, marital status, family size, education level, employment status, and household annual income. The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section One: Demographics are provided as Appendix C.

Based on the results from the pilot study, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 35 and 54 years old. The age group with the most respondents was 35 – 44 years old at 36.59%, followed by the age group 45 – 54 years old at 31.71%. With an equal percentage of respondents, the age groups of 25 – 34 years old and 55 – 64 years old followed with 12.20% respectively. Only two respondents were aged between 18 and 24 years old (4.88%), and only one respondent was aged 65 years and above (2.11%).

The majority of the pilot study respondents were female at 75.61%, followed by male respondents at 21.95%. One respondent (2.44%) noted themselves as other.

Most of the respondents noted that they were married (68.29%), with 17.07% stating that they were in a relationship. 7.32% noted that they were single, 4.88% stated that they were separated or divorced, while 2.44% of the respondents preferred not to answer the question.

The majority of the respodents had between two and four children within their family (58.54%). This was followed by one child (14.63%), and an equal percentage of no children and more than four children (12.20% respectivley). One respondent (2.44%) noted that they would prefer to not answer the question.

36.59% of respondents of the pilot study held a bachelor's degree, 19.51% of respondents held a high school certificate, and 14.63% completed trade school. 9.76% of respondents held a master's degree and 4.88% of respondents held an honour's degree. 9.76% of respondents did not complete high school, and 4.88% of respondents chose not to answer the question. This indicates that just over half of the respondents hold a degree level qualification (51.23%).

According to the results from question six of the pilot study, the majority of respondents were employed on a full-time basis at 65.85%. This was followed by 21.95% of respondents employed on a part time basis. Equal percentages of respondents were retired or unemployed (4.88% respectively) and 2.44% of the respondents (one) chose not to answer the question. This indicated that the vast majority of respondents earn an income through active employment (87.80%).

41.46% of the respondents were within the household annual income bracket of $140 001 - $280 000. 26.83% of the respondents preferred not to answer this question, while 21.95% of respondents stated that they were within the $70 001 - $140 000 household annual income bracket. 9.76% of respondents had a household annual income of less than $35 000.

95.12% of the respondents were based in the state of Queensland. This was due to the fact that a convenience sample was taken for the purpose of this pilot study. 4.88% of the respondents noted the state of Victoria as their home state. For the larger research survey, the researcher intends to enlist the services of the Online Research Unit and Qualitative Recruitment Australia to identify and recruit respondents throughout Australia for a more accurate display of data for the purpose of the study.

3.5.1.2. Survey Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility

Questions 9 to 22 pertained to the respondents' perceptions regarding ECSR within the food industry. The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility are provided as Appendix D.

56% of the respondents agreed that issues relating to the environment are very important to them. 19.51% of respondents noted that they strongly agreed with the statement. 12.20% of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, 9.76% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement, while one respondent (2.44%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This provides an overwhelming majority of 87.71% of respondents agreeing with the statement that issues relating to the environment are very important to them.

53.66% of the respondents agreed with the statement that an organisation within the food industry has a responsibility to protect the environment. 21.95% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 19.51% of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. 4.88% of the respondents selected neutral as a response to the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (95.12%) believe that an organisation within the food industry has a responsibility to protect the environment.

Based on the responses from question eleven of the pilot study, 56.10% of the respondents agreed with the statement that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment. 31.71% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 9.76% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. 2.44% of respondents (one respondent) somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (97.57%) believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment.

53.66% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that organisations within the food industry that spend their resources on environmentally friendly initiatives are wasting their money and time, and should rather focus on maximising their profits. 34.15% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. 4.88% of respondents agreed with the statement. One respondent (2.44%) selected neutral as a response to this statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (92.69%) believe that organisations within the food industry that spend their resources on environmentally friendly initiatives are not wasting their money and time. This emphasises the requirement for organisations within the food industry to focus on maximising their profits, in addition to ensuring a positive environmental impact.

60.98% of respondents disagreed with the statement that they are indifferent to environmentally friendly initiatives by organisations within the food industry. 14.63% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, while 14.63% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement, while an equal percentage of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement and agreed with the statement (2.44% respectively). This indicates that the

majority of respondents (80.49%) are not indifferent to environmentally friendly initiatives by organisations within the food industry.

24.39% of respondents disagreed with this statement. 21.95% of respondents were neutral in response to this statement, while 17.07% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. 17.07% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, 12.20% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 4.88% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, and 2.44% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that just under half of the respondents (46.34%) are not indifferent as to the type of social responsibility an organisation within the food industry chooses. The majority of the respondents (53.66%) are either neutral or are indifferent as to the type of social responsibility an organisation within the food industry chooses.

Equal percentages of respondents somewhat agreed and agreed with the statement that it is important for them that the food products they purchase are environmentally friendly (39.02% respectively). Equal percentages of respondents were neutral in response to the statement and strongly agreed with the statement (9.76% respectively). One respondent (2.44%) disagreed with the statement. This indicates that it is important to the majority of respondents (87.80%) that the food products they purchase are environmentally friendly.

51.22% of respondents agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the food products they purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain. 26.83% of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 12.20% of respondents were neutral in response to the statement. 7.32% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and one respondent (2.44%) disagreed with the statement. This indicates that it is important to the majority of respondents (85.37%) that the food products they purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.

36.59% of the respondents agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the food products they purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging. Equal percentages of respondents (29.27% respectively) either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent somewhat disagreed with the statement (2.44%) while one respondent was neutral in relation to the statement. This

indicates that the majority of the respondents (95.13%) believe that it is important that the food products they purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.

43.90% of the respondents agreed with this statement. 29.27% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 26.83% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. This indicates that all the respondents (100%) believe that it is important that the food products they purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies.

48.78% of respondents agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the organisation from where they purchase their food products conducts waste audits. 19.51% of respondents were neutral towards this statement, while 17.07% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 14.63% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (80.48%) believe that it is important that the organisation from where they purchase their food products conducts waste audits.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 36.59% of the respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the organisation from where they purchase their food products partakes in food donation programs. 26.83% of the respondents agreed with the statement, while 19.51% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 14.63% of the respondents were neutral towards this statement, while one respondent (2.44%) somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (82.93%) believe that it is important that the organisation from where they purchase their food products partakes in food donation programs.

53.66% of respondents agreed with this statement. 24.39% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 12.20% strongly agreed with the statement. 9.76% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (90.25%) believe that it is important that the organisation from where they purchase their food products adheres to energy and water conservation strategies.

51.22% of the respondents agreed with the statement that it is important to them that the organisation from where they purchase their food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling. 24.39% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 14.63% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. 9.76%

of respondents were neutral towards the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (90.24%) believe that organisation from where they purchase their food products should promote consumer product packaging recycling.

3.5.1.3. Pilot Study Section Three: Customer Satisfaction

Questions 23 to 29 pertained to the respondents' opinions regarding environmental corporate social responsibility and customer satisfaction. The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section Three: Customer Satisfaction are provided as Appendix E.

The majority of respondents (92.68%) believe that their choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision. 58.54% of the respondents agreed with this statement, and equal percentages of respondents (17.07% respectively) somewhat agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. 7.32% of respondents were neutral towards the statement.

The majority of respondents (87.81%) believe that the purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is their contribution towards environmental preservation. 36.59% of the respondent somewhat agreed with the statement, 34.15% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 17.07% of respondent strongly agreed with the statement. 7.32% of respondents were neutral towards the statement, while 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement.

34.15% of respondents agreed with the statement that they feel proud when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. 29.27% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 17.07% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 14.63% of respondents were neutral towards the statement, while 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (80.49%) feel proud when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.

48.78% of respondents agreed with the statement that they respected organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment. 41.46% of

respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 7.32% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. One respondent (2.44%) selected a neutral response towards the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (97.56%) respect organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.

53.66% of respondents agreed with the statement that they admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment. 34.15% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while only 12.20% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. This indicates that the all the respondents (100%) admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 34.15% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that they believe that food products from an organisation that protects the environment have a higher quality level. 24.39% of respondents were neutral towards this statement, while equal percentages of respondents (17.07% respectively) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Equal percentages of respondents (2.44%) strongly disagreed, disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (68.29%) believe that food products from an organisation that protects the environment have a higher quality level.

The majority of respondents (90.24%) feel satisfied when they buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment. 43.90% of respondents agreed with this statement. 26.83% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 19.51% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 7.32% of respondents were neutral towards the statement and 2.44% of respondents (one respondent) somewhat disagreed with the statement.

3.5.1.4. Pilot Study Section Four: Customer Trust

Questions 30 to 34 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding environmental corporate social responsibility and customer trust. The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section Four: Customer Trust are provided as Appendix F.

The majority of respondents (63.41%) believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not. An equal percentage of respondents (21.95% respectively) somewhat agreed and agreed with this statement. 19.51% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement, while 17.07% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 9.76% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement An equal percentage of respondents (4.88% respectively) disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Based on the responses for question 32 of the pilot study, 34.15% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that they believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings them safety. 24.39% of respondents agreed with the statement, while 19.51% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 7.32% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement and 9.76% of respondents disagreed with the statement. An equal percentage of respondents strongly disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement (2.44% respectively). This indicates that the majority of respondents (60.98%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings them safety.

29.27% of respondents agreed with the statement that they believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option. 24.39% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 21.95% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 14.63% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement, and equal percentages (2.44% respectively) strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of

respondents (68.29%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option.

41.46% of respondents agreed with the statement that they believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company. 29.27% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while equal percentages of respondents (9.76% respectively) strongly agreed with the statement and were neutral towards the statement. 7.32% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 2.44% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (80.49%) believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company.

3.5.1.5. Pilot Study Section Five: Customer Loyalty

Questions 35 to 41 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and customer loyalty (CL). The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section Five: Customer Loyalty are provided as Appendix G.

The majority of respondents' (60.98%) purchasing decisions are positively influenced by a company's environmental efforts within the food industry. Based on the 34.15% of the respondents somewhat disagreed with this statement. An equal percentage of respondents (19.51% respectively) disagreed and somewhat agreed with the statement. 12.20% of respondents agreed with the statement, and an equal percentage of respondents (7.32% respectively) were neutral and strongly disagreed with the statement.

Based on the results from the pilot study, an equal percentage of respondents (29.27% respectively) somewhat agreed and agreed with the statement that they consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice when purchasing such products. An equal percentage of respondents (12.20% respectively) somewhat disagreed with, and were neutral towards this statement. An equal percentage of respondents (7.32% respectively) disagreed with the statement and

strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent (2.44%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (65.86%) consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice when purchasing such products.

24.39% of respondents agreed with this statement that they encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment. 19.51% of respondents were neutral towards this statement. 17.07% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 14.63% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. 7.32% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, and 4.88% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Based on the results of the pilot study, 36.59% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that they intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future. 29.27% of the respondents agreed with the statement, and 17.07% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 12.20% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement, while an equal percentage of respondents (2.44% respectively) disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (82.93%) intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.

Based on the results from the pilot study, equal percentages of respondents (19.51% respectively) disagreed, somewhat disagreed, were neutral towards, and somewhat agreed with the statement that if their store is out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, they will postpone buying the product or go to another store. 12.20% of respondents agreed with the statement, and 7.32% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 2.44% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Based on the results from the pilot study, equal percentages of respondents (36.59% respectively) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement that they would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if they found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment. An equal percentage of respondents (9.76% respectively) were neutral towards, and somewhat agreed with the statement. 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement, while 2.44% of respondents disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of

respondents (82.94%) would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if they found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 31.71% of respondents agreed with, and 29.27% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement that they always say positive things about organisations within the food industry that protect the environment. 24.39% of respondents were neutral towards this statement, while 9.76% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Equal percentages of respondents (2.44% respectively) disagreed and somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (70.74%) always say positive things about organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.

3.5.1.6. Pilot Study Section Six: Customer Retention

Questions 42 to 50 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and customer retention (CR). The results per question are presented below, and the results tables for Pilot Study Section Six: Customer Retention are provided as Appendix H.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 29.27% of respondents feel neutral towards the statement that if an organisation within the food industry does something wrong, they would be more likely to remain their customer if they were environmentally friendly. 24.39% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while equal percentages of respondents (17.07% respectively) somewhat disagreed and somewhat agreed with the statement. 7.32% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, and 4.88% agreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (78.05%) feel neutral towards or would not remain a customer of an organisation within the food industry if it did something wrong, regardless of whether the organisation is environmentally friendly.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 24% of the respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement that if the price of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, they would not switch to another brand that

represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation. 21.95% of respondents were neutral towards the statement, while an equal percentage of respondents (21.95%) agreed with the statement. 17.07% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 9.76% of respondents disagreed with the statement. 4.88% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that less than half the respondents (43.90%) would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation, if the price of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased.

Most of the respondents (43.9% versus 34.15%) would switch food product brands based on taste alone, regardless of the environmental consciousness of an organisation. 21.95% of respondents felt neutral towards this statement. 24.39% of respondents somewhat disagreed with this statement. An equal percentage of respondents (21.95% respectively) felt neutral towards the statement and somewhat agreed with the statement. 19.51% of respondents disagreed with the statement, while 12.20% of the respondents agreed with the statement. No respondents strongly disagreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Based on the responses from this question, 31.71% of respondents agreed with the statement that they would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment. 24.39% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement, while 19.51% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement. 17.07% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement, 4.88% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 2.44% of the respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (75.61%) would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment.

34.15% of respondents agreed with the statement that they would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment. An equal percentage of respondents (19.51% respectively) were neutral towards, and somewhat agreed with the statement, while 14.63% of respondent strongly agreed with the statement. 7.32%

of respondents disagreed with the statement and 4.88% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (68.29%) would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 26.83% of respondents somewhat agreed that it makes no difference to them whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly: they will remain a customer of a certain food product for as long as they like it based on taste. 19.51% of respondents agreed with this statement. 17.07% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement, and 14.63% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement. An equal percentage (9.76% respectively) of respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement, while 2.44% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that almost half respondents (48.78%) will remain a customer of a certain food product for as long as they like it based on taste, regardless of whether the organisation is environmentally friendly or not.

31.71% of respondents somewhat disagreed with the statement that it makes no difference to them whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly. They will remain a customer of certain food product for as long as it is within their budget. 21.95% of respondents somewhat agreed with the statement, while 17.07% of respondents agreed with the statement. 12.20% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and 7.32% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. 2.44% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. This indicates that the majority of respondents (51.23%) will not remain a customer of a certain food product based on budget alone.

Based on the results from the pilot study, 24.39% of the respondents were neutral towards the statement that environmentally friendly food organisations make them feel more satisfied with their choice of product purchase - therefore, they will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price. An equal percentage of respondents (19.51% respectively) disagreed and somewhat agreed with the statement, while 12.20% of respondents agreed with the statement. 4.88% of respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 2.44% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that 39.02% of respondents will not continue to purchase

environmentally friendly food products regardless of taste or price, while 36.59% will continue to purchase environmentally friendly food products regardless of taste or price.

The slight majority of respondents (51.22%) will not continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste or price, based on trust alone. 26.83% of respondents disagreed with this statement. An equal percentage of respondents (21.95% respectively) somewhat disagreed and somewhat agreed with the statement, while 17.07% of respondents were neutral towards the statement. An equal percentage of respondents (4.88% respectively) agreed and strongly agreed with the statement, while 2.44% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

3.5.2. Pilot Study Reliability Analysis

The data from the pilot study was analysed using a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to test the interior consistency of the score, which describes the reliability of the data tool (the questionnaire-based survey). To check for reliability and internal consistency of the items included for each factor, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to determine whether removal of any items from the pilot study survey would improve reliability of quantitative questionnaire-based survey to be used in the actual research.

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is a measure of internal consistency or how closely related a set of items are as a group. In most social science research situations, a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable (McNeish 2017).

The researcher performed a reliability analysis on the pilot study questionnaire through SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). From the results of the reliability analysis, the researcher selected the items for the final online questionnaire-based survey based on the calculated reliability coefficient.

The table below shows the findings of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient analysis per construct and the items selected for online questionnaire-based survey for the final study.

Table 5: Findings of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient analysis

Construct	Items Selected for the Online Questionnaire-Based Survey for the Final Study	Cronbach's Alpha
ECSR	ECSR3: I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment.	0.891
	ECSR7: It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly.	
	ECSR8: It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.	
	ECSR9: It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.	
	ECSR10: It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices).	
	ECSR11: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits.	
	ECSR14: It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling.	
Customer Satisfaction	CS1: My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision.	0.810
	CS2: I believe that my purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation.	
	CS3: I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.	
	CS5: I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.	

	CS7: I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment.	
Customer Trust	CT1: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not.	0.903
	CT2: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not.	
	CT3: I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety.	
	CT4: I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option	
	CT5: I believe an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company.	
Customer Loyalty	CL2: I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products.	0.863
	CL3: I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.	
	CL4: I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.	
	CL5: If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store.	

	CL6: I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment	
Customer Retention	CR2: If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation.	0.881
	CR4: I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry, if it was committed to protecting the environment.	
	CR5: I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.	
	CR8: Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	
	CR9: I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	

3.6. Data Analysis Methods

The purpose of data analysis is to bring together the data collected in a meaningful way to generate an interpretation, allow justification and permit appropriate analyses to be depicted (Creswell & Creswell 2018). After conducting phase one (quantitative study) and phase two (qualitative study) of the data collection process, the researcher was ready to begin the analysis of the data. As previously noted, the data from this research was collected via two instruments sequentially: firstly, via online

questionnaire-based surveys, and secondly via semi-structured interviews, both of which were aimed at exploring the effect of ECSR (independent variable) on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty (mediating variables), and thereby positively influencing customer retention (dependent variable) within the food industry. Thus, the data set that the researcher collected for this research contained 453 completed online questionnaire-based surveys and 22 semi-structured interviews with participants who had previously completed the online questionnaire-based survey.

3.6.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

For this study, quantitative data analysis was employed to the online questionnaire-based survey. Therefore, as applied to this study, quantitative data analysis refers to the procedures and steps the researcher adopted to understand data gained from the online questionnaire-based surveys completed by Australian consumers (the participants).

The researcher applied the following procedures for the quantitative (descriptive and inferential) data analysis of the online questionnaire-based surveys: Firstly, the researcher checked all questionnaires for completion. 913 questionnaires were attempted, but only 463 questionnaires were completed in full. The Likert scale categories and statement choices were coded as 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neutral, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, and 7 = Strongly Agree. Next, participant questionnaires were assigned numbers from 1 to 463. The collected data was entered into SPSS computer program version 21.0. Prior to the data analysis process, the researcher implemented an error-checking step on the SPSS data file to make sure that all the entered data was correct. The researcher then removed all responses with a standard deviation of 0. There were ten such responses, therefore the final amount of completed survey questionnaires included in the study for data analysis was 453. Demographics were statistically analysed using SPSS. Frequency tables, which provided informative details about the participants were produced. Next descriptive data statistics, including the average of means and the standard deviation of each statement, were done. Figures, tables, and charts present the data results to help understand the outlines of the gained data.

In order to conduct inferential data analysis, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) (Haroon 2017). ECSR was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (M1), Customer Trust (M2) and Customer Loyalty (M1) were used as mediating variables. Next, path b1, b2 and b3 were evaluated. The researcher then used the results from the descriptive and inferential data analysis to prepare the semi-structured interview questions for the qualitative data collection phase of this study.

3.6.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, qualitative data analysis was employed to the semi-structured interview questions. Therefore, as applied to this study, qualitative data analysis refers to the procedures and steps the researcher adopted to understand data gained from the semi-structured interviews questions completed by Australian consumers (the participants).

The researcher applied the following procedures for the qualitative data analysis of the semi-structured interview questions: Once complete, the researcher transcribed each interview, analysed the data, understood it, and organised it into codes and themes. While the research process for the qualitative data is emergent, the researcher used inductive data analysis to establish a set of themes. A narrative passage was used to deliver the findings of the qualitative data analysis, and the researcher considered how the qualitative findings supported the quantitative results. During the collection, evaluation and analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher ensured self-reflection to clarify bias. Lastly, the researcher summarised a discussion of the implications of the results in terms of previous related studies in academic literature, expressing limitations and future research.

The researcher analysed the qualitative data manually and did not use qualitative data analysis software as the data amount was not large. According to St. John and Johnson (2000), while qualitative data analysis software frees the researcher from manual and clerical tasks when dealing with large amounts of qualitative data, the

process can often include increasingly deterministic and inflexible procedures, and show partiality towards coding and recovery methods. In addition, qualitative data analysis software places heightened pressure on researchers to focus on quantity and scope rather than on depth and meaning. The time and energy spent learning to use the qualitative data analysis computer package and increased commercialism, distract the researcher from the actual work involved in the analysis of the data. It is therefore recommended that researchers think about the abilities of the software package, their own computer literacy and knowledge of the package, or the time necessary to achieve these skills, and the appropriateness of the package for their own research. (St. John and Johnson (2000)

3.7. Ethical Clearance

This research obtained final ethics approval (No. H20REA213) from the University of Southern Queensland (USQ) Human Research Ethics Committee on the 24th of September 2020.

Ethics are the methods that help us retain the things we value (Johnson & Christensen 2012). Research ethics instructs and directs the behaviour and awareness of the researcher on the researchers' rights and the rights of any other participants affected by the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009).

Due to the fact that this research includes human perceptions, the researcher observed the ethical agreement procedures that are part of the University of Southern Queensland Human Ethics Research Committee (HREC) requirements. While the research involved human participants, the data was not classified as sensitive in nature.

The researcher established that there was no psychological or physical harm caused to the participants while the data collection process was carried out. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that they the participants' provided informed consent to participate in the study, and that they were provided with details of the research topic, as well as the researcher's contact information. This ensured the participants were aware of and able to withdraw from the study at any research stage without any consequences. All

participant information and responses were treated as confidential, with the utmost respect to anonymity and personal privacy.

As noted by Bouma (2000), it is necessary to ensure that the participants in any social research are able to make a voluntary, informed decision to participate within the research study. Therefore, each participant was clearly informed of the purpose of the study in straightforward language. This made certain that each participant was aware that their participation was completely voluntary. The researcher explained to the participants that the data collected from their online questionnaire-based surveys and semi-structured interview questions would only be used for this research. The researcher also ensured that the participants received written emails, advising the participants that by taking part in the research, they automatically provide consent.

All the digital data, including any email correspondence between the researcher and the participants, were confidentially and securely stored, only accessible by the researcher. Only the researcher has exclusive access to the data produced from the questionnaires and the interviews.

3.8. Reliability and Validity of the Research

Reliability and validity are two significant issues when contemplating the trustworthiness of research findings. As stated by Bryman (2012), employing mixed methods research improves the validity and reliability for any research.

3.8.1. Reliability

As stated by Dornyei (2007), reliability encompasses the uniformities of the data, scores or observations gained using induction methods. This can include a variety of instruments, initiatives and actions taken by participants in a research study. Reliability implies uniformity, and indicates that the results of the research would be the same or similar, even if the research instruments were to be used at another time by different researcher (Denscombe, 2010).

As noted by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the researcher of the study adopted the following strategies to lessen threats to reliability: Firstly, a mixed methods sequential explanatory paradigm was implemented in both the data collection and analysis stages of the study. More than one data collection instrument - namely online questionnaires-based surveys and semi-structured interview questions – were used to enhance reliability. The online questionnaire-based survey design was carefully considered. This involved the use of closed ended questions, and clear and comprehensible language and instructions to avoid any misunderstanding or ambiguity. A seven-point Likert scale form was adopted for the online questionnaire-based surveys, which enhanced the reliability and legitimacy of the measurements of the consumer's perspectives (Lyberg 1997).

3.8.2. Validity

To ensure the validity of the instruments in this study, the data collection tools were tested more than once using a pilot study. Validity was acquired by assuring that the research instrument measured what it was meant to measure (Bryman 2012).

As noted by Dornyei (2007), the researcher of the study adopted the following strategies to lessen threats to validity: The data from the pilot study was analysed using a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to test the interior consistency of the score, which describes the reliability of the data tools (the questionnaire-based survey). To check for reliability and internal consistency of the items included for each factor, the researcher used Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to determine whether removal of any items from the pilot study survey would improve reliability of the quantitative questionnaire-based survey to be used in the actual research. The researcher performed a reliability analysis on the pilot study questionnaire-based survey through SPSS. From the results of the reliability analysis, the researcher selected the items for the final quantitative online questionnaire-based survey based on the calculated reliability coefficient. The first drafts of the final online questionnaire-based survey were discussed with the supervisory team and the final online questionnaire-based survey was agreed to be implemented.

In addition, various steps were implemented to increase the validity of the semi-structured interview questions, including supervisors' revisions, and the researcher's familiarity with the research context. This allowed the researcher to probe the participants while conducting the interviews to clarify any ambiguity in the questions, or in their responses. Lastly, the researcher employed two different data collection instruments (online questionnaire-based surveys and semi structured interviews) to achieve a better understanding of the main research topic.

3.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter began with a reiteration of the purpose of this study, including an overview of the research questions and hypotheses. The researcher then presented and described the methodological framework of the study. Mixed method research was selected for this study to explore the effect of ECSR (independent variable) on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty (mediating variables), and the influence of enhanced customer satisfaction, enhanced customer trust and enhanced customer loyalty on customer retention (dependent variable) within the food industry through the participants' perspectives.

An overview of the data collection process for this study was stated before the pilot study and the results from the pilot study were presented. The researcher then described the process of the pilot study reliability analysis. Thereafter, the researcher presented the data analysis methods deployed for this research study. These included quantitative research data analysis techniques and qualitative research data analysis techniques. The ethical clearance for this research was provided, followed by an explanation of the reliability and validity of the research.

Chapter Four shall present phase one of the study, which includes quantitative data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: PHASE ONE OF THE STUDY: QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

In Chapter Three, the research methodology was presented, including the research design, the data collection instruments, and the data analysis procedures used in this study. The purpose of Chapter Four is to present phase one of the study – the quantitative data collection and analysis. This shall include the composition of the final online questionnaire-based survey, as well as an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase of the study.

The researcher shall present the quantitative data collection process. Thereafter the quantitative data results will be presented and analysed. This shall include descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis. The researcher shall discuss the results from the quantitative data analysis process. Summary tables, charts, histograms, and figures shall be used to support and illustrate the results from the data gathered from the online questionnaire-based survey. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher shall present a summary of the key findings.

4.2. Final Questionnaire Composition

Based on the results of the pilot study reliability analysis, the researcher relabeled the construct names for the final quantitative online questionnaire-based survey, which now consisted of a total of 35 items distributed across six (6) sections as follows:

Section One: Questions pertaining to participant demographics. This section consisted of eight (8) questions as per the table below:

Table 6: Final questionnaire section one: Demographics

CONSTRUCT	CONSTRUCT NAME	CONSTRUCT LABEL
Section 1: Demographics	DEM1	Please select your age group.
	DEM2	Please select your gender.
	DEM3	Please select your marital status.
	DEM4	Please select you family size.
	DEM5	Please select your highest education level.
	DEM6	Please select your current employment status.
	DEM7	Please select your household annual income.
	DEM8	Please select your state.

Section Two: Questions pertaining to consumer perceptions regarding the importance of environmental corporate social responsibility within the food industry. This section consisted of seven (7) questions.

Section Three: Questions pertaining to consumer perceptions regarding their satisfaction in relations to environmental social responsibility within the food industry. This section consisted of five (5) questions.

Section Four: Questions pertaining to consumer perceptions regarding their trust in relation to environmental corporate social responsibility within the food industry. This section consisted of five (5) questions.

Section Five: Questions pertaining to consumer perceptions regarding their loyalty in relation to environmental corporate social responsibility within the food industry. This section consisted of five (5) questions.

Section Six: Questions pertaining to consumer perceptions regarding their retention in relation to environmental corporate social responsibility within the food industry. This section consisted of five (5) questions.

Sections two, three, four, five and six consisted of 27 Likert scale type items in total. The researcher used the USQ Survey Tool to create the online questionnaire-based survey to collect quantitative data through the use of the Likert Scale. The Likert Scale items allowed comparisons to be made between the participant responses. Closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to the consumer target population to test the identified theories, which predict that ECSR (independent variable) may positively influence customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), thereby positively influencing customer retention (dependent variable) within the food industry.

As a non-comparative scale, the Likert Scale is often used in marketing research as it is simple to create, manage, and understand by prospective respondents (Aaker et al. 2016). In this study, the researcher adopted Likert scaling for the constructs of ECSR, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty and customer retention. A seven-point scale was selected for increased reliability (Kline 2013). The constructs of ECSR, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty and customer retention were measured via seven-point scale poles of 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

The table below provides the construct names and labels of sections two, three, four, five and six of the final questionnaire-based survey, and the validated research studies from which they were adapted.

Table 7: Final questionnaire sections two, three, four, five and six

Construct	Construct Name	Construct Label	Validated Research Studies
Section 2: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility	ECSR1	I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment.	Pradhan (2018)
	ECSR2	It is important to me that the food products I	Maloni and Brown (2006)

		purchase are environmentally friendly.	
	ECSR3	It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.	
	ECSR4	It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.	Marsh and Bugusu (2007)
	ECSR5	It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices).	Kim (2017)
	ECSR6	It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits.	
	ECSR7	It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling.	

Section 3: Customer Satisfaction	CS1	My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision.	Park, Kim and Kwon (2017)
	CS2	I believe that my purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation.	Pradhan (2018)
	CS3	I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.	
	CS4	I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.	Aramburu and Pescador (2019); Deng, Kang, and Low (2013); Lee (2017); Griffin (2008).
	CS5	I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment.	Jones (2010)

Section 4: Customer Trust	CT1	I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not.	Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012); Lombart and Louis (2014)
	CT2	I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not.	
	CT3	I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety.	
	CT4	I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option	Wei et al. (2018); Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CT5	I believe an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the	Priester and Petty (1995)

		environment is a credible company.	
Section 5: Customer Loyalty	CL1	I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products.	Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CL2	I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.	Yeh (2015)
	CL3	I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.	Park, Kim and Kwon (2017); Australian Organic Limited (2021)
	CL4	If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store.	Tripathi (2014) Carrigan and Attalla (2001)
	CL5	I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical	Pradhan (2018)

		practice within the environment	
Section 6: Customer Retention	CR1	If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation.	Carrigan and Attalla (2001)
	CR2	I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry, if it was committed to protecting the environment.	Nielsen (2014)
	CR3	I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.	
	CR4	Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product	Jones (2010); Carrigan and Attalla (2001)

		purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	
	CR5	I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012); Lombart and Louis (2014); Carrigan and Attalla (2001)

4.3. Sample and Participant Recruitment

Based on the researcher's analysis plans, a convenience population sample was selected based on availability. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), researchers can adopt convenience sampling when they include in their sample participants who are available or who volunteer, who can be quickly recruited, and who are willing to participate in the research study. Contributors are selected as respondents and should become accessible and available at the time of data gathering (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). The researcher included stratification based on demographics and geographical location to include the eight states of Australia in accordance with population dispersion prior to data collection to reflect the true proportion of the target population.

The researcher identified two research participant recruitment agencies - the Online Research Unit and Qualitative Research Recruitment - as suitable service providers to identify appropriate respondents with the correct demographics for this study, and to distribute the survey to these respondents throughout the eight Australian states.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) the preliminary estimated resident population (ERP) of Australia as of the 30th of June 2019 was 25,364,300 people. The sample size determined for this study at a 95% confidence level and a

5% margin for error is 385 participants. The following equation was used to calculate the study's sample size (www.qualtrics.com):

N = Population size (25364300)

e = Margin of error (percentage in decimal form) (0.95)

z = z-score (1.96)

4.4. Quantitative Data Collection Process

For the purpose of this study, quantitative data was collected via an online questionnaire-based survey (using the USQ Survey Tool). Closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to the consumer target population to test the identified theories, which predict that ECSR (independent variable) may positively influence customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), thereby positively impacting customer retention (dependent variable).

Surveys are one of most frequently used quantitative methods for exploring social phenomena. They entail the gathering of information in the form of the opinions of a sample of individuals representative of a population with the goal of developing knowledge about a problem under investigation. Therefore, the data gathered from surveys is quantitative in nature and may be subjected to statistical testing analysis in order to make generalisations regarding the study.

This study involved a survey of Australian consumers in order to collect their opinions regarding the impact of ECSR (within the food industry) on their behaviour, and the effect of their impacted behaviour on customer retention.

Numerous factors informed the selection of the survey method in this study. First, the survey method aided in the collection of a large volume of numerical data on the opinions of Australian consumers. The survey also gave an opportunity for the collection of data with adequate detail and quality to uncover patterns in customer

perceptions. Furthermore, surveys are simple and convenient to disseminate to a large number of respondents. The survey method offered an appropriate method of testing the study's hypotheses:

H1: *ECSR enhances customer satisfaction.*

H2: *ECSR enhances customer trust.*

H3: *ESCR enhances customer loyalty.*

H4: *Enhanced customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

H5: *Enhanced customer trust positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

H6: *Enhanced customer loyalty positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

The survey method was also considered appropriate because it gave access to a large population of respondents drawn from all eight states within Australia. The researcher identified two research participant recruitment agencies - the Online Research Unit and Qualitative Research Recruitment - as suitable service providers to identify appropriate respondents with the correct demographics for this study, and to distribute the survey to these respondents throughout the eight Australian states.

The survey instrument comprised of a total of 35 closed ended questions on a Likert-scale distributed across six (6) sections, from which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to several statements in the range of 1 (strongly disagree) and 7 (strongly agree). Kindly refer to Appendix B.

The questionnaires were distributed to 913 eligible Australian respondents between June 2021 and August 2021. Of the total number of 913 participants, 463 completed the survey, indicating a response rate of 50%. Prior to the actual surveys, the respondents received a participant information sheet explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants provided consent. See Appendix I - Participant Information Sheet: Online Questionnaire-Based Survey.

Participant questionnaires were assigned numbers from 1 to 463. The collected data was entered into SPSS computer program version 21.0 where various statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were performed.

The results from the collected quantitative data were then analysed and used to plan the second phase of the study: the qualitative data collection process.

4.5. Quantitative Data Presentation and Analysis

The online questionnaire-based survey was conducted from June 2021 to August 2021. It was distributed to 913 participants throughout Australia. Of the total number of 913 participants, 463 completed the survey, indicating a response rate of 50%. Participant questionnaires were assigned numbers from 1 to 463. The collected data was entered into SPSS computer program version 21.0 where various statistical analyses, including descriptive and inferential statistics, were performed.

4.5.1. Descriptive Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics entails summarising and arranging the data so it can be understood in a clear and concise manner. Unlike inferential statistics, descriptive statistics aims to describe the data, but does not make an effort to make inferences from the sample to the whole population. The data is described in a sample, and therefore descriptive statistics is not established on the basis of probability theory.

The researcher conducted data cleaning. Due to the fact that each question of the questionnaire-based survey was compulsory, there were no missing values to remove. The researcher then checked for and removed unengaged responses. All responses with a standard deviation of 0 were removed. There was a total of 10 responses removed, resulting in 453 responses.

Demographics were statistically analysed using SPSS. Then frequency tables, which provided informative details about the participants and their perceptions,

were produced. After that, descriptive data statistics, including the average of means and the standard deviation of each statement, were done per section. Figures and tables present the data results to help understand the outlines of the gained data (Please see Appendix J: Data Results for Survey Section One: Demographics)

4.5.*1.1. Survey S*ection O*ne: Demographics*

The purpose of this section is to establish the demographic make-up of the group of participants involved in the study. The researcher included stratification based on demographics and geographical location to include the eight states of Australia in accordance with population dispersion prior to data collection to reflect the true proportion of the target population. The first eight (8) questions of the survey pertained to the respondents' demographics. This included the respondents' age group, gender, marital status, family size, education level, employment status, and household annual income. The results per question are stated below.

According to the results from the survey, 37.7% (171) of participants were aged 65 years old and above. 19.2% of participants were between the ages of 55 and 64 years old (89), 15.2% of participants were between the ages of 45 and 54 years old (69), 15.9% of participants were between the ages of 35 and 44 years old (72), 9.7% of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 34 years old (44), and 1.8% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (8). This indicates that 282 participants (62.2%) were aged between 18 years old and 64 years old, and 171 participants were aged 65 years old and above (37.7%). While every attempt was made to allow for a representative sample of the Australian population due to the age demographic, once the survey was distributed to the 913 potential participants, the researcher could not guarantee who would complete the survey. Based on the responses received, it was clear that most (over 70%) of the respondents were above 45 years old. According to .id (informed decisions 2022), in 2021, the largest age group in Australia was 30- to 34-year-olds, and the age group that increased the most since 2016, was the 35- to 39-year-olds, growing by 277133 individuals. Furthermore, the group that increased the second most, was the 70- to 74-year-olds, growing by 273054 individuals. This was followed by the 75- to 79-year-olds, growing by 169244

individuals and the 60- to 64-year-olds, growing by 168697 individuals. This growth indicates a trend of an expanding group of older Australian consumers. The country also saw increased growth in the 10- to 14-year-olds group, which increased by 190877 people, however this was not taken into consideration for this study, due to the age requirement of the participants to be over the age of 18 years old. Therefore, the researcher associated the increased responses from participants aged 45 years and older to the growing trend of an expanding group of this particular age group, in addition to the possible likeliness of this age group responding to such types of surveys more favourably than the younger demographic.

Furthermore, the 2014 Nielsen Global Survey on CSR surveyed 30,000 consumers in 60 countries to examine how concerned consumers are about sustainable practices when it relates to their purchase deliberation; which consumer segments are the most supportive of ecological or other socially responsible initiatives; and which social issues attract the most alarm. It is noted that Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996), are more receptive to sustainability initiatives. Millennials represent 51% of consumers who will pay more for sustainable products and 51% of consumers who review packaging labels for information on sustainable practices. Regionally, there are large disparities between younger and older consumers in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East/Africa regions. In these developing countries, Millennial consumers who support sustainability actions are three times more agreeable to sustainability actions when compared to Generation X consumers (born between 1965 and 1980) and 12 times more agreeable than Baby Boomer consumers (born between 1946 and 1964). When taking the findings from the Nielsen survey into consideration, the researcher of this study acknowledged that, based on which consumer segments are the most supportive of ecological or other socially responsible initiatives, an equal representation of the demographic age groups may possibly skew the results of this study due to Millennial consumers being up to twelve times more agreeable than Generation X and Baby Boomer consumers. This provides the researcher with the opportunity to examine the data more thoroughly through the collection of qualitative data in the second stage of this study, by purposefully selecting participants who are more representative of the Australian population with regards to age.

With regards to gender, the majority of participants were male at 54.3% (246), 45.3% of the respondents were female (205), and 0.4% (2) of the respondents preferred not to answer the question. With regards to marital status, the majority of participants were married at 56.5% (256), 14.1% (64) of the respondents were separated or divorced, 13.9% (63) of the respondents were single, 10.6% (48) of respondents were in a relationship, and 4.9% (22) of respondents were widowed, at the time of this study.

With regards to family size, the majority of participants had two to four children at 45.5% (206), 34.7% (157) of the participants had no children, 17% (77) of the participants had one child, 2.6% (12) of the participants had more than four children, and 0.2% (1) of the participants preferred not to answer the question, at the time of this study.

With regards to highest education level, at the time of this study, 25.6% (116) of the participants had completed a Bachelor's Degree, 22.3% (101) of the participants had completed high school year 12, 21.9% (99) of the participants had completed training at Trade School, 12.4% (56) of the participants had completed some high school education, 9.5% (43) of the participants had completed a Master's level Degree, 6% (27) of the participants had completed an Honour's level Degree, and 0.7% (3) of the participants preferred not to answer the question.

At the time of this study, with regards to current employment status, 39.3% (178) of the participants were retired, 34% (154) of participants were employed full time, 17% (77) of participants were employed part time, 7.1% (32) of participants were unemployed, 1.8% (8) of participants were seeking opportunities, and 0.9% (4) of participants preferred not to answer the question.

At the time of this study, with regards to household annual income, 128 participants (27.4%) earned an annual household income of between $70 001 and $140 000, 27.4% (124) of the participants earned a household annual income of between $35 000 and $70 000, and 19.9% (90) of the participants earned an annual household income of less than $35 000. 12.4% (56) of participants earned an annual household income of between $140 001 and $280 000, 9.7% (44) of the participants preferred

not to answer the question, and 2.4% (11) of the participants earned an annual household income of more than $280 000.

453 Australian based consumers completed the online questionnaire-based survey to help to understand the effectiveness of ECSR as a CR tool within the food industry. The participants' home Australian states related to eight main groups. Out of the 453 participants 12.4% (56) were based in Queensland, 13% (59) were based in New South Wales, 12.1% (55) were based in Victoria, 12.6% (57) were based in Western Australia, 13% (59) were based in Tasmania, 11.9% (54) were based in South Australia, 13% (59) were based in the Australian Capital Territory, and 11.9% (54) were based in the Northern Territory.

4.5.1.2. Survey Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility

In section two of the online questionnaire-based survey, questions 9 to 15 pertained to the respondents' opinions regarding ECSR within the food industry. The purpose of this section is to establish and evaluate the Australian consumers' personal beliefs regarding what they think the responsibilities of the food industry are in terms of environmental preservation, and how important it is for them to buy food items from an environmentally friendly organisation. The results per question are stated below: (Please also see Appendix K Data Results for Survey Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility)

The participants were asked whether they believe if it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment. The majority of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement at 87.4% (396). The participants were asked whether it was important to them that the food products they purchased are environmentally friendly. The majority of participants (76%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement. The participants were then asked whether it was important to them that the food products they purchased included responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain. The majority of participants (80.5%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed that this was important to them. The participants were asked whether it was important to them that the food products they purchased use biodegradable

materials for packaging. The majority of participants (79.9%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

The participants were then asked whether it was important to them that the food products they purchased adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices). The majority of participants (84.1%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For the next question, the participants were asked whether it was important to them that the organisation from where they purchase their food products conducts waste audits. The majority of participants (72.6%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. Thereafter the participants were asked whether it was important to them that the organisation from where they purchase their food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling. The majority of participants (86.1%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

4.5.1.3. Survey Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility Results Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean: The mean is a central tendency of the data collected during the research study. It is a number around which an entire data set is distributed. For the purpose of this study, the researcher selected a seven-point Likert scale, which consisted of seven response categories. Thus, the midpoint of the data set is four.

