The Moderating Effect of Social Capital on the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author HMS designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors HMS and YSL managed the analyses of the study. Author HMS managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aims: The purpose of this paper is to study the effect of the sustainable marketing of three types of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives—cause-related marketing (CRM), corporate philanthropy and creating shared value (CSV)—on consumer attitudinal evaluations with the moderating effect of individual social capital.

Methodology: A 3 x 2 x 2 between-subjects factorial design was employed with the manipulation of three different CSR initiatives.

Results: Our study finds that CSV has the greatest effect on both consumer-company identification (C-C identification) and brand image, followed by corporate philanthropy and CRM. The relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer attitudinal evaluations was especially strong when consumers perceived the C-C identification and brand image as having a high degree of individual social capital. A higher degree of C-C identification and a more positive brand image through CSR initiatives was also linked to stronger in-role and extra-role consumer responses.

Conclusion: The findings of this study help enrich literature on CSR and enable implementers to choose the appropriate goodness of fit while assisting corporations in improving their reputation and image.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's day and age, firms need to consider not only competition within their industry but also global climate change, the depletion of natural resources, international affairs and trends and labour relations. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to a company's social behaviour that exceeds its legal obligations so as to fulfil societal demands [1,2,3]. CSR can be a valuable marketing tool for a company to respond to consumer expectations and enhance its performance and image through philanthropy [4,5,6]. Various studies in the field of marketing have demonstrated that CSR affects the cognition, attitudes and behavioural intentions of consumers (e.g., [4,7,8,6]). Consumer-company (C-C) identification is similar to trust, and identity also affects customer loyalty [9,5,7]. On the basis of the theories of social and organisational identity, Bhattacharya and Sen [9] report that stable consumer-to-company relationships are often determined by consumers' identification with the company. When consumers recognise a company, they are selective and voluntary, and this leads them to potentially perform acts that indicate whether they like the company. The purchase behaviour of a company or brand's consumer is likely affected by his or her identification with it [10]. The most effective method for corporations to maintain long-term growth is to attract consumers by ensuring that they recognise their company and by psychologically maintaining a distinct identity.

Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned about their immediate environment and aspire to improve their communities [11]. Therefore, a company's social responsibility initiatives that treat consumers as the key have become crucial. A company's stable social relationship with its consumers would facilitate its investment in CSR activities.

'Social capital' refers to shared values and active connections that bind members of networks and enable cooperative action. This wider perspective of social capital has resulted in the emergence of numerous organisational themes, such as values, identity and internal competence development [12]. Organisations increasingly depend on their social capital to be able to combine the delivery of added value in the market place with social responsibility [13]. By applying resource-based theory, enterprises can obtain the corresponding social capital through fulfilling their social responsibility. The concept of social capital is effective because investment in social relations is expected to be rewarded in the market and helps companies gain a firm competitive advantage.

Academic research on CSR initiatives has long focused on positive responses to corporations. The focus of this study is to determine whether, in the digital era, different types of initiatives have an emotional effect on consumers and whether such initiatives differ in terms of impact or change.

This paper aims to enhance knowledge about CSR initiatives by investigating the effect of social capital on the relationship between different types of CSR initiatives and consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions. This study investigates the efficacy of three CSR initiatives—cause-related marketing (CRM), corporate philanthropy and creating shared value (CSV)—on consumer-company identification (C-C identification) and brand image and, in turn, consumer behaviours and attitudes. This paper contributes to literature on CSR and helps CSR implementers to select the appropriate goodness of fit. It also assigns the greatest value to corporate image and sustainability in the implementation of CSR initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

2.1 CSR Initiatives

CSR is possibly most commonly described using Carroll's theory of the pyramid model of CSR. He regards CSR as a structure consisting of four levels of relationships between commercial enterprises and society, including the social, economic, legal, ethical and charitable expectations of business organisations [1]. In 2011, Porter [14] provided a fresh perspective by proposing a new CSR concept: creating shared value (CSV). The focus of CSV is not only that corporations must demonstrate responsibility to the community but that in addition to the need to become good corporate citizens, corporations must provide community feedback and comply with standards. They must also produce more value—not only in terms of value creation for particular social problems but also profit-making

value. This study divides CSR initiatives into three major categories: CRM, corporate philanthropy and CSV [15-18].

2.1.1 CRM

In CRM, corporations promise to donate a certain amount of money to a nonprofit organisation or to society as a whole when consumers purchase their merchandise or services [19]. Farache et al. [20] confirm that companies that cooperate with charities or the public sector to implement CRM campaigns can improve consumers' perception of their corporate image. Edmondson and Lafferty [21] demonstrate that the prominence of cause-related actions has a positive impact on brands. Further, CRM is the optimal solution for corporations to create a win-win situation for themselves and nonprofit organisations [22]. Contributing returns in the different form to nonprofit organisations or the great multitude through marketing to earn profit and contribute to society is known as 'doing well by doing good' [23]. CRM strategies can improve companies' corporate image, enhance the organisation's benefits [24] and influence consumers' perceptions of their products [25] and purchasing options [26].