For section two of this survey, the means across the seven items presented a range between 5.32 and 5.81, indicating that the majority of the participants felt similarly across all the items within the section. While response category seven equals 'strongly agree', and the midpoint of this data set is four, the mean for each of the seven questions indicates that the majority of the participants agreed with the statements presented. The higher the mean per item, the more the participants tended to agree with the statement.

Standard Deviation: The measurement of the average distance between every quantity and the mean, is the standard deviation (or σ). It is how dispersed the data is

relative to the mean. A low standard deviation suggests that the data points are inclined to be close to, or clustered around the mean of the data set, while a high standard deviation implies that the data points are distributed out over a broader scope of values, or more spread out. Data values become more disparate, and extreme values become more probable.

A standard deviation close to zero implies that data points are close to the mean, whereas a high or low standard deviation implies that the data points are respectively above or below the mean. While the mean identifies a central value in the distribution, it does not indicate how far the data points fall from the center. Higher SD values signify that more data points are further away from the mean. In other words, extreme values occur more frequently. For section two of this survey, the standard deviation across the seven items presented a range between 1.23 and 1.40, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean and not spread out over a broad range of value.

4.5.1.4. Survey section Three: Customer Satisfaction

In section three, questions 16 to 20 of the online questionnaire-based survey pertained to the respondents' opinions regarding ECSR and customer satisfaction. The results per question are stated below. (Please also see Appendix L: Data Results for Survey Section Three: Customer Satisfaction)

The participants were asked whether they believe that their choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision. The majority of participants (80.2%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. The participants were then asked whether they believe if their purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is their contribution towards environmental preservation. The majority of participants (76%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 18, the participants were asked whether they feel proud when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. The majority of participants (61.3%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

For survey question 19, the majority of participants (82.7%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with the statement that they admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment. For survey question 20, the participants were asked whether they feel satisfied when they buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment. The majority of participants (78.4%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

4.5.1.5. Survey Section Three: Customer Satisfaction – Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean: For section three of this survey, the means across the five items presented range between 5.00 and 5.65, indicating that the majority of the participants felt similarly across all the items within the section. While response category seven equals 'strongly agree', and the midpoint of this data set is four, the mean for each of the items indicates that the majority of the participants agreed with the statements presented. The higher the mean per item, the more the participants tended to agree with the statement.

Standard Deviation*:* For section three of this survey, the standard deviation across the five items presented range between 1.32 and 1.51, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean and not spread out over a broad range of values.

4.5.1.6. Survey Section Four: Customer Trust

In section four of the online questionnaire-based survey, questions 21 to 25 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding ECSR and customer trust. The results per question are stated below. (Please also see Appendix M: Data Results for Survey Section Four: Customer Trust)

For survey question 21, the participants were asked whether they believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than

a food organisation that is not. The majority of participants (60.3%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 22, the participants were asked whether they believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not. Just over half the participants (51.3%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 23, the participants were then asked whether they believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings them safety. Just over half the participants (54.6%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

For survey question 24, the respondents were asked whether they believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option. The majority of participants (66%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 25, the participants were then asked whether they believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a credible option. The majority of participants (68%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

4.5.1.7. Survey Section Four: Customer Trust – Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean: For section four of this survey, the means across the five items presented range between 4.52 and 5.06, indicating that the majority of the participants felt similarly across all the items within the section. While response category seven equals 'strongly agree', and the midpoint of this data set is four, the mean for each of the items indicates that the majority of the participants agreed with the statements presented. The higher the mean per item, the more the participants tended to agree with the statement.

Standard Deviation: For section four of this survey, the standard deviation across the five items presented range between 1.41 and 1.59, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean and not spread out over a broad range of values.

4.5.1.8. Survey Section Five: Customer Loyalty

In section five of the online questionnaire-based survey, questions 26 to 30 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding environmental corporate social responsibility (ECSR) and customer loyalty (CL). The results per question are stated below. (Please also see Appendix N: Data Results for Survey Section Five: Customer Loyalty)

For survey question 26, the participants were asked whether they consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice when purchasing such products. Approximately half of the participants (53.6%) agreed somewhat, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 27, the participants were then asked whether they encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment. 41.8% of the participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

For survey question 28, the participants were asked whether they intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future. The majority of the participants (68.4%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 29, the participants were then asked whether they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store is out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. 39.9% of participants somewhat disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with this statement, while 37% of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

For survey question 30, the participants were asked whether they would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if they found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment. The majority of participants (71.8%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

4.5.1.9. Survey Section Five: Customer Loyalty – Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean: For section five of this survey, the means across the five items presented range between 3.76 and 5.18, indicating slight differences in participants' opinions across all the items within the section. While response category seven equals 'strongly agree', and the midpoint of this data set is four, the mean for each of the items indicates that while some of the participants agreed with the items presented, some did not. The higher the mean per item, the more the participants tended to agree with the statement.

Standard Deviation: For section five of this survey, the standard deviation across the five items presented range between 1.39 and 1.69, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean and slightly spread out over the range of values.

4.5.1.10. Survey Section Six: Customer Retention

In section six of the online questionnaire-based survey, questions 31 to 35 pertain to the respondents' opinions regarding ECSR and customer retention. The results per question are stated below. (Please also see Appendix O: Data Results for Survey Section Six: Customer Retention)

For survey question 31, the participants were asked whether to agree or disagree with the following statement: If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation. 43.2% of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. The results indicate that less than half the respondents (43.90%) would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation, if the price of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased. Approximately one third of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

For survey question 32, the participants were asked whether to agree or disagree with

the following statement: I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment. The majority of participants (73.7%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 33, the participants were then asked whether to agree or disagree with the following statement: I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment. The majority of the participants (65.8%) somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

For survey question 34, the participants were asked whether to agree or disagree with the following statement: Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price. 43.9% of the participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. For survey question 35, the participants were then asked whether to agree or disagree with the following statement: I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price. Only 36.5% of participants somewhat agreed, agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement.

4.5.1.11. Survey Section Six: Customer Retention – Mean and Standard Deviation

Mean: For section six of this survey, the means across the five items presented range between 4.02 and 5.22, indicating that the majority of the participants felt similarly across all the items within the section. While response category seven equals 'strongly agree', and the midpoint of this data set is four, the mean for each of the items indicates that the majority of the participants agreed with the items presented. The higher the mean per item, the more the participants tended to agree with the statement.

Standard Deviation: For section six of this survey, the standard deviation across the five items presented range between 1.40 and 1.66, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean and not spread out over a broad range of values.

4.5.2. Inferential Data Analysis

Inferential statistics aim to imply justifications for a certain situation or phenomenon. It permits the researcher to create conclusions based on extrapolations, and is essentially different from descriptive statistics which simply summarise the measured data (Chin & Lee, 2008).

For the purpose of this study, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5). As stated by Hayes, Montoya, and Rockwood (2017) marketing, consumer, and organisational behaviour researchers concerned with the study of the mechanisms by which effects operate and the conditions that augment or hinder such effects often rely on statistical mediation and conditional process analysis (commonly referred to as the analysis of "moderated mediation"). Model estimation is usually assumed with ordinary least squares regression-based path analysis, such as applied in PROCESS macro for SPSS and SAS (Hayes, 2013), or using a structural equation modelling program. For observed variable models, the results are essentially the same.

In quantitative studies, certain research questions require involved mediation and/or moderation analyses. The PROCESS macro developed by Andrew Hayes calculates regression analyses containing various combinations of mediators, moderators, and covariates (Haroon 2017). Similar studies relating to CSR and customer retention that have used the Hayes PROCESS Model include a 2021 study by Bharadwaj and Yameen, a 2021 study by Ogunmokun and Timur, and a 2021 study by Islama et al. Previous PhD theses which have successfully used the Hayes Process model include Draper (2022), Rouse (2021) and Kraus (2018).

According to Hayes (2012), moderation is often mistaken for mediation, even though they are two different processes, and each process is modelled in a unique way. The most fundamental mediation model is the straightforward mediation model, whereby X is modelled to influence Y directly, and indirectly via an individual intermediary or mediator variable M positioned between X and Y. The direct and indirect effects of X are obtained from two linear models, one estimating M from X and the other estimating Y from both X and M. In this research study, Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer

Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). This represents path c in the mediation model below. The path from X to M1 was significant (b=0.940, p<0.001), as was the path from X to M2 (b=0.832, p<0.001). The path from X to M3 was also significant (b=0.930, p<0.001). This is represented as paths a1, a2, and a3 in the mediation model below.

Next, path b1, b2 and b3 were evaluated. That is the significance of the effect of the mediators on Y, with X already in the model. Path b2 was significant (b=0.060, <0.001), as was path b3 (b=0.583, p< 0.001). However, path b1 was not significant (b=0.060, p>0.05). Path c' (the direct effect of X on Y) was also non-significant (b=0.042, p>0.05).

The results from the parallel mediation model tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) infer the following: The fact that path c is significant, and path c' is not significant, indicates that full mediation has taken place. The indirect effect of X on Y for each of the mediators suggests that M2 (Customer Trust) and M3 (Customer Loyalty) are significant mediators of the relationship between X and Y (Bootstrapped confidence intervals: M2 BLLCI 0.111 - BUCLI 0.290 and M3 BLLCI 0.430 - BUCLI 0.652). M1 (Customer Satisfaction) is however, not a significant mediator of the relationship between X and Y (BLLCI -0.064 - BUCLI 0.181).

Figure 8: A parallel mediation model tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) to assess the mediation effect of change on the relationship between ECSR and customer retention
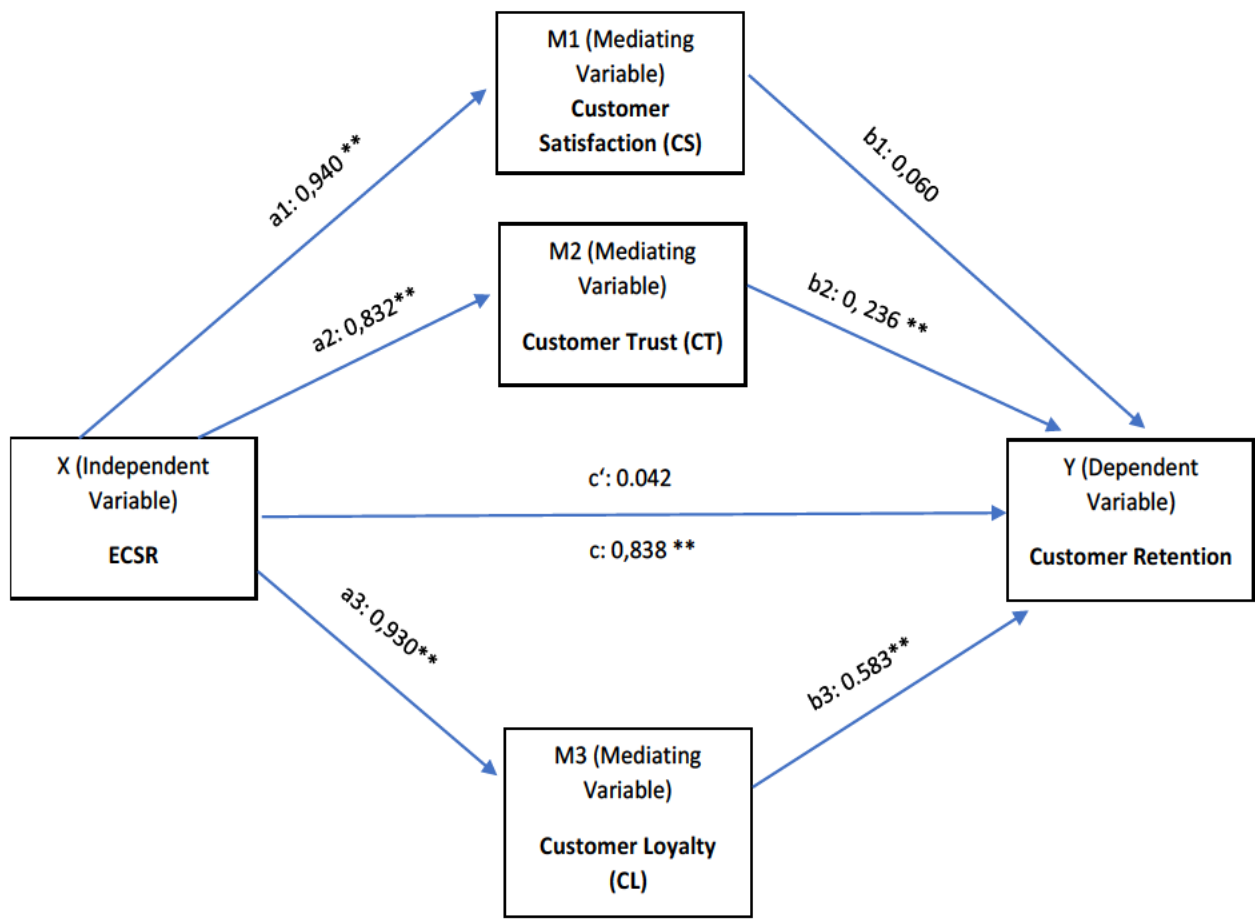
** p 0,001

4.5.3. Quantitative Data Analysis – Summary of Findings

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the USQ Survey Tool to create an online questionnaire-based survey to collect quantitative data through the use of a Likert Scale. The Likert Scale items allowed comparisons to be made between the participant responses. Closed-ended questions were used to generalise results to the consumer target population to test the identified theories, which predict that ECSR (independent variable) may positively influence customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty (mediating variables), thereby positively influencing customer retention (dependent variable).

4.5.3.1. ECSR

The data collected from the online questionnaire-based survey confirms that the majority of the participants (87.4%) believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment. This reinforces the literature reviewed which states that there a growing market share of organic products in Australia reflecting consumers' preferences for cruelty free products and environmentally friendly socially responsible products produced in a sustainable way (Australian Organic Limited 2021).

Furthermore, the data confirms that it is important to the majority of respondents (76%) that the food products they purchase are environmentally friendly. It is also important to the majority of respondents (80.5%) that the food products which they purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain. The data collected further indicates that the majority of respondents (72.6%) believe that it is important that the organisation from where they purchase their food products conducts waste audits, and 86.1% of the respondents believe that organisation from where they purchase their food products should promote consumer product packaging recycling.

The results from the online questionnaire-based survey states that the vast majority of respondents (79.9%) believe that it is important that the food products they purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging, and that the organisation from where they

purchase their food products adheres to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices) (84.1%).

These findings establish a strong connection with the reviewed literature whereby authors have suggested the following ECSR initiatives to combat the food industry's negative environmental impact, including environmentally friendly products; responsible environmental care practices within the supply chain (Maloni & Brown 2006); biodegradable materials for packaging (Marsh & Bugusu 2007); pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices); waste audits; food donation programs; energy and water conservation strategies; and the promotion of consumer product packaging recycling (Kim 2017).

In addition, these findings align with the stakeholder theory, which proposes that the purpose of a business is to create value for its various stakeholders, which includes its customers (Freeman 2010). Freeman defined a stakeholder as 'any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives' (Freeman 1984). These stakeholders offer resources, influence the industry environment, benefit from the organisation, and influence both its productivity and impact (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Therefore, it is the combined efforts of the stakeholder network that are the foundation of value creation (Haslam et al. 2015) and the revocation of stakeholder support can jeopardise the sustainability of a business (Freeman 2010). From the perspective of the stakeholder theory, a shared purpose ought to result from the shared values of an organisation and its stakeholders, therefore serving as a robust motivator for joint value creation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund 2017). Joint value creation suggests that the relationships between a business and its stakeholders should be greater than transaction-oriented interactions (Freeman 2010) and according to Theodoulidis et al. (2017), a business ought to involve all its stakeholders (investors, employees, their community, customers, etc.) in its decision making.

The stakeholder theory of CSR implies that a company's success is reliant on both the monetary and non-monetary benefits of CSR that are presented to all stakeholders (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García & Marchante-Lara 2014; Brown & Forster 2013). This reinforces that stakeholders anticipate businesses to participate in social

and CSR initiatives for various monetary and non-monetary advantages (Wolter & Cronin 2017). As applied to this study, organisations are driven to expand upon their objectives over and above profit expansion. Organisations that adopt ECSR as a manner in which to encourage socially responsible behaviours are in a favourable position to successfully act in response to customer requirements.

4.5.3.2. ECSR and Customer Satisfaction

The data collected indicates that the majority of respondents (80.2%) believe that their choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision, and that the purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is their contribution towards environmental preservation (76%). This data confirms the research conducted by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment.

The percentage of agreeing respondents drops slightly when they are asked if they feel proud when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation (61.3%). This question is linked to research conducted by Pradhan (2018), who states that consumers feel a sense of pride when purchasing from a socially responsible company, because it gives them the opportunity to support humanity and their nation, despite their busy lifestyles. While the percentage of agreeing participants drops slightly for this question, it provides the researcher with an opportunity to explore the concept more thoroughly through the collection of qualitative data in the second phase of the study, in order to understand the perspectives of the consumers more completely and answer the research questions comprehensively.

It was noted that the majority of the respondents (82.7%) admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment. This correlates with the literature that states that CSR increases customer admiration through bolstering an organisation's reputation (Aramburu & Pescador 2019; Deng, Kang, & Low 2013; Lee 2017; Griffin 2008).

The researcher discovered through the collection of data that the majority participants feel satisfied when they buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment (78.4%). These results support the Social Exchange Theory, which indicates that human behaviour is an exchange of both physical and unquantifiable activity, specifically that of cost and reward (Homans 1958; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). The theory proposes that social behaviour is the outcome of an exchange process (Emerson 1976; Skidmore 1975) and interpersonal interactions comprise of exchanges of resources. Furthermore, satisfaction is predominantly influenced by the economic and social results of these exchanges. Therefore, the customer perceptions of a company can be influenced by various internal processes and interpersonal variables. According to Sierra and McQuitty (2005), in the case of a close interaction between an organisation and a customer, the manner in which the company and its representatives behave is frequently more significant than what is actually delivered (Ozment & Morash 1994). In social exchange, customers and organisations realise a level of shared responsibility, and the success or failure of the outcome results in an emotional response (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005). These results also align with the Organisational Identification Theory developed by Cheney and Tompkins in 1987, which states that an individual who appreciates the righteous efforts of an organisation may feel more satisfied about their connection with the organisation. According to the existing literature, this enhances the individual's identification with the organisation and encourages positive reactions from the individual (Jones 2010).

Furthermore, the results align with the Consumer-Company Identification Theory, established by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003). This theory proposes that consumers may develop a strong relationship with a company as the result of the consumers' identification with that company, which assists them satisfy an important self-defining need. As applied to this study, the theory anticipates that when consumers identify with the CSR efforts of an organisation, they may respond with a committed relationship towards the organisation, while becoming champions of the organisation and their products.

However, based on the inferential analysis of the quantitative data collected, the results indicate that customer satisfaction is not a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. For the purpose of this study, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) to test the

relationship between the variables. Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively). Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M1 was also significant (b=0.940, p<0.001). Next, path b1 was evaluated - that is the significance of the effect of customer satisfaction (mediator) on Y, with X already in the model – and the results inculcated that path b1 was not significant (b=0.060, p>0.05), indicating that customer satisfaction is not a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention (BLLCI -0.064 - BUCLI 0.181). This provides the researcher of this study with an opportunity to explore this outcome further, through the collection of qualitative data in the next phase of this study.

4.5.3.3. ECSR and Customer Trust

The data indicates that a sizeable majority of respondents (60.3%) believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. This outcome aligns with the existing literature whereby researchers identified four primary drivers for customer loyalty, including customer satisfaction, product quality, customer trust and company image. When measuring the effects of CSR on these drivers, they found that CSR had a positive effect on all four drivers, with the strongest effect on customer trust (Van den Berg & Lidfors 2012). Further investigation into the perspectives of the respondents regarding the influence of CSR initiatives on consumer trust via qualitative data collection in the second phase of this stay shall allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the concept for the purpose of this study.

The quantitative data gathered by the researcher for this study indicates that approximately half the respondents (51.3%) believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not. Again, further investigation into the opinions and perspectives of the respondents regarding this question via qualitative data collection shall allow for a

deeper understanding as to why this is the case, and what organisations within the food industry can do to enhance their customers' perceptions of organisational honesty.

Approximately half the respondents who completed this survey (54.6%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings them safety. This aligns with existing literature which states that consumers feel that purchasing from an organisation that is committed to CSR initiatives brings them safety (Lombart & Louis 2014). A deeper analysis as to the perceptions of the respondents regarding their perceived safety, or lack thereof, when purchasing food from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is required via the collection of qualitative data in order for the researcher confirm whether CSR positively influences a consumer's feeling of safety, which may then influence their customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty levels.

The responses from the survey indicate that the majority of respondents (66%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option. This data aligns with the existing literature that states that consumers consider organic products to be better for their health and for the health of the planet (Australian Organic Limited 2021). However, a deeper analysis as to the respondents' perceptions regarding the level of health, or lack thereof, when purchasing food from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is required via the collection of qualitative data in the second phase of this study in order for the researcher to explore the concept further. The consumer perception regarding whether or not products that are produced by an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation are a healthy option for them, influences the level of customer trust towards the organisation, which as stated by the existing literature, influences customer loyalty. When customers trust an organisation, their confidence levels in that organisation's product and service quality are enhanced, and these enhanced confidence levels result in customer repurchase behaviour and customer retention (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). Thus, it is necessary for the researcher to explore this data further via qualitative data collection in order to provide a deeper understanding of the research questions.

Based on the data collected, 68% of the respondents believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company. The researcher anticipates further analysis as to the participants' perceptions regarding the credibility of an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment via the qualitative data collection phase of this study. Based on the existing literature reviewed, dialogue between a company and its external stakeholders, ensures enhanced company credibility and trust (Priester & Petty 1995). Companies are then able to better realise the needs of their external stakeholders, resulting in enhanced innovation to meet these needs while enhancing the company's reputation as a responsible business, and contributing to the company's brand positioning by increasing its competitive advantage. The researcher expects to gain a further understanding as to the consumers' perceptions regarding an organisation's CSR message and activities, and its level (or lack thereof) of credibility in the mind of the consumer.

Organisational credibility is intricately linked to customer trust, which as stated by the existing literature, positively influences customer retention (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). Based on the inferential analysis of the quantitative data collected, the results indicate that customer trust is a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. For the purpose of this study, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) to test the relationship between the variables. Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively). Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M2 was also significant (b=0.832, p<0.001). Next, path b2 was evaluated - that is the significance of the effect of customer trust (mediator) on Y, with X already in the model – and the results inculcated that path b2 was significant (b=0.060, p>0.001), indicating that customer trust is a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention (BLLCI 0.111 - BUCLI 0.290). This provides the researcher with an opportunity to explore this outcome further, through the collection of qualitative data in the next phase of this study.

4.5.3.4. ECSR and Customer Loyalty

The data collected indicates that approximately half of the respondents (53.6%) consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice when purchasing such products. The growing market share of organic products in Australia reflects consumers' preferences for cruelty free products and environmentally friendly socially responsible products produced in a sustainable way. This trend is expected to rise with indicators suggesting an increase in household annual spend on organic products (an increase of 12.8%) and 565 000 additional households purchasing organic products since 2019 (Australian Organic Limited 2021). Further investigation into the opinions and perspectives of the respondents regarding this statement through semi-structured interview questions shall allow the researcher to gather a deeper understanding as to why this is the case.

According to the literature, Yeh (2015) states that CSR enhances customer advocacy and consumers are more likely to encourage their friends and relatives to purchase from a provider who is committed to CSR initiatives. However, based on the research data, less than half (41.8%) the respondents said that they would encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment. Further analysis as to the participants' perceptions regarding this question is to be established via the qualitative data collection phase of this study in order for the researcher probe the participants further with regards to product referral.

The data further indicates that the majority of respondents (68.4%) intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future, however almost equal percentages (39% and 37% respectively) of the respondents agreed and disagreed with the statement which indicated whether they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store is sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. According to the existing literature, customer satisfaction occurs when products and services exceed the customer's expectations; however, customer satisfaction alone does not guarantee customer loyalty and retention. A business must ensure that its customers are continuously engaged throughout the process of purchase to repurchase as this creates an

emotional and psychological investment for the customer with the brand. Frequent purchasing enables the customer to connect with their service or product provider more regularly, and this may strengthen their positive attitude towards the organisation, while building loyalty. It is therefore vital that such interaction between the customer and their service or product provider remain positive, in order for brand loyalty to be ensured (Tripathi 2014).

Deeper analysis as to the respondents' perceptions regarding their level of loyalty, or lack thereof, towards their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation is required via the collection of qualitative data in the second phase of this study. The researcher anticipates that the data collected from the first stage of the study with regards to this question relates to the research conducted by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), which implies that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience or quality. However, further exploration via qualitative data collection shall provide the researcher with a clearer picture of consumer perceptions in this regard.

The gathered data suggests that the majority of respondents (71.8%) would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if they found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment. Furthermore, based on the inferential analysis of the quantitative data collected, the results indicate that customer loyalty is a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. Based on the parallel mediation model tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) to assess the relationship between the variables, Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively). Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M3 was also significant (b=0.930, p<0.001). This was represented as paths a3 in the mediation model. Next, path b3 was evaluated - that is the significance of the effect of customer loyalty (mediator) on Y, with X already in the model – and the results inculcated that path b3 was significant (b=0.583, p>0.001), indicating that customer loyalty is a significant mediator of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention (BLLCI 0.430 - BUCLI 0.652).This provides the researcher of this study with

an opportunity to explore this outcome further, through the collection of qualitative data in the next phase of this study.

4.5.3.5. ECSR and Customer Retention

For the purpose of this study, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) to prove evidence of a relationship between the constructs. In this research study, Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M1 was significant (b=0.940, p<0.001), as was the path from X to M2 (b=0.832, p<0.001). The path from X to M3 was also significant (b=0.930, p<0.001). This is represented as paths a1, a2, and a3 in the mediation model.

Next, path b1, b2 and b3 were evaluated. That is the significance of the effect of the mediators on Y, with X already in the model. Path b2 was significant (b=0.060, <0.001), as was path b3 (b=0.583, p< 0.001). However, path b1 was not significant (b=0.060, p>0.05). Path c' (the direct effect of X on Y) was also non-significant (b=0.042, p>0.05).

The results from the parallel mediation model tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) infer the following: The fact that path c is significant, and path c' is not significant, indicates that full mediation has taken place. The indirect effect of X on Y for each of the mediators suggests that M2 (Customer Trust) and M3 (Customer Loyalty) are significant mediators of the relationship between X and Y (Bootstrapped confidence intervals: M2 BLLCI 0.111 - BUCLI 0.290 and M3 BLLCI 0.430 - BUCLI 0.652). M1 (Customer Satisfaction) is however, not a significant mediator of the relationship between X and Y (BLLCI -0.064 - BUCLI 0.181).

The data collected from the questionnaires further suggests that less than half the respondents (43.90%) would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation, if the price of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased. These results correspond with the existing literature that implies that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behaviour in an ethical direction further only when there is no additional cost in terms of price (Carrigan & Attalla 2001). However, the alignment with the existing literature is contradicted by the data collected when the respondents were asked if they would continue to purchase environmentally friendly food products regardless of taste or price: 43.9% of the respondents stated that they would continue to purchase environmentally friendly food products regardless of taste or price. The results of this question require a deeper investigation through the collection of qualitative data in order for the researcher to obtain a full understanding of the effect of ECSR on customer retention within the food industry.

According to a Nielsen survey (2014) 52% of the global respondents noted that they check product labels before they purchase products to ensure that the brand they are purchasing is committed to positive social and environmental impact. This is confirmed by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment. The data collected in the first phase of this study confirms the existing literature, and states that 73.7% of the respondents would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment, and that they would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment (65.8%).

4.6. Chapter Summary

Chapter Four presented phase one of the study – the quantitative data collection and analysis. This included the composition of the final online questionnaire-based survey, as well as an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase

of the study. The researcher then presented the quantitative data collection process. Thereafter the quantitative data results were be presented and analysed. This included descriptive data analysis and inferential data analysis. The researcher then presented and discussed the results from the quantitative data analysis process. Summary tables, charts, histograms, and figures were used to support and illustrate the results from the data gathered from the online questionnaire-based survey. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher presented a summary of the key findings.

The following chapter shall discuss phase two of the research study: the qualitative data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: PHASE TWO OF THE STUDY: QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four presented phase one of the study – the quantitative data collection and analysis. In this chapter, the researcher shall present phase two of the study: qualitative data collection and analysis.

The researcher shall begin Chapter Five by presenting the final semi-structured interview questions. Thereafter an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase of the study shall be provided. Following this, the qualitative data collection process shall be described, and the qualitative data results shall be presented and analysed. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher shall present a summary of the key findings and the implications of the findings of the qualitative study.

5.2. Final Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Based on the results obtained from the quantitative data collected during the first phase of this study, eleven (11) semi-structured interview questions were formulated to give the participants the opportunity to elaborate on their perceptions and for the researcher to understand the effect that ECSR has on customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and therefore on customer retention within the food industry, as perceived by the participants. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018) the total number of questions for an interview should be between five and ten, however no exact number can be provided, and thus the researcher made the decision to include eleven questions in the interview for this study.

The table below provides the eleven semi-structured interview questions formulated by the researcher, and their corresponding constructs.

Table 8: Final semi-structured interview question guide

Construct	Semi-Structured Interview Questions
Customer Satisfaction	Q1: Do you feel that you are doing the right thing when you buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation? If so, does doing the right thing give you a sense of pride, and why?
Customer Trust	Q2: What do you think makes a food organisation trustworthy? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not? Please elaborate.
Customer Trust	Q3: Can you give me an example of a food organisation that you believe is honest with its customers? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not? Please elaborate.
Customer Trust	Q4: What does food safety mean to you personally? Do you believe that it is safer for you to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation and why?
Customer Trust	Q5: Do you believe that purchasing and eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively or negatively affects your health, and why?
Customer Trust	Q6: What do you believe makes a food organisation credible? Do you think that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more or less credible, and why?

Customer Loyalty	Q7: Are products from an environmentally friendly food company your first choice when purchasing food items, and why?
Customer Loyalty	Q8: Would you encourage or discourage your friends and family from purchasing products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment? Why?
Customer Loyalty	Q9: How loyal are you towards your favourite food products? Would you postpone buying a product or go to another store, if your regular store is out of your preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, and why?
Customer Retention	Q10: How important is the taste of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste? Why?
Customer Retention	Q11: How important is the price of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of the price?

5.3. Sample and Participant Recruitment

The researcher identified one of the two research participant recruitment agencies previously used in the first phase of this study - Qualitative Research Recruitment - as a suitable service provider to identify appropriate respondents with the correct demographics for this study.

Twenty-two (22) participants for the qualitative data collection phase of the study were purposefully selected and interviewed from the convenience population sample used for the quantitative data collection phase. According to Creswell (1998) for research using a grounded theory approach, 20 to 30 qualitative interviews are suggested. Although the participants who agreed to participate in the online questionnaire-based

survey, also agreed to being interviewed, upon making contact with more than 30 participants, only 22 participants accepted the invitation to be interviewed.

The researcher selected participants who allowed for a representative sample of the Australian population. According to .id (informed decisions 2022), in 2021, the largest age group in Australia was 30- to 34-year-olds, and the age group that increased the most since 2016, was the 35- to 39-year-olds, growing by 277133 individuals. Furthermore, the group that increased the second most, was the 70- to 74-year-olds, growing by 273054 individuals. This was followed by the 75- to 79-year-olds, growing by 169244 individuals and the 60- to 64-year-olds, growing by 168697 individuals. This growth indicates a trend of an expanding group of older Australian consumers. The country also saw increased growth in the 10- to 14-year-olds group, which increased by 190877 people, however this was not taken into consideration for this study, due to the age requirement of the participants to be over the age of 18 years old.

All participants were sent an invitation and incentive email with information outlining the nature of the research, aims, and assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity, which also clearly stated that participants had the right to extract at any stage from the research. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants provided consent. The profiles of the participants at the time of the study were as follows:

18.18% of participants were between the ages of 55 and 64 years old (4), 18.18% of participants were between the ages of 45 and 54 years old (4), 22.72% of participants were between the ages of 35 and 44 years old (5), 18.18% of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 34 years old (4), 9.09% of participants were between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (2), and 13.63% of participants were over the age of 65 (3).

With regards to gender, the majority of participants were female at 54.54% (12), 45.45% of the respondents were male (10). With regards to marital status, the majority of participants were married at 68.18% (15), 22.73% (5) of participants were in a relationship, and 9% (2) of the participants were single.

With regards to family size, 40.9% of the participants had two to four children (9), 36.36% (8) of the participants had one child, 22.72% (5) of the participants had no

children. With regards to highest education level, at the time of this study, 45.45% (10) of the participants had completed a Bachelor's Degree, 22.72% (5) of the participants had completed high school year 12, 18.18% (4) of the participants had completed training at Trade School, 4.54% (1) of the participants had completed a Master's level Degree, 9.09% (2) of the participants had completed an Honour's level Degree.

At the time of this study, with regards to current employment status, 13.63% (3) of the participants were retired, 45.45% (10) of participants were employed full time, 27.27% (6) of participants were employed part time, 13.63% (3) of participants were unemployed.

At the time of this study, with regards to household annual income, 13 participants (59.09%) earned an annual household income of between $70 001 and $140 000, 27.27% (6) of the participants earned a household annual income of between $35 000 and $70 000, and 13.63% (3) of participants earned an annual household income of between $140 001 and $280 000.

With regards to location, 18.18% (4) were based in Queensland, 18.18% (4) were based in New South Wales, 13.63% (3) were based in Victoria, 13.63% (3) were based in Western Australia, 4.54% (1) were based in Tasmania, 13.63% (3) were based in South Australia, 9.09% (2) were based in the Australian Capital Territory, and 9.09% (2) were based in the Northern Territory.

5.4. The Qualitative Data Collection Process

Interviews are a common form of data collection in qualitative research. For the purpose of this study, the interview method was used to obtain the perspectives of Australian consumers regarding ECSR within the food industry. Semi-structured interviews questions were considered best for this study as they helped to boost the flexibility of the interview process. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer prepares interview questions using the interview guide. However, the interviewer is flexible as much as necessary to permit the interviewing process to diverge slightly

from the interview guide in order to allow the respondents to bring up important issues that may not have been depicted in the interview guide (Carruthers 1990).

One of the benefits of the semi-structured interview is that it provides the interviewees with the opportunity to convey individual opinions based on their own understanding and not that of the researcher. The semi-structured interview process also permits two-way communication between the researcher and the interviewee (Carruthers 1990).

This study involved interviews that followed a semi-structured format. The respondents were encouraged to participate in free expression of their opinions and delve into issues that they considered important to their own experiences and food choices.

The interview method was considered most appropriate for this study because it enabled the collection of rich data through in-depth interviews with Australian consumers.

Prior to the actual interviews, the researcher contacted the respondents via an emailed participant information sheet explaining the nature and purpose of the study. Upon agreeing to participate, all participants provided consent. See Appendix I - Interview Consent to Participate. The researcher then continued to liaise with the respondents via email to arrange for the most suitable date and time for the interviews to take place.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out in March 2022.

According to Harvey (2011), there is no specific agreement about the appropriate length of interviews. In the researcher's case, the conversations lasted between 15 – 25 minutes. All the participants agreed to be audio-recorded. Each interview followed the format of a conversation. The researcher used a comparable style of language for all the interviews in order to improve reliability and ensure standardisation.

Zoom and telephone session recordings were used to keep a correct record of the data gathered from these interviews and to prevent any loss of data. Having audio-recorded the interviews permits the researcher to go revisit the recordings when necessary and to get a richer interpretation of the content of the interview. The researcher also made notes during the interviews regarding points raised by the participants, as well as any emerging trends.

After each interview, the researcher used a transcription application called Otter Transcription to transcribe the participants' responses immediately after each interview to maintain accurate data for later analysis. All the recordings were transcribed to Microsoft Word documents without any language, syntax or grammar modification. Each interview was stored on the researcher personal computer, as well as an external hard drive using a unique identifier code.

5.5. Qualitative Data Presentation and Analysis

As previously stated, the semi-structured interviews were designed to support and build on the findings from the data collected from the online questionnaire-based survey. Therefore, to explain the outcomes from the online questionnaire-based survey, the consumers who participated in survey were again interviewed. The purpose of data analysis is to gather the data collected in a significant way to produce clarification, permit explanation and allow suitable interpretations to be drawn.

The data for phase two of this research was collected via semi-structured interviews with 22 consumers who had previously completed the online questionnaire-based survey. Each interview comprised of eleven (11) semi-structured questions designed to gather information from the participants regarding their perceptions pertaining to the constructs of ECSR, customer satisfaction, customer trust, customer loyalty, and customer retention. Each interview was labelled from 1 to 22 and will be referred to as Participant 1 through to Participant 22 for the purpose of this study. After collecting all needed data from the interviews, it was time to commence the data analysis.

5.5.1. Interview Question Results

5.5.1.1 Interview Question One

> *Question One. Do you feel that you are doing the right thing when you buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation? If so, does doing the right thing give you a sense of pride, and why?*

According to the data collected, 21 out of the 22 participants stated that they do feel that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. 20 out of the 22 participants stated that this type of purchase gives them a sense of pride. For example, Participant 6 noted that they had not really considered the statement before, but when they think about it consciously, they would be proud of their purchase choice. Their statement included:

> I wouldn't say yes or no, I mean I don't think I actually think about it if I bought something like that, that I'm just helping the environment or whatever. I'm somewhere in between. I guess if I sat down and thought about it, I would say, I would be proud for doing my bit.

The participants that noted that this type of purchase does not give them a sense of pride, explained that it's more about doing the right thing than it is about feeling a sense of pride. For example, Participant 1's statement included:

> Not necessarily. I am buying food for the fact that I'm hungry. If it's a choice between different foods, then I would obviously choose the food that is made by the organisation that is more socially conscience. I wouldn't say it's a sense of pride. I would say it's a sense of doing the right thing. You must support people who have a bit of a social conscience. If they are genuinely demonstrating that they have a social conscience and [that] they are uplifting the community, then I feel like I am participating in that venture as well. I don't have a sense of pride about it. I think it's a sense of duty.

Participant 14 noted that they are environmentally aware, however they do not feel a sense of pride when they purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisations. This participant stated that feeling pride from making such a purchase is arrogant. Their statement included:

> Yes. I'm quite environmentally aware so and also like with chemicals and things like that, I'm quite sensitive to what products are being used, so if it is a credible organisation, yes, I would choose them. Hmmm, not really. I wouldn't use the word pride. Does it make you feel good? Yes. Does it make you feel prideful? I don't think so, that's like arrogance.

The participants who noted that they do feel that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, and that this type of purchase does give them a sense of pride, believe that this purchase choice is their contribution towards the preservation of the planet, and that they feel proud to be part of such a purpose. Furthermore, some respondents noted that they feel good about supporting organisations that are committed to environmental preservation, because it is the moral thing to do. For example, Participant 4's statements included: 'Yes, and yes, because I'm doing… I'm really doing my bit to save the planet and probably support a business that cares about the planet.' Participant 13 agreed with this notion and stated the following:

> Yes, I do. I would say I would. Yes. I think that once I, if it's something that I can have a choice that's between a company that is looking after the environment and one that is not, it's got a product that is comparable, yeah, I will absolutely go for the other one, yeah, because I know they kind of are doing the right thing and the sustainability is a good thing. When I can do something like that, and if I can contribute to a company doing something like that, it makes me feel good.

Participant 5 explained that their purchase choice is about preserving the planet for future generations: 'Yes, I do. Yes, it does, because I think… I immediately think for future generations and that I'm helping to preserve the planet'. Participant 7 continued with this pattern by stating: 'Yes. Yes, because I'm doing the right thing. I'm morally conscious when it comes to food.' In addition, Participant 8 explained: 'Yes, because it feels like I'm doing something to contribute globally and making a difference to the environment.'

Participants also explained that their purchase choice was their way of making a valuable contribution to the planet and to the community. For example, Participant 9 noted: 'I do definitely. Yes… because I am contributing to the environment and our planet…' In addition, Participant 10 stated: 'Yes of course. Yes, it does give me a sense of pride because I'm doing my bit to help.'

This trend continued with Participant 11 explaining: 'Yes, so I've seen it as I'm contributing a little bit towards the community so it's my good deed for the day sort of thing'. Participant 12 explained: 'Yes, you're just trying to do the right thing for the world actually', and Participant 15 noted: 'I'm just being… making a little bit of a difference to our world.'

Some of the respondents believe that purchasing products from an organisation within the food industry that is committed to environmental preservation is the right thing to do, and that it is the better choice. Thus, it makes them feel a sense of pride about their purchase. This was confirmed by Participant 16's statements: 'Yes… yeah, well I guess it's a better choice and its sustainability, and makes you feel like you are doing the right thing.' Participant 21 further confirmed this trend, by explaining that the topic of environmental sustainability has been around for many years and that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to environmental preservation indicates that the company's values are right and good. Therefore, they believe that they are doing the right thing and that they feel a sense of pride when they purchase products from such organisations. Their statement included the following:

> Yes. I think so, because I know their values are all right. Because I think organisations need to be relevant and sustainability and being environmentally friendly, we've been talking about this for so many years, um, and you know if you don't do that, you're just destroying something that might not be here in a couple of years.

A trend of consumer skepticism was identified during question one. Two participants out of the 22 participants stated that they are untrusting of the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims. They noted that they would feel a sense of doing the right thing, and a sense of pride when buying food products from a company that claimed to be committed to environmental preservation if they were

certain that the organisation was following through with their claims. For example, Participant 3 explained the following:

> My initial answer is yes, but now I'm really skeptical. How many are actually environmentally concerned, or how much is actually just lip service? I'm a little skeptical but my initial answer is yes. So yes, it does, because I feel like I'm not just being a consumer you know, I'm part of a process that is ensuring that what I am taking out of the system, I'm trusting that the company is putting back into the system.

In continuing with this pattern of consumer skepticism, Participant 17's statements included:

> Generally, yes, obviously I'm trusting that the actual companies are doing what they say. So, I mean, you know obviously there is a bit of an issue there because I want to know beyond being, you know, a trusting consumer I suppose, that they are doing what they claim. But look um, as I said putting that aside and just believing that they are doing what the claim, yes, generally the answer is yes.

> Well, yes, to a certain extent, I mean as I said to you, just trusting on face value that they are doing as they claim, yes. I mean it would be something, you know, it would be something, a decision I am proud of, yes.

5.5.1.2. Interview Question Two

> *Question Two: What do you think makes a food organisation trustworthy? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, and why?*

Some respondents noted that a good company reputation, quality processes and safety certificates make a food organisation trustworthy. For example, Participant 1's answer included:

> In terms of trustworthy, it's got to have a clean reputation. It's got to have all the certificates and have the quality processes in place. There must be no negative feedback in the media about that.

Respondents also noted that transparency, clear communication, honesty, and correct product labelling makes a company within the food industry trustworthy. For example, Participant 4 explained: 'Their transparency, and their honesty, yeah, transparency, and honesty and even if they do mess up the truth about it all.' Participant 6 confirmed this pattern by stating: 'Their reputation, their openness, their labels.' and Participant 7 stated, 'Correct labelling on their products.' Participant 15 further established this trend by stating, 'Certifications and logos that they have on packaging and branding', while Participant 12 explained that brand popularity and familiarity made organisations within the food industry more trustworthy:

> I think, it's how popular the brand is to be honest, and the company is. I tend to stick to the ones I know rather than the less known ones.

Participant 1 further explained that the food industry's supply chain and how local sourcing positively affected the level of a food company's trustworthiness in their mind:

> There are so many different types of foods and products, there are a lot of sourcing issues that can come from products from different countries. So, for instance if they demonstrate that they are a company that is buying local and proves that they are buying local then an element of trust is established for me. I do know for instance that you can get honey [and] that people say we have the greatest honey meanwhile it's corn syrup that they are importing [it] from China. [If] their food stocks are from this province, I'm more inclined to buy from them.

Participant 8 confirmed this pattern of linking the sourcing of food products with the level of an organisational trustworthiness by stating, 'I think when they are quite explicit with what [the] ingredients are and you know, where those ingredients come from…' Participant 14 also noted reliable sourcing of products as a strong indicator of organisational trustworthiness within the food industry, 'If they are buying from reliable sources… [the organisation is more trustworthy].'

Eleven participants stated that they believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. Participant 1 noted that they believed that they would be more trusting of such organisations, because they believe them to be more transparent with their souring activities:

I would say they are more trustworthy, and I would place more trust in their product based on the fact that they've proved their provenance and that they're actually doing it in a sustainable way.

Participant 4 compared organisations that care for the environment to people that care for animals, and this made them more trusting of such organisations. Their statement included the following:

In a way yes, um, I guess I feel that organisations that aren't, I know, I feel that they normally um… aligned with the core producers and the fossil fuel guys. Whereas I think I can trust people that are caring for the earth just like those who care for animals, I trust them.

Participant 7 stated that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, because it meant that they are not only interested in profits, but that they are also interested in sustaining the environment. The participant explained:

I just see them as, as they [have] different motivations, and that they are not just motivated by money and making the most out of it, but also giving back to the environment as one of their motivations.

Participant 22 confirmed this point even further, by stating: 'Yes, it just shows that they are thinking further than themselves and not the dollar and that they are committed to making environmental change.'

Eleven out of the 22 participants did not believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. Some of the beliefs driving these opinions included the fact that environmental preservation is currently a trend for organisations to gain popularity, and so this may be the actual driver rather than their moral obligation. For example, Participant 5 stated:

No, I don't, only because I feel like, there is a lot of focus [on environmental preservation] at the moment. It's quite trendy obviously, for environmental factors and things to be export. I wouldn't say they are more or less trustworthy, no.

Participant 6 explained that organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR are not necessarily more trustworthy when compared to organisations that don't practice ECSR by explaining the following:

> No, I don't believe that. I mean it depends if they, they're making their difference, the right thing by the environment. I don't think it makes a difference by it.

Participant 13 confirmed this notion by explain: 'I wouldn't necessarily say if they're environmentally friendly that they are more trustworthy, but, I'd think, depends on their level of transparency I would say…' and Participant 17 explained:

> I don't know if they would be more trustworthy, I think they would be you know, as again, trusting what they say, you know, if their making more responsible choices and environmentally sustainable choices and things like that, I think there is great value in the that, but I don't know if that translates a hundred percent to trustworthy.

The trend of consumer skepticism was identified again for question two, with some participants noting that they would only believe an environmentally sustainable organisation within the food industry to be trustworthy, if they were actually doing what they claimed. For example, Participant 2 noted in their statement:

> I'd like to believe that they are more trustworthy but I'm not always so sure that they are. Sometimes we get hoodwinked. I just think that some companies are out to make money and out to look good and I think sometimes they feed us false information to look good and sometimes we believe false things about them.

This was confirmed by Participant 3, who stated the following:

> It's so hard to answer given my initial skepticism. Yeah, it just feels like it's not only about the bottom dollar, you know it's not only about making money or greed and all of that, I feel if I'm supporting a more eco-friendly company, then I feel like they are giving to the community, giving more back to the earth. You know there's lots of things whereas other companies its always just about the money. When it's about more than just the money I'm more likely to support it.

Participant 17 continued with the trend of consumer skepticism by stating the following:

> Not necessarily, you know, let's just say they are making claims about their environmentally sustainable practices and what have you, I mean, I would be just, I guess, I would be in the position of believing them or not. How would I have proof of what they are saying? You know what I mean? I don't know if they are more trustworthy. It would be a perception. I might believe that perception but it's if that perception is the actual truth, I don't know.

Participant 18 further implied consumer skepticism by explaining the following:

> Now that is, skeptical, so I would like to research a bit into it. I would say I've been skeptical since the beginning since I know a lot of businesses use that as a, like a way to sell a product, or enhance the features of a product.

Participant 19 stated: 'It would all depend on how they present themselves because I guess the conduct will determine when they're lying with what they say that they are doing', and Participant 21 stated the following:

> I don't know about trustworthy, as I said in the beginning, if you are environmentally conscious, you're at that much level higher, not to say that other organisation isn't trustworthy, their standards may be very high in terms of everything else, it just that next layer.

Keeping with the trend of consumer skepticism, Participant 5 explained that they would be more trusting of an organisation if they knew the financial drivers and supporter of the organisation, by stating:

> I think, probably transparency and um, probably I would like to know who they are involved with, so if there is any one financially involved with the company, either what's supporting it or who's driving the company, yeah so, the roots of the company. Sometimes they're not very transparent on those sorts of things, and that would make the red flags, I mean is there a bigger purpose here or are they just doing this for fame rights, or are they doing a good dead or is it a money-making scheme?

5.5.1.3. Interview Question Three

> *Question Three: Can you give me an example of a food organisation that you believe is honest with its customers? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not, and why?*

When answering the first part of this question, 13 out of the 22 participants were unable to think of a food organisation by name within Australia that they believed to be honest with their customers. When probed by the researcher, they answered in general terms, with examples such as free-range eggs, local small producers, and small local grocery stores. For example, Participant 5 stated: 'No not really, only small grocery stories. It feels that I've instantly had more trust in smaller, locally grown, directly from the farmers market stuff…', and Participant 10 stated: 'The company that I buy stuff from is, um… Can we come back to that one? More independent brands, local brands…' Participant 12 asked the researcher, 'We buy free range eggs. Would those count? '

When asked if the participants believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not, 15 out of the 22 participants agreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims would be more scrutinised by the public. For example, Participant 3 stated:

> Yeah I do, um, because they have, if they are making those claims you still have to fact check them especially in this day and age since there is so much information available, so I think, that they have to be a little more trustworthy if they are making claims about being more sustainable and ecofriendly. They kind of have to show a degree of follow up, or audited.

Participant 4 confirmed this belief by stating the following:

> I feel like they have to be more honest because they're always scrutinised, I think the environmental guys probably get you know, the packaging and things, and get more scrutinised.

Participant 7 explained that such organisations would be more honest because they are not just interested in profits, but rather they also have concern for the environment and the community. The participant linked this concern for the environment with honesty, by stating: 'They aren't just for the bottom line. They are interested in giving back to the environment and the community and not just the profit.' Participant 11 agreed, by also linking the concept of honesty with an organisation's concern for the environment. Their statement included the following:

> Yes. So, it firstly has a majorly impact on the environment in how they are sourced, if they are environmentally friendly. If they work on a sustainable model, if they, uh, good to the farmers.

Participant 18 confirmed the pattern further by stating:

> Yes, because they are doing some good. They are trying to do something good for the environment and if they can stand behind their product, and they say what they, if the product is environmentally friendly then you know you can't fault that.

Participant 22 further verified this perspective by stating the following:

> Yes. Because they are prepared to actually look past themselves and you know past the bottom dollar as I said before and look towards actually making change. They are getting rid of all their plastic bags, going completely fabric or, yeah, which is just a show, that they are prepared to actually just put back in. That could cost them you know, although we pay for them, it costs them.

7 out of the 22 participants disagreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims don't necessary indicate that these particular organisations are more honest than other organisations within the food industry that are not committed to environmental preservation. For example, Participant 5 explained the following:

> Again, I don't know if they would be more honest, I don't know. I keep thinking that, I feel that it's a trendy thing at the moment for a lot of companies and I feel like at the end of the day, the bottom line is money driven. I want to know more about you know that aspect of the business that just to say they are environmentally engaged or whatever, the terminology was, I want there to be more there to be more honest.

Participant 9 also disagreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest, by stating:

> No, I wouldn't say that. Well, I don't think you can brag they're honest, um, just based on whatever they put into the environment, um, you know, it depends on how you want to define honesty.

Participant 17 further confirmed this perspective by explaining the following:

> Well look not necessarily, because I mean even if they are being honest about commitment to the environment it doesn't translate to meaning that they were being honest about absolutely everything else.

The trend of consumer skepticism was prevalent again with regards to question three, with some participants explaining that organisations may be advertising that they are environmentally friendly, when in fact they are not actually conducting initiatives that are preserving the environment, and this will indicate dishonesty rather than honesty towards their consumers. For example, Participant 2 stated:

> I would like to think they are more honest, but I don't think they always are. I don't think they are always as transparent as they should be, and they want us to believe certain things and sometimes I think information can be misleading.

Participant 13 confirmed the trend of consumer skepticism further by explaining the following:

> Um, no not necessary, they could um, sometimes, I find that if they say something, I have to go look more to see if they are actually backing it up. A lot of it, you see it in advertising, and it's like uh, you paid to have this stuff. So yeah.

Question Four: What does food safety mean to you personally? Do you believe that it is safer for you to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, and why?

According to the participants' responses, 22 out of the 22 interviewees stated that food safety is important to them. Participants noted that they mostly avoid genetically modified foods, foods that have been in contact with pesticides and hormones, and foods that are not locally sourced, due to the safety levels of such food items. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> I would place a high degree of decision making with foods that I can see have less of a, or of a less chance of having genetically modified components to it. Such as package stuff I tend to stay away from more chemical products, or they've been changed for taste or genetically changed. I prefer natural foods, like nuts, if we're talking fast foods, I prefer nuts versus chips.

Participant 3 confirmed the importance of food safety by stating:

> Well initially for me food safety is, what is in the food that shouldn't be in the food, what is going into mine and my family's body, okay. In terms of pesticides, or antibiotics or whatever.

Participant 22 explained that although they are not likely to buy organic products and follow health trends, they are still concerned about what they eat and confirmed that what they eat affects their health. The response included the following statement:

> I'm not a I'm not a new age person. Put it that way and I don't I don't buy like organic and all that kind of thing not only because they're more expensive, and I do believe that the food that is sprayed with pesticides, I'm sure it's cleaned and it's something that we've been living with forever in a day. But it is important to me I mean, obviously health wise. Yeah, that we that we will try and stay away from it. But health wise, yeah, I mean, that's the main thing.

On the contrary, Participant 5 explained that they are very conscious about where their food comes from, and that they are more likely to purchase locally sourced products.

This respondent further verified their belief that food produced by environmentally conscious organisation is better for their health by stating the following:

> I'm really conscious about quality of food and everything to do with getting that food and getting it onto our plates. Like I would usually go to markets and things where I can try and make conscious choices about paying a little bit extra for food that is better quality, it's a little more local. I like to support like, like a butchery of made from local farmers. So yeah, it's quite important.

Participant 8 continued with the pattern of the importance of food safety and food sourcing by explaining:

> I think it's really important because you want to know where food comes from and also, like, I don't want to that, you know, for example, animals or things have been processed. And I think that's part of the safety as well.

This notion was confirmed by Participant 9, who explained that the more local the sourcing of the food items, the safer the food due to less time in transit. Their statement included the following:

> You think about your Woollies, and it's been frozen for how long and then they just defrost it again. Yeah, I think it's safer because of the fact that the product is fresher, more likely to be organic.

Two of the participants explained that food safety was important to them because they had a responsibility to uphold the health and safety of their family. They further explained that they consider food produced from an environmentally conscious organisation to be healthier for them and their family. For example, Participant 4 explained:

> Yes, it's important to me mostly just because of the later effects that I've seen in my body and how I don't sort of want in particular, it happening in my child's body. So, where there would be all the pesticides and chemicals and the hormones that go into animals, products and things I can sort of that curb that happening in my daughter later. Then maybe I wouldn't then, I'm more concerned about like food safety and maybe keeping it as fresh as possible. And as few hormones and pesticides as possible.

In continuing with this pattern, Participant 20 stated:

> It's very important, because I have a responsibility to my family and children of what I buy. [If it's a] health hazard or jeopardise the health and safety of my family, I will not be encouraged to purchase that.

One participant explained that they are very sensitive to modified food products and chemicals that may be used in the processing of food items. Therefore, food safety for them was of the utmost importance to their wellbeing, and they believe food products from environmentally conscious organisations to be safer and healthier for them. Participant 13 explained the following in their statement:

> Food safety is very important to me because I've got a number of allergies when it comes to preservatives and pesticides and so forth and it's very important and yeah, and if there is more in line with sort of the organic and looking after the environment, I would be more inclined to, um…

Another participant linked the concept of food safety with hygiene and food safety practices, as well as the environmentally friendly sourcing of live food products such as tuna. For example, Participant 17 stated:

> So probably around all of, you know, the hygiene, and you know all the food safety practices to make sure its food that's safe to consume by humans. All of those sorts of things, there will also be an aspect of it, say for example, just something in my head, when they are fishing for tuna you know, makes sure it's safe for other animals like dolphins and all that, wherever their other practices are, that they are safe for other animals as well.

Participant 18 explained that the freshness of food correlated to the level of safety they attached to the products in addition to the use of, or the lack of use of pesticides by explaining the following: 'I would preferably shop for fresher food; fresher veg or fruits. And if I knew they were using dangerous pesticides I would not want to purchase that.'

When asked if the participants believe that it is safer for them to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, 20 out of the 22 participants agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer option.

Participant 1 agreed that it was the safer choice because if the food producer cared about the environment, then they automatically assumed that the food producer cared about what was best for its consumers. Their statement included the following:

> Yes, I would definitely say. So that they are [a] company [that] cared for the environment [then they must] care for their people as well and their products as well. It's all [a] natural extension in my thinking. It's a natural extension.

Participant 11 agreed with this concept by stating:

> Yes, so the companies who are committed to environmental safety and so the produce from them gives us a sense of confidence that we are getting the right kind of foods. And occasionally that they do a call out for call-backs on items, it gives you a scare for a moment, maybe you check your own pantry whether you have bought something of that sort or not. It gives you a sense of confidence that the company cares but if you are buying it from a not so organised store. Nobody bothers, actually.

Participant 3 explained that if an organisation within the food industry is committed to environmental preservation, the positive impact - or the lack of the negative impact - that they had on the planet, directly impacted on their health because both the actions of the organisation and the consumer cohabit within the same ecosystem:

> Absolutely. Because if they are using these like chemicals. Let's say and Roundup, and all of that, not only is that going into my body, but it's going into the deep soil, so it's never ever going to be able to produce, for however many years, produce [food] that isn't affected by all those chemicals.

Participant 4 explained that the lack of pesticides and harsh chemicals used by organisations within the food industry that are committed to environmental preservation, is of benefit to their health, and this in turn makes the food safer:

> Yeah, [it] would probably be safer because if they're committed to the environment, then they probably using less harsh chemicals and less pesticides, which would then make it safer to consume.

Participant 7 agreed with this concept by stating:

> Absolutely, well I think in terms of pesticides [if] they are willing to change the way they grow things, even if it takes them longer to grow, then it's safer for me.

Participant 13 continued with the pattern of linking ECSR with food safety by stating the following:

> Yes, because if they're committed to environmentally friendly, I am more likely to go for them because they're less likely to be using harmful pesticides and so forth. And they cause reactions.

Participant 19 explained: 'Absolutely because it's something you physically consume and can impact you individually in the long term', and Participant 22 stated:

> Yes, because the same thing they'd also be looking at sort of spending the extra dollar to buy food that is, is healthier, I mean, essentially, it is healthy, it has been proven scientifically. Well, it's healthier for you. But you know that they do have to pass the cost on to the consumer, which is unfortunate, but there are a lot more people going towards the pesticide-free way.

Participant 15 explained that they believed that food from an environmentally friendly organisation is fresher, which then results in safer food:

> Yes, I do. The fresher the better, quicker onto the table, the better and the less chemicals would be great. So that you know what's in the actual food that you are eating and providing your family with.

2 out of the 22 participants noted that they did not believe that it is safer for them to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. These respondents believe that food safety is linked more to hygiene factors, and that both organisation that do and do not practice ECSR, can ensure equal hygiene factors, therefore one is not safer than the other. For example, Participant 2 explained:

Not necessarily safer no. Because I think a company not necessarily protecting the environment can be just as hygienic food conscious and safety conscious even at the cost of the environment.

Participant 18 further confirmed this belief by stating the following:

Not necessary, I wouldn't say it's safer. If I knew what chemicals were going into the food that was wasn't environmentally safe, or it's an opinion um, in terms of the food, um, itself, I don't know if I would, I mean I'm happy to just know what's going into the food.

5.5.1.5. Interview Question Five

Question Five: Do you believe that purchasing and eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively or negatively affects your health, and why?

When responding to this question 21 out of the 22 participants stated that they believed that eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively affected their health because food items produced by environmentally friendly organisations are less likely to contain harmful chemicals, hormones and antibiotics, which the participants believe to impact on their health negatively. For example, Participant 3 explained:

Absolutely positively because, I know that, or well I'm trusting, […] that I'm making sure that I'm avoiding certain chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, additives that [are] in another organisation that might be there in that food, because of mass production.

Participant 12 stated: 'I think it's positive because well again, hopefully not including in any of the products any of the nasty things you are trying to avoid', and Participant 13 confirmed this perception further by stating the following:

I'd like to think positively because it would fit my health because they're less likely to be using harmful or harmful chemicals and pesticides and so forth. That would be not so good for my health.

Participant 4 believed that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation are wholesome and natural, and that these products have a positive effect on their body, as well as the planet:

> Well, yeah, definitely positively affects my health. If there is an organisation committed to the environment. It's just healthy whole, in a healthy, wholesome product that come from the earth and is good for the body. And I've seen the effects of products that have less chemicals and you know, I can see the positive effects from products that are natural and when someone's committed to the earth particularly, and the way they source their products and produce the products. You know, you could just see the positive effects in the body, and definitely my skin changing, or my stomach problems changing. They're all positive and then I want to either keep supporting that, and keep buying products that I know they're helping the earth and even the packaging, or knowing it's not being thrown into the drains.

Participant 5 clarified that the whole cycle of food production affects consumer health, and thus food produced from environmentally friendly organisations are healthier for consumers:

> I'd say it would positively affect my health, because I feel if they are considering the environment where the food is grown or manufactured or whatever soils are rejuvenating the source or not some products in the soils, or they have been feeding the animals with a certain type of food that can grow easily and doesn't need a lot of extra pesticides and things to grow like that. The whole cycle of production would be considered because it would have been reconsidered and if you want a healthier planet, to grow healthier food and sort of, wouldn't be healthy all around.

Participant 16 agreed with this belief, stating:

> Well generally positively, because they will use much less pesticides than what is necessary, but then they are also making the environment greener since there is less toxins in the environment.

Participant 7 linked the organisation's actions of preserving the environment with the level of food healthiness by explaining the following: 'Positively, because again, if they are interested in sustaining the environment and committed to that, and the produce, it will be healthier'. Participant 9 believes that organisations that are committed to

environmental sustainability don't store food items for long periods of time, and thus the produce is healthier. Their statement included the following:

> I would say positivity by the fact that fruits and veggies are actually fresh, that many places are organic and sourced, and they don't sit in containers for God knows how long.

Participant 11 continued with the trend of linking local product sourcing with healthier food products, stating that they are more likely to buy from environmentally friendly food organisations because they know where and how the food is sourced, therefore in the mind of this consumer, the food from these organisations is healthier. Their statement included the following:

> Buying from an organisation who's committed, it affects my health positively because I can trust them for the source where the food is being manufactured or produced, or you know the actual source, and I am confident that I will be looked after just in case if there is a there is an issue, and it doesn't matter if it is from big organisation. It can also be from local producers, but also from local producers as well. I also buy from local producers, but if it's more about trust, we are sure they are more committed and they talk about commitment, what they are telling us and how much we trust them, and it does give it does have [a] positive impact on my health.

Participant 14 linked the food produced from environmentally friendly organisations with their state of mind, stating that if they believe the food to be healthier for them, then it is: 'Well, I'd say positively it effects my health just because I believe that. That mentally, if I believe it, it is already positive'. Participant 21 explained that not only is buying the food from an environmentally friendly organisation the healthier option, but it is also the moral thing to do. Their statement included the following:

> Well, if they are doing everything right, it should be affecting positively. We were talking about this the other day, generally just about they say you should need this or that for reason, but, I mean, we've been doing it for years and years and years. I think the risk is low, but it's not. You just need a small section to develop some kind of severe illness and – it's an ethical decision.

One participant out of the 22 participants did not believe that purchasing and eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively or negatively affects their health. They noted the following statement:

I don't think it has any more impact than buying from a company as non-commitment to protecting the environment. Because my health, is not, if they are committed to protecting the planets, health, it doesn't have a direct impact on my health, it does on the planet's health, but not on my health.

5.5.1.6. Interview Question Six

> *Question Six: What do you believe makes a food organisation credible? Do you think that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more or less credible, and why?*

When answering this question, Participant 1 stated that they believe a food organisation to be credible if the company can clearly show from where their produce is sourced, and if they can prove their claims, whatever those may be:

> Well, the fact that they can demonstrate or show the area that they are getting their food from and that they have a little bit of a demonstration about how their food gets to the packet.

Participant 11 stated transparency and clear communication with regards to produce sourcing to contribute towards a food organisation's credibility:

> Being more transparent with their communication with their sourcing makes them more credible because I know where the food is coming from and how they are - so if it is a fresh produce - and how they are treating the products when it comes to the farmer, the food, because… It's if they have excellent communication and slowly going around and telling [consumers] the type of stuff that they are doing.

Participant 2 stated that honest labelling makes an organisation within the food industry more credible by explaining the following: 'Labelling, honest labelling. Sometimes labels can be purposely misleading, so honest labelling. And checking with the health industry…' Participant 20 stated that full disclosure regarding product ingredients, supply chain activities and produce sourcing makes an organisation within the food industry credible. They explained the following: 'Full transparency and

disclosure of their ingredients, supply chain, where their products are sourced, all of that…'

Participant 22 explained that false advertising negatively affected the credibility of a food organisation. They explained: 'No false advertising, I mean, false advertising [is] obviously going to make them less credible… So, delivering on what they say, on the promise.' Participant 3 clarified that they believe that organisations within the food industry that source their products locally, are more credible:

> I really like local supply, and when they name and have personal relationships with their local suppliers. And you can see that in their emails or in their reports or even when you get your delivery or whatever food comes from the farm. So, I think when they show that they have true relationships with actual families who own these farms, and they are local, and that really… For me, it's a big thing, and I can really trust them.

In keeping with this pattern, Participant 4 described that clear communication and customer testimonials make an organisation within the food industry credible, by stating the following:

> I guess their communication with us. The testimonies people share, and reviews people share. And their product. Their product that I have used and that I can attest to and that I find credible.

Participant 7 agreed that food organisations that make the effort to protect the environment are more credible:

> If they're taking steps to protect the environment, to me, then they are more credible, believing that they are doing those things is of course, and in terms of what makes a brand credible. It would be longevity of the market and I guess I got an idea if they are not a credible company, you know that they're going to struggle to last, and you know there's fierce competition in the food industry. I mean you see so many companies come up with something, where there is an incident on food and quality score lost, and they get a bust. They just don't have the public support anymore or confidence in their product anymore so yeah longevity and reputation you know, perception of the brand by the public in general.

Participant 7 further explained that they believe an organisation within the food industry to be credible, if they align with their personal values:

> I think there is underlying value, with the way the truly conduct themselves and what they deliver to customers. All those for myself personally, I think it makes them more credible. And that what aligns with my personal values.

21 out of the 22 participants believe that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more credible. The reasons for these beliefs involved the idea that the organisation will be required to prove their environmental preservation initiatives, which shows a level of credibility. Furthermore, the organisation's values would evolve beyond profitability. In the minds of the consumers, this indicates a more credible organisation. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> Its more credible because if they are saying that then they have to prove that. And in order to prove that they have to have a system to demonstrate that and that has to be made known. The media coverage would indicate that they are involved with the protection of the environment in some form or manner, and they would be involved in trust and in also other preferable organisations in ventures for demonstrating their care and commitment.

Participant 3 stated: 'Definitely more credible, because it's not only about the money but also the sustainability of life. It's a huge thing.' Participant 4 continued with this perception and explained:

> They're more credible. I guess we just live in a time when the environmental key is so important. I value new environmental care over capitalism and for me I find a person who cares for the environment credible over someone who's lining their pockets with money.

In agreement, Participant 7 stated: 'More credible, because if they are interested in protecting the environment, they are more interested than just the profit…', and Participant 8 stated: 'Probably more because yeah, they've gone, they're looking after like the bigger picture so not just using it for profit or for making a buck…'

Participant 14 agreed that organisation that practice ECSR are more credible because they are concerned with the future and that includes the preservation of the environment. The respondent noted:

> Makes [the organisation] more credible because they are looking [towards the] future, they are advertising for the future and doing good work by protecting the environment where the food

comes from anyway, so it's more sustainable going forward. More sustainable, environmentally friendly.

Participant 16 agreed with this noting by stating: 'More credible and I think it goes further than the food industry, I think doing anything to preserve the environment makes you more credible', and Participant 20 stated:

> More credible, because they are honest, it builds the trust within the brand. If an organisation is disclosing on how they source their food or their products or how they make their products, or all of the environmental factors, that provides me confidence in their, in what I'm consuming, it brings up the trust and reliability in their brand.

Participant 21 explained that organisations within the food industry that preserve the environment are more credible because they have a responsibility to protect the environment:

> More credible... Because I think companies have a responsibility as corporate citizens to protect their environment and protect the space that they operate in. And if they don't, then I think they need to lower their ethics and the sense of responsibility.

One participant out of the 22 participants noted that they did not believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more or less credible. This respondent explained the following: 'I don't think it's either more or less, you know. I think an organisation that doesn't protect the environment can also be credible.'

5.5.1.7. Interview Question Seven

Question Seven: Are products from an environmentally friendly food company your first choice when purchasing food items, and why?

16 out of the 22 participants stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are their first choice when purchasing food items. This decision is based on

their personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage. For example, Participant 2 stated: 'Yes, they are, because I do care about the environment, and I do try and do my bit for it even it does cost a bit more', while Participant 3 stated: 'Always, because of the health benefits for me and my family'.

Participant 9 continued with this pattern by stating the following:

It's my first choice and that's again, that's based just on the quality of the food, or the items that you buy from them. And it may be a little bit more expensive, but it's just, it's just worth it and it's less wastage. Like if you buy those little cherry tomatoes, they just go all soggy, even with cucumbers the just don't last.

In agreement, Participant 11 explained:

Yes, it is always because of the quality of the food is good. Then there's not any side-effects or drama and it just give you ease from buying it from the right place and right people.

Participant 19 clarified that even though it is their first choice to always purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisation, such products are not always available or labelled clearly. The participant stated the following:

They would be a preferred choice, but it's not something that always physically labeled as that when one is doing normal shopping, so one needs to be purposeful to look out for those labeled products.

Participant 20 explained that products from an environmentally friendly organisation within the food industry is their first choice, and Participant 21 agreed, by stating:

Because I know then that they're responsible and I'm very choosy about the packaging and stuff. So, if I know they've got… if they've gone and made the effort, I'll make the effort to buy the product. Support them.

6 out of the 22 participants stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are not their first choice when purchasing food items. These participants explained that not only is it inconvenient (due to time restraints as they are busy) to always look for food products from an environmentally friendly food organisation, but it is also too expensive. For example, Participant 4 explained:

> This a tough one, always I beat myself up about it because of the way prices have increased at the moment and being a single income family. And it's so, like when we were completely vegan, it was easy, we're actually blessed, some meat products tend to be, obviously add to the bill. And yeah, the way vegetable prices have skyrocketed, we are buying frozen. I beat myself up. Yeah, I wish that I could say I was going to the farmers' market. And I think for convenience and just yeah ease, we're not really shopping from the people I would like to be shopping [from]. And sometimes it's the cost factor? Sometimes an ease factor.

Participant 7 continued with this pattern by stating the following: 'No, not necessarily. Because sometimes they are more expensive, and price can be a determining factor.' Participant 8 also agreed with this notion and stated:

> I think it depends on the price. Morally and ethically, I want to say yes, but it's often more expensive. When you've got a budget, sometimes that is what's going to guide you. But I will say that we've gone more for organic over the alternatives, we take that into consideration.

Participant 15 explained that products from an environmentally friendly food company are not their first choice due to limited available time to shop for food products and the inconvenience of selected such products, and Participant 18 explained that price was a deterrent to their purchase choice when it came to products from an environmentally friendly food company:

> Not so much, I don't really give much thought to it when I'm shopping, but I do, I will purchase like free range chicken so that if a know that the chicken is free range, I will purchase that. Not so much for meat, and that's just because [of] the cost involvement. Organic meat is so much more expensive compared to regular stuff on the shelves.

5.5.1.8. Interview Question Eight

> *Would you encourage or discourage your friends and family from purchasing products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment? Why?*

19 of out the 22 participants noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to conduct business and contribute to society in general. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> No, I wouldn't discourage my family or friends I would encourage [them]. I just think that they're having companies that are socially aware and supporting them help society in general so I would promote their business in order for it to continue.

In agreement Participant 2 explained: 'Yes, if there was a choice and product, absolutely. Because I think we've all got to do our bit to look after the planet.' Continuing with this trend, Participant 3 stated:

> I would definitely encourage them. I'll encourage them for their own health, but I'll also encourage to them if I really trusted the company in order for them to do well.

Participant 5 stated that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from an environmentally friendly food company because such a purchase is healthier for their friends and family, as well as for the planet. Their answer included the following statement:

> I would encourage, to protect the environment for sure. Because like we just said, I think it's better for everyone like not just to health, our personal health and our eating products, then the environments being considered. But also, just the animals, help the planet… If we're looking after everything a little bit better.

Participant 7 explained that encouraging their friends and family to buy products from an environmentally friendly food company will actually encourage more food organisations to practice ECSR. They stated the following:

> I'd encourage them to do it because they are protecting the environment and you know we all have a small part to play. But I think the more people that do it, the more they put pressure onto food organisations to practice that.

Participant 21 agreed with this notion. Their statement included the following:

> Yep. Definitely encourage that. Because I think we have a responsibility as well to promote [that] kind of industries or suppliers or retailers or whatever. The thing is, the more we support them versus somebody else, they'll do more good. And maybe the other players will lose market share, and maybe they'll have to realise what was happening. Maybe it'll drive social conscience of you know, what are we not doing?

This trend of customer referral continued with Participant 11 explaining that they would encourage others to buy products from an environmentally friendly food company because it's the right thing to do, and therefore they would be more likely to let others know and make them aware of good, well-priced products that are environmentally friendly. The respondent stated the following:

> I would encourage them to do so. Because, for me, it's the right thing to do if I'm getting something good. If I… the quality is going to be good and the impact on the environment is going to be positive. One good thing for me to do, to spread the word and make sure that however, like multiple sides of network, I can just talk to them let them know that this is the right thing that I am doing and if the price point is fairly good…

Participant 12 noted that they would not discourage others from purchasing products from an environmentally friendly food company, but rather that they would encourage them. The reason for this was because it's the right and moral thing to do. The interviewee explained their opinion by stating the following:

> Obviously, I would not discourage them. I would encourage them to buy from companies that are looking out for the environment. Actually, I think it's down to everybody's trying to do what we can and not only as you mentioned, not only for our health, for instance, but it's for the environment. And it's just the right thing to do.

Some consumer skepticism was identified in Participant 17 response, however the interviewee stated that they would encourage others to purchase products from an environmentally friendly food company because doing so aligns with their personal values. They noted the following:

> Again, trusting that if what they're doing, I would encourage friends and family… I guess it could be because it fits with my value system, and I believe that you know if someone asked my opinion on something that's going to be it.

Participant 19 explained that they would encourage others to buy products from an environmentally friendly food company in order to protect the environment for the next generation. Their statement included the following:

> I would certainly encourage them, since I'm a strong advocate for taking care of the environment and our world because what will we leave for the next generation if we don't get it right now?

Three participants out of 22 stated that they would not encourage nor discourage their friends and family from purchasing products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment, because they believe that it is not their place to tell other people what to purchase, regardless of their own personal choices. For example, Participant 6 stated: 'I wouldn't do either, I'm not one to give it to much thought. People can do what they want', and Participant 8 stated: 'No, because I'm thinking it's their choices that they make. I'm not going to judge them'. Participant 14 continued this trend by stating: 'No, I wouldn't discourage anybody from whatever they're choosing to do. [It's] their business'.

5.5.1.9. Interview Question Nine

Question Nine: How loyal are you towards your favourite food brands? Would you postpone buying a product or go to another store, if your regular store is out of your preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, and why?

18 out of the 22 participants stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, however only 10 respondents said that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. The reasons stated by those participants who explained that they would purchase an alternative product if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, including lack of time and inconvenience as contributing factors.

However, the researcher uncovered a key finding: the type of food item was a determining factor. If the food item is an essential everyday product, the participants would be more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. For example, Participant 1 stated: 'I would probably find something similar. Time, convenience… If it's something I absolutely couldn't be without, I'd find a substitute.' Continuing with this key finding, Participant 3 confirmed that there are some food items that they would not substitute by stating the following:

> I'm pretty loyal to my Fresh Box and my meat deliveries. [Those] are things that are important to me. I'm pretty loyal, especially at the moment with the floods and food shortages and potential war on the you know… I think it's really important to have good relationships with these people, these smaller companies. So that, you know, when it comes to if there are shortages, if you have a good rapport and you're a local, loyal customer you're more likely to get looked after by that company… It depends on what it is, how essential that product is or was. I'm genuinely quite flexible with you know, those sorts of things… I wouldn't compromise on certain things.

While Participant 5 explained that they would buy an alternative product due to convenience, Participant 8 noted that their decision would be based on the type of product. The respondent explained the following: 'I think it depends on what the product is…' In agreement Participant 12 stated: 'It just depends [on] what it is because there's certain things that are not negotiable, like you know, fresh chicken.'

In contradiction to this emerging trend of product type versus convenience, Participant 16 noted the following:

> Not very loyal, I think it depends on taste and price because I think they are quite easy factors to see… No, yeah, generally [I] wouldn't mind since products don't really have that huge of a difference so there's generally an alternative right there. And it's probably convenience more so than anything else.

It must be noted that Participant 16 explained that they are not very loyal to food brands, and their decision to purchase an alternative product would not be out of character.

The ten participants who stated that they would delay buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store is out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, explained that this is the case because they don't like change, or because they have chosen to be loyal towards a certain brand for a reason. For example, Participant 7 stated: 'No, if the alternative wasn't environmentally [friendly] because my choice would be to stay with environmentally friendly.'

Continuing with this pattern, Participant 11 stated:

> I am very much loyal. It always has to do with like also the quality and the taste of the food. So, once you have that brand in place or company that you trust, then the price and everything follows and becomes a part of your pantry on a regular basis… If it's not something I need urgently or on a regular basis, then I would rather wait, Better than having tried and tested rather than experimenting.

Participant 14 explained that they don't like change and that they prefer to purchase food items with which they are familiar. Their statement included the following:

> Very loyal, I don't like change. I wouldn't go anywhere else, I'd wait. Because I don't normally, I stick to what I know. I've very rarely tried something different. I just stick to what I know.

Participant 21 also noted that they are very loyal to their preferred food brands. They explained that they would rather go without than purchase a product from an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. The respondent stated the following:

> Very loyal. Yeah. I'd rather go or go without it if can't go somewhere else. I've seen some real cheap stuff. Yeah, I mean, real cheap stuff. It just doesn't look good. And if you check it out, you just know they're not. They're not doing the right thing. Rather than not buy it and support those organisations for now and rather support environmentally conscious business…

Verifying this finding, Participant 22 stated the following:

> I would actually go to another shop. Okay. And try and find the same product if it's important to me, because the reason why we've chosen the product is for [a] certain reason, is you know, not only because it's the one that we like and prefer the taste of, but also because of the you know, the environmental reasons behind it and all of that as well.

Two participants explained that if their regular store were out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, they would find the product online. For example, Participant 4 stated:

> Yeah, we're pretty loyal to my favorite brands… I would go online, generally all our stuff is online. If the stuff is out of stock, I would delay or otherwise I purchase online.

In agreement, Participant 13 responded with the following statement:

> Yeah, pretty loyal. As I said because of the food allergies, [I'll] find one that works for me. It's very hard to shift me unless I noticed that their packaging changed and then I have to go investigate again… I'll find it. I'll look online. Find out where they're selling it online.

5.5.1.10. Interview Question Ten

> *Question Ten: How important is the taste of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste? Why?*

21 participants stated that the taste of food is very important to them. In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste, the majority of participants explained that taste would deter them from the purchase, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations.

However, a key finding here was that this choice was determined by the extent to which they didn't like the taste of the item: the worse the taste, the less likely they would be to purchase the product. If the taste of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was not as good as that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, but not too bad either, they would choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation. For example, Participant 2 stated: 'Taste is important, um yeah, it's very important. If it was awful, I'm probably not going to buy it.' In agreement, Participant 4 explained that there are certain products that they are non-negotiable on with regards to environmentally sustainability (such as their oat milk), however they are more negotiable on other food items based on taste. Their response included the following:

> Taste is very important to us, and freshness and crispness. We do. We use a lot of herbs and spices in all our cooking and things. Yeah. Taste [is] important. There's one oat milk we only buy and if it's sold out, we don't buy another oat milk brand. We don't buy the cheaper tasting brand… I think because they're an oat milk I feel like I'm doing something good for the environment... So, we are predominantly vegan, there will be certain things, I won't buy, the least tasty ones, I would refuse it altogether.

In contradiction, Participant 5 explained that they feel as if they would be wasting their money if they purchased a product of which they did not enjoy the taste. They statement included the following:

> I'd feel like I'd be wasting my money if it was, I don't know, I'd probably try… try every now and then. Change the purchase but yeah, I just felt like if it wasn't to my satisfaction, like if it didn't taste very good. I prefer not to buy at all.

In agreement, Participant 17 stated the following:

> If the taste was terrible as in like I tasted the product and I spat it out and it was at that level then no I would not buy it because then what, I mean obviously, well, being a human being, we buy food primarily to eat it. If I can't eat it, if I can't consume it, then what am I buying it… I

wouldn't wholly and solely be buying a product if I absolutely loathed it or couldn't stomach it just because it was environmentally friendly so you know sustainable products I wouldn't, I wouldn't buy, no… Taste is very important because it's essentially that's why we buy food in the first place. We are buying it with that intent 99% of the time - unless we're doing some sort of craft project - so you know 99% time the reason why we buy food is to consume it, so if you can't consume it, I wouldn't be buying it... I would have to like the product I would have to want to consume the product to buy it in the first place.

However, in keeping with the trend of choosing environmentally friendly products over taste, Participant 7 stated: 'Taste is important, and I wouldn't buy regardless of taste. As long as I still enjoyed [it], I would buy the environmentally friendly one'. Verifying this trend, Participant 8 stated:

I think food needs to taste good. That doesn't mean I like it pumped full of preservatives. Even ones that aren't environmentally friendly or whatever. Just buy them because, like it has changed but it still needs to be a good product not just have crap put in there to taste good… Maybe the environmentally friendly one, if the other one was only slightly better.

In continuing with this tendency, Participant 16 stated:

Taste is important. If it was definitely worse and I didn't like it, I would generally go with the one that tastes better. Again, to an extent, if there really is not much of a difference in taste then I would go for the more environmentally friendly one. If it's really quite bad, I might not.

Participants also noted that their preference towards taste was determined by the type of product. For example, Participant 13 stated:

Taste is very important. Yeah. And I think it would depend on the product. If it was an everyday product, I probably would just continue with, even if it wasn't, you know, if there was a minor difference in taste. If there was a major difference, I'd probably not [buy] the environmentally friendly. If it's an occasional product like chocolate or something I would probably go with the one that tastes better. For those sort of things it's quality over quantity… And everyday stuff, it wouldn't, probably wouldn't matter.

Participant 11 stated that although taste is really important, they are very mindful of environmentally friendly practices when it comes to the sourcing of food items and

therefore, they would choose among sustainable products – based on taste – instead of purchasing food products from organisations that do not practice ECSR. Their statement included the following:

> Taste is really important. I am a foodie and my family are foodie[s] and so taste is really important for us… Definitely depends on the quality of the food, let's say that we are willing to try, we are keeping in mind that the sourcing… We prefer buying cage free [eggs], and there is the one that we get for cheaper from the company that is advertised as responsibly sourced from caged animals but again it is caged, with 250 hens in a closed environment. But they are still not wanting to call it cage and I don't want to be sourcing from there. These are a few things I'm very mindful of. I guess some days trying different things and different brands which are equally sustainable.