2.1.2 Corporate Philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy is a type of noble social behaviour that is performed without the expectation of corporate benefits or business in return but is done simply in order to be a good citizen [27]. Corporate philanthropy can attract customers, employees and other stakeholders to consolidate resources, reduce constraints, develop core competencies and enhance competitive advantage [28]. Corporate philanthropy generates value-added effects that immediately or indirectly improve business performance [29]. It is often one of the most cost-effective methods for corporations to improve their competitive environment [30]. Koma [31] suggests that corporate philanthropy is no longer considered an independent philanthropic activity—corporations are adopting a more strategic approach by linking their corporate philanthropy to their CSR and overall business characteristics [32].

2.1.3 CSV

CSV refers to creating not only economic value but also value for society in the handling of its needs and problems [18]. CSV does not only promote economic prosperity and social progress but also possibly facilitates the change of perceptions between society and corporations [33]. Corporations and society are interdependent, and both should be governed by the principle of 'value sharing' and make mutually beneficial decisions. A corporation can create shared value by supporting social causes that reinforce its competitiveness and promote CSR initiatives [33]. CSV is the practice of CSR through daily business activities [34,35,18]. The most favourable opportunity for a corporation to create shared value is necessarily connected to its business and its most prominent activity, which can contribute the maximum economic benefits to the corporation [18].

2.2 C-C Identification

C-C identification refers to the consumer and company establishing a profound, loyal and meaningful relationship. This relationship derives from the fact that consumers believe that interaction with firms can help fulfil certain identification needs. It is a type of a self-categorising process [36]. Kramer [37] reports that when individuals recognise a group, they are concerned with the goal of the group, which increases the chances of exchange. Lewicki and Bunker [38] argue that significant recognition not only increases the chances of meaningful exchanges but also the frequency of cooperation. From the perspective of social identity, purchasing products from a company is also a type of C-C identification. From a marketing point of view, C-C identification can be considered as the comprehensive result of integrating all marketing activities. CSR can create the kinds of traits or identity that are capable of triggering customer identification as it combines the three elements of the corporate identity mix— behaviour of organisational members, communication and symbolism [39,40]. Through an appropriate communication channel, a corporation conveys its image and related information to its consumers who, under the self-need condition, emotionally identify with the company through conceptual selection. Consumers who are linked with a corporate CSR initiative are more likely to identify with that company [41].

2.3 Brand Image

Dobni and Zinkhan [42] argue that brand image is the mental picture a consumer has of a company's products or services. Consumers form their image of a brand according to their

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cognition and feelings about brands that they remember. CSR has been proven to assist companies in gaining a positive reputation [43] and enhancing economic returns, financial performance [44] and own-market competitive advantages [7].

These studies indicate that the impact of consumers on C-C identification and brand image differs despite the existence of various types of CSR initiatives. On the basis of our literature review, we propose the following hypotheses:

> **H1** The three types of CSR initiatives—CRM, corporate philanthropy and CSV—have different effects on C-C identification.
> **H2** The three types of CSR initiatives—CRM, corporate philanthropy and CSV—have different effects on brand image.

2.4 Social Capital

Social capital has come to be considered as an essential concept in the past 50 years in the field of social science. Social capital is the sum of reality and virtuality. It can be applied to individuals or groups by using a sustainable network (i.e. a relationship) that comprises different degrees of institutionalisation and people who know each other. The most prestigious scholar in this field is arguably Robert D. Putnam. He argues that the characteristics of social capital (including social networks, norms and trust) are designed to enable participants to act more effectively in the pursuit of common goals. Briefly, social capital refers to social linkages and concomitant norms and trust [45]. It is generally defined as 'the characteristics of social organisations, such as trust, norms and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by promoting coordinated action' [46]. More simply, social capital implies that 'relationships matter' [47]. Such relationships include many interpersonal interactions, such as hierarchies, markets and networks.

There are many methods and classifications of social capital [46]. Functionally, it can be divided into 'bonding' and 'bridging' [48]; in terms of scope of application, it can be divided into 'country' and 'the individual'. Social capital is embedded in interpersonal relationship network resources and is obtained through relationships. Therefore, the people we contact constitute our social capital. Therefore, the two elements of social capital are (a) a social network and (b) the

resources that this network makes obtainable. So far as the theory of capital is concerned, social relations are an investment from which a return is expected. The first step in this investment is building relationships. When more abundant resources are chosen, it indicates that the resources are more diverse. Bourdieu [49] argues that when individuals establish close relationships within a group, their social capital increases. Coleman [50] argues that social capital is a resource that exists in a social structure. Resources and information are exchanged through trust, interaction and communication among people, which helps communities and their members achieve their desired goals. Putnam [47] argues that a high degree of correlation exists between bonding and bridging at the individual level, that is, people who have more links with other similar individuals in a local group find it easier to connect with individuals who are distant or different.