Four participants believed that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation actually taste better than food from organisations that are not environmentally friendly. Furthermore, these participants are suspicious of food that tastes better than food produced by environmentally friendly organisations. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> Taste is really important… I'm suspicious of what they put into the meal, and what makes it last so long so I would rather buy fresh food from the deli. And I mean, I like the taste of a hamburger, but I would need to be really really hungry to go for that, because if I can go to Coles and buy the stuff fresh rather… For fast foods, I don't trust that they don't use genetically modified foods. I'm pretty sure they do, and I don't trust the nutrition that it is giving my body… Nutrition, flavour and quality of food is important. And I'm probably more inclined to buy them from a company that is socially aware.

In agreement, Participant 3 stated:

> Mostly if you're buying organic food, I feel like it tastes better than non-organic. Or, you know, so I probably wouldn't. Because I would worry, why is it tasting better. Yeah, taste is really important. Because it comes with the quality of food, taste is really important. And that organic taste better because its grown better.

Participant 9 explained that their particular state received the majority of their food items from out of state, which implies that the food is transported over long periods of

time, negatively affecting the taste. Therefore, food from local suppliers tastes better than the alternative and thus they prefer to buy their food items locally, which contributes to decreased emissions and supports local farmers. The respondent stated the following:

> In the Northern Territory, a lot of our fresh food comes from down south, and it's transported and cold stored. It loses its flavour whereas if we get the local veggies and stuff from the market with the qualities, or the choice often isn't… yeah, but they do taste a lot better… In terms of the availability is always not, not the same.

Participant 12 agreed that food from environmentally friendly organisation tastes better. Their statement included the following:

> The taste is actually a very important thing actually. Trying to feed a family and yourself too, if something isn't as tasteful. Generally, when thinking more environmentally friendly, generally it is tastier.

Participant 14 stated that they eat because they are hungry and to fuel their body, and therefore taste is not important to them. They explained that they would continue to purchase and eat food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste. This respondent answered this question with the following statement: 'No, I eat because I'm hungry. Yes. I would [continue to purchase and eat food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste]'.

Participant 19 stated that although taste is important, they would also continue to purchase and eat food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste:

> Taste is important, because I am a foodie, I love food. However, if I am aware that the taste has been compromised because of something that could impact the environment then I tend to refrain my preference for taste and purchase something better for the environment.

Continuing with this trend, Participant 21 also stated that they would continue to purchase and eat food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the

food industry regardless of taste: 'I'd probably support the other one [environmentally friendly organisation], I'd just do my best to probably, spice it up'.

5.5.1.11. Interview Question Eleven

> *Question Eleven. How important is the price of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of the price? Why?*

21 participants stated that the price of food is important to them. In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of price, the majority of participants explained that high prices would deter them from the purchase, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations. For example, Participant 6 stated: 'Price is very important. So, I wouldn't even consider it'.

However, a key finding from this data uncovered that this choice was also based on the extent to which the price was higher than the food items that are not from environmentally friendly organisations: the more expensive the product, the less likely the respondents would be to purchase it. Whereas if the price of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was only marginally more expensive than that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, they would choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation. For example, Participant 2 stated: 'Yeah, regardless of the price within reason. You know I'm having to pay more, but obviously, you know, within reason…' and Participant 3 stated:

> That's a hard one because buying from these places is generally more expensive. Yeah. And there have been times where I've gone like woah, I can't buy that. Because it's, I mean, it's $14 a kilogram. Yeah, the price is important, and price probably would be the thing that sways my choice. Yeah. It can be really expensive, especially like, I actually don't buy organic berries because they're just too expensive… The price is negotiable point.

Participant 7 explained that price is important, however they would be happy to pay a little more for products from an environmentally friendly food organisation, up to a point. In agreement Participant 16 stated:

> Yeah so, I guess that one is the same with taste, depends on the varying degree. For example, with eggs, I will always buy free range eggs over cage, even though they are more expensive because it is quite well advertised the difference between them. But then if there is a vastly huge difference in price, where if it was an extra $10 for something that was already an extra $5, than maybe you start to wonder and would go on the price.

Participant 17 explained that although price is important, if the food item from the organisation that practices ECSR is only slightly more expensive than the food items from an organisation that does not practice ECSR, they would choose the former. They statement included the following:

> Look the price is important. I think the price is important for everybody because you know no matter what they say because everybody, you know, unless you like the absolute top tier richest person in the world, everybody looks at the price of everything. So, you know price is important. It's going to be a determining factor. Let's just say that company A isn't environmental concerned whatsoever and Company B has the exact same product and is compatible with taste and you know we take these environmental measures from B and A and the price is $0.20 more expensive then I'll definitely go with the environmental one cause the $0.20 is incidental. But if you're telling me if the product is $20 more, that turns the tables.

In agreement, Participant 19 stated:

> Price sensitivity is unfortunately the reality, so depending on how far that price difference is, I may make the expectation to continue to purchase something that is environmentally friendly, however because of price sensitivity I may compromise on that.

In continuing with this key finding, Participant 22 stated:

> Look, price is naturally part of everyone's life. I mean, you know, unless you're a multimillionaire. But if you if you're paying say $1 more for something they actually really want. Yes, you're not gonna haggle about it. You know, it's important, but it's not the deciding factor. When it comes to what you enjoy, I'd rather buy something that I enjoyed.

Eight participants stated that the quality of their food is more important than price. These participants believe that food from an organisation that is environmentally friendly is of a higher quality, and sometimes more convenient, than food that is produced by an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> Yeah so, price is a factor, but I, I put my quality food above that, like I've been a Hello Fresh costumer for the last three months or so. And I personally believe that they provide a good service to me in terms of my needs… They source things ethically and they look for what's best for me. So, Hello Fresh is an example and they are way more expensive food, but I mean it comes as a package and I don't need to think about it. The food is good. The meal plan is good and awesome. So, I would rather choose that for me.

In agreement, Participant 5 stated:

> I'm happy to pay a little bit more for something that's the quality and is healthier and is considering it has good ethics, philosophy behind them while they're producing, [I'll] pay a little bit more.

Continuing with this pattern, Participant 13 stated the following:

> Once again, price goes back to and so forth. So, if it ticks the other boxes, price is something [to] take into consideration so I'm more likely to continue with something and not regard the price. If it ticks all the boxes.

Further confirmation as to the development of this perspective, Participant 21 stated:

> If everything else is right, price doesn't matter. Obviously, I'm not going to spend a fortune on something. I mean, the price of this stuff was always a little bit more, but considering the effort they went into to make the product, I must be prepared to buy that difference.

Participant 4 explained that although food products produced by an environmentally friendly organisation may be more expensive, the purchase will actually save them money on health issues in the future. However, the fact that these products are not readily available in one location, and the participant is required to drive to various

different venues to purchase the products she needs, actually adds to the cost of such items. The respondent stated the following:

> I would try my best. I think it's that whole concept of food and medicine, you know, needing one to pay for the medicine later in time… Spending more money towards only the healthy stuff and cutting all the other junk, cutting and then saving money that way. Less doctor's visits. I've seen the long term [results] so if all my products were easy to find in one store, and I probably didn't need maybe five trips to five stores to find my things, then I think that often doesn't and eventually I'm buying everything at one store, [it] doesn't matter what they cost.

In agreement, Participant 11 stated:

> Price is important actually because every household has their own budget to spend. We are always mindful of sourcing the right stuff. Sometimes we have to compromise on the price. We don't mind doing that… On the day this is what we are eating and putting into our body rather than paying the doctors at a later stage.

5.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis – Summary of Findings

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used semi structured interviews consisting of eleven open-ended questions to collect qualitative data to support and clarify the results from the quantitative data analysis.

Based on the qualitative data collected by the researcher, the majority (21 out of 22 participants) of the participants stated that they feel that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. Most of the participants (20 out of 22 participants) stated that this type of purchase gives them a sense of pride. The participants that noted that this type of purchase does not give them a sense of pride, explained that it's more about doing the right thing than it is about feeling a sense of pride. Furthermore, it was noted by one participant that even though they are environmentally aware, they believe that feeling pride from making such a purchase is arrogant.

While it was noted by one participant that they had not really considered the statement before, the participants who noted that they do feel that they are doing the right thing

when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, and that this type of purchase does give them a sense of pride, believe that this purchase choice is their contribution towards the preservation of the planet, and that they feel proud to be part of such a purpose. Furthermore, some participants noted that they feel good about supporting organisations that are committed to environmental preservation, because it was the moral thing to do.

The data confirms the research conducted by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment. In addition, Pradhan (2018) further states that consumers feel a sense of pride when purchasing from a socially responsible company, because it gives them the opportunity to support humanity and their nation, despite their busy lifestyles. The existing literature is confirmed by the qualitative data collected by the researcher in that participants explained that their purchase choice is about preserving the planet for future generations, and that this is their way of making a valuable contribution to the planet and to the community. Furthermore, participants believe that purchasing products from an organisation within the food industry that is committed to environmental preservation is the right thing to do, and that it is the better choice. Thus, it makes them feel a sense of pride about their purchase.

While it was identified by the qualitative data that the participants are aware of the topic of environmental sustainability, it was confirmed that the majority (21 out of 22 participants) of participants believe that an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation indicates that the company's values are right and good. This aligns with the research conducted by Schwartz (1994), which states that human values underpin an individual's thoughts and behaviours, and each consumer's set of values is constituted individually because values are made and reinforced by an individual's distinctive experiences with the world around them. This personalised set of values is then used by the individual as an instrument to evaluate other things and other individuals (Kahle 1996; Jansson 2010). When a company's products or services reflect a person's distinctive set of values, it is more plausible that the person will assess the organisation, and therefore the brand, as positive (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). The respondents that identify with the values of the environmentally friendly

organisations, believe that they are doing the right thing and so they feel a sense of pride, when they purchase products from such organisations.

A trend of consumer skepticism began to emerge from the start of the qualitative data collection process. Respondents expressed their distrust of the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims. They noted that they would feel a sense of doing the right thing, and a sense of pride when buying food products from a company that claimed to be committed to environmental preservation if they were certain that the organisation was following through with their claims. The data confirms previous research conducted on consumer skepticism associated with CSR initiatives, in that such skepticism may occur when consumers connect a self-seeking impetus to the company, and that the degree of consumer skepticism fluctuates between consumers, which impacts on the influence of the CSR initiative on consumer behaviour. A consumer's previous experience regarding a company's efforts may influence their level of skepticism, and a common characteristic of skeptical consumers is that they may vary their level of skepticism when they receive authenticated evidence (Friestad & Wright 1994).

With regards to the trustworthiness of an organisation, the participants noted that a good company reputation, quality processes and safety certificates make a food organisation trustworthy. The qualitative data from this study further indicates that the participants felt that transparency, clear communication, honesty, and correct product labelling aids in perceiving an organisation within the food industry as trustworthy. This outcome aligns with research the conducted by Turban and Greening (1997), who state that a company's corporate ability is very much connected to its capacity to deliver products and services. The data also aligns with the UN's Global Compact's responsibility of anti-corruption. This area is vital for corporate reputation as a corruption scandal considerably and negatively affects company reputation and brand trust. Furthermore, Australian Organic Limited (2021) stated that with regards to certification, more than 50% of organic shoppers check for certification marks on organic product labels.

One of the participants noted that brand popularity and familiarity made organisations within the food industry more trustworthy. This supports research conducted by Liu and Wu (2007) and Stahl et al. (2012), who noted that trust becomes a valuable factor

in the development of a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship between a customer and an organisation. Customers are more likely to purchase from a brand that they perceive as having negligible risk, and customers who are familiar with a certain brand and its product or service, are more likely to connect value to its features. This perceived value of the brand's products offers the customer confidence in their decision to buy from the same brand in the future.

The issue of trustworthiness was explored further, with participants noting supply chain and local sourcing as positive contributors to a food company's trustworthiness. This confirms the existing literature which states that as the move from the single-firm level organisations to supply chains and networks within the food industry grow, large retailers and food processors are progressively faced with growing obligations (Hartmann 2011). Issues can occur throughout the food supply chain, from the start of the chain with the farmers or at the end of the chain with the retailers. Supply chain complexities are especially pertinent within the food industry when dealing with natural produce that can deteriorate over time and the incapacity to halt farm production. In addition, production may also necessitate imported goods or services such as fertilisers, pesticides, expertise, and seeds, which all have their own intricate supply chain that most likely spans over various continents. The product may be required to undergo additional processing by one or more third parties before arriving at its destination of consumption.

Half of the participants (11 out of 22 participants) stated that they believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. It was observed that participants are more trusting of such organisations, because they believe them to be more transparent with their souring activities and because they believe them to care for the environment. Furthermore, the qualitative data implied that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, because the respondents believe that they are not only interested in profits, but because they are also interested in sustaining the environment.

This data strongly supports the existing literature which states that customers expect an organisation to be an ethical corporate citizen, resulting in more favourable perceptions of the organisation (Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016; Ho 2017).

Furthermore, the qualitative data supports the research conducted by Turban and Greening (1997), which states that a company's corporate ability is very much connected to its capacity to deliver products and services. However, CSR activities – and more specifically ECSR within the food industry – may significantly impact a company's image and its overall reputation by providing consumers an awareness and understanding of the company's values (Kim 2017; Devin & Richards 2018).

The other half of the participants (11 out of 22 participants) did not believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. Some of the beliefs driving these opinions included the fact that environmental preservation is currently a trend for organisations to gain popularity, and so this may be the actual driver rather than their moral obligation.

The trend of consumer skepticism was identified again for question two, with some participants noting that they would only believe an environmentally sustainable organisation within the food industry to be trustworthy, if they were actually doing what they claimed. This data supports the existing literature regarding consumer skepticism and contradicts the literature that CSR activities may significantly impact a company's image and its overall reputation by providing consumers an awareness and understanding of the company's values (Turban & Greening 1997). It is apparent to the researcher that consumer skepticism may be a serious deterrent to the effectiveness of ECSR as a positive contributor to creating customer trust, however when the participants were probed further by the researcher, the majority stated that they would want to be clear on the drivers of the company's CSR initiatives, and whether these drivers were financially orientated, before they trusted the organisation. This supports the existing literature which states that a credible company message results in positive consumer attitudes and responses (Petty & Cacioppo 1986).

Company credibility with regards to CSR campaigns is enhanced when the organisation's principal message is social, and their communication efforts are openly related to non-economic concerns (Priester & Petty 1995). The more skeptical the consumer, the more they question and inspect the company's CSR activities. When consumers do not trust CSR initiatives and they connect a self-centered motive to the company, they will react negatively to the CSR campaign and towards the company's core business function (Campbell & Kirmani 2000; Forehand & Grier 2003).

In terms of question three, most of the participants (13 out of 22 participants) were unable to think of a food organisation by name within Australia that they believed to be honest with their customers. When probed further by the researcher, they answered in general terms, with examples such as free-range eggs, small local producers, and small local grocery stores.

When asked if the participants believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not, 15 of out the 22 participants agreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims would be more scrutinised by the public. This directly supports the existing literature that CSR allows an organisation to develop its assets, which include goodwill, honesty, trust and a good reputation (Lombart & Louis 2014). The qualitative data suggests that the participants believed such organisations to be more honest because they are not just interested in profits, but rather they also have concern for the environment and the community.

In contradiction to the existing literature, seven out of the 22 participants disagreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims don't necessary indicate that these particular organisations are more honest than other organisations within the food industry that are not committed to environmental preservation.

Once again, the trend of consumer skepticism was prevalent with regards to question three, with two of the participants explaining that organisations may be advertising that they are environmentally friendly, when in fact they are not actually conducting initiatives that are preserving the environment, and this will indicate dishonesty rather than honesty towards their consumers. This data supports the existing literature which states that skepticism may occur as a consumer response to a company's activities, whereby the consumer is more likely to distrust, suspect and question the motives of an organisation (Skarmeas & Leonidou 2013). Furthermore, it supports the findings of Australian Organic Limited (2021), which note that 31% of consumers who purchased an organic product in 2021 believe that they have been previously misled by organic claims on product packaging.

It is clear from the qualitative data that food safety is extremely important to the participants. All 22 of the interviewees stated that food safety is important to them,

noting that they mostly avoid genetically modified foods, foods that have been in contact with pesticides and hormones, and foods that are not locally sourced, due to the safety levels of such food items. When asked if the participants believe that it is safer for them to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, the majority (20 out of 22 participants) agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer option.

Participants explained that food safety is important to them because they have a responsibility to uphold the health and safety of their family, and some participants explained that they are overly sensitive to modified food products and chemicals that may be used in the processing of food items. Therefore, food safety for them was of the utmost importance to their wellbeing. This contradicts the existing literature which states that a positive strategy towards to achievement of sustainable agriculture may be the use of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds. Despite ongoing debate regarding the ethical position of GM food products, they are considered by certain individuals as the solution to the heightened need for food and the dwindling resources accessible to farmers, and that regardless of the risks involved, businesses within the food industry that forge forward new technologies or integrative business strategies in expectation of the impending challenges the sector faces, will gain the competitive advantage when new policies are put in place (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005). As consumers are developing intolerance to unnatural food items, such as genetically modified food products, this strategy may be unsuitable for the achievement of sustainable agriculture, and a commitment towards ECSR, rather than GM food products, may be the key to avoiding declining resources and to feed the world's growing population.

The data from this study strongly supports the research conducted by Australian Organic Limited (2021), which states that Australian consumers mostly purchase organic goods due to the belief that the products are of a better quality, contain no (or fewer) chemicals, and are fresher. The participants note that they consider organic products to be better for their health and also, better for the health of the planet.

The topic of local sourcing of food items was once again raised by the participants. It was noted that the less time food is in transit, and the more locally sourced the food,

the safer it is to consume. This supports the 2001 report on food safety strategy published by the World Health Organisation, noting that fluctuating practices in agriculture, amplified urbanisation, varying food consumption patterns, and the globalisation of the food trade, have contributed to the heightened risk of foodborne disease (WHO 2001).

Another participant linked the concept of food safety with the environmentally friendly sourcing of live food products such as tuna. This statement strongly supports research conducted by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) (2014) regarding the demand for sustainable seafood, whereby nine consumers out of ten believe that ocean sustainability is of vital importance.

Participants also agreed that purchasing products from a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation to be the safer choice because they believed that if the food producer cared about the environment, then they automatically assumed that the food producer cared about the consumer. This supports the stakeholder theory created by R. Edward Freeman in 1984, which theory holds that the purpose of a business is to create value for its various stakeholders, including its customers. Organisations are driven to expand upon their objectives over and above profit expansion, and companies that adopt ECSR as a manner in which to encourage socially responsible behaviours are in a favourable position to successfully act in response to customer requirements (Freeman 2010). The data also supports research conducted by Turban and Greening (1997), which states that a company's corporate ability is very much connected to its capacity to deliver products and services. However, CSR activities may significantly impact a company's image and its overall reputation by providing consumers an awareness and understanding of the company's values, which include the wellbeing of their consumers, community, and the planet.

This existing literature is further supported by the qualitative data from this study, in that participants explained that if an organisation within the food industry is committed to environmental preservation, the positive impact - or the lack of the negative impact - that they had on the planet, directly impacted on their health because both the actions of the organisation and the consumer cohabit within the same ecosystem.

With regards to eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation and its positive or negative effects on health (question

five), the majority of the participants (21 out of 22 participants) stated that they believe that eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively affected their health because they believe that food items produced by environmentally friendly organisations are less likely to contain harmful chemicals, hormones and antibiotics, which the participants believe to impact on their health negatively.

The participants stated that the food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation are wholesome and natural, and that these products have a positive effect on their body, as well as on the planet. Furthermore, the data revealed that the whole cycle of food production affects consumer health, and thus food produced from environmentally friendly organisations is healthier for consumers. This supports research conducted by Australian Organic Limited (2021), which states that Australian consumers mostly purchase organic goods due to the belief that the products are healthier, of a better quality, contain no (or fewer) chemicals, involve less packaging, are fresher, and support local farmers.

Continuing with the trend of local product sourcing, participants stated that environmentally friendly food organisations are more likely to source locally and be more stringent with their suppliers. Therefore, in the mind of the consumer, this makes the food from these organisations healthier. This data contradicts the research conducted by Meldrum-Hanna, Russell and Christodoulo (2015), who identified that many food producers are independent farmers who do not have a connection to larger businesses and therefore they are less likely to have a dedicated and suitable CSR program. The accountability rests on the food retailers to ensure that the food products that they purchase are sourced from reputable suppliers who are able to prove that are meeting their commitment to protecting human rights and the environment. However, it has been demonstrated to be difficult for large retailers to enforce these requirements on their suppliers, and such retailers, for example Woolworths, have been directly linked to food producers that have been accused of abusing the human rights of their labourers in the past. This assumption is that if suppliers continue to abuse the human rights of their labourers regardless of their customers' sustainability strategies, it can be presumed that the environmental impacts of their production are not achieved according to relevant Australian and international standards.

With regards to organisational credibility (question six), the participants stated that they believe a food organisation to be credible if the company can clearly show from where their produce is sourced. Transparency and clear communication were also identified as contributors towards a food organisation's credibility. The qualitative data supports the existing literature which states that business-to-customer communication initiatives reduce customer anxiety (Tripathi 2014), and that while CSR beneficially influences customer perceptions of an organisation, numerous studies have concluded that without the appropriate communication strategy, the benefits of CSR activities are decreased (Rhou, Singal & Koh 2016).

Again, honest labelling was identified as a promoting factor towards credibility within the food industry, with participants stating that full disclosure regarding product ingredients, supply chain activities and produce sourcing makes an organisation within the food industry credible.

The qualitative data collected also indicated that false advertising negatively affected the credibility of a food organisation. This strongly supports the existing literature that states that past corporate reporting has been corrupted with scandalous statements that have overemphasised an organisation's sustainability initiatives, deceiving the public with false reporting and resulting in consumer skepticism due to the undermining of public trust. This deepens consumer skepticism around reporting integrity with many consumers believing that if large and popular brands are prepared to deceive consumers to enhance the image of their products, it is highly possible that other brands may do the same (Mačaitytė 2018).

Additional contributors to organisational credibility were identified by the participants. These included customer testimonials, and the alignment of personal values. This can be positively linked to the existing literature which states that CSR enhances customer advocacy and consumers are more likely to encourage their friends and relatives to purchase from a provider who is committed to CSR initiatives (Yeh 2015). Based on the qualitative data from this research and the research conducted by Yeh (2015), the researcher is able to deduce that customer testimonials and customer referrals are strong contributors to a consumer's positive perception of the credibility of an organisation within the food industry, especially if these organisations make the effort to protect the environment (Porter & Kramer 2011).

With regards to the alignment of personal values, the data supports research conducted by Schwartz (1994), which states that human values underpin an individual's thoughts and behaviours. This personalised set of values is then used by the individual as an instrument to evaluate other things and other individuals (Kahle 1996; Jansson 2010). When a company's products or services reflect a person's distinctive set of values, it is more plausible that the person will assess the organisation, and therefore the brand, as positive (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

Most of the participants (21 out of 22 participants) believe that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more credible. The reasons for these beliefs involved the idea that the organisation will be required to prove their environmental preservation initiatives, which shows a level of credibility. Furthermore, the organisation's values would evolve beyond profitability. In the minds of the consumers, this indicates a more credible organisation. This data supports the statement made by Austrade (2019) in that the Australian food industry enforces strict quality and safety regulations across the processes of development, packaging and production, however the existing literature also states that ethical responsibility is the obligation of business organisations to conduct themselves beyond their required legal conditions, and philanthropic responsibility is the social expectancy of businesses to satisfy social duties (Carroll 1979). Guidelines have been introduced to control the sustainability reporting of global organisations; however, they remain voluntary and there is no real penalty in the case of non-compliance, other than in the case of human rights abuse (Priester & Petty 1995).

A large majority (16 out of 22 participants) of the participants stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are their first choice when purchasing food items. This decision is based on their personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage.

It was also noted that even though it may be the participants' first choice to always purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisation, such products are not always available or labelled clearly. This supports the findings by Australian Organic Limited (2021) which stated that more than 50% of organic shoppers check for certification marks on organic product labels. In contradiction, less than half of the

participants stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are not their first choice when purchasing food items. These participants explained that not only is it inconvenient (due to time restraints as they are busy) to always look for food products from an environmentally friendly food organisation, but it is also too expensive. This data supports the existing literature by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who note that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience or quality, and when there is no additional cost in terms of price.

The majority of the participants (19 out of 22 participants) noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to conduct business and contribute to society in general. This data supports research conducted by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment. Furthermore, Yeh (2015) states that CSR enhances customer advocacy and consumers are more likely to encourage their friends and relatives to purchase from a provider who is committed to CSR initiatives.

In terms of customer loyalty (question nine), most of the participants (18 out of 22 participants) stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, however less than half said that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. The reasons stated by the participants who said that they would purchase an alternative product, included time restraints and inconvenience. This further confirms the existing literature by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who note that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience.

However, in contradiction to the existing literature, a key finding from this research identified the type of food item to be a determining factor. It was observed that if the

food item is an essential everyday product, the participants are more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. However, if the food product is not an everyday essential item, they would choose to delay their purchase. Furthermore, participants stated resistance to change and customer loyalty as deterrents to purchasing a different brand, and online shopping was noted as an alternative to buying their second-choice brand of product physically in a store.

Almost all of the participants (21 out of 22 participants) stated that the taste of food is very important to them (question ten). In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste, the majority of participants explained that taste would deter them from the purchase, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations. Once again, the qualitative data supports the research conducted by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), which noted that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of quality.

However, in contradiction to the existing literature, a key finding was uncovered when the respondents were probed further by the researcher. The respondents noted that their decision was based on a sliding scale - the worse the taste, the less likely they would be to purchase the product. Nevertheless, if the taste of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was not as good as that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, but not too bad either, they would still choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation.

To further contradict the existing literature, some participants believe that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation actually tastes better than food from organisations that are not environmentally friendly, and other participants explained that they eat because they are hungry and to fuel their body, and therefore taste is not as important to them as their health and the health of the environment.

Almost all of the participants (21 out of 22 participants) stated that the price of food is important to them (question eleven). In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of price, the majority of participants explained that high prices would deter them from the purchase,

regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations. This data directly aligns with the research conducted by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who note CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behaviour in an ethical direction further only when there is no additional cost in terms of price.

However, in contradiction to the existing literature, another key finding was uncovered when the researcher probed the participants further. This decision was also based on a sliding scale - the more expensive the product, the less likely they would be to purchase it. But if the price of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was only slightly more expensive than that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, the participants would choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation as their first option.

Contradicting the existing literature even further, this study's participants stated that the quality of their food is more important that price. These participants believe that food from an organisation that is environmentally friendly is of a higher quality, and sometimes actually more convenient, than food that is produced by an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. In addition, it was noted that although food products produced by an environmentally friendly organisation may be more expensive, the purchase will actually save the participants money on health issues in the future.

The issue of convenience was again raised when discussing the ease of purchasing products from food organisations that are dedicated to environmental preservation. The fact that these products are not readily available in one location, and participants are required to travel to various venues to purchase the products they need, actually adds to the cost of such items. However, once again, another key finding was discovered when the researcher probed the participants further. It was noted that the participants were more accepting of this time inconvenience and cost, if it resulted in a benefit to their health and a benefit in the health of the planet.

Table 9: Summary table of key findings per construct

Construct	Semi-Structured Interview Questions	Key Findings and Sample Quotations
Customer Satisfaction	Q1: Do you feel that you are doing the right thing when you buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation? If so, does doing the right thing give you a sense of pride, and why?	21 out of 22 participants stated that they feel that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation. 20 out of 22 participants stated that this type of purchase gives them a sense of pride. These participants believe that their purchase is their contribution towards the preservation of the planet, and that they feel proud to be part of such a purpose. Some participants noted it was simply the moral thing to do. 21 out of 22 participants believe that an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation has values are right and good. For example, Participant 13 stated: Yes, I do. I would say I would. Yes. I think that once I, if it's something that I can have a choice that's between a company that is looking after the environment and one that is not, it's got a product that is comparable, yeah, I will absolutely go for the other one, yeah, because I know they kind of are doing the right thing and the sustainability is a good thing. When I can do

something like that, and if I can contribute to a company doing something like that, it makes me feel good.

Participant 5 explained: 'Yes, I do. Yes, it does, because I think… I immediately think for future generations and that I'm helping to preserve the planet'. Participant 7 noted: 'Yes. Yes, because I'm doing the right thing. I'm morally conscious when it comes to food.' and Participant 8 stated: 'Yes, because it feels like I'm doing something to contribute globally and making a difference to the environment.'

A trend of consumer skepticism began to emerge from the start of the qualitative data collection process. Respondents expressed their distrust of the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims. They noted that they would feel a sense of doing the right thing, and a sense of pride when buying food products from a company that claimed to be committed to environmental preservation if they were certain that the organisation was following through with their claims. For example, Participant 3 stated:

My initial answer is yes, but now I'm really skeptical. How many are actually environmentally concerned, or how much is actually just lip service? I'm a

		little skeptical but my initial answer is yes. So yes, it does, because I feel like I'm not just being a consumer you know, I'm part of a process that is ensuring that what I am taking out of the system, I'm trusting that the company is putting back into the system.
Customer Trust	Q2: What do you think makes a food organisation trustworthy? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not? Please elaborate.	The participants noted that a good company reputation, quality processes and safety certificates make a food organisation trustworthy. For example, Participant 1 stated: In terms of trustworthy, it's got to have a clean reputation. It's got to have all the certificates and have the quality processes in place. There must be no negative feedback in the media about that. Participants also felt that transparency, clear communication, honesty, and correct product labelling aids in perceiving an organisation within the food industry as trustworthy. For example, Participant 4 stated : 'Their transparency, and their honesty, yeah, transparency, and honesty and even if they do mess up the truth about it all.' Participant 6 explained: 'Their reputation, their openness, their labels.' and Participant 7 stated: 'Correct labelling on their products.'

		One of the participants noted that brand popularity and familiarity made organisations within the food industry more trustworthy. Participant 12 stated:
		I think, it's how popular the brand is to be honest, and the company is. I tend to stick to the ones I know rather than the less known ones.
		The issue of trustworthiness was explored further, with participants noting supply chain and local sourcing as positive contributors to a food company's trustworthiness. For example, Participant 1stated:
		There are so many different types of foods and products, there are a lot of sourcing issues that can come from products from different countries. So, for instance if they demonstrate that they are a company that is buying local and proves that they are buying local then an element of trust is established for me. I do know for instance that you can get honey [and] that people say we have the greatest honey meanwhile it's corn syrup that they are importing [it] from China. [If] their food stocks are from this province, I'm more inclined to buy from them.
		11 out of 22 participants stated that they believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. It was observed that

participants are more trusting of such organisations, because they believe them to be more transparent with their souring activities and because they believe them to care for the environment. Furthermore, the data implied that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, because the respondents believe that they are not only interested in profits, but because they are also interested in sustaining the environment. For example, Participant 1 stated:

> I would say they are more trustworthy, and I would place more trust in their product based on the fact that they've proved their provenance and that they're actually doing it in a sustainable way.

The other half of the participants (11 out of 22 participants) did not believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. Some of the beliefs driving these opinions included the fact that environmental preservation is currently a trend for organisations to gain popularity, and so this may be the actual driver rather than their moral obligation. The trend of consumer skepticism was identified again for question two, with some participants noting that they would

		only believe an environmentally sustainable organisation within the food industry to be trustworthy, if they were actually doing what they claimed. For example, Participant 5 stated:
		> No, I don't, only because I feel like, there is a lot of focus [on environmental preservation] at the moment. It's quite trendy obviously, for environmental factors and things to be export. I wouldn't say they are more or less trustworthy, no.
Customer Trust	Q3: Can you give me an example of a food organisation that you believe is honest with its customers? Do you believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not? Please elaborate.	13 out of 22 participants were unable to think of a food organisation by name within Australia that they believed to be honest with their customers. When probed further by the researcher, they answered in general terms, with examples such as free-range eggs, small local producers, and small local grocery stores. 15 of out the 22 participants agreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims would be more scrutinised by the public. The participants believed such organisations to be more honest because they are not just interested in profits, but rather they also have concern for the environment and the community. For example, Participant 3 stated:

		Yeah I do, um, because they have, if they are making those claims you still have to fact check them especially in this day and age since there is so much information available, so I think, that they have to be a little more trustworthy if they are making claims about being more sustainable and ecofriendly. They kind of have to show a degree of follow up, or audited. Seven out of the 22 participants disagreed that environmentally friendly food organisations are more honest because such claims don't necessary indicate that these particular organisations are more honest than other organisations within the food industry that are not committed to environmental preservation. Once again, the trend of consumer skepticism was prevalent with regards to question three, with two of the participants explaining that organisations may be advertising that they are environmentally friendly, when in fact they are not actually conducting initiatives that are preserving the environment, and this will indicate dishonesty rather than honesty towards their consumers. For example Participant 2 stated: I would like to think they are more honest, but I don't think they always are. I don't think they are always as transparent as they should be, and they want us to believe certain things and sometimes I think information can be misleading.

Customer Trust	Q4: What does food safety mean to you personally? Do you believe that it is safer for you to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation and why?	All 22 of the interviewees stated that food safety is important to them, noting that they mostly avoid genetically modified foods, foods that have been in contact with pesticides and hormones, and foods that are not locally sourced, due to the safety levels of such food items. When asked if the participants believe that it is safer for them to purchase food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, 20 out of 22 participants agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer option. The topic of local sourcing of food items was once again raised by the participants. It was noted that the less time food is in transit, and the more locally sourced the food, the safer it is to consume. Another participant linked the concept of food safety with the environmentally friendly sourcing of live food products such as tuna. Participants also agreed that purchasing products from a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation to be the safer choice because they believed that if the food producer cared about the environment, then they automatically assumed that the food producer cared about the consumer. For example, Participant 1 stated:

		I would place a high degree of decision making with foods that I can see have less of a, or of a less chance of having genetically modified components to it. Such as package stuff I tend to stay away from more chemical products, or they've been changed for taste or genetically changed. I prefer natural foods, like nuts, if we're talking fast foods, I prefer nuts versus chips. Participant 5 explained: I'm really conscious about quality of food and everything to do with getting that food and getting it onto our plates. Like I would usually go to markets and things where I can try and make conscious choices about paying a little bit extra for food that is better quality, it's a little more local. I like to support like, like a butchery of made from local farmers. So yeah, it's quite important. Participant 4 explained: Yes, it's important to me mostly just because of the later effects that I've seen in my body and how I don't sort of want in particular, it happening in my child's body. So, where there would be all the pesticides and chemicals and the hormones that go into animals, products and things I can sort of that curb that happening in my daughter later. Then maybe I wouldn't then, I'm more concerned about like food safety and maybe keeping it as fresh as possible. And as few hormones and pesticides as possible.

		Participant 13 explained the following in their statement:
		Food safety is very important to me because I've got a number of allergies when it comes to preservatives and pesticides and so forth and it's very important and yeah, and if there is more in line with sort of the organic and looking after the environment, I would be more inclined to, um…
		Participant 17 stated:
		So probably around all of, you know, the hygiene, and you know all the food safety practices to make sure its food that's safe to consume by humans. All of those sorts of things, there will also be an aspect of it, say for example, just something in my head, when they are fishing for tuna you know, makes sure it's safe for other animals like dolphins and all that, wherever their other practices are, that they are safe for other animals as well.
		Participant 7 stated:
		Absolutely, well I think in terms of pesticides [if] they are willing to change the way they grow things, even if it takes them longer to grow, then it's safer for me.
Customer Trust	Q5: Do you believe that purchasing and eating food products from an organisation that is committed to	21 out of 22 participants stated that they believe that eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively affected their health because they believe that

	environmental preservation positively or negatively affects your health, and why?	food items produced by environmentally friendly organisations are less likely to contain harmful chemicals, hormones and antibiotics, which the participants believe to impact on their health negatively. The participants stated that the food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation are wholesome and natural, and that these products have a positive effect on their body, as well as on the planet. Furthermore, the data revealed that the whole cycle of food production affects consumer health, and thus food produced from environmentally friendly organisations is healthier for consumers. Continuing with the trend of local product sourcing, participants stated that environmentally friendly food organisations are more likely to source locally and be more stringent with their suppliers. Therefore, in the mind of the consumer, this makes the food from these organisations healthier. For example, Participant 3 explained:
		Absolutely positively because, I know that, or well I'm trusting, […] that I'm making sure that I'm avoiding certain chemicals, hormones, antibiotics, additives that [are] in another organisation that might be there in that food, because of mass production.
		Participant 4 stated:

		Well, yeah, definitely positively affects my health. If there is an organisation committed to the environment. It's just healthy whole, in a healthy, wholesome product that come from the earth and is good for the body. And I've seen the effects of products that have less chemicals and you know, I can see the positive effects from products that are natural and when someone's committed to the earth particularly, and the way they source their products and produce the products. You know, you could just see the positive effects in the body, and definitely my skin changing, or my stomach problems changing. They're all positive and then I want to either keep supporting that, and keep buying products that I know they're helping the earth and even the packaging, or knowing it's not being thrown into the drains.
Customer Trust	Q6: What do you believe makes a food organisation credible? Do you think that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more or less credible, and why?	The participants stated that they believe a food organisation to be credible if the company can clearly show from where their produce is sourced. Transparency and clear communication were also identified as contributors towards a food organisation's credibility. Again, honest labelling was identified as a promoting factor towards credibility within the food industry, with participants stating that full disclosure regarding product ingredients, supply chain activities and produce sourcing makes an organisation within the food industry credible. The data also

		indicated that false advertising negatively affected the credibility of a food organisation. Additional contributors to organisational credibility were identified by the participants. These included customer testimonials, and the alignment of personal values. 21 out of 22 participants believe that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more credible. The reasons for these beliefs involved the idea that the organisation will be required to prove their environmental preservation initiatives, which shows a level of credibility. Furthermore, the organisation's values would evolve beyond profitability. In the minds of the consumers, this indicates a more credible organisation. For example, Participant 11 stated:: Being more transparent with their communication with their sourcing makes them more credible because I know where the food is coming from and how they are - so if it is a fresh produce - and how they are treating the products when it comes to the farmer, the food, because… It's if they have excellent communication and slowly going around and telling [consumers] the type of stuff that they are doing.

		Participant 22 stated:
		I really like local supply, and when they name and have personal relationships with their local suppliers. And you can see that in their emails or in their reports or even when you get your delivery or whatever food comes from the farm. So, I think when they show that they have true relationships with actual families who own these farms, and they are local, and that really… For me, it's a big thing, and I can really trust them.
		Participant 21 stated:
		More credible... Because I think companies have a responsibility as corporate citizens to protect their environment and protect the space that they operate in. And if they don't, then I think they need to lower their ethics and the sense of responsibility.
Customer Loyalty	Q7: Are products from an environmentally friendly food company your first choice when purchasing food items, and why?	16 out of 22 participants stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are their first choice when purchasing food items. This decision is based on their personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and

food wastage. It was also noted that even though it may be the participants' first choice to always purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisation, such products are not always available or labelled clearly. These participants explained that not only is it inconvenient (due to time restraints as they are busy) to always look for food products from an environmentally friendly food organisation, but it is also too expensive. For example, Participant 9 stated:

> It's my first choice and that's again, that's based just on the quality of the food, or the items that you buy from them. And it may be a little bit more expensive, but it's just, it's just worth it and it's less wastage. Like if you buy those little cherry tomatoes, they just go all soggy, even with cucumbers the just don't last.

Participant 19 stated:

> They would be a preferred choice, but it's not something that always physically labeled as that when one is doing normal shopping, so one needs to be purposeful to look out for those labeled products.

Participant 4 explained:

> This a tough one, always I beat myself up about it because of the way prices

		have increased at the moment and being a single income family. And it's so, like when we were completely vegan, it was easy, we're actually blessed, some meat products tend to be, obviously add to the bill. And yeah, the way vegetable prices have skyrocketed, we are buying frozen. I beat myself up. Yeah, I wish that I could say I was going to the farmers' market. And I think for convenience and just yeah ease, we're not really shopping from the people I would like to be shopping [from]. And sometimes it's the cost factor? Sometimes an ease factor. Participant 7 stated: I think it depends on the price. Morally and ethically, I want to say yes, but it's often more expensive. When you've got a budget, sometimes that is what's going to guide you. But I will say that we've gone more for organic over the alternatives, we take that into consideration.
Customer Loyalty	Q8: Would you encourage or discourage your friends and family from purchasing products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment? Why?	19 out of 22 participants noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to

		conduct business and contribute to society in general. For example, Participant 3 stated:
		> I would definitely encourage them. I'll encourage them for their own health, but I'll also encourage to them if I really trusted the company in order for them to do well.
		Participant 5 stated:
		> I would encourage, to protect the environment for sure. Because like we just said, I think it's better for everyone like not just to health, our personal health and our eating products, then the environments being considered. But also, just the animals, help the planet… If we're looking after everything a little bit better.
Customer Loyalty	Q9: How loyal are you towards your favourite food products? Would you postpone buying a product or go to another store, if your regular store is out of your preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, and why?	18 out of 22 participants stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, however less than half of the participants said that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. The reasons stated by the participants who said that they would purchase an alternative product, included time restraints and inconvenience. However, a key finding from this research identified the type of food item to be a determining

		factor. It was observed that if the food item is an essential everyday product, the participants are more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. Nevertheless, if the food product is not an everyday essential item, they would choose to delay their purchase. Furthermore, participants stated resistance to change and customer loyalty as deterrents to purchasing a different brand, and online shopping was noted as an alternative to buying their second-choice brand of product physically in a store. For example, Participant 3 stated:
		I'm pretty loyal to my Fresh Box and my meat deliveries. [Those] are things that are important to me. I'm pretty loyal, especially at the moment with the floods and food shortages and potential war on the you know… I think it's really important to have good relationships with these people, these smaller companies. So that, you know, when it comes to if there are shortages, if you have a good rapport and you're a local, loyal customer you're more likely to get looked after by that company… It depends on what it is, how essential that product is or was. I'm genuinely quite flexible with you know, those sorts of things… I wouldn't compromise on certain things.
		Participant 5 explained that they would buy an alternative product due to convenience, and Participant 8 noted that their decision would be

		based on the type of product: 'I think it depends on what the product is…' In agreement Participant 12 stated: 'It just depends [on] what it is because there's certain things that are not negotiable, like you know, fresh chicken.'
		Participant 11 stated:
		I am very much loyal. It always has to do with like also the quality and the taste of the food. So, once you have that brand in place or company that you trust, then the price and everything follows and becomes a part of your pantry on a regular basis… If it's not something I need urgently or on a regular basis, then I would rather wait, Better than having tried and tested rather than experimenting.
		Participant 14 stated:
		Very loyal, I don't like change. I wouldn't go anywhere else, I'd wait. Because I don't normally, I stick to what I know. I've very rarely tried something different. I just stick to what I know.
Customer Retention	Q10: How important is the taste of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly	21 out of 22 participants stated that the taste of food is very important to them. In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations regardless of taste, the majority of participants

	organisations within the food industry regardless of taste? Why?	explained that taste would deter them from the purchase, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations. However, a key finding was uncovered when the respondents were probed further by the researcher: the respondents noted that their decision was determined by the extent to which they didn't like the taste of the item: the worse the taste, the less likely they would be to purchase the product. If the taste of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was not as good as that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, but not too bad either, they would still choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation. For example, Participant 4 explained:
		Taste is very important to us, and freshness and crispness. We do. We use a lot of herbs and spices in all our cooking and things. Yeah. Taste [is] important. There's one oat milk we only buy and if it's sold out, we don't buy another oat milk brand. We don't buy the cheaper tasting brand... I think because they're an oat milk I feel like I'm doing something good for the environment... So, we are predominantly vegan, there will be certain things, I won't buy, the least tasty ones, I would refuse it altogether.
		Participant 17 stated:

		If the taste was terrible as in like I tasted the product and I spat it out and it was at that level then no I would not buy it because then what, I mean obviously, well, being a human being, we buy food primarily to eat it. If I can't eat it, if I can't consume it, then what am I buying it… I wouldn't wholly and solely be buying a product if I absolutely loathed it or couldn't stomach it just because it was environmentally friendly so you know sustainable products I wouldn't, I wouldn't buy, no… Taste is very important because it's essentially that's why we buy food in the first place. We are buying it with that intent 99% of the time - unless we're doing some sort of craft project - so you know 99% time the reason why we buy food is to consume it, so if you can't consume it, I wouldn't be buying it... I would have to like the product I would have to want to consume the product to buy it in the first place.
		Participant 13 stated:
		Taste is very important. Yeah. And I think it would depend on the product. If it was an everyday product, I probably would just continue with, even if it wasn't, you know, if there was a minor difference in taste. If there was a major difference, I'd probably not [buy] the environmentally friendly. If it's an occasional product like chocolate or something I would probably go with the one that tastes better. For those sort of things it's quality over quantity… And everyday stuff, it wouldn't, probably wouldn't matter.
		Participant 19 stated:

| | | Taste is important, because I am a foodie, I love food. However, if I am aware that the taste has been compromised because of something that could impact the environment then I tend to refrain my preference for taste and purchase something better for the environment.

Some participants believe that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation actually tastes better than food from organisations that are not environmentally friendly, and other participants explained that they eat because they are hungry and to fuel their body, and therefore taste is not as important to them as their health and the health of the environment. For example, Participant 14 stated: 'No, I eat because I'm hungry. Yes. I would [continue to purchase and eat food items from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of taste]'. |
|---|---|---|
| **Customer Retention** | Q11: How important is the price of food to you? Would you continue to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations within the food industry regardless of the price? | 21 out of 22 participants stated that the price of food is important to them (question eleven). In terms of purchasing food items from environmentally friendly organisations regardless of price, the majority of participants explained that high prices would deter them from the purchase, regardless of their commitment to purchase from |

		environmentally friendly organisations. However, a key finding was uncovered when the researcher probed the participants further. This decision was also based on the extent to which the price was higher than the food items that are not from environmentally friendly organisations - the more expensive the product, the less likely they would be to purchase it. But if the price of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was only slightly more expensive than that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, the participants would choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation as their first option. The participants stated that the quality of their food is more important than price. These participants believe that food from an organisation that is environmentally friendly is of a higher quality, and sometimes actually more convenient, than food that is produced by an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. It was noted that although food products produced by an environmentally friendly organisation may be more expensive, the purchase will actually save the participants money on health issues in the future. For example, Participant 7 explained that price is important, however they would be

happy to pay a little more for products from an environmentally friendly food organisation, up to a point.

Participant 16 stated:

> Yeah so, I guess that one is the same with taste, depends on the varying degree. For example, with eggs, I will always buy free range eggs over cage, even though they are more expensive because it is quite well advertised the difference between them. But then if there is a vastly huge difference in price, where if it was an extra $10 for something that was already an extra $5, than maybe you start to wonder and would go on the price.

Participant 17 stated:

> Look the price is important. I think the price is important for everybody because you know no matter what they say because everybody, you know, unless you like the absolute top tier richest person in the world, everybody looks at the price of everything. So, you know price is important. It's going to be a determining factor. Let's just say that company A isn't environmental concerned whatsoever and Company B has the exact same product and is compatible with taste and you know we take these environmental measures from B and A and the price is $0.20 more expensive then I'll definitely go with the environmental one cause the $0.20

| | | is incidental. But if you're telling me if the product is $20 more, that turns the tables.

The issue of convenience was again raised when discussing the ease of purchasing products from food organisations that are dedicated to environmental preservation. The fact that these products are not readily available in one location, and participants are required to travel to various venues to purchase the products they need, actually adds to the cost of such items. However, once again, another key finding was discovered when the researcher probed the participants further. It was noted that the participants were more accepting of this time inconvenience and cost, if it resulted in a benefit to their health and a benefit in the health of the planet. For example, Participant 5 stated:

> I'm happy to pay a little bit more for something that's the quality and is healthier and is considering it has good ethics, philosophy behind them while they're producing, [I'll] pay a little bit more.

Participant 4 stated:

> I would try my best. I think it's that whole concept of food and medicine, you know, needing one to pay for the medicine later in time… Spending more money towards only the healthy stuff and cutting all the other junk, |
|---|---|---|

		cutting and then saving money that way. Less doctor's visits. I've seen the long term [results] so if all my products were easy to find in one store, and I probably didn't need maybe five trips to five stores to find my things, then I think that often doesn't and eventually I'm buying everything at one store, [it] doesn't matter what they cost.

5.6. Implications of the Qualitative Study Findings

The main objective of this qualitative study was to clarify and understand the data from the quantitative study regarding the impact of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically on customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and how that impact influences customer retention. A number of implications can be ascertained from the findings of this qualitative study.

Customers believe that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, and that this type of purchase gives them a sense of pride. The participants from this study believe that their purchase is their contribution towards the preservation of the planet, with some participants noting that it was simply the moral thing to do. Participants also believe that an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation has values are right and good, and that protecting the environment makes an organisation more credible. The reasons for these beliefs involved the idea that the organisation will be required to prove their environmental preservation initiatives, which shows a level of credibility. Furthermore, the organisation's values would evolve beyond profitability. In the minds of the consumers, this indicates a more credible organisation. There is therefore an opportunity for food organisations to enhance their company image and reputation by incorporating ECSR initiatives into their business activities.

A trend of consumer skepticism began to emerge from the start of the qualitative data collection process. Respondents expressed their distrust of the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims. This supports and builds on existing literature on consumer skepticism associated with CSR initiatives, in that such skepticism may occur when consumers connect a self-seeking impetus to the company, and that the degree of consumer skepticism fluctuates between consumers, which impacts on the influence of the CSR initiative on consumer behaviour (Friestad & Wright 1994). However, when probed further by the researcher, the respondents identified that good company reputation, familiarity, quality processes, safety certificates, transparency, clear communication, honesty, correct product labelling, and local sourcing would decrease their levels of skepticism, and make them more trusting of the organisation's values and drivers. This indicates that organisations

within the food industry are able to avoid high levels of consumer skepticism by incorporating and ensuring a good company reputation, familiarity, quality processes, safety certificates, transparency, clear communication, honesty, correct product labelling, and local sourcing within the business activities.

The participants all agreed that food safety is important to them, noting that they mostly avoid genetically modified foods, foods that have been in contact with pesticides and hormones, and foods that are not locally sourced, due to the safety levels of such food items. In particular, the participants were more concerned about the safety of fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, chicken and eggs. The participants agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer and healthier option, especially when the products are locally sourced and sourced in a manner that ensures minimal negative impact on the environment. Participants also agreed that purchasing products from a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation to be the safer choice because they believed that if the food producer cared about the environment, then they automatically assumed that the food producer cared about the consumer. Findings from this study indicate that customers prefer products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice. This decision is based on their personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage. However, while it may be the customer's first choice to always purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisation, such products are not always available or labelled clearly.

These findings indicate that organisations within the food industry should make every effort to ensure that their products are locally sourced and sourced in an environmentally friendly manner. Furthermore, ensuring that such products are made readily available and clearly labelled as environmentally friendly is an important consideration for businesses. In the mind of the customer, this ensures easily available, easily recognisable, safer and healthier food of a higher quality, resulting in increased sales and retained customers for the business. In addition, such business considerations may result in customer referrals and positive word of mouth, further

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bolstering the company's reputation and sales. This is confirmed by the findings of this study, whereby the participants noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to conduct business and contribute to society in general.

The availability and ease of purchase of products produced by organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR is an important consideration for business managers. While participants stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, less than half of the participants said that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. However, a key finding from this research identified the type of food item to be a determining factor. It was observed that if the food item is an essential everyday product, the participants are more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. Nevertheless, if the food product is not an everyday essential item, they would choose to delay their purchase. Furthermore, participants stated resistance to change and customer loyalty as deterrents to purchasing a different brand, and online shopping was noted as an alternative to buying their second-choice brand of product physically in a store. Organisations should therefore ensure that stock levels of both everyday essential items *and* indulgent items are managed successfully in order to prevent customer loss.

While the taste of food is very important to customers, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations, this study uncovered a key finding: the participants noted that their decision was determined by the extent to which they didn't like the taste of the item: the worse the taste, the less likely they would be to purchase the product. If the taste of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was not as good as that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, but not too bad either, they would still choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation. Some participants even noted that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental

preservation actually tastes better than food from organisations that are not environmentally friendly due to the absence of unnatural additives and preservatives. This is an important implication for businesses within the food industry, who should focus on food taste, freshness and longevity as major contributors to customer preference when using ECSR as a possible customer retention strategy. While the factor of taste is imperative, this study finds that customers will choose to purchase food that is produced by organisations that participate in ECSR as their first choice, even if the taste of that food item is not as good as a food item from a provider that does not participate in ECSR, but still pleasurable to eat.

A similar key finding was uncovered regarding the price of food: while the price of food is very important to customers, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations, this study uncovered that the customer's decision was determined by how much more expensive the food item from an environmentally friendly organisation was when compared to a similar product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly. The greater the discrepancy, the less likely the customer is to purchase the more expensive item. The participants stated that the quality of their food is more important than price, and that food from an organisation that is environmentally friendly is of a higher quality, and sometimes actually more convenient, than food that is produced by an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. It was noted that although food products produced by an environmentally friendly organisation may be more expensive, the purchase will actually save the participants money on health issues in the future. This is another important implication for businesses within the food industry, who should focus on quality as major contributors to customer preference when using ECSR as a possible customer retention strategy. While the factor of price is imperative, this study finds that customers will choose to purchase food that is produced by organisations that participate in ECSR as their first choice, even if the price of that food item is reasonably higher than food item from a provider that does not participate in ECSR, but of a higher quality.

This study found that customers are more accepting of the time inconvenience, decreased taste, and increased cost of food items purchased from organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR, if such purchases result in a benefit to their

health and to the health of the planet. Customers prefer food items from organisations that practice ECSR because they believe such organisations hold values that are right and good therefore in the customers' minds, such organisations are more credible, trustworthy and honest. In addition, customers believe that food items from such organisations to be healthier for both their families and for the environment, fresher and safer. As a key implication for business, organisations within the food industry should adapt ECSR as a key strategy the retention of their current customers.

5.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the qualitative phase of the data collected through 22 semi-structured interviews. The aim was to provide both concrete and meaningful data in order to support the findings from the quantitative phase of the study.

The chapter began with the researcher presenting the final semi-structured interview questions. Thereafter, an explanation of the sample and recruitment of participants for this phase of the study was provided. Following this, the qualitative data collection process was described, and the qualitative data results were presented and analysed. In the last part of this chapter, the researcher presented a summary of the key findings and the implications of the findings of the qualitative study.

The next chapter contains a summary of the key findings and implications in relation to the research objective, stated research questions, and hypotheses of this study. This is followed by the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have presented the study's context, objectives, literature review, research methodology and data collection methods, and the analysis and discussion of the data findings. This chapter contains three main sections. The first section presents a summary of the key findings in relation to the research objective, stated research questions, and hypotheses. The second section presents the theoretical and practical implications of the study. This is followed by the study's limitations and suggestions for future research. The chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

6.2. Summary of Key Findings

Based on the literature reviewed for the purpose of this study, the researcher has confirmed that in today's market, the majority of businesses can anticipate uncertainty, and demanding consumers who want the satisfaction of their needs and desires. To build a sustainable competitive advantage in today's market, an organisation needs to ensure that their customers are at the centre of their strategy. This may be achieved by an organisation's focus on retaining its high-value customers, also known as customer retention. Not only does customer retention positively enhance an organisation's profitability and sustainability (Cambra-Fierro et al. 2021; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017; Heal 2008; Urip 2010; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016; Bernstel 2002), it also attracts investor interest (Chen & Lee 2017) and increases customer admiration through bolstering an organisation's reputation (Deng, Kang, & Low 2013; Lee 2017; Griffin 2008).

With heightened consumer concerns regarding diet-influenced health issues, environmental destruction, climate change and hardship for small-scale food producers, appealing to such concerns through ECSR may provide organisations

within the food industry a beneficial strategy retain customers, while enhancing their contribution towards environmental preservation, and increasing their profitability and sustainability within a competitive market. Because ethical standards hold a dominant position in enhancing consumer loyalty (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017), increased corporate ethical levels encourage customers to believe that an organisation is dedicated to its CSR. Once this perception is formed, customers' satisfaction levels rise and their trust levels are improved, resulting in consumer loyalty towards the company. This is confirmed by Lee, Kim and Roh (2019), whereby it has been determined that CSR activities may enhance firm reputation, which contributes to enhanced firm performance, enhanced employee job satisfaction, and increased organisational trust (Brammer, Millington & Rayton 2007; Lee, Huang & Hsu 2007). Furthermore, CSR activities may enhance a company's image (Weber, 2008) and raise customer purchase intention (Sen & Bhattacharya 2001).

It is important for organisations to understand why consumers churn. A customer's behaviour is influenced by their experience, values, lifestyles and demographics, and their expectations are influenced by quality, price, ease of purchase and the access of information. Businesses can either view the rise of the socially conscious consumer as a negative disruption, or as an opportunity to align their business, products, and services with the future of consumer needs in order to attain customer loyalty, and greatly outsmarting their competitors.

Loyal customers equal profitability, but loyalty is more than just repeat purchases: It is about the customer's personal belief about a company's brand, which is created by customer satisfaction and customer trust (Gunther et al., 2014). Often the CSR initiatives of an organisation positively influence the way customers perceive the company and its brand by appealing to their levels of satisfaction, trust, and loyalty (Maignan, Ferrell & Hult 1999; Christopher & Luke 2013; Park, Kim & Kwon 2017).

For the purpose of this study the researcher addressed the effectiveness of ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used whereby quantitative data was collected via an online questionnaire-based survey, and analysed. The results from the data were used to develop eleven open-ended questions for semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data collected provided a more in-depth understanding of the quantitative results and

a complete understanding of the research problem. Based on the analysis of the data collected during this study, key findings were uncovered.

6.2.1. ECSR

The results of this study indicate that the majority of consumers believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment. Furthermore, this study confirms that it is important to the majority of consumers that the food products they purchase are environmentally friendly and that organisations within the food industry include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chains.

This study further supports existing literature which states that the majority of consumers believe that it is important that the organisations within the food industry conduct waste audits and promote consumer product packaging recycling, while emphasising the importance of biodegradable packaging materials within the food industry and the value of pro-environmental policies, including limited usage of pesticides and enhanced animal welfare practices.

These findings expand upon existing literature whereby authors have suggested the following ECSR initiatives to combat the food industry's negative environmental impact, including environmentally friendly products; responsible environmental care practices within the supply chain (Maloni & Brown 2006); biodegradable materials for packaging (Marsh & Bugusu 2007); pro-environmental policies; waste audits; food donation programs; energy and water conservation strategies; and the promotion of consumer product packaging recycling (Kim 2017).

In addition, these findings align with the stakeholder theory, which proposes that the purpose of a business is to create value for its various stakeholders, which includes its customers (Freeman 2010). Freeman defined a stakeholder as 'any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization's objectives' (Freeman 1984). These stakeholders offer resources, influence the industry environment, benefit from the organisation, and influence both its productivity

and impact (Donaldson & Preston 1995). Therefore, it is the combined efforts of the stakeholder network that are the foundation of value creation (Haslam et al. 2015) and the revocation of stakeholder support can jeopardise the sustainability of a business (Freeman 2010). From the perspective of the stakeholder theory, a shared purpose ought to result from the shared values of an organisation and its stakeholders, therefore serving as a robust motivator for joint value creation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund 2017). Joint value creation suggests that the relationships between a business and its stakeholders should be greater than transaction-oriented interactions (Freeman 2010) and according to Theodoulidis et al. (2017), a business ought to involve all its stakeholders (investors, employees, their community, customers, etc.) in its decision making.

The stakeholder theory of CSR implies that a company's success is reliant on both the monetary and non-monetary benefits of CSR that are presented to all stakeholders (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García & Marchante-Lara 2014; Brown & Forster 2013). This reinforces that stakeholders anticipate businesses to participate in social and CSR initiatives for various monetary and non-monetary advantages (Wolter & Cronin 2017). As applied to this study, organisations are driven to expand upon their objectives over and above profit expansion. Organisations that adopt ECSR as a manner in which to encourage socially responsible behaviours are in a favourable position to successfully act in response to customer requirements.

6.2.2. ECSR and Customer Satisfaction

The findings from this study indicate that consumers admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment. This outcome confirms and builds upon the existing literature which states that CSR increases customer admiration through bolstering an organisation's reputation (Aramburu & Pescador 2019; Deng, Kang, & Low 2013; Lee 2017; Griffin 2008). In addition, the findings confirm and build on the existing literature by Jones (2010) in that the researcher of this study verified that consumers feel satisfied when they buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment. This confirms and builds on the existing literature by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers feel a

sense of pride when purchasing from a socially responsible company, because it gives them the opportunity to support humanity and their nation, despite their busy lifestyles.

Human values underpin an individual's thoughts and behaviours, and this personalised set of values is used by the consumer as an instrument to evaluate an organisation (Kahle 1996; Jansson 2010). When a company's products or services reflect a consumer's distinctive set of values, it is more plausible that the consumer will assess the organisation, and therefore the brand, as positive (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). The consumers who identify with the values of environmentally friendly organisations, believe that they are doing the right thing when they purchase products from such organisations, and therefore feel a greater sense of satisfaction. These results support the Social Exchange Theory, which indicates that human behaviour is an exchange of both physical and unquantifiable activity, specifically that of cost and reward (Homans 1958; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). Furthermore, satisfaction is predominantly influenced by the economic and social results of these exchanges. Therefore, the customer perceptions of a company can be influenced by various internal processes and interpersonal variables. According to Sierra and McQuitty (2005), in the case of a close interaction between an organisation and a customer, the manner in which the company and its representatives behave is frequently more significant than what is actually delivered (Ozment & Morash 1994). In social exchange, customers and organisations realise a level of shared responsibility, and the success or failure of the outcome results in an emotional response (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005).

These results also align with the Organisational Identification Theory developed by Cheney and Tompkins in 1987, which states that an individual who appreciates the righteous efforts of an organisation may feel more satisfied about their connection with the organisation. According to the existing literature, this enhances the individual's identification with the organisation and encourages positive reactions from the individual (Jones 2010).

Furthermore, the results align with the Consumer-Company Identification Theory, established by Bhattacharya and Sen (2003). This theory proposes that consumers may develop a strong relationship with a company as the result of the consumers' identification with that company, which assists them satisfy an important self-defining

need. As applied to this study, the theory anticipates that when consumers identify with the CSR efforts of an organisation, they may experience enhanced customer satisfaction, and respond with a committed relationship towards the organisation, while becoming champions of the organisation and their products. Therefore, the alignment of the company's values with the consumer's personal values, and the admiration felt by the consumer towards the company, are contributing factors to customer satisfaction.

A parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5). Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M1 was also significant (b=0.940, p<0.001), allowing the researcher to answer RQ1 by confirming H1, which states:

H1: *ECSR enhances customer satisfaction.*

6.2.3. ECSR and Customer Trust

In terms of customer trust, the quantitative data collected during this study suggests that the majority of respondents believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy (60.3%) and more honest (51.3%) than a food organisation that is not. However according to the qualitative data collected, only half of the participants stated that they believe that a food organisation that is committed to ECSR is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not. However, with regards to honesty, the qualitative data indicated that the majority of the respondents believed that a food organisation that is committed to ECSR is more honest than a food organisation that is not. The consumers explained this to be the case because they believe that such ECSR claims made by an organisation would be more scrutinised by the public.

Building on the existing literature by Adebiyi, Oyatoye and Amole (2016), Ho (2017), and Van den Berg and Lidfors (2012), this study observed that consumers are more trusting of food organisations that are committed to ECSR, because they are more honest, indicating that honesty precedes trust. Furthermore, the consumers who implied that a food organisation that is committed to ECSR is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, is because they are not only interested in profits, but because they are also interested in sustaining the environment. And this, in the mind of the consumer, makes them more trustworthy.

A trend of consumer skepticism began to emerge, whereby some consumers believe that ECSR is currently a fashionable trend for organisations to gain popularity, and so this may be their actual driver rather than their moral obligation. It became evident to the researcher that consumer skepticism may be a serious deterrent to the effectiveness of ECSR as a positive contributor to creating customer trust, with participants in this study expressing their distrust towards the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims.

This supports and builds on existing literature on consumer skepticism associated with CSR initiatives, in that such skepticism may occur when consumers connect a self-seeking impetus to the company, and that the degree of consumer skepticism fluctuates between consumers, which impacts on the influence of the CSR initiative on consumer behaviour (Friestad & Wright 1994). However, when probed further by the researcher, the respondents identified that good company reputation, familiarity, quality processes, safety certificates, transparency, clear communication, honesty, correct product labelling, and local sourcing would decrease their levels of skepticism, and make them more trusting of the organisation's values and drivers. This notion builds on the existing literature which states that a credible company message results in positive consumer attitudes and responses (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and that company credibility with regards to CSR campaigns is enhanced when the organisation's principal message is social, and their communication efforts are openly related to non-economic concerns (Priester & Petty 1995). It is therefore of paramount importance that organisations within the food industry, who choose ECSR as a customer retention strategy, to be aware of the weight that consumer skepticism

carries when communicating their efforts, and what tools they can use to decrease such skepticism.

Brand popularity and familiarity were also noted as factors contributing to organisational trustworthiness. This supports and builds on the existing literature by Liu and Wu (2007) and Stahl et al. (2012), who note that trust becomes a valuable factor in the development of a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship between a customer and an organisation, and customers are more likely to purchase from a brand that they perceive as having low risk (Stahl et al. 2012). In terms of customer retention, customers who are familiar with a certain brand and its product or service, are more likely to connect value to its features. This perceived value of the brand's products offers the customer confidence in their decision to buy from the same brand in the future.

Based on the quantitative data collected, approximately half the respondents (54.6%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings them safety, and the majority of respondents (66%) believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option. It is clear from the qualitative data that food safety is extremely important to the respondents, with all of the interviewees stating that food safety is important to them. They agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer option. When probed further by the researcher, the reasons for this consumer perception included the belief that the products are of a better quality, healthier, contain no (or fewer) chemicals, and are fresher due to local supply. Furthermore, it was discovered that the participants link the concept of food safety with sustainable and cruelty-free product sourcing. In the mind of the majority of the consumers, the concept of safety now encompasses not only the safety of the food in terms of hygiene factors and consumption, but also the safety of the surrounding environment and ecosystem.

Respondents also noted that the food from such organisations within the food industry are safer because the values of the organisation are good. The connection between good organisational values and the organisation's concern for the health of their

consumers was made, and according to the qualitative data results, the respondents stated that they believe that eating food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation positively affects their health. This confirms that consumers consider organic products to be better for their health and better for the health of the planet, and builds on the existing research conducted by Australian Organic Limited (2021), which states that Australian consumers mostly purchase organic goods due to the belief that the products are of a better quality, contain no (or fewer) chemicals, and are fresher due to local sourcing and decreased time in transit.

Furthermore, the results from this study indicate that consumers believe that purchasing products from a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation to be the safer choice because if the food producer cares about the environment, then they automatically assume that the food producer cares about the consumer.

Based on the quantitative data collected, 68% of the respondents believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company. According to the qualitative data, the participants believe that protecting the environment makes an organisation within the food industry more credible. When probed further by the researcher, the interview respondents stated that they believe a food organisation to be credible if the company can clearly show from where their produce is sourced. Transparency, clear communication, customer testimonials, and the alignment of the respondent's personal values with the values of the organisation were also identified as contributors towards a food organisation's credibility.

With regards to the alignment of personal values, the data from this study builds on existing literature by Schwartz (1994), which states that human values underpin an individual's thoughts and behaviours. This personalised set of values is then used by the individual as an instrument to evaluate other things and other individuals (Kahle 1996; Jansson 2010). When a company's products or services reflect a person's distinctive set of values, it is more plausible that the person will assess the organisation, and therefore the brand, as positive (Park, Kim & Kwon 2017). The results from this study indicate that consumers believe that if an organisation conducts

ECSR, its values evolve beyond profitability. In the mind of the consumer, this indicates a more credible organisation, further building on existing literature which states that ethical responsibility is the obligation of business organisations to conduct themselves beyond their required legal conditions, and philanthropic responsibility is the social expectancy of businesses to satisfy social duties (Carroll 1979).

From the data gathered, the researcher can assume that the majority of the consumers believe that an organisation that is committed ECSR has good values that take into account the wellbeing of the consumer and the planet. Therefore, such organisations are believed to be more honest and cautious when it comes to the use (or lack thereof) of harmful chemicals. Stringent hygiene and sourcing processes are thought to be followed to ensure the safety of the food and the environment. Furthermore, the food from such organisations is considered fresher due to local supply chains resulting in decreased transition times between the farm and the consumer's plate, and according to the consumer, fresher food is healthier food, which is safer for consumption. Therefore, the researcher can assume that consumers are more trusting of organisations within the food industry who practice ECSR.

A parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5). Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M2 was also significant, allowing the researcher to answer RQ2 by confirming H2, which states:

H2: *ECSR has enhances customer trust.*

6.2.4. ECSR and Customer Loyalty

Based on the quantitative data, approximately half of the respondents (53.6%) consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice when purchasing such products. According to the qualitative data, the majority of

respondents stated that products from an environmentally friendly food company are their first choice when purchasing food items. When probed further, the researcher discovered that this decision is based on the respondents' personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer, and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage.

Based on the quantitative research data, less than half (41.8%) of the respondents said that they would encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment. However, the interview respondents from the qualitative data collection phase of this study noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to conduct business and contribute to society in general. This data builds on existing literature by Pradhan (2018) who states that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that by purchasing products from an organisation that is dedicated to CSR efforts, they are contributing directly towards the betterment of society and the environment. Furthermore, the results from this study support and build on existing literature by Yeh (2015), who states that CSR enhances customer advocacy and consumers are more likely to encourage their friends and relatives to purchase from a provider who is committed to CSR initiatives.

The quantitative data further indicated that the majority of respondents (68.4%) intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future, however almost equal percentages (39% and 37% respectively) of the respondents agreed and disagreed with the statement whether they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store is sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. In contrast, most of the interview respondents stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, but not all of the respondents expressed that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an

environmentally friendly food organisation. This outcome supports and builds on the existing literature by Carrigan and Attalla (2001), who note that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience.

However, in contradiction to the existing literature, a key finding here was that the type of food item was noted as a determining factor for this decision. It was observed that if the food item is an essential everyday product, the respondents are more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. However, if the food product was not an everyday essential item, they would choose to delay their purchase. Furthermore, participants stated resistance to change and customer loyalty as deterrents to purchasing a different brand, and online shopping was noted as an alternative to buying their second-choice brand of product physically in a store. This supports existing literature by Yadav, Misra and Ranjan (2021) who states that online shopping has increased exponentially due to the Covid19 pandemic.

From the data gathered in this study, the researcher can assume that food items produced by organisations that practice ECSR are the first choice for the majority of the consumers. Furthermore, the researcher discovered that this decision is based on the consumers' personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer, and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage.

A key finding was uncovered by the researcher that contradicts existing literature (Carrigan & Attalla 2001). It was observed that consumers are more inclined to delay their purchase if they are unable to access their preferred food product from an organisation that practices ECSR, if that food item is not an everyday essential item. Therefore, the researcher can assume that consumers are loyal to organisations within the food industry who practice ECSR up to a point based on the type of food item.

For the purpose of this study, a parallel mediation model was tested using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5). Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was

used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M3 was also significant (b=0.930, p<0.001) allowing the researcher to answer RQ3 by confirming H3, which states:

H3: *ESCR enhances customer loyalty.*

6.2.5. ECSR and Customer Retention

Based on the parallel mediation model test using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5), Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) was used as the independent variable (X) and Customer Retention (CR) was used as the dependent variable (Y). Customer Satisfaction (CS), Customer Trust (CT) and Customer Loyalty (CL) were used as mediating variables (M1, M2 and M3 respectively).

Upon calculation, the total effect of X on Y (without any mediators) was significant (b=0.838, 0<0.001). The path from X to M1 was significant (b=0.940, p<0.001), as was the path from X to M2 (b=0.832, p<0.001). The path from X to M3 was also significant (b=0.930, p<0.001).

Next, path b1, b2 and b3 were evaluated. That is the significance of the effect of the mediators on Y, with X already in the model. Path b2 was significant (b=0.060, <0.001), as was path b3 (b=0.583, p< 0.001). However, path b1 was not significant (b=0.060, p>0.05). Path c' (the direct effect of X on Y) was also non-significant (b=0.042, p>0.05).

The results from the parallel mediation model tested using the Hayes Process Model (v 3.5) infer the following: The fact that path c is significant, and path c' is not significant, indicates that full mediation has taken place. The indirect effect of X on Y for each of the mediators suggests that M2 (Customer Trust) and M3 (Customer Loyalty) are significant mediators of the relationship between X and Y, while M1

(Customer Satisfaction) is not a significant mediator of the relationship between X and Y. This allows the researcher to answer RQ4 by confirming H5, H6, and disproving H4, which state:

H4: *Enhanced customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

H5: *Enhanced customer trust positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

H6: *Enhanced Customer loyalty positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*

In support of expanding upon pre-conceived perceptions and assumptions, the researcher of this study devised a conceptual framework (Lacey 2010), whereby concepts from theories were used to support the study rather than full theories. This research is based on concepts from the following two main theories: the stakeholder theory and the social exchange theory.

The stakeholder theory holds that the purpose of a business is to create value for its various stakeholders, which include customers (Freeman 2010). The combined efforts of the stakeholder network that are the foundation of value creation (Haslam et al. 2015) and the revocation of stakeholder support can jeopardise the sustainability of a business (Freeman 2010). From the perspective of the stakeholder theory, a shared purpose ought to result from the shared values of an organisation and its stakeholders, therefore serving as a robust motivator for joint value creation (Breuer & Lüdeke-Freund 2017). The results from this study confirm that organisations, specifically those within the food industry, that adopt ECSR as a manner in which to encourage socially responsible behaviours are in a favourable position to successfully act in response to customer requirements, reinforcing the concept that stakeholders anticipate businesses to participate in social and CSR initiatives for various monetary and non-monetary advantages (Wolter et al. 2017).

The social exchange theory indicates that human behaviour is an exchange of both physical and unquantifiable activity, specifically that of cost and reward (Homans 1958; Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016). The results from this study confirm that the independent variable of ECSR positively influences the mediating variables of customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. However only customer trust and customer loyalty positively mediate the relationship between ECSR and the dependent variable of customer retention. This is because customers expect food organisations to be ethical corporate citizens, resulting in more favourable perceptions of the organisation. When this is not fulfilled by the organisation, the consumer no longer feels that the exchange is mutually beneficial. Since this exchange is characterised by reciprocation, customers who feel that they are not receiving ethical commitment from their service and/or product provider, through its ECSR initiatives, believe that this reciprocation is violated, and therefore they will choose to end their relationship with the organisation (Adebiyi, Oyatoye & Amole 2016; Ho 2017).

Based on the parallel mediation model test using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5), the findings of this study indicate that ECSR enhances customer satisfaction, customer trust, and customer loyalty. However only customer trust and customer loyalty are significant mediators of the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. A summary table of confirmed and unconfirmed hypotheses is presented below:

Table 10: Confirmed and non-confirmed hypotheses for this study

Hypotheses	Confirmed or Not Confirmed
H1: *ECSR enhances customer satisfaction.*	**Confirmed**
H2: *ECSR enhances customer trust.*	**Confirmed**
H3: *ESCR enhances customer loyalty.*	**Confirmed**
H4: *Enhanced customer satisfaction positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*	**Not confirmed**
H5: *Enhanced customer trust positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*	**Confirmed**
H6: *Enhanced customer loyalty positively mediates the relationship between ECSR and customer retention.*	**Confirmed**

6.3. Research Implications

6.3.1. Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to consumer behaviour literature and the functional food industry. It provides a greater understanding of the role of ECSR on consumer behaviour, particularly with regards to customer satisfaction, customer trust, and customer loyalty, and the impact of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. Based on the findings of this study the researcher is able to answer the main research question which states: What is the impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on customer behaviour, and how does this affect customer retention?

The findings indicate that ECSR enhances customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty. However only customer trust and customer loyalty positively mediate the relationship between ECSR and customer retention. Therefore, the results from this study provide a theoretical framework for the impact of ECSR on customer behaviour, and how the impact of ECSR on customer behavior affects customer retention.

The results from this study state that consumers believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment and that it is important to the majority of consumers that the food products they purchase are environmentally friendly. It is also important to the majority of consumers that the food products which they purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain, use biodegradable materials for packaging, and adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices). The results of this study indicate that consumer believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more credible and trustworthy than a food organisation that is not, and that their products are safer, healthier and fresher. However, prior literature by Carrigan and Attalla (2001) implies that CSR campaigns influence consumer buying behavior in an ethical direction further only when there is no loss of convenience or quality. The findings from this study contradict these statements. The researcher uncovered that customers are more accepting of the time inconvenience, decreased

taste, and increased cost of food items purchased from organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR, if such purchases result in a benefit to their health and contribute towards environmental preservation.

6.3.2. Practical Implications

This outcome of this study supports integrating ECSR into an organisation's marketing strategy, and more specifically, organisations within the food industry, thus directing and supporting business leaders and marketing strategists to develop customer retention models with ECSR as a key component. A number of practical implications can be ascertained from the findings of this study.

The results from this study indicate that customers believe that they are doing the right thing when they buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation, and that this type of purchase gives them a sense of pride. The data from this study indicates that consumers believe that their purchase is their contribution towards the preservation of the planet, with some participants noting that it was simply the moral thing to do. Participants also believe that an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation has values are right and good, and that protecting the environment makes an organisation more credible. The reasons for these beliefs involved the idea that the organisation will be required to prove their environmental preservation initiatives, which shows a level of credibility. Furthermore, the organisation's values would evolve beyond profitability. In the minds of the consumers, this indicates a more credible organisation. There is therefore an opportunity for food organisations to enhance their company image and reputation by incorporating ECSR initiatives into their business activities.

A trend of consumer skepticism began to emerge from the start of the qualitative data collection process. Respondents expressed their distrust of the legitimacy of an organisation's environment sustainability claims. This supports and builds on existing literature on consumer skepticism associated with CSR initiatives, in that such skepticism may occur when consumers connect a self-seeking impetus to the company, and that the degree of consumer skepticism fluctuates between consumers, which impacts on the influence of the CSR initiative on consumer behaviour (Friestad

& Wright 1994). However, when probed further by the researcher of this study, the respondents identified that good company reputation, familiarity, quality processes, safety certificates, transparency, clear communication, honesty, correct product labelling, and local sourcing would decrease their levels of skepticism, and make them more trusting of the organisation's values and drivers. This indicates that organisations within the food industry are able to avoid high levels of consumer skepticism by incorporating and ensuring a good company reputation, familiarity, quality processes, safety certificates, transparency, clear communication, honesty, correct product labelling, and local sourcing within the business activities.

The participants all agreed that food safety is important to them, noting that they mostly avoid genetically modified foods, foods that have been in contact with pesticides and hormones, and foods that are not locally sourced, due to the safety levels of such food items. In particular, the participants were more concerned about the safety of fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, chicken and eggs. The participants agreed that buying and consuming food items from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is the safer and healthier option, especially when the products are locally sourced and sourced in a manner that ensures minimal negative impact on the environment. Participants also agreed that purchasing products from a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation to be the safer choice because they believed that if the food producer cared about the environment, then they automatically assumed that the food producer cared about the consumer. Findings from this study indicate that customers prefer products from an environmentally friendly food company as their first choice. This decision is based on their personal values pertaining to protecting the environment, and the belief that these organisations produce food items that are healthier, safer and fresher, thus actually saving the consumers money in the long term by avoiding illness and food wastage. However, while it may be the customer's first choice to always purchase food items from environmentally friendly organisation, such products are not always available or labelled clearly.

These findings indicate that organisations within the food industry should make every effort to ensure that their products are locally sourced and sourced in an environmentally friendly manner. Furthermore, ensuring that such products are made

readily available and clearly labelled as environmentally friendly is an important consideration for businesses. In the mind of the customer, this ensures easily available, easily recognisable, safer and healthier food of a higher quality, resulting in increased sales and retained customers for the business. In addition, such business considerations may result in customer referrals and positive word of mouth, further bolstering the company's reputation and sales. This is confirmed by the findings of this study, whereby the participants noted that they would encourage their friends and family to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment because they believe that it is the moral thing to do, that it is better for their friends' and families' health, and because they believe it is important to support companies that are socially aware so that those companies can continue to conduct business and contribute to society in general.

The availability and ease of purchase of products produced by organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR is an important consideration for business managers. While participants stated that they are loyal towards their favourite food brands, less than half of the participants said that they would postpone buying a product or go to another store, if their regular store was sold out of their preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation. However, a key finding from this research identified the type of food item to be a determining factor. It was observed that if the food item is an essential everyday product, the participants are more likely to purchase the alternative due to convenience, rather than delay their purchase or go to another store. Nevertheless, if the food product is not an everyday essential item, they would choose to delay their purchase. Furthermore, participants stated resistance to change and customer loyalty as deterrents to purchasing a different brand, and online shopping was noted as an alternative to buying their second-choice brand of product physically in a store. Organisations should therefore ensure that stock levels of both everyday essential items *and* indulgent items are managed successfully in order to prevent customer loss.

While the taste of food is very important to customers, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations, this study uncovered a key finding: the participants noted that their decision was determined by the extent to which they didn't like the taste of the item: the worse the taste, the less likely they would be

to purchase the product. If the taste of the product from the environmentally friendly organisation was not as good as that of the product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly, but not too bad either, they would still choose to purchase the product from the environmentally friendly organisation. Some participants even noted that food produced by organisations that are committed to environmental preservation actually tastes better than food from organisations that are not environmentally friendly due to the absence of unnatural additives and preservatives. This is an important implication for businesses within the food industry, who should focus on food taste, freshness and longevity as major contributors to customer preference when using ECSR as a possible customer retention strategy. While the factor of taste is imperative, this study finds that customers will choose to purchase food that is produced by organisations that participate in ECSR as their first choice, even if the taste of that food item is not as good as a food item from a provider that does not participate in ECSR, but still pleasurable to eat.

A similar key finding was uncovered regarding the price of food: while the price of food is very important to customers, regardless of their commitment to purchase from environmentally friendly organisations, this study uncovered that the customer's decision was determined by how much more expensive the food item from an environmentally friendly organisation was when compared to a similar product from an organisation that was not environmentally friendly. The greater the discrepancy, the less likely the customer is to purchase the more expensive item. The participants stated that the quality of their food is more important than price, and that food from an organisation that is environmentally friendly is of a higher quality, and sometimes actually more convenient, than food that is produced by an organisation that is not environmentally friendly. It was noted that although food products produced by an environmentally friendly organisation may be more expensive, the purchase will actually save the participants money on health issues in the future. This is another important implication for businesses within the food industry, who should focus on quality as major contributors to customer preference when using ECSR as a possible customer retention strategy. While the factor of price is imperative, this study finds that customers will choose to purchase food that is produced by organisations that participate in ECSR as their first choice, even if the price of that food item is reasonably

higher than that of a food item from a provider that does not participate in ECSR, but of a higher quality.

This study found that customers are more accepting of the time inconvenience, decreased taste, and increased cost of food items purchased from organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR, if such purchases result in a benefit to their health and to the health of the planet. Customers prefer food items from organisations that practice ECSR because they believe such organisations hold values that are right and good therefore in the customers' minds, such organisations are more credible, trustworthy and honest. In addition, customers believe that food items from such organisations to be healthier for both their families and for the environment, fresher and safer.

As an important implication for business, this research indicates that ECSR can be used as a successful strategy for customer retention within the food industry, thus organisations within the food industry should adapt ECSR as a key strategy for the retention of their current customers.

6.4. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis examined ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. As an anticipated outcome of the study, the researcher aims to encourage organisations to make a significant investment towards the sustainability of the planet by appealing to their need for business profit.

The first limitation of this study is that only three dimensions of customer behaviour were investigated as mediating variables – customer satisfaction, customer trust, and customer loyalty. The second limitation of this study is that the research was conducted within the food industry in Australia exclusively. The researcher narrowed the study to a particular industry within a certain geographical area, to present a

sizeable yet manageable data set to answer the study's research question and confirm the hypotheses. A third limitation is that the researcher did not specify a particular food category for the study. The reason for this was to ascertain across which food categories customer behaviour may be affected by ECSR. However, the findings from this study do indicate that fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as meat, chicken, fish, and eggs are of most concern to consumers with regards to ECSR.

Despite these limitations, the study maintained rigorous research methods that ensured that it developed an in-depth understanding of the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. This study provides a foundation for future researchers to build upon the findings of this research. Future studies may include other dimensions of customer behaviour, as well as research participants from other nations and other industries to allow a thorough understanding of the research problem. In addition, another suggestion for future research would be the evaluation of food categories, and across which food categories customer behaviour may be affected by ECSR.

It must be noted, that while this study was conducted within Australia, consumer perceptions towards ECSR are not considered equal on a global level, and this may influence the practicality of using ECSR as a retention strategy internationally, especially in emerging markets. Currently, Australia is a prosperous country with an advanced economy, and its citizens are less likely to be affected by food shortages due to natural disaster, disease, and war. Therefore, it is assumed that Australian consumers are in more of a position of choice when it comes to the products and services they purchase, and the food that they consume. In contrary, citizens of developing nations equate to approximately four billion people (77% of the world's population). Such individuals usually suffer from high rates of illiteracy, disease, political instability, and population growth, limiting their choice with regards to food consumption. The notion of environmental responsibility is therefore mostly a concern for developed nations, in that such countries are in a preferable position, and have the resources to positively impact on environmental sustainability and contribute towards providing a solution to food shortages on a global level. There is therefore the call for future studies to explore the role of global environmental sustainability by

organisations from developed nations. This includes organisations from developed nations that have a presence within developing countries in terms of production, as well as waste disposal.

6.5. Chapter Summary

Customer retention results in greater market share, improved profits, and decreased acquisition expenditure for organisations. As a major sector for the Australian economy with regards to monetary impact and employment, the food industry is extremely active and motivated by demanding customers wanting variety, excellence, and value. Globally, the manner in which consumers buy their food, from whom they buy their food, and how their food is packaged, is rapidly becoming a conscious issue and the food industry is under pressure to increase production to meet heightened demand in an eco-friendly manner.

The food industry's environmental impact includes water and soil pollution, food wastage, the destruction of forests, and the ineffective discarding of waste such as plastic packaging. It is due to these issues that consumers, government, corporate leaders, and activists have placed pressure on the industry to tackle the environmental matters concerned with its activities. However, despite stakeholder belief that ECSR is the most critical facet of an organisation's CSR endeavours, such initiatives are lacking within the food industry, negatively affecting corporate image and profitability.

This thesis examined ECSR as a viable customer retention strategy, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer behaviour, specifically customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, customer trust and customer loyalty on customer retention. As an anticipated outcome of the study, the researcher aims to encourage organisations to make a significant investment towards the sustainability of the planet by appealing to their need for business profit.

Based on the parallel mediation model test using the Hayes PROCESS Model (v 3.5), the findings of this study indicate that ECSR enhances customer satisfaction, customer trust, and customer loyalty. However only customer trust and customer loyalty are significant mediators of the relationship between ECSR and customer

retention. This study also found that customers are more accepting of the time inconvenience, decreased taste, and increased cost of food items purchased from organisations within the food industry that practice ECSR, if such purchases result in a benefit to their health and to the health of the planet. Customers prefer food items from organisations that practice ECSR because they believe such organisations hold values that are right and good therefore in the customers' minds, such organisations are more credible, trustworthy and honest. In addition, customers believe that food items from such organisations to be healthier for both their families and for the environment, fresher and safer. As an important implication for business, this research proves that ECSR can be used as a successful strategy for customer retention within the food industry, thus organisations within the food industry should adapt ECSR as a key strategy for the retention of their current customers.

This chapter presented a summary of the key findings in relation to the research objective, stated research questions, and hypotheses of the study. The theoretical and practical implications of the study were detailed, and the study's limitations and suggestions for future research were presented.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet – Online Questionnaire-Based Survey

Survey - Customer Perceptions Regarding Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) within the Food Industry in Australia

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H20REA213

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Research Project.

The purpose of this project is to address the effectiveness of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibly (ECSR) as a customer retention strategy within the food industry in Australia. A two-phase research process shall be followed whereby quantitative results shall be explained with qualitative data for a more in-depth understanding of the quantitative results and a complete understanding of the research problem.

The study aims to explore ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry in Australia, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty levels, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty levels on customer retention. As an anticipated outcome of the study, the researcher intends to encourage organisations within the food industry to make a significant investment towards the sustainability of the planet by appealing to their need for business profit.

The research team requests your assistance because a clear answer as to when, how and why consumers respond to corporate social responsibility is still under review. Your opinions will contribute to this body of knowledge and therefore this study anticipates making a practical contribution to business practice by exploring the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty, and identifying ECSR as an effective customer retention strategy for organisations within the food industry in Australia.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Questions will include themes such as Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility, customer loyalty, customer trust, customer satisfaction, and customer retention.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be withdrawn and confidentially destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Principal Investigator (contact details at the bottom of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project may be of indirect benefit to you. Your feedback will be analysed and recommendations pertaining to the use of ECSR within the food industry shall be designed and shared with the relevant communities, academic institutions, and organisations within the food industry. The endorsement and implementation of these recommendations shall play a part in the preservation of the planet in which you live.

RISKS

In participating in the questionnaire, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living. Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised in the questionnaire can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately, please contact Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. A participant's data may be made available for future research purposes for the second data collection process of this project. The identifiable data will be stored and shared amongst the investigators of this research project only.

Participants may request access to the project summary of results by making contact with the Principal Investigator on the contact details noted below. Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's [Research Data Management policy](#).

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

By taking part in this survey, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Are over 18 years of age.
- Understand that any data collected may be used in future research related to this field.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Clicking on the 'Submit' button at the conclusion of the questionnaire is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project.

QUESTIONS OR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the bottom of this form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Principal Investigator Details	Supervisor Details	Associate Supervisor Details
Ms. Samantha Worthington	Doctor Ranga Chimhundu	Doctor Enamul Kabir

Appendix B: Online Questionnaire-Based Survey

Survey - Customer Perceptions Regarding Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) within the Food Industry in Australia

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H20REA213

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Research Project.

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PARTICIPATION

Your participation will involve completion of an online questionnaire that will take approximately 15 minutes of your time. Questions will include themes such as Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility, customer loyalty, customer trust, customer satisfaction, and customer retention.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be withdrawn and confidentially destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Principal Investigator (contact details at the bottom of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project may be of indirect benefit to you. Your feedback will be analysed and recommendations pertaining to the use of ECSR within the food industry shall be designed and shared with the relevant communities, academic institutions, and organisations within the food industry. The endorsement and implementation of these recommendations shall play a part in the preservation of the planet in which you live.

RISKS

In participating in the questionnaire, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living. Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised in the questionnaire can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately, please contact Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

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- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
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RESEARCH TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Principal Investigator Details	**Supervisor Details**	**Associate Supervisor Details**
Ms. Samantha Worthington	Doctor Ranga Chimhundu	Doctor Enamul Kabir

There are 35 questions in this survey.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Please select your age group.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 and above
- Prefer not to answer

2. Please select your gender.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

3. Please select your marital status.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Single
- In a relationship
- Married
- Separated or divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to answer

4. Please select your family size.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- No children
- 1 child
- 2 - 4 children
- More than 4 children
- Prefer not to answer

5. Please select your highest education level.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Some high school
- High school year 12
- Trade school
- Bachelor's Degree
- Honours Degree
- Master's Degree
- PhD or Higher
- Prefer not to answer

6. Please select your current employment status.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Seeking opportunities
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Prefer not to answer

7. Please select your household annual income.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Less than $35 000
- $35 000 - $70 000
- $70 001 - $140 000
- $140 001 - $280 000
- More than $280 000
- Prefer not to answer

8. Please select your state.

Choose one of the following answers

Please choose only one of the following:

- Queensland
- New South Wales
- Victoria
- Western Australia
- Tasmania
- South Australia
- Australian Capital Territory
- Northern Territory
- Prefer not to answer

ENVIRONMENTAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

9. I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

10. It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

11. It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

12. It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

13. It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices).

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree

- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

14. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

15. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

16. My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

17. I believe that my purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

18. I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

19. I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

20. I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

CUSTOMER TRUST

21. I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

22. I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

23. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

24. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

25. I believe an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

26. I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

27. I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

28. I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

29. If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

30. I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree

- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

CUSTOMER RETENTION

31. If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

32. I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

33. I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

34. Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

35. I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.

Please choose only one of the following:

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neutral
- Somewhat agree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with this statement and how much it reflects how you feel or think personally.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project.
13.12.2022 – 17:36

Submit your survey.
Thank you for completing this survey.

Appendix C: Pilot Study Results: Demographics

Table 11: Pilot study question 1 results

Please Select Your Age Group		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
18 – 24	2	4.88%
25 – 34	5	12.20%
35 – 44	15	36.59%
45 – 54	13	31.71%
55 – 64	5	12.20%
65 and above	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 11: Pilot study question 2 results

Please Select Your Gender		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Female	31	75.61%
Male	9	21.95%
Other	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 12: Pilot study question 3 results

Please Select Your Marital Status		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Single	3	7.32%
In a relationship	7	17.07%
Married	28	68.29%
Separated or divorced	2	4.88%
Widowed	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 13: Pilot study question 4 results

Please Select Your Family Size		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
No children	5	12.20%
One child	6	14.63%
2 – 4 chidren	24	58.54%
More than 4 children	5	12.20%
Prefer not to answer	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 14: Pilot study question 5 results

Please Select Your Highest Education Level		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Some high school	4	9.76%
High school year 12	8	19.51%
Trade school	6	14.63%
Bachelor's Degree	15	36.59%
Honours Degree	2	4.88%
Master's Degree	4	9.76%
PhD or Higher	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	2	4.88%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 15: Pilot study question 6 results

Please Select Your Current Employment Status		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Employed full time	27	65.85%
Employed part time	9	21.95%
Seeking opportunities	0	0%
Unemployed	2	4.88%
Retired	2	4.88%

| Prefer not to answer | 1 | 2.44% |
| **TOTAL** | **41** | **100%** |

Table 16: Pilot study question 7 results

Please Select Your Household Annual Income		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Less than $35 000	1	2.44%
$35 000 - $70 000	3	7.32%
$70 001 - $140 000	9	21.95%
$140 001 - $280 000	17	41.46%
More than $280 000	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	11	26.83%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 17: Pilot study question 8 results

Please Select Your State		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Queensland	39	95.12%
New South Wales	0	0%
Victoria	2	4.88%
Western Australia	0	0%
Tasmania	0	0%
South Australia	0	0%
Australian Capital Territory	0	0%
Northern Territory	0	0%
Prefer not to answer	0	0%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix D: Pilot Study Results: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility

Table 18: Pilot study question 9 results

Question 9: Issues relating to the environment are very important to me (ECSR1)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	5	12.20%
Agree	23	56.10%
Strongly agree	8	19.51%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 19: Pilot study question 10 results

Question 10: I believe that an organisation within the food industry has a responsibility to protect the environment (ECSR2)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	2	4.88%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	22	53.66%
Strongly agree	9	21.95%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 20: Pilot study question 11 results

Question 11: I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment (ECSR3)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	0	0%
Somewhat agree	4	9.76%
Agree	23	56.10%
Strongly agree	13	31.71%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 21: Pilot study question 12 results

Question 12: I believe that organisations within the food industry that spend their resources on environmentally friendly initiatives are wasting their money and time, and should rather focus on maximising their profits (ECSR4)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	14	34.15%
Disagree	22	53.66%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	1	2.44%%
Somewhat agree	0	0%
Agree	2	4.88%
Strongly agree	0	0%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 22: Pilot study question 13 results

Question 13: I am indifferent to environmentally friendly initiatives by organisations within the food industry (ECSR5)		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly disagree	6	14.63%
Disagree	25	60.98%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	6	14.63%
Somewhat agree	1	2.44%
Agree	1	2.44%
Strongly agree	0	0%
TOTAL	41	100%

Table 23: Pilot study question 14 results

Question 14: I am indifferent as to the type of social responsibility an organisation within the food industry chooses. As long as the organisation is giving back to society in some way, I will support them (ECSR6)		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly disagree	2	4.88%
Disagree	10	24.39%
Somewhat disagree	7	17.07%
Neutral	9	21.95%
Somewhat agree	7	17.07%
Agree	5	12.20%
Strongly agree	1	2.44%
TOTAL	41	100%

Table 24: Pilot study question 15 results

Question 15: It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly (ECSR7)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	16	39.02%
Agree	16	39.02%
Strongly agree	4	9.76%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 25: Pilot study question 16 results

Question 16. It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain (ECSR8)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	5	12.20%
Somewhat agree	11	26.83%
Agree	21	51.22%
Strongly agree	3	7.32%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 26: Pilot study question 17 results

Question 17. It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging (ECSR9)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	1	2.44%
Somewhat agree	12	29.27%
Agree	15	36.59%
Strongly agree	12	29.27%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 27: Pilot study question 18 results

Question 18. It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices) (ECSR10)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%
Somewhat agree	11	26.83%
Agree	18	43.90%
Strongly agree	12	29.27%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 28: Pilot study question 19 results

Question 19. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits (ECSR11)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	8	19.51%
Somewhat agree	6	14.63%
Agree	20	48.78%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 29: Pilot study question 20 results

Question 20. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products partakes in food donation programs (ECSR12)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	6	14.63%
Somewhat agree	15	36.59%
Agree	11	26.83%
Strongly agree	8	19.51%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 30: Pilot study question 21 results

Question 21. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products adheres to energy and water conservation strategies (ECSR13)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	10	24.39%
Agree	22	53.66%
Strongly agree	5	12.20%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 31: Pilot study question 22 results

Question 22. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling (ECSR14)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	6	14.63%
Agree	21	51.22%
Strongly agree	10	24.39%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix E: Pilot Study Results: Customer Satisfaction

Table 32: Pilot study question 23 results

Question 23. My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision (CS1)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	3	7.32%
Somewhat agree	7	17.07%
Agree	24	58.54%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 33: Pilot study question 24 results

Question 24. I believe that the purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation (CS2)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	3	7.32%
Somewhat agree	15	36.59%
Agree	14	34.15%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 34: Pilot study question 25 results

Question 25. I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation (CS3)		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	6	14.63%
Somewhat agree	12	29.27%
Agree	14	34.15%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	41	100%

Table 35: Pilot study question 26 results

Question 26. I respect organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment (CS4)		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	1	2.44%
Somewhat agree	3	7.32%
Agree	20	48.78%
Strongly agree	17	41.46%
TOTAL	41	100%

Table 36: Pilot study question 27 results

Question 27. I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment (CS5)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	0	0%
Neutral	0	0%
Somewhat agree	5	12.20%
Agree	22	53.66%
Strongly agree	14	34.15%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 37: Pilot study question 28 results

Question 28. I believe that food products from an organisation that protects the environment have a higher quality level (CS6)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	10	24.39%
Somewhat agree	14	34.15%
Agree	7	17.07%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 38: Pilot study question 29 results

Question 29. I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment (CS7)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	3	7.32%
Somewhat agree	11	26.83%
Agree	18	43.90%
Strongly agree	8	19.51%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix F: Pilot Study Results: Customer Trust

Table 39: Pilot study question 30 results

Question 30. I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not (CT1)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	2	4.88%
Somewhat disagree	4	9.76%
Neutral	7	17.07%
Somewhat agree	10	24.39%
Agree	9	21.95%
Strongly agree	8	19.51%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 40: Pilot study question 31 results

Question 31: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not (CT2)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	2	4.88%
Disagree	2	4.88%
Somewhat disagree	4	9.76%
Neutral	7	17.07%
Somewhat agree	9	21.95%
Agree	9	21.95%
Strongly agree	8	19.51%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 41: Pilot study question 32 results

Question 32. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety (CT3)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	4	9.76%
Somewhat disagree	3	7.32%
Neutral	8	19.51%
Somewhat agree	14	34.15%
Agree	10	24.39%
Strongly agree	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 42: Pilot study question 33 results

Question 33. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option (CT4)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	9	21.95%
Somewhat agree	10	24.39%
Agree	12	29.27%
Strongly agree	6	14.63%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 43: Pilot study question 34 results

Question 34. I believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company (CT5)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	7.32%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	12	29.27%
Agree	17	41.46%
Strongly agree	4	9.76%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix G: Pilot Study Results: Customer Loyalty

Table 44: Pilot study question 35 results

Question 35. I am indifferent to whether an organisation within the food industry is environmentally friendly or not. My purchasing decisions are not influenced by a company's environmental efforts (CL1)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	3	7.32%
Disagree	8	19.51%
Somewhat disagree	14	34.15%
Neutral	3	7.32%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	5	12.20%
Strongly agree	0	0%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 45: Pilot study question 36 results

Question 36. I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products (CL2)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	3	7.32%
Somewhat disagree	5	12.20%
Neutral	5	12.20%
Somewhat agree	12	29.27%
Agree	12	29.27%
Strongly agree	3	7.32%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 46: Pilot study question 37 results

Question 37. I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment (CL3)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	2	4.88%
Disagree	7	17.07%
Somewhat disagree	6	14.63%
Neutral	8	19.51%
Somewhat agree	5	12.20%
Agree	10	24.39%
Strongly agree	3	7.32%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 47: Pilot study question 38 results

Question 38. I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future (CL4)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	5	12.20%
Somewhat agree	15	36.59%
Agree	12	29.27%
Strongly agree	7	17.07%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 48: Pilot study question 39 results

Question 39. If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store (CL5)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	8	19.51%
Somewhat disagree	8	19.51%
Neutral	8	19.51%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	5	12.20%
Strongly agree	3	7.32%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 49: Pilot study question 40 results

Question 40. I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment (CL6)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	4	9.76%
Somewhat agree	4	9.76%
Agree	15	36.59%
Strongly agree	15	36.59%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 50: Pilot study question 41 results

Question 41. I always say positive things about organisations within the food industry that protect the environment (CL7)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	1	2.44%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	10	24.39%
Somewhat agree	12	29.27%
Agree	13	31.71%
Strongly agree	4	9.76%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix H: Pilot Study Results: Customer Retention

Table 51: Pilot study question 42 results

Question 42. If an organisation within the food industry does something wrong, I would be more likely to remain their customer if they were environmentally friendly (CR1)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	3	7.32%
Disagree	10	24.39%
Somewhat disagree	7	17.07%
Neutral	12	29.27%
Somewhat agree	7	17.07%
Agree	2	4.88%
Strongly agree	0	0%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 52: Pilot study question 43 results

Question 43. If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation (CR2)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	4	9.76%
Somewhat disagree	10	24.39%
Neutral	9	21.95%
Somewhat agree	7	17.07%
Agree	9	21.95%
Strongly agree	2	4.88%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 53: Pilot study question 44 results

Question 44. If the taste of the food product from an environmentally friendly organisation is not as appealing as that of a food product from an organisation that is not environmentally conscious, I will not switch brands based on taste alone (CR3)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	8	19.51%
Somewhat disagree	10	24.39%
Neutral	9	21.95%
Somewhat agree	9	21.95%
Agree	5	12.20%
Strongly agree	0	0%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 54: Pilot study question 45 results

Question 45. I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment (CR4)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	2	4.88%
Somewhat disagree	1	2.44%
Neutral	7	17.07%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	13	31.71%
Strongly agree	10	24.39%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 55: Pilot study question 46 results

Question 46. I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment (CR5)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	7.32%
Somewhat disagree	2	4.88%
Neutral	8	19.51%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	14	34.15%
Strongly agree	6	14.63%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 56: Pilot study question 47 results

Question 47. It makes no difference to me whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly. I will remain a customer of a certain food product for as long as I like it based on taste (CR6)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	4	9.76%
Disagree	4	9.76%
Somewhat disagree	7	17.07%
Neutral	6	14.63%
Somewhat agree	11	26.83%
Agree	8	19.51%
Strongly agree	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 57: Pilot study question 48 results

Question 48. It makes no difference to me whether or not a food organisation is environmentally friendly. I will remain a customer of certain food product for as long as it is within my budget (CR7)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	3	7.32%
Disagree	5	12.20%
Somewhat disagree	13	31.71%
Neutral	3	7.32%
Somewhat agree	9	21.95%
Agree	7	17.07%
Strongly agree	1	2.44%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 58: Pilot study question 49 results

Question 49. Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price (CR8)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	8	19.51%
Somewhat disagree	7	17.07%
Neutral	10	24.39%
Somewhat agree	8	19.51%
Agree	5	12.20%
Strongly agree	2	4.88%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Table 59: Pilot study question 50 results

Question 50. I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price (CR9)		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Strongly disagree	1	2.44%
Disagree	11	26.83%
Somewhat disagree	9	21.95%
Neutral	7	17.07%
Somewhat agree	9	21.95%
Agree	2	4.88%
Strongly agree	2	4.88%
TOTAL	**41**	**100%**

Appendix I: Interview Consent to Participate

UNIVERSITY
OF SOUTHERN
QUEENSLAND

Consent to Participate in USQ Research Project Interview - Customer Perceptions Regarding Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) within the Food Industry in Australia

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H20REA213

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is being undertaken as part of a Doctor of Philosophy Research Project.

The purpose of this project is to address the effectiveness of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibly (ECSR) as a customer retention strategy within the food industry in Australia.

The study aims to explore ECSR as a customer retention strategy within the food industry in Australia, by investigating the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty levels, and the effect of enhanced customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty levels on customer retention. As an anticipated outcome of the study, the researcher intends to encourage organisations within the food industry to make a significant investment towards the sustainability of the planet by appealing to their need for business profit.

The research team requests your assistance because a clear answer as to when, how and why consumers respond to environmental corporate social responsibility is still under review. Your opinions will contribute to this body of knowledge and therefore this study anticipates making a practical contribution to business practice by exploring the effect of ECSR on customer satisfaction, trust and loyalty, and identifying ECSR as an effective customer retention strategy for organisations within the food industry.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation will involve completion of a Zoom and/or telephonic interview that will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. Questions will include themes such as Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility, customer loyalty, customer trust, customer satisfaction, and customer retention.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You may also request that any data collected about you be withdrawn and confidentially destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact the Principal Investigator (contact details at the bottom of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

It is expected that this project may be of indirect benefit to you. Your feedback will be analysed and recommendations pertaining to the use of ECSR within the food industry shall be designed and shared with the relevant communities, academic institutions, and organisations within the food industry. The endorsement and implementation of these recommendations shall play a part in the preservation of the planet in which you live.

RISKS

In participating in the questionnaire, there are no anticipated risks beyond normal day-to-day living. Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised during the interview can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately, please contact Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. Any identifiable data will be stored and shared amongst the investigators of this research project only.

Participants may request access to the project summary of results by making contact with the Principal Investigator on the contact details noted below. Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

By taking part in this interview, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you have any additional questions you can contact the research team.
- Are over 18 years of age.
- Understand that any data collected may be used in future research related to this field.
- Agree to participate in the project.

By taking part in this interview, it is accepted as an indication of your consent to participate in this project.

QUESTIONS OR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the bottom of this form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS REGARDING THE CONDUCT OF THE PROJECT

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics on +61 7 4631 1839 or email researchintegrity@usq.edu.au. The Manager of Research Integrity and Ethics is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

RESEARCH TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Principal Investigator Details	**Supervisor Details**	**Associate Supervisor Details**
Ms. Samantha Worthington	Doctor Ranga Chimhundu	Doctor Enamul Kabir

Appendix J: Final Quantitative Study Results: Demographics

Table 60: Survey question 1 results

Survey Question 1: Please Select Your Age Group		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
18 – 24	8	1.8%
25 – 34	44	9.7%
35 – 44	72	15.9%
45 – 54	69	15.2%
55 – 64	89	19.6%
65 and above	171	37.7%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 9: Pie chart illustrating survey question 1 results
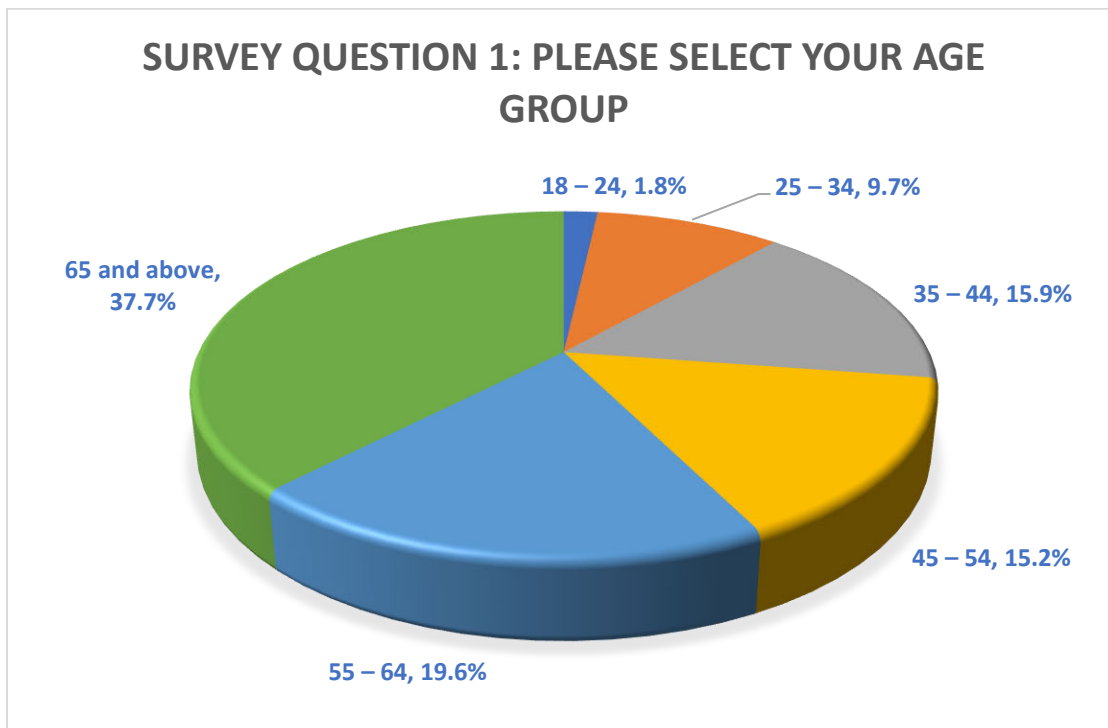
Table 61: Survey question 2 results

Survey Question 2: Please Select Your Gender		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Female	205	45.3%
Male	246	54.3%
Other	2	0.4%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 10: Pie chart illustrating survey question 2 results

Table 62: Survey question 3 results

Survey Question 3: Please Select Your Marital Status		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Single	63	13.9%
In a relationship	48	10.6%
Married	256	56.5%
Separated or divorced	64	14.1%
Widowed	22	4.9%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 11: Pie chart illustrating survey question 3 results

SURVEY QUESTION 3: PLEASE SELECT YOUR MARITAL STATUS

Widowed 5%
Single 14%
Separated or divorced 14%
In a relationship 11%
Married 56%
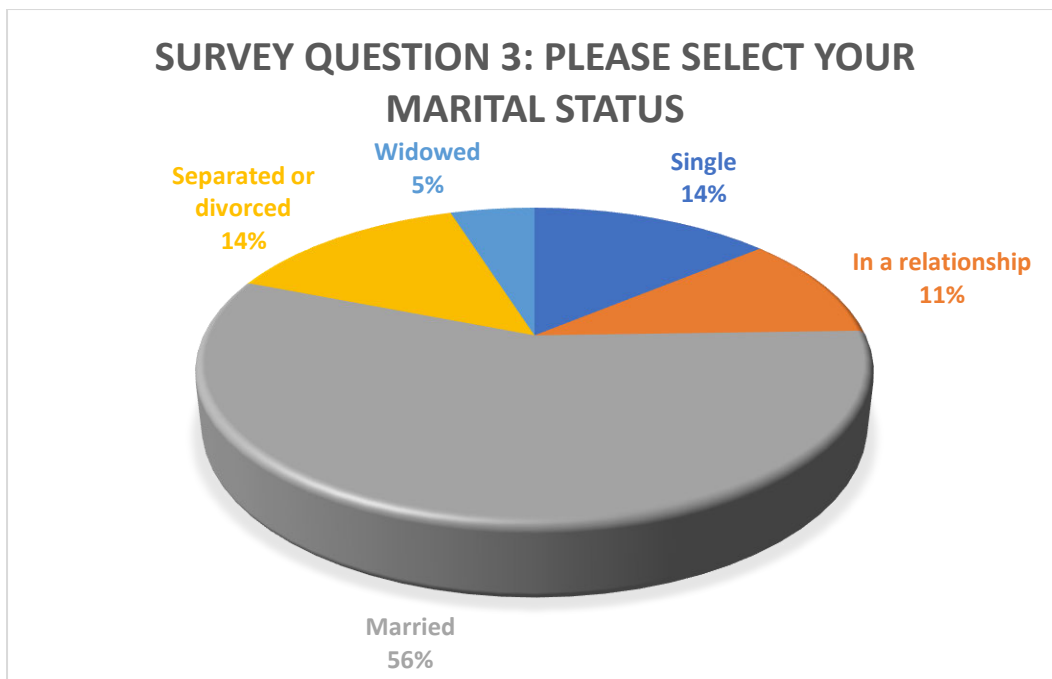
Table 63: Survey question 4 results

Survey Question 4: Please Select Your Family Size		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
No children	157	34.7%
One child	77	17%
2 – 4 chidren	206	45.5%
More than 4 children	12	2.6%
Prefer not to answer	1	0.2%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 12: Pie chart illustrating survey question 4 results

SURVEY QUESTION 4: PLEASE SELECT YOUR FAMILY SIZE

More than 4 children 3%
Prefer not to answer 0%
No children 35%
2 – 4 chidren 45%
One child 17%
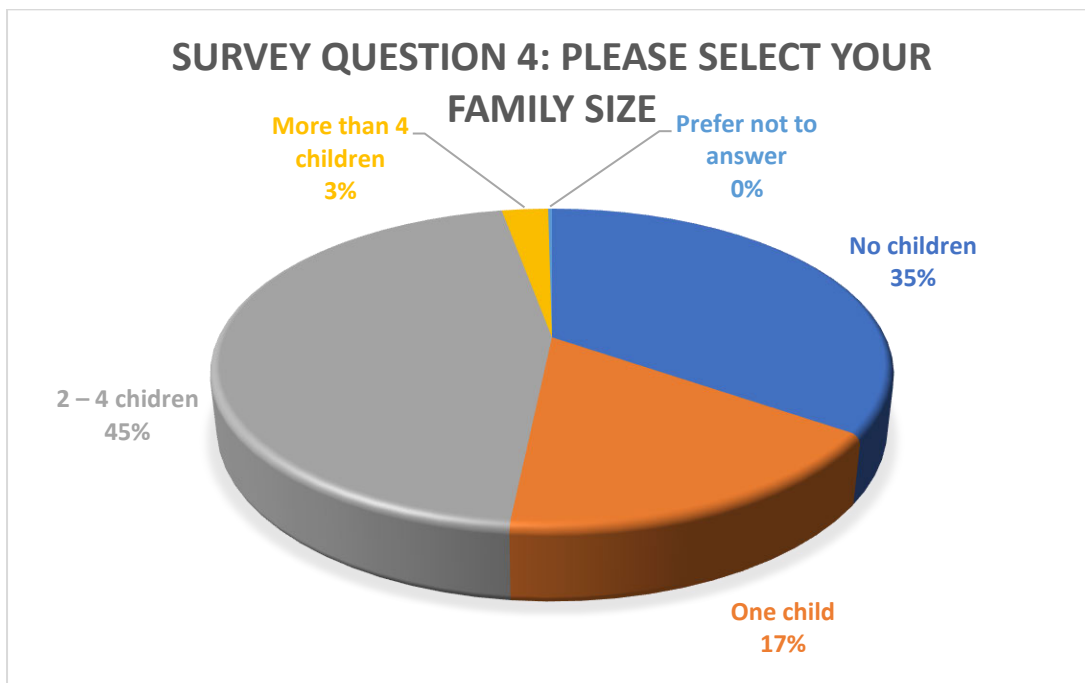
Table 64: Survey question 5 results

Survey Question 5: Please Select Your Highest Education Level		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Some high school	56	12.4%
High school year 12	101	22.3%
Trade school	99	21.9%
Bachelor's Degree	116	25.6%
Honours Degree	27	6%
Master's Degree	43	9.5%
PhD or Higher	8	1.8%
Prefer not to answer	3	0.7%
TOTAL	453	100%

Figure 13: Pie chart illustrating survey question 5 results
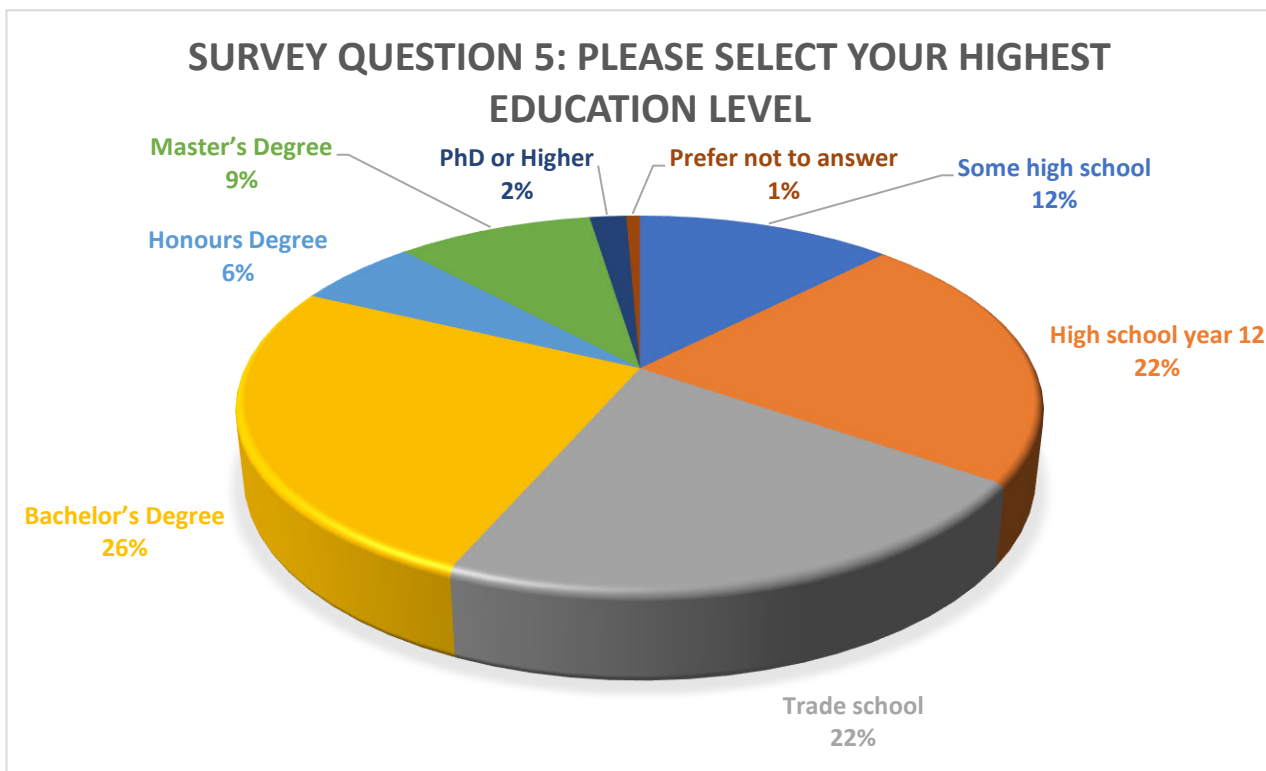
Table 65: Survey question 6 results

Survey Question 6: Please Select Your Current Employment Status		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Employed full time	154	34%
Employed part time	77	17%
Seeking opportunities	8	1.8%
Unemployed	32	7.1%
Retired	178	39.3%
Prefer not to answer	4	0.9%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 14: Pie chart illustrating survey question 6 results
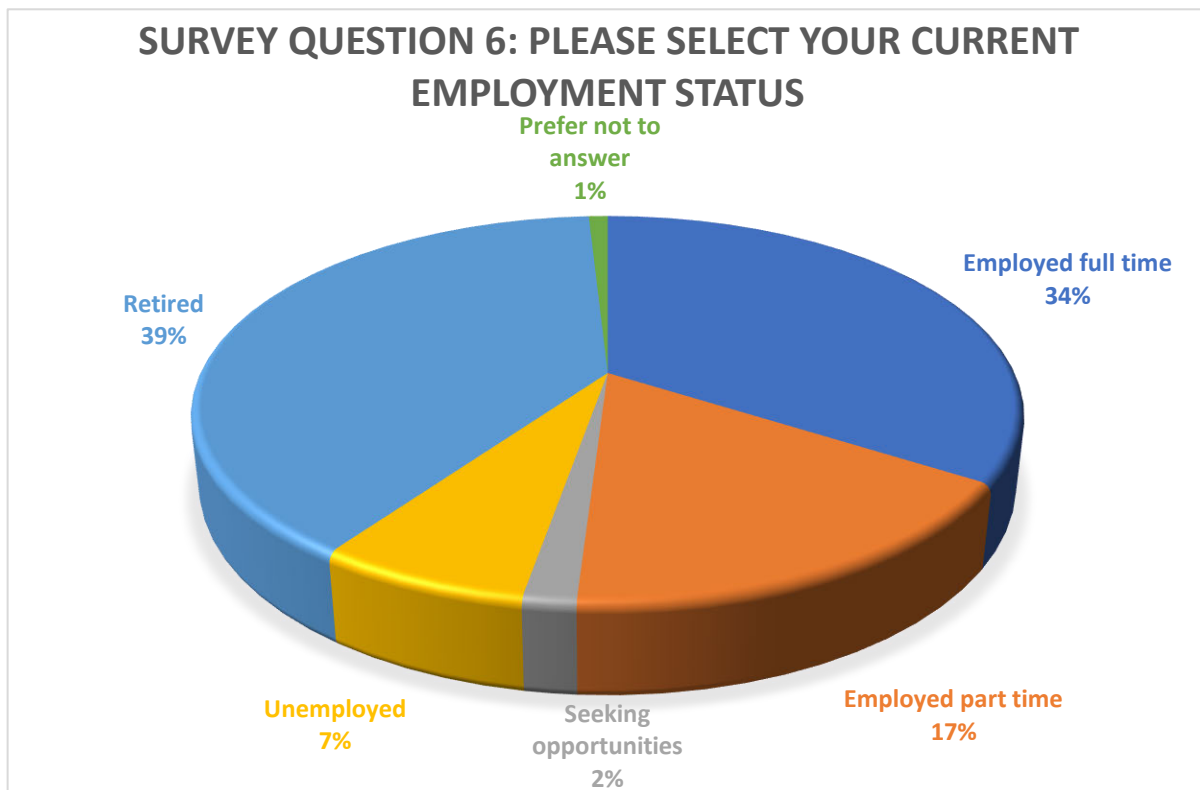
Table 66: Survey question 7 results

Survey Question 7: Please Select Your Household Annual Income		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Less than $35 000	90	19.9%
$35 000 - $70 000	124	27.4%
$70 001 - $140 000	128	28.3%
$140 001 - $280 000	56	12.4%
More than $280 000	11	2.4%
Prefer not to answer	44	9.7%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 15: Pie chart illustrating survey question 7 results

SURVEY QUESTION 7: PLEASE SELECT YOUR HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL INCOME

More than $280 000 3%
Prefer not to answer 10%
Less than $35 000 20%
$140 001 - $280 000 12%
$35 000 - $70 000 27%
$70 001 - $140 000 28%
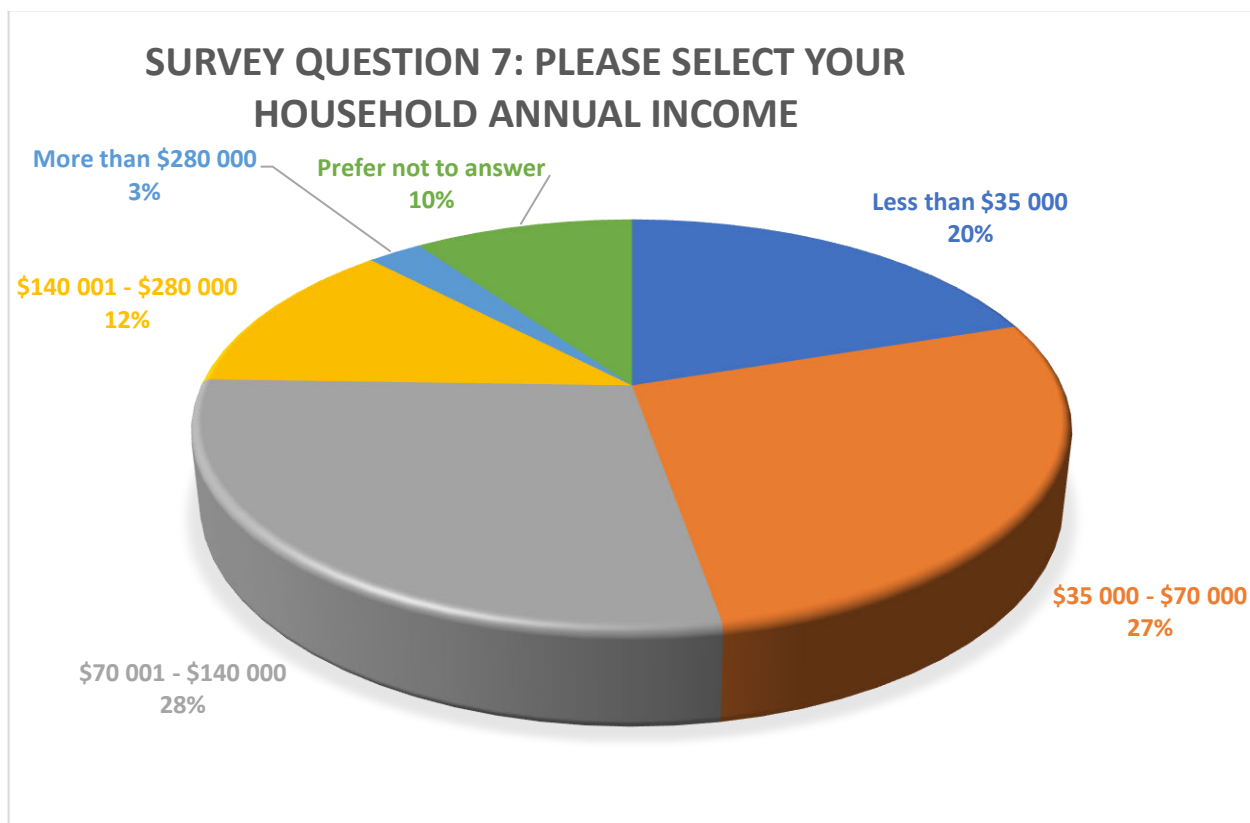
Table 67: Survey question 8 results

Survey Question 8. Please Select Your State		
Answer	**Count**	**Percentage**
Queensland	56	12.4%
New South Wales	59	13%
Victoria	55	12.1%
Western Australia	57	12.6%
Tasmania	59	13%
South Australia	54	11.9%
Australian Capital Territory	59	13%
Northern Territory	54	11.9%
TOTAL	**453**	**100%**

Figure 16: Pie chart illustrating survey question 8 results
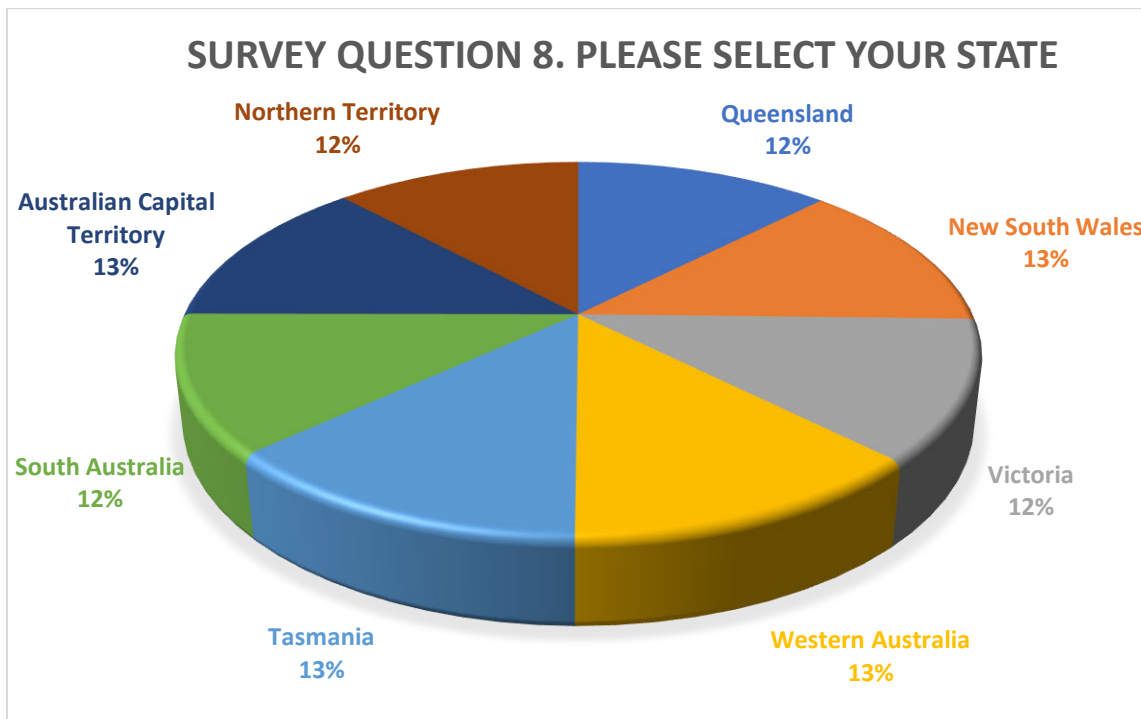
Appendix K: Final Quantitative Study Results: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility

Figure 17: Histogram illustrating survey question 9 results

Survey Question 9: I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment (ECSR1)
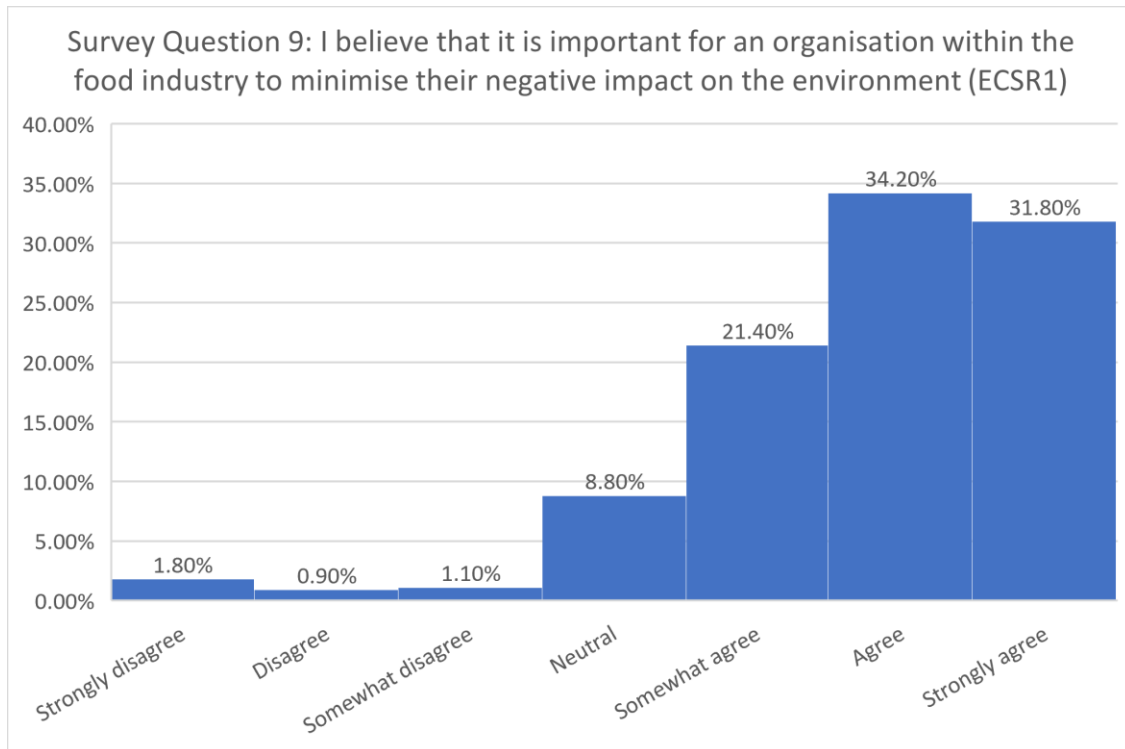
Figure 18: Histogram illustrating survey question 10 results

Survey Question 10: It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly (ECSR2)
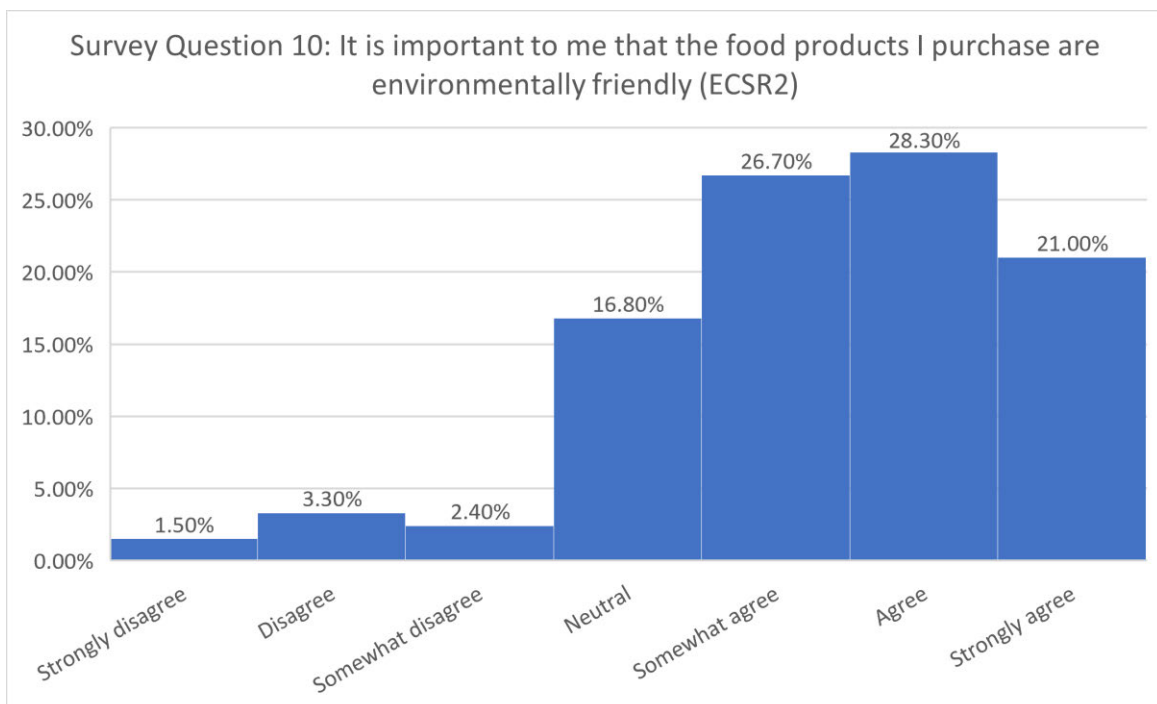
Figure 19: Histogram illustrating survey question 11 results

Survey Question 11. It is important to me that the food products I purchase
include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain
(ECSR3)
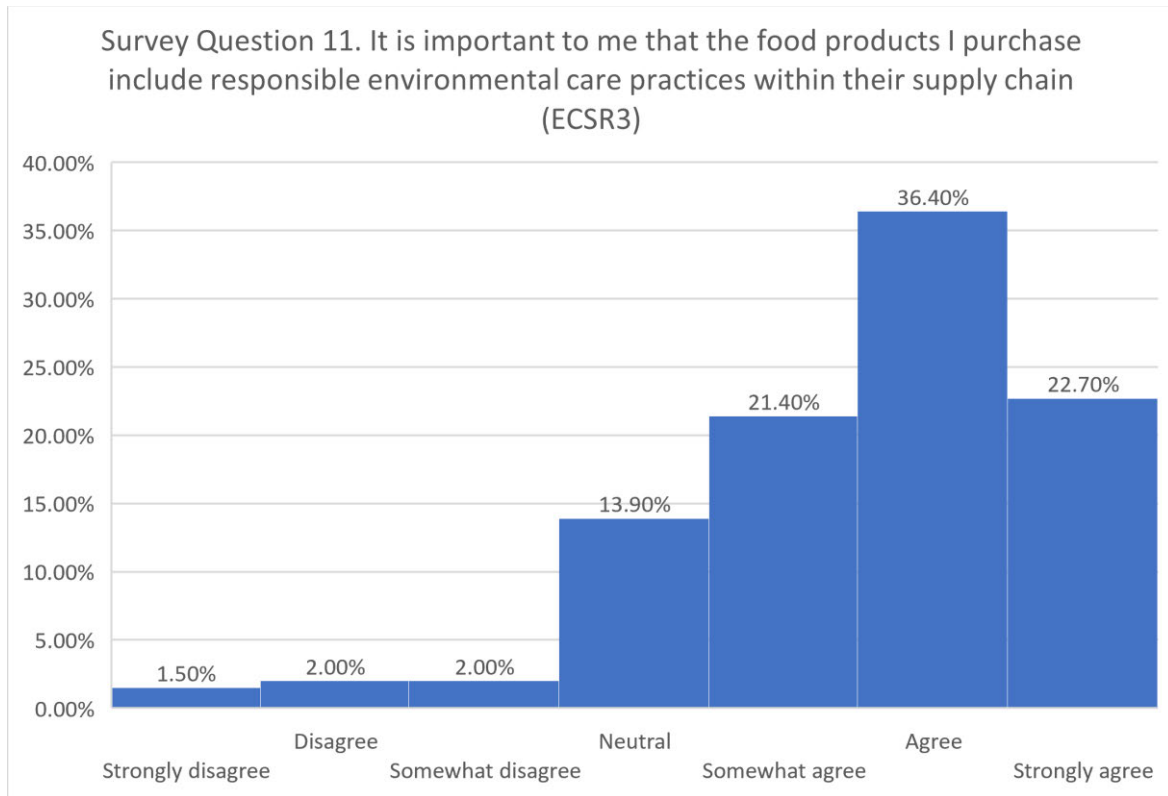
Figure 20: Histogram illustrating survey question 12 results

Survey Question 12. It is important to me that the food products I purchase
use biodegradable materials for packaging (ECSR4)
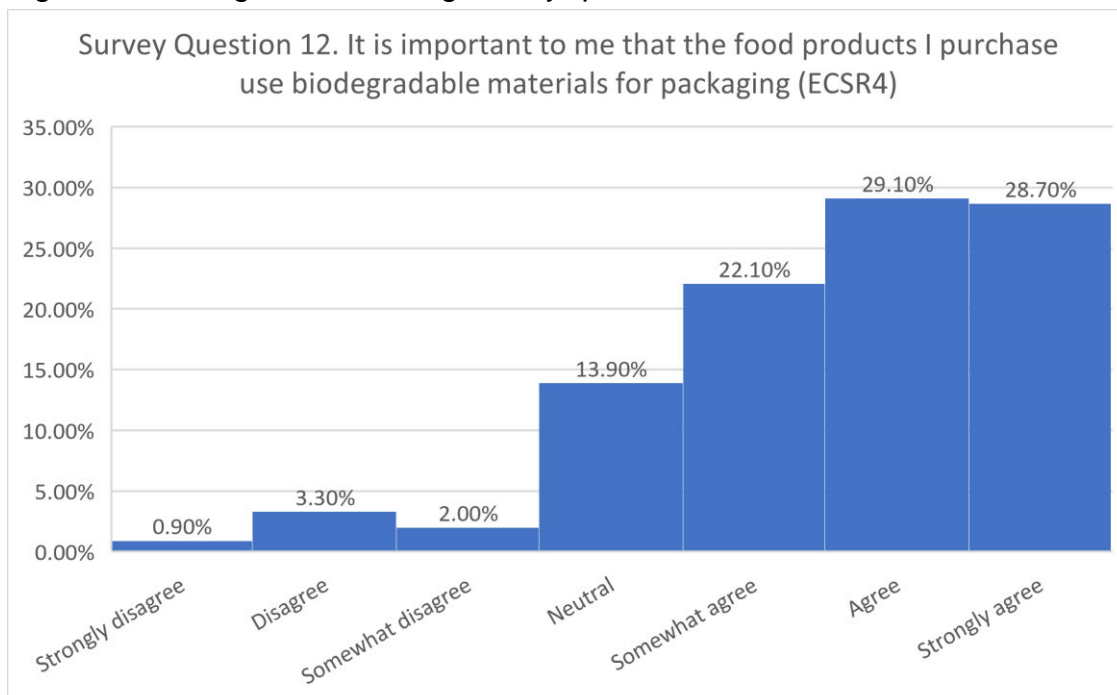
Figure 21: Histogram illustrating survey question 13 results

Survey Question 13. It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices) (ECSR5)
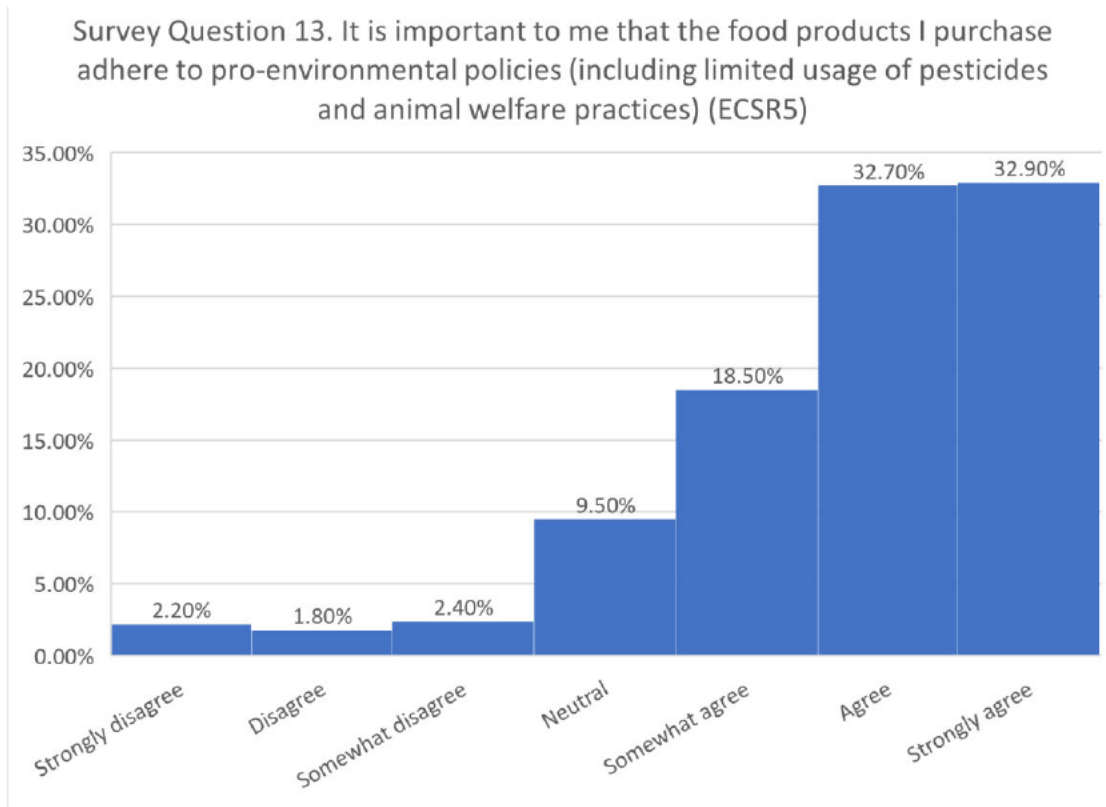
Figure 22: Histogram illustrating survey question 14 results

Survey Question 14. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits (ECSR6)
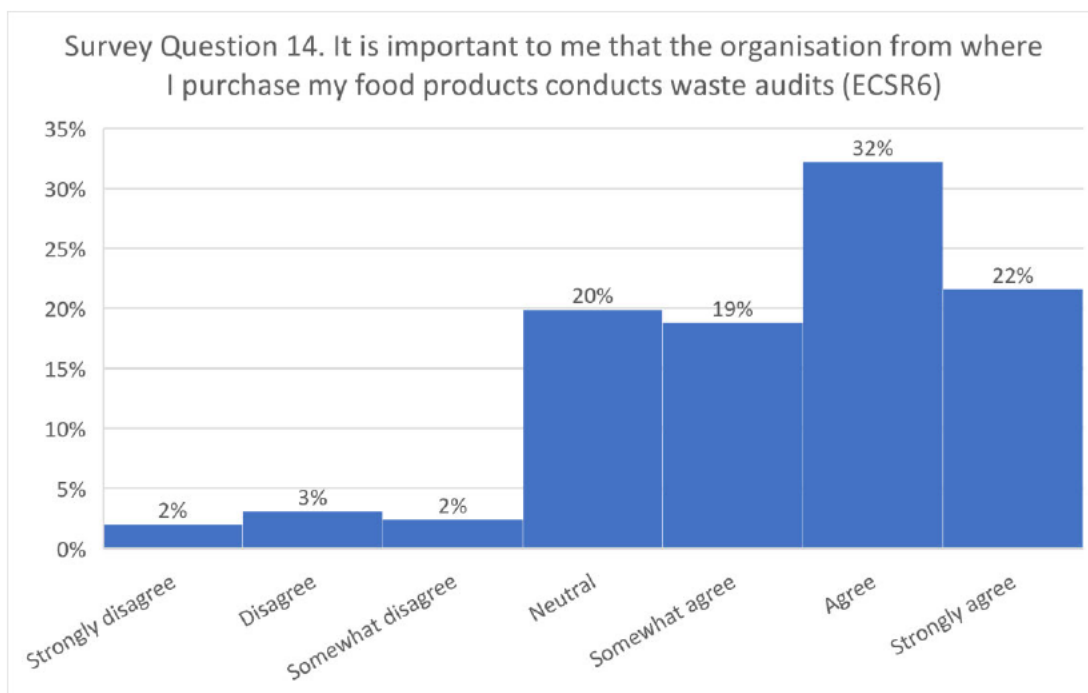
Figure 23: Histogram illustrating survey question 15 results

Survey Question 15. It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling (ECSR7)
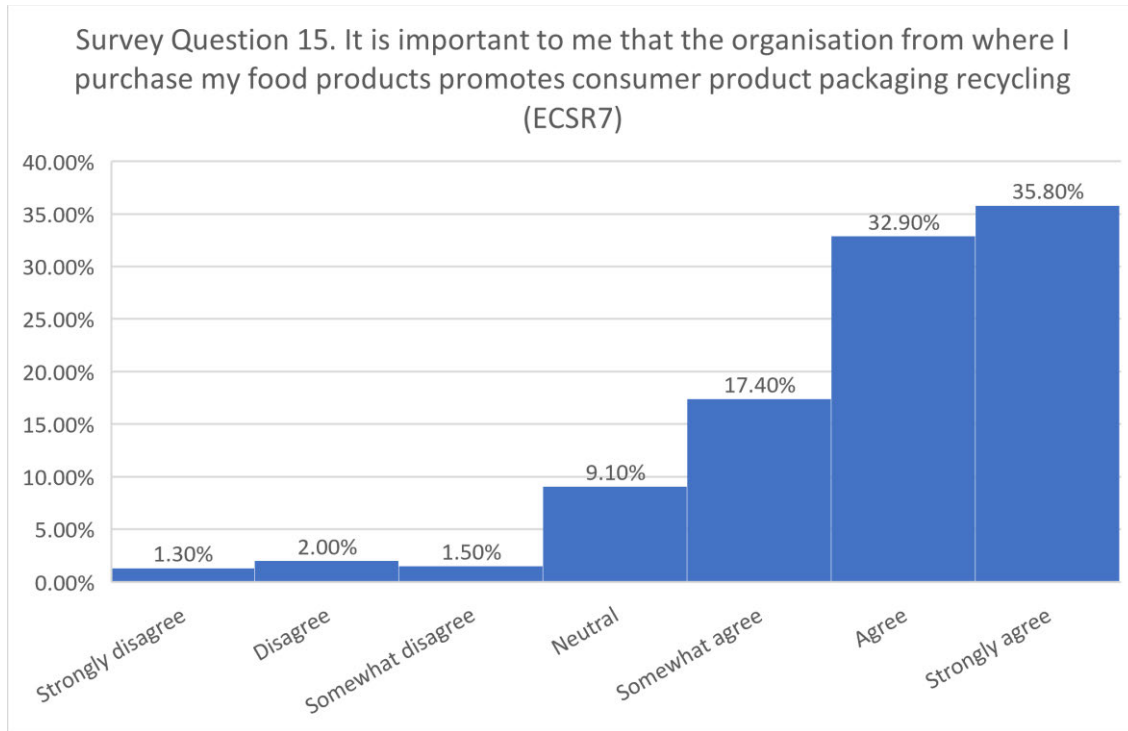
Table 68: Survey section two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility – mean and standard deviation

Survey Section Two: Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility – Mean and Standard Deviation												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
I believe that it is important for an organisation within the food industry to minimise their negative impact on the environment	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2614.00	5.7704	.05789	1.23206	1.518	-1.409	.115	2.820	.229
It is important to me that the food products I purchase are environmentally friendly	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2412.00	5.3245	.06356	1.35289	1.830	-.852	.115	.736	.229

It is important to me that the food products I purchase include responsible environmental care practices within their supply chain.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2500.00	5.5188	.06040	1.28563	1.653	-1.112	.115	1.500	.229
It is important to me that the food products I purchase use biodegradable materials for packaging.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2515.00	5.5519	.06297	1.34035	1.797	-.964	.115	.757	.229
It is important to me that the food products I purchase adhere to pro-environmental policies (including limited usage of pesticides and animal welfare practices).	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2582.00	5.6998	.06409	1.36418	1.861	-1.373	.115	2.009	.229
It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products conducts waste audits.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2417.00	5.3355	.06597	1.40401	1.971	-.896	.115	.620	.229

It is important to me that the organisation from where I purchase my food products promotes consumer product packaging recycling.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2632.00	5.8102	.06035	1.28441	1.650	-1.397	.115	2.206	.229
Valid N (listwise)	453												

Appendix L: Final Quantitative Study Results: Customer Satisfaction

Figure 25: Histogram illustrating survey question 16 results

Figure 24: Histogram illustrating survey question 17 results
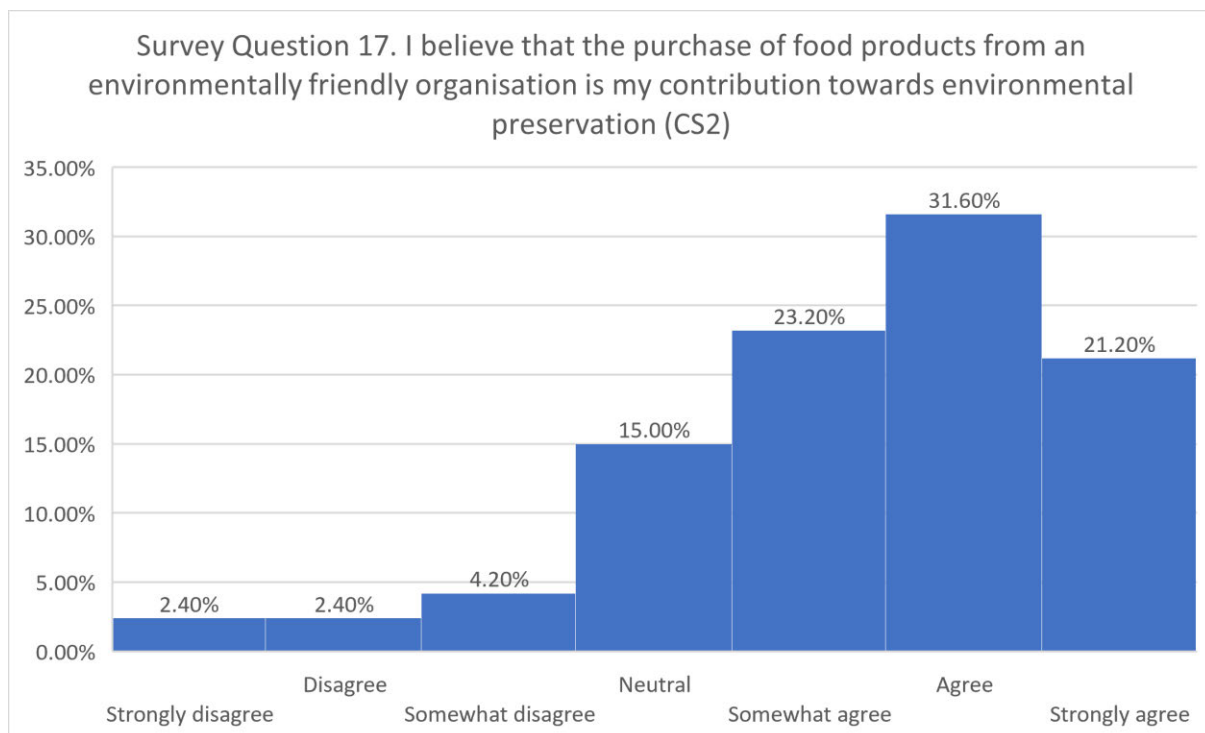
Figure 27: Histogram illustrating survey question 18 results

Survey Question 18. I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation (CS3)
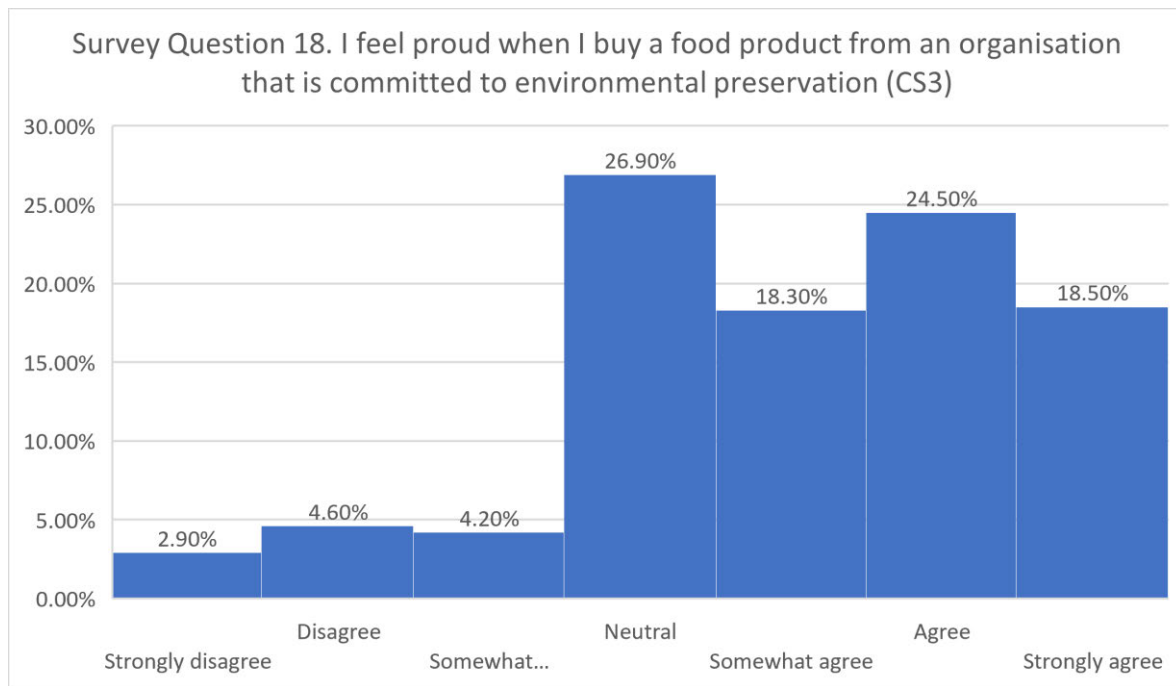
Figure 26: Histogram illustrating survey question 19 results

Survey Question 19. I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment (CS4)
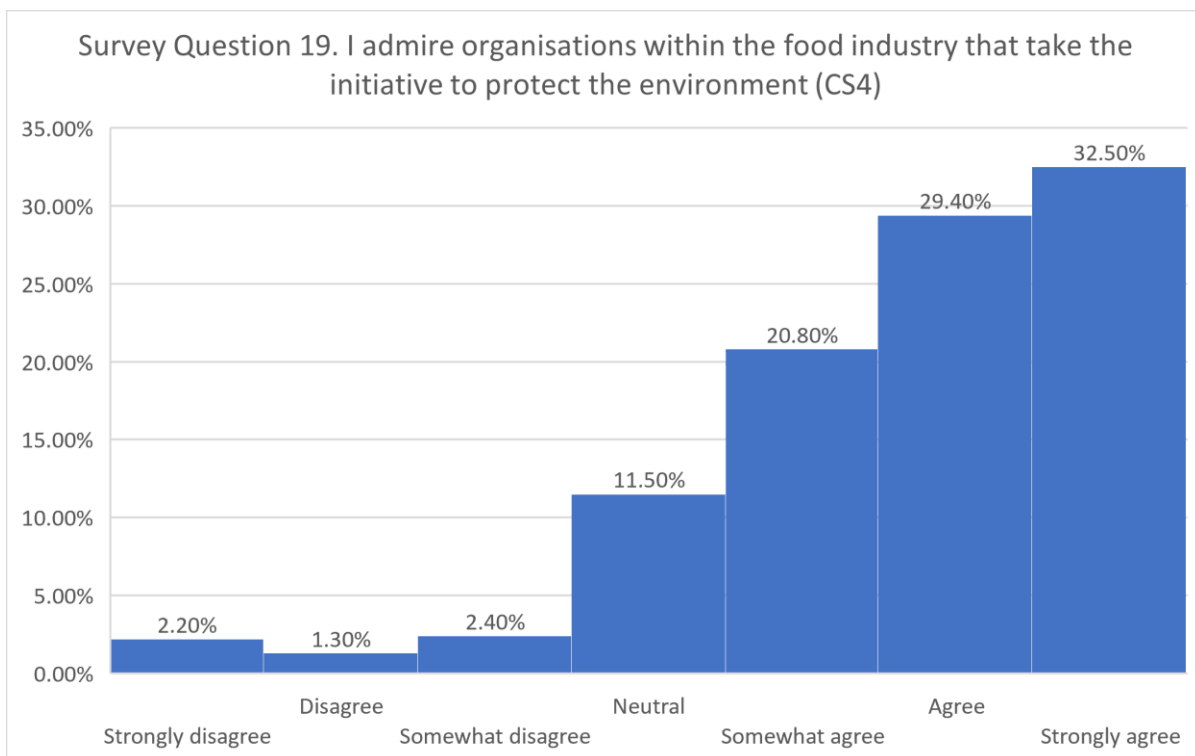
Figure 28: Histogram illustrating survey question 20 results

Survey Question 20. I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment (CS5)
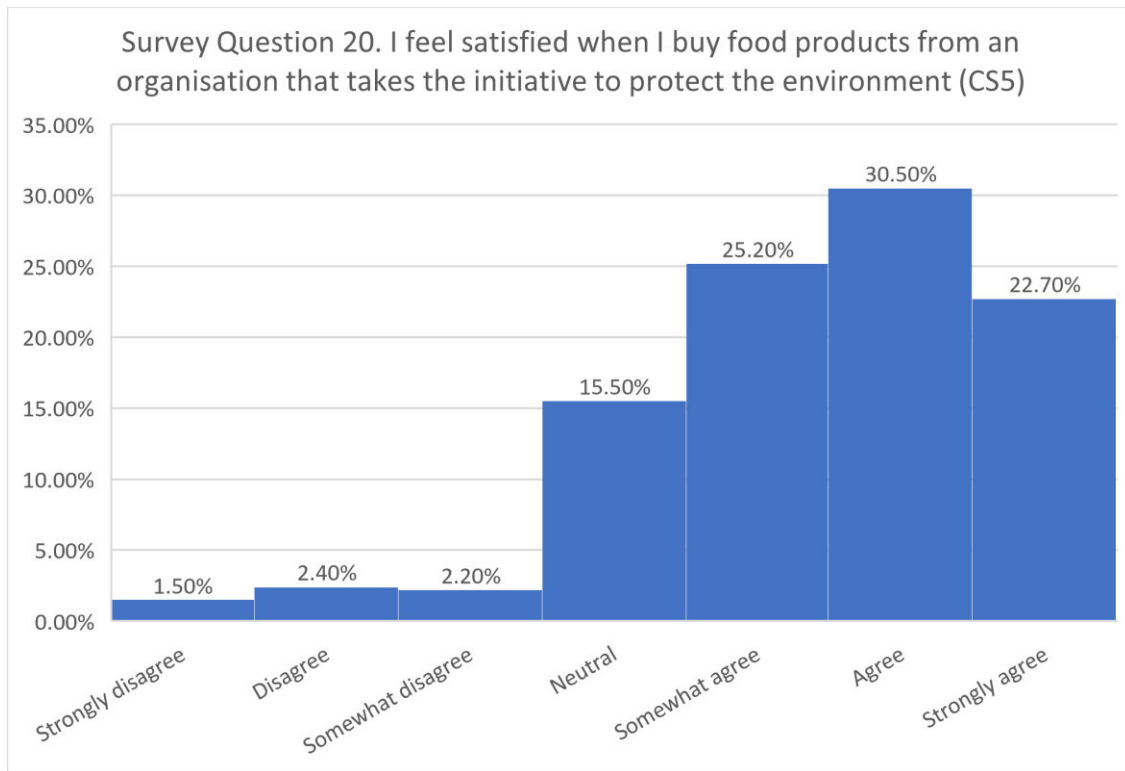
Table 69: Survey section three: Customer satisfaction – mean and standard deviation

	Survey Section Three: Customer Satisfaction – Mean and Standard Deviation												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
My choice to purchase food products from organisations that are committed to environmentally friendly initiatives is a wise decision.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2522.00	5.5673	.06232	1.32638	1.759	-1.254	.115	1.662	.229

Statement	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
I believe that my purchase of food products from an environmentally friendly organisation is my contribution towards environmental preservation.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2417.00	5.3355	.06611	1.40715	1.980	-.979	.115	.866	.229
I feel proud when I buy a food product from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2269.00	5.0088	.07134	1.51830	2.305	-.583	.115	-.091	.229
I admire organisations within the food industry that take the initiative to protect the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2560.00	5.6512	.06401	1.36233	1.856	-1.228	.115	1.654	.229

I feel satisfied when I buy food products from an organisation that takes the initiative to protect the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2458.00	5.4260	.06207	1.32101	1.745	-.941	.115	1.021	.229
Valid N (listwise)	453												

Appendix M: Final Quantitative Study Results: Customer Trust

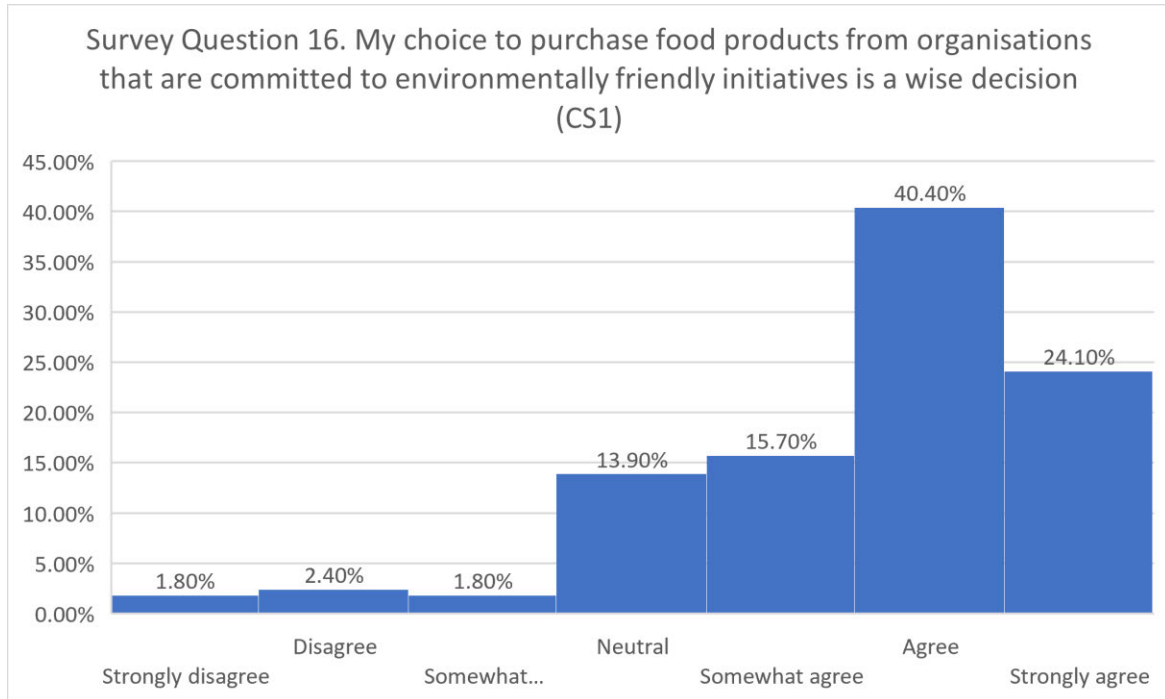Figure 29: Histogram illustrating survey question 21 results

Survey Question 21. I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not (CT1)
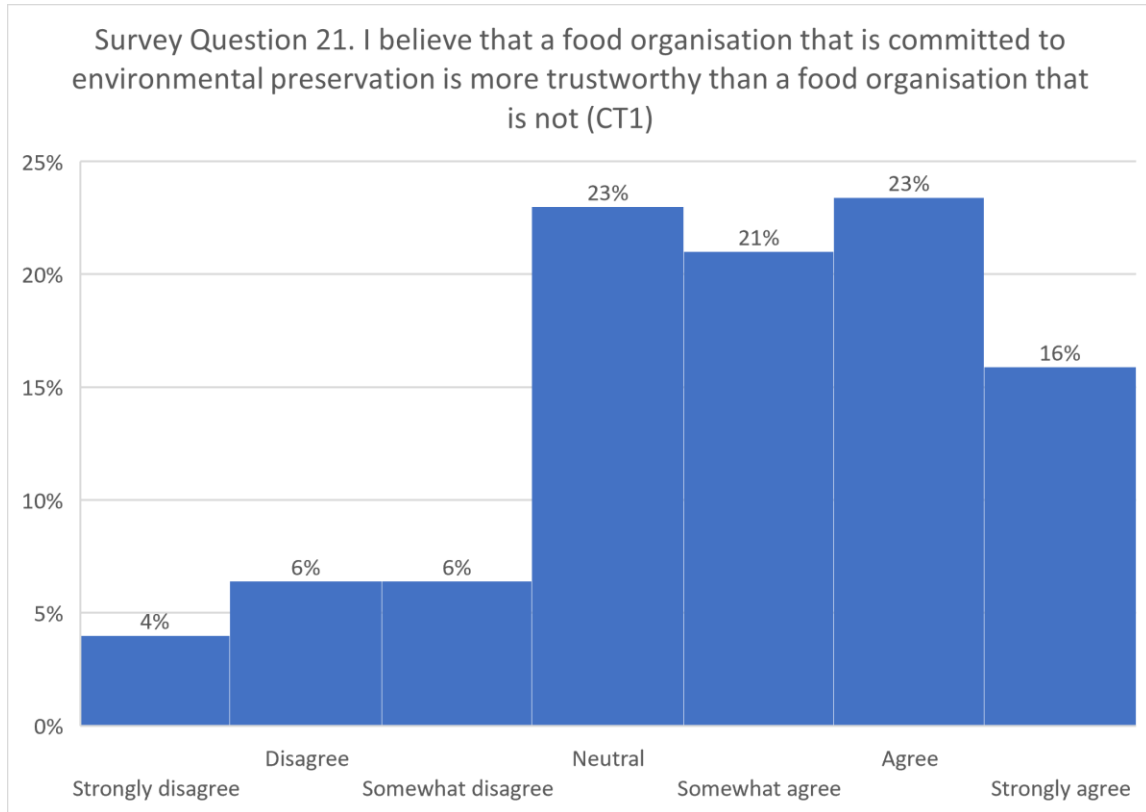
Figure 30: Histogram illustrating survey question 22 results

Survey Question 22: I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not (CT2)
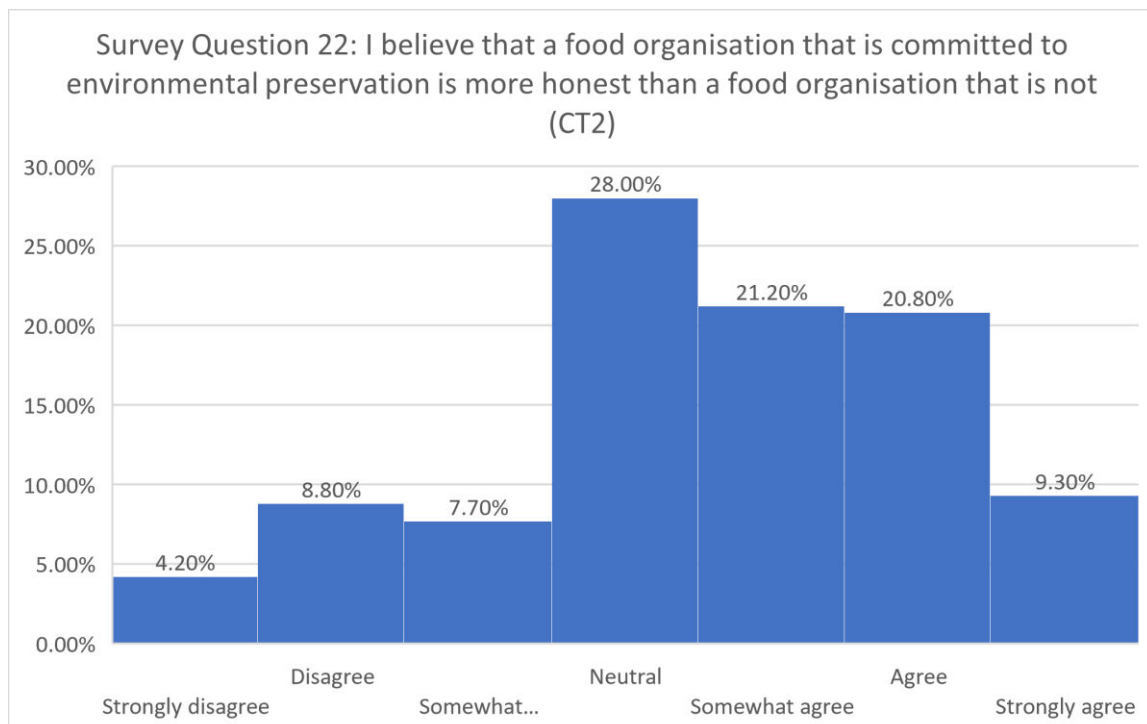
Figure 31: Histogram illustrating survey question 23 results

Survey Question 23. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety (CT3)
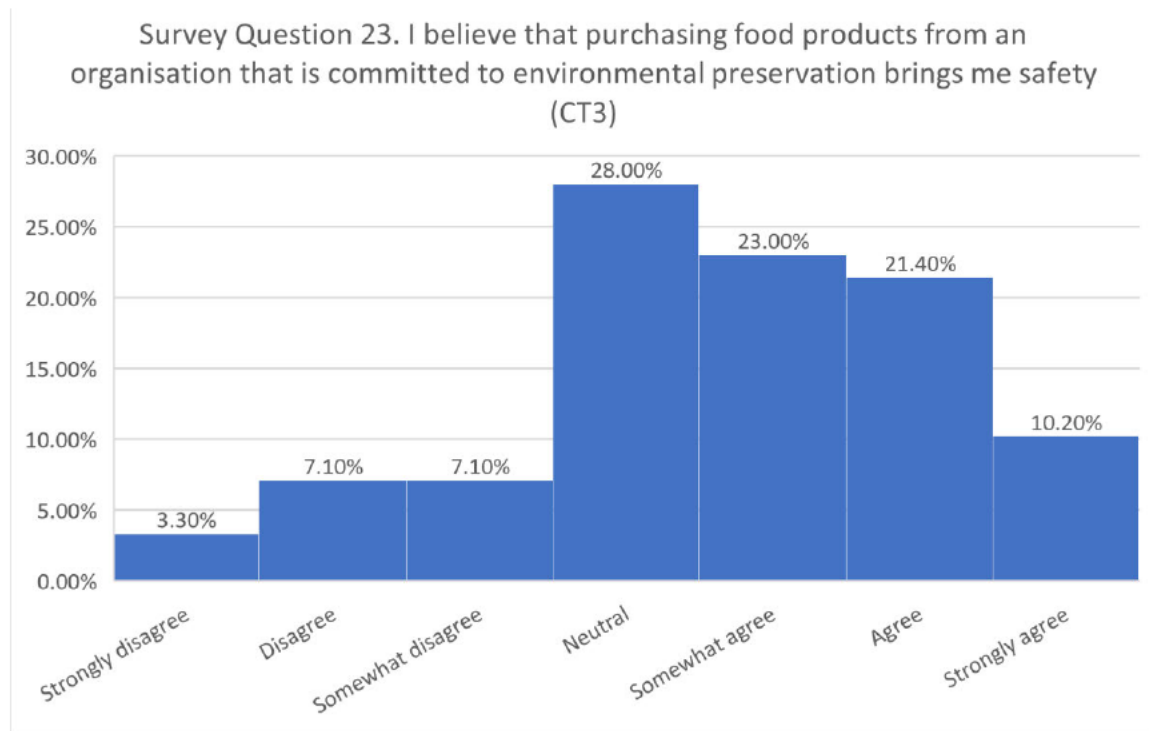
Figure 32: Histogram illustrating survey question 24 results

Survey Question 24. I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option (CT4)
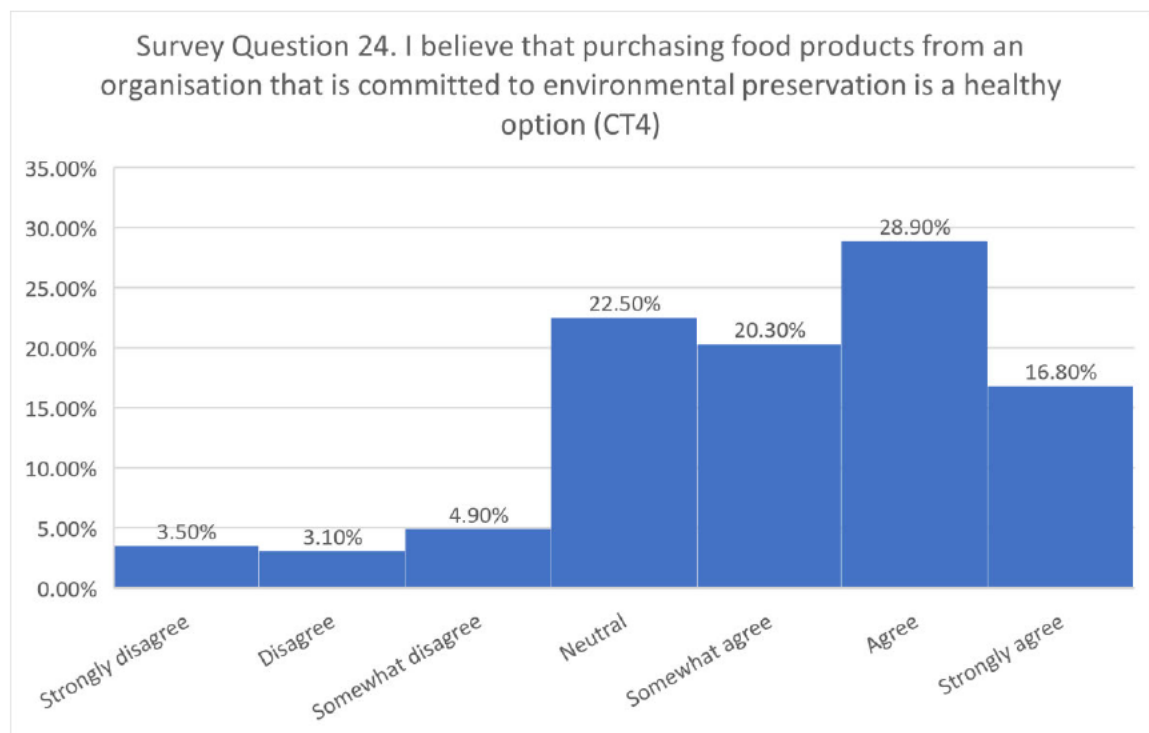
Figure 33: Histogram illustrating survey question 25 results

Survey Question 25. I believe that an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company (CT5)
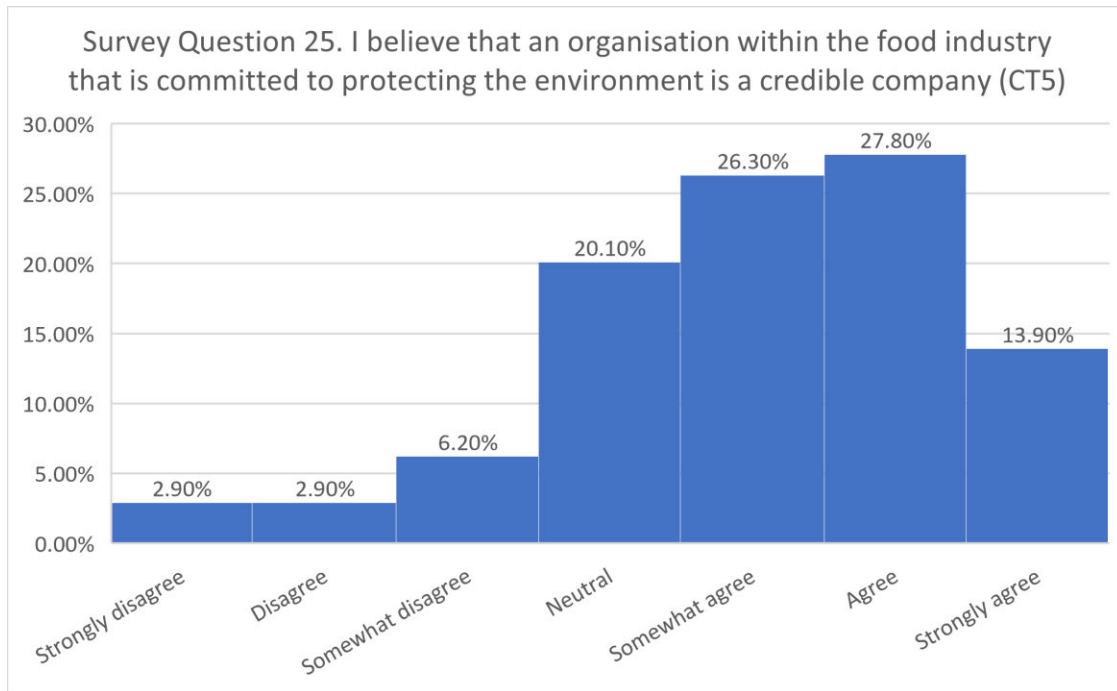
Table 70: Survey section four: Customer trust – mean and standard deviation

Survey Section Four: Customer Trust – Mean and Standard Deviation														
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more trustworthy than a food organisation that is not.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2194.00	4.8433	.07500	1.59637	2.548	-.571	.115	-.273	.229

I believe that a food organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is more honest than a food organisation that is not.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2050.00	4.5254	.07299	1.55358	2.414	-.398	.115	-.409	.229
I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation brings me safety.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2107.00	4.6512	.07019	1.49401	2.232	-.445	.115	-.216	.229

I believe that purchasing food products from an organisation that is committed to environmental preservation is a healthy option.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2296.00	5.0684	.07005	1.49103	2.223	-.769	.115	.299	.229
I believe an organisation within the food industry that is committed to protecting the environment is a credible company.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2279.00	5.0309	.06650	1.41544	2.003	-.746	.115	.424	.229
Valid N (listwise)	453												

Appendix N: Final Quantitative Study Results: Customer Loyalty

Figure 34: Histogram illustrating survey question 26 results

Survey Question 26. I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products (CL1)
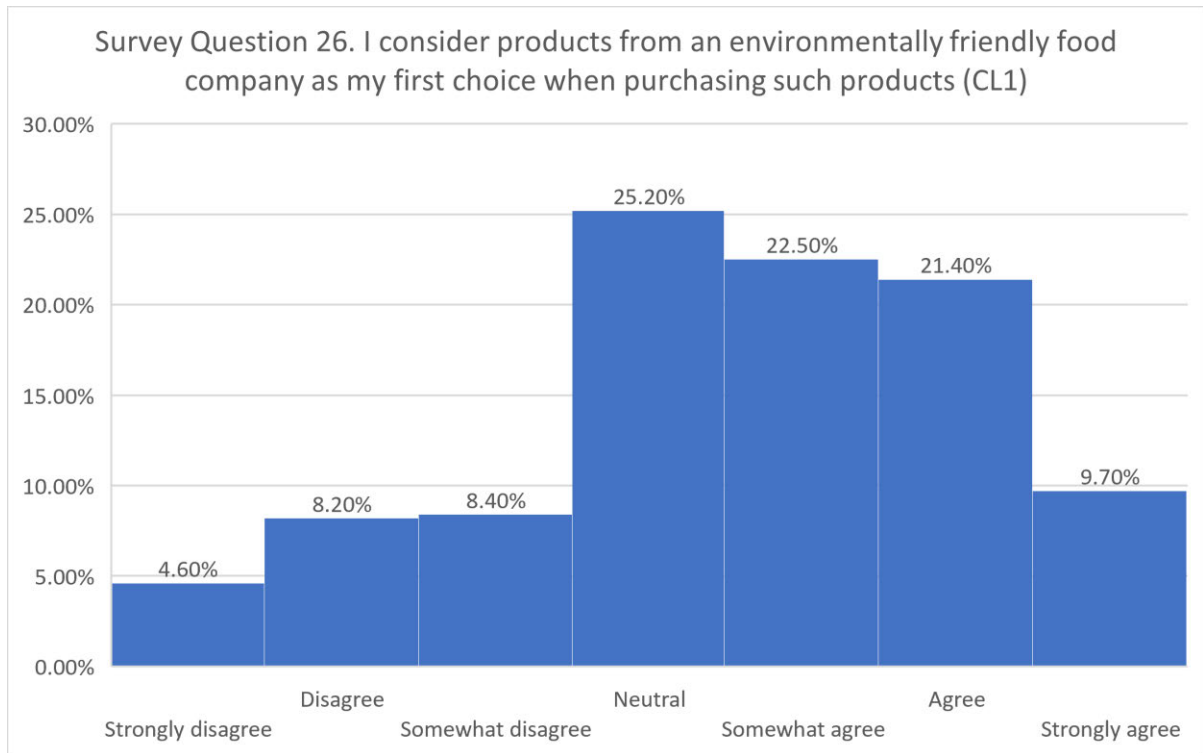
Figure 35: Histogram illustrating survey question 27 results

Survey Question 27. I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment (CL2)
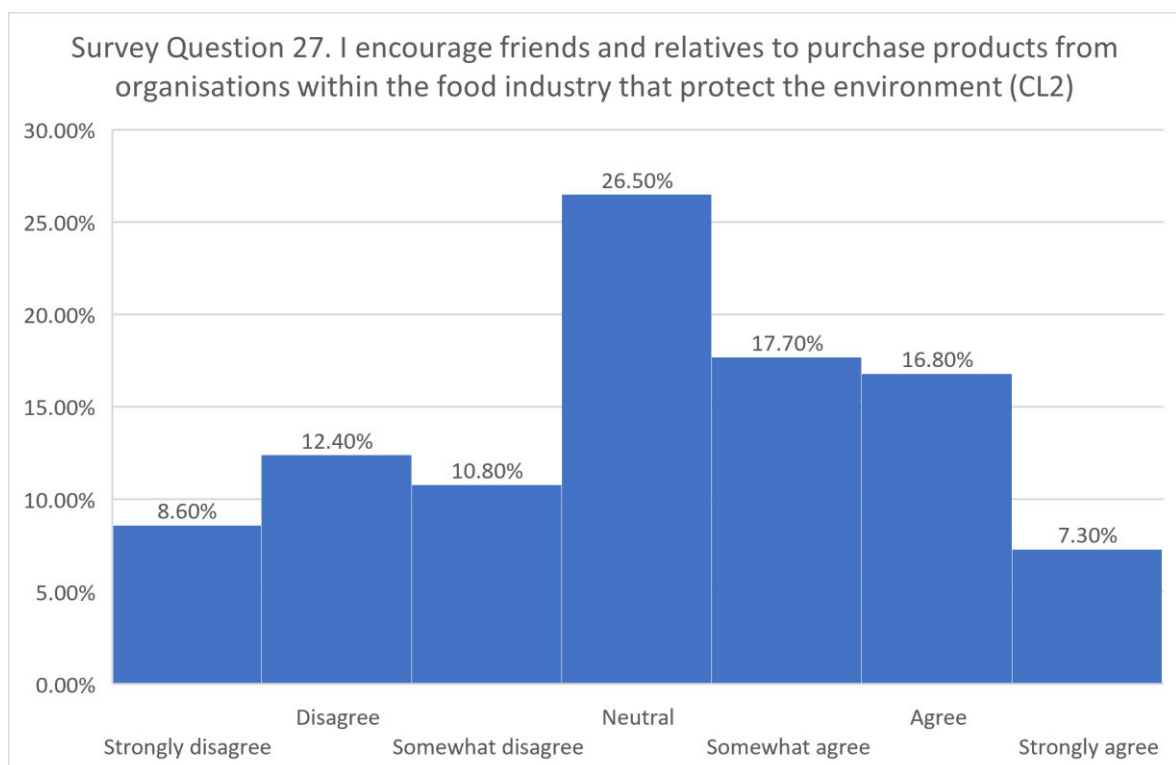
Figure 36: Histogram illustrating survey question 28 results

Survey Question 28. I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future (CL3)
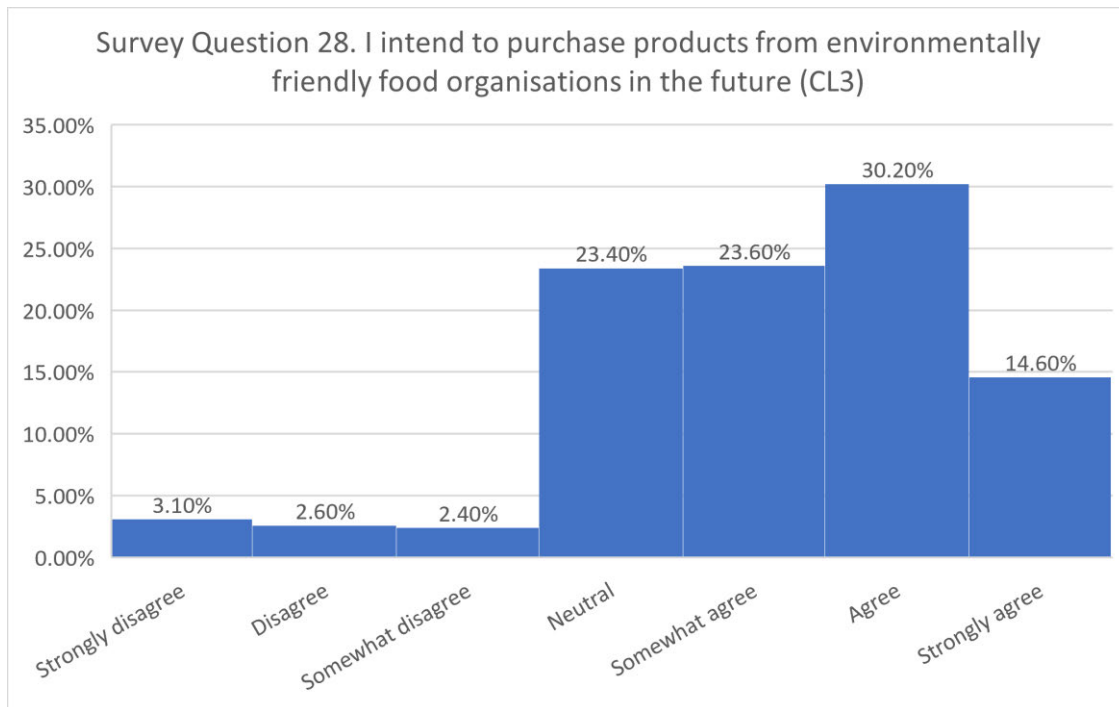
Figure 37: Histogram illustrating survey question 29 results

Survey Question 29. If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store (CL4)
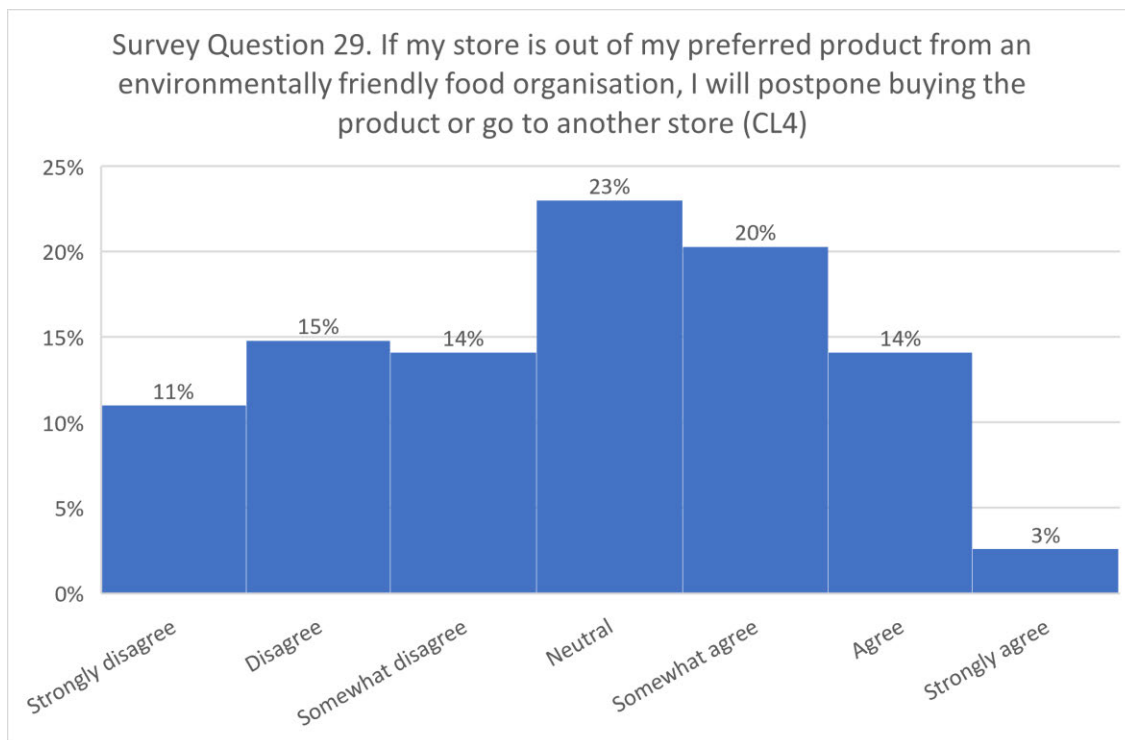
Figure 38: Histogram illustrating survey question 30 results

Survey Question 30. I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment (CL5)

Table 71: Survey section five: Customer loyalty – mean and standard deviation

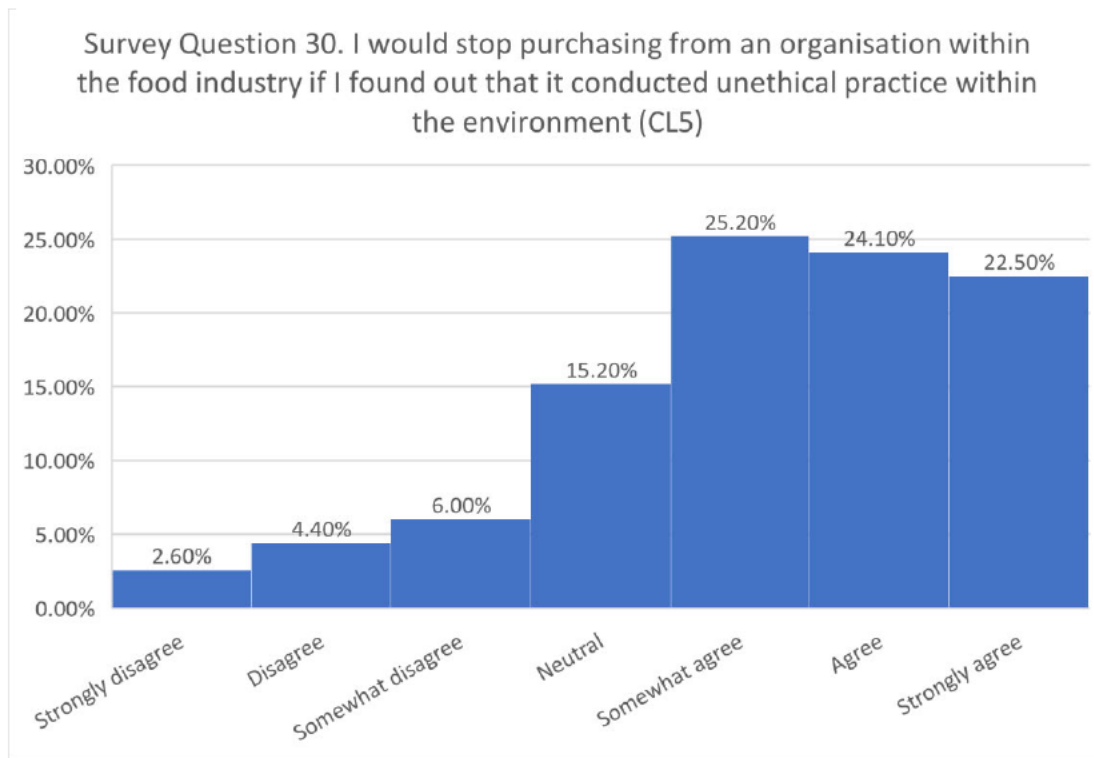|	Survey Section Five: Customer Loyalty – Mean and Standard Deviation												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
							Std. Error				Std. Error		Std. Error
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
I consider products from an environmentally friendly food company as my first choice when purchasing such products.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2065.00	4.5585	.07395	1.57392	2.477	-.450	.115	-.399	.229
I encourage friends and relatives to purchase products from organisations within the food industry that protect the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	1865.00	4.1170	.07964	1.69513	2.873	-.195	.115	-.803	.229

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Std. Error	Kurtosis	Std. Error
I intend to purchase products from environmentally friendly food organisations in the future.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2314.00	5.1082	.06547	1.39349	1.942	-.849	.115	.795	.229
If my store is out of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation, I will postpone buying the product or go to another store.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	1720.00	3.7969	.07717	1.64244	2.698	-.138	.115	-.941	.229
I would stop purchasing from an organisation within the food industry if I found out that it conducted unethical practice within the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2347.00	5.1810	.07165	1.52498	2.326	-.778	.115	.141	.229
Valid N (listwise)	453												

Appendix O: Final Quantitative Study Results: Customer Retention

Figure 39: Histogram illustrating survey question 31 results

Survey Question 31. If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation (CR1)
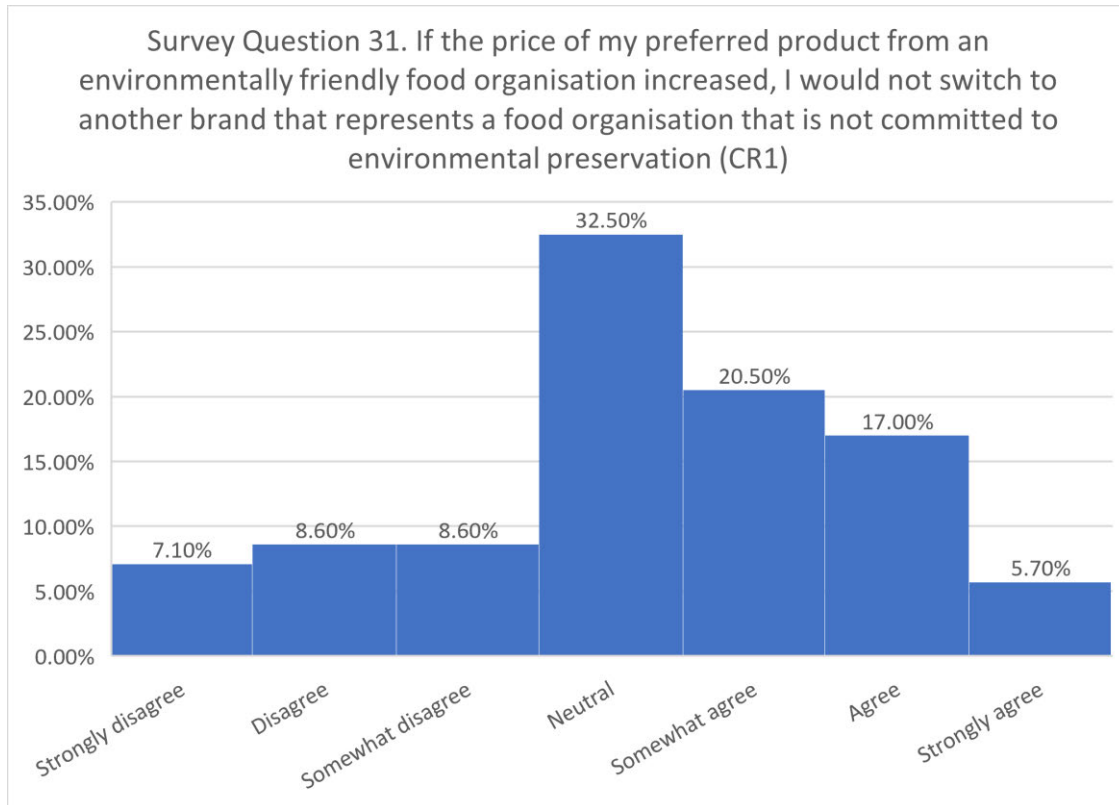
Figure 40: Histogram illustrating survey question 32 results

Survey Question 32. I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment (CR2)
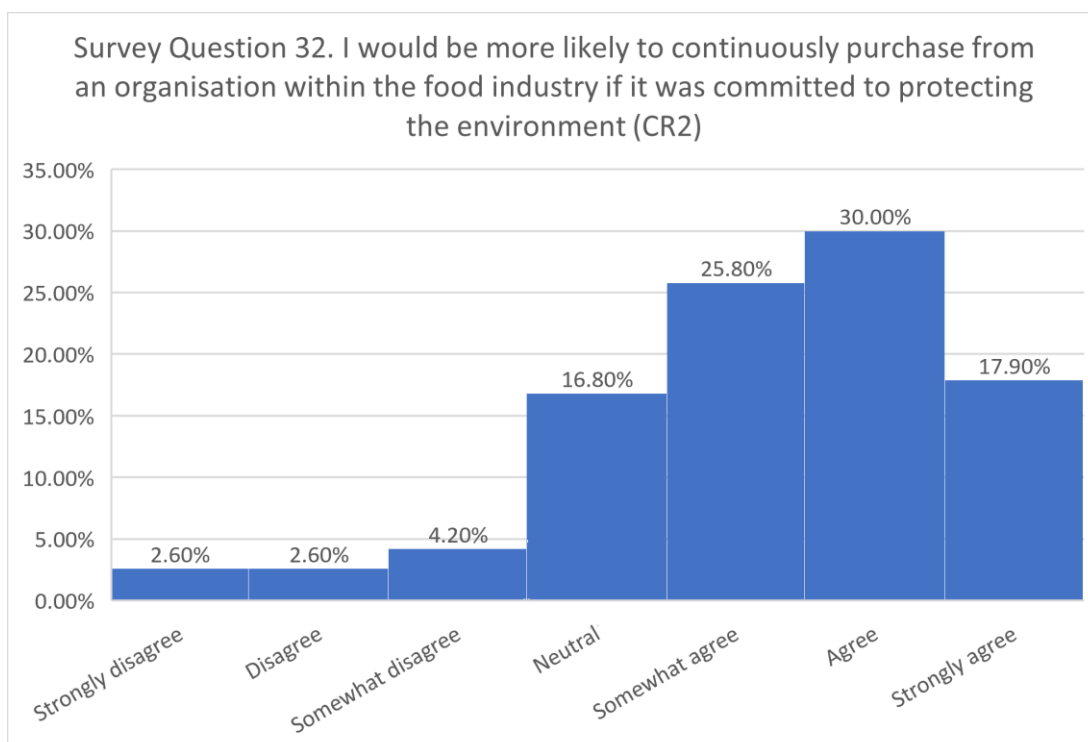
Figure 41: Histogram illustrating survey question 33 results

Survey Question 33. I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment (CR3)
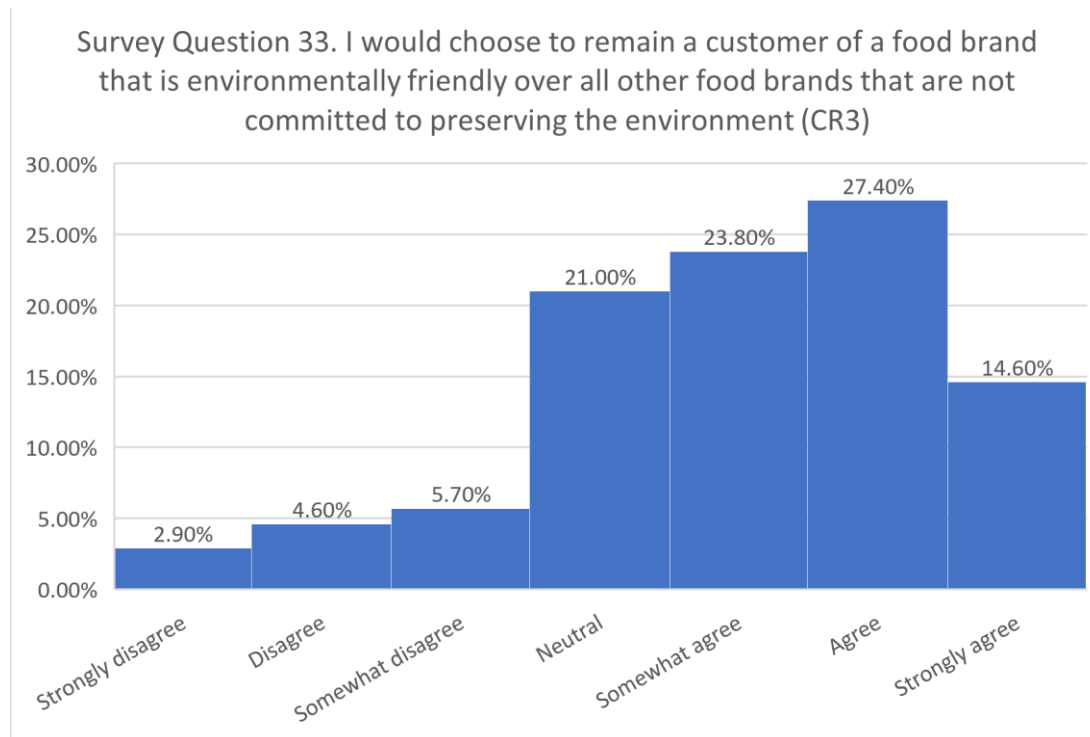
Figure 42: Histogram illustrating survey question 34 results

Survey Question 34. Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price (CR4)
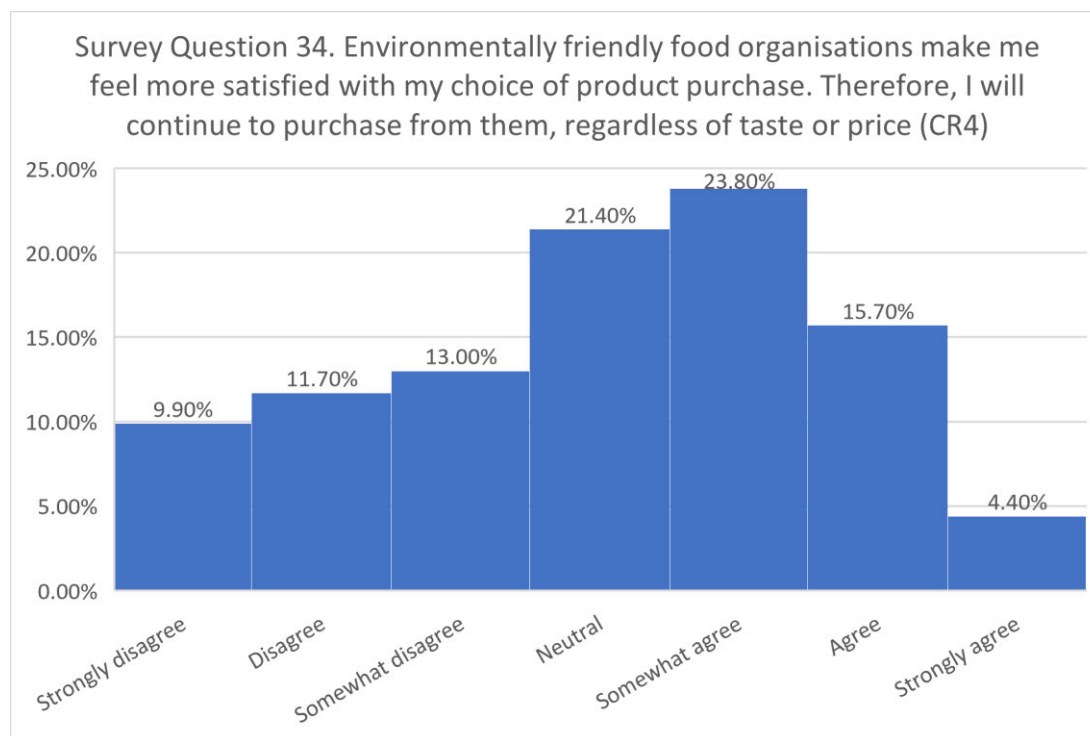
Figure 43: Histogram illustrating survey question 35 results

Survey Question 35. I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price (CR5)
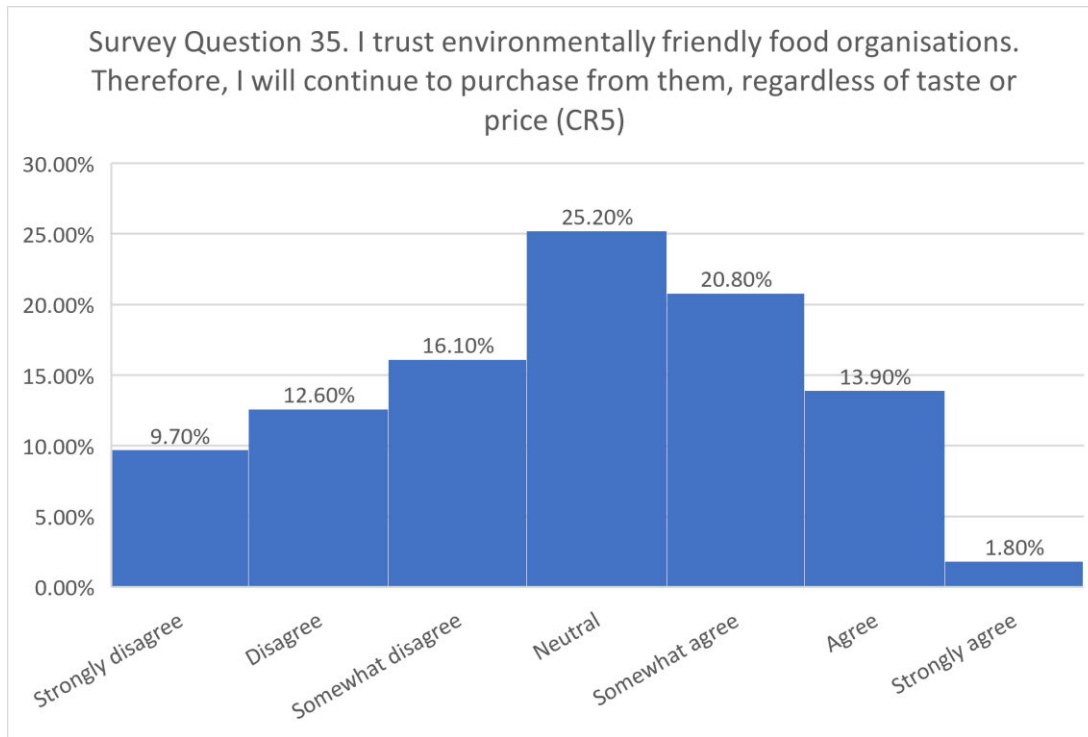
Table 72: Survey section six: customer retention – mean and standard deviation

	Survey Section Six: Customer Retention – Mean and Standard Deviation												
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
If the price of my preferred product from an environmentally friendly food organisation increased, I would not switch to another brand that represents a food organisation that is not committed to environmental preservation.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	1924.00	4.2472	.07297	1.55312	2.412	-.367	.115	-.363	.229

I would be more likely to continuously purchase from an organisation within the food industry if it was committed to protecting the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2365.00	5.2208	.06593	1.40316	1.969	-.909	.115	.793	.229
I would choose to remain a customer of a food brand that is environmentally friendly over all other food brands that are not committed to preserving the environment.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	2259.00	4.9868	.06932	1.47540	2.177	-.699	.115	.134	.229

Environmentally friendly food organisations make me feel more satisfied with my choice of product purchase. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	1822.00	4.0221	.07806	1.66150	2.761	-.274	.115	-.825	.229
I trust environmentally friendly food organisations. Therefore, I will continue to purchase from them, regardless of taste or price.	453	6.00	1.00	7.00	1737.00	3.8344	.07338	1.56184	2.439	-.206	.115	-.803	.229
Valid N (listwise)	453												