Psychologists and sociologists who research social networks have long known that positive emotional and material support obtained on the basis of the levels of social capital vary considerably. In general, people who live in a community with a relatively high degree of trust may be friendlier and more supportive to other residents and strangers. This reflects a culture of civic spirit and mutual respect. Additionally, community members are relatively more closely linked when facing inequality. Furthermore, they exhibit relatively higher social trust [51].

Most scholars of social capital, such as Putnam, Coleman, Fukuyama and Brehm, focus on trust. Trust is not only the input of social capital but also an output and is a key link between social capital and successful collective action [52]. Through trust, social capital is integrated with collective action [53]. The existence of trust can help avoid excessive contracts, reduce transaction costs and is the key to solving shared plight through collective action. If the members of a social network share a common language, code and narratives, all the members can understand each other better. This also results in the consistency of views and reasoning among all the members of the network on matters of debate, which facilitates discussion, communication, assistance and knowledge sharing [54], which in turn generates greater social capital.

Enterprise operations and development are not just the result of enterprise operations but also the interaction between a regional environment,

culture, society and politics. Social capital has a marked influence on the business relationship networks of enterprises. It helps companies gain knowledge and helps build their reputations, enhances trust and facilitates cooperation between businesses [31]. Through CSR diversification and enrichment, corporations interact with communities, the public, the natural environment and special social groups by undertaking social responsibility. Through this, corporations also provide their resources, such as capital, human resources and material resources, to other members of society. Simultaneously, corporations receive resources from the members of society, including support, awareness and reputation. Subsequently, the interaction is completed between the corporation and members of society. Through social interaction with stakeholders, corporations can acquire social capital, which can be used to promote corporate performance. This creates a virtuous circle whereby businesses tend to more effectively fulfil their social responsibilities and initiate positive interactions with stakeholders [55]. Social capital can be an important determinant of a firm's performance and highlights the circumstances under which CSR can be beneficial to a firm's value [56]. The social connection between a corporation and its operators comprises the social capital of this corporation.

Social trust remains a reasonable measure of social capital. Trust is in fact at the very core of social capital. In environments in which individuals trust each other, they are relatively more willing to help others and to participate in joint activities. When trust is low, people avoid assisting others [57,58,59,60]. Many studies report that when the degree of trust is relatively high, people are more open to social exchange, particularly in cooperative interactions in which people who relatively trust each other are more willing to share resources [54].

Individuals can trust each other because the behaviour of an individual is embedded in social norms and networks. Social capital can be conceptualised as a social resource, embedded in a long-term stable network relationship [61]. The capability of different social networks to transmit information and emotions varies; thus, social networks have a marked impact on the driving force mechanism of collective actions. The relationships in social networks can generate mutual trust, and economic

transactions are embedded in the context of social culture and relationships of mutual trust [62]. Lin [63] argues that social capital and actions taken by individuals to acquire social capital interact effectively with each other and are mutually reinforcing.

According to the findings of the aforementioned scholars, we propose the following hypotheses, which can be applied from the individual to the macroscopic level:

> **H3** High individual social capital resulting from CSR initiatives (CRM, corporate philanthropy and CSV) has a stronger influence on C-C identification than low individual social capital.
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> **H4** High individual social capital resulting from CSR initiatives (CRM, corporate philanthropy CSV) has a stronger influence on brand image than low individual social capital.

The premise of C-C identification is that consumers can identify a company—even if they are not a formal member of the company [64], [65,67]—that at least partially meets their self-defining needs (e.g. self-uniqueness or self-consistency). That is, the customer's need for self-definition or a sense of belonging can be expressed through his or her identification with a corporation [67,68]. In this sense, C-C identification is similar to the concept of 'brand resonance' [69]. When a consumer chooses a brand that undertakes CSR activities, it means that the consumer has a strong sense of social responsibility, which is a channel for his or her own self-expression. Consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions will be higher when a product has high preference image and familiarity [70]. Laroche et al. [71] argue that when the degree of consumer familiarity with a product is relatively high, consumers exhibit more confidence and a more positive attitude towards it, which in turn leads to a greater willingness to purchase it. Park et al. [72] state that brand image can be divided into functional image, symbolic image and empirical image. Brand image is thus not only the direct impact on brand attitude but also the driving force encouraging the consumer to purchase the product. Howard [73] also confirms that consumers' degree of preference for and extent of trust in a particular brand directly affects their purchase intention and attitude.

Bennett and Rundle-Thiele [74] argue that this attitude can explain the tendency for future

purchasing behaviours when a consumer has the tendency to purchase a particular brand. According to Bangura [75], when consumers accept the message of corporate sponsorship, the attitude of their behavioural intentions is initially stimulated by external factors, which causes consumers to produce positive cognitive evaluations, emotional feelings and behavioural ideas. Finally, consumers form a belief or feeling towards a particular object and an attitude about it that affects their behavioural intentions. Behavioural intentions and actual behaviour have been confirmed as highly correlated in behavioural theory [76,77,78]. To predict a person's behaviour, behavioural intention is often an accurate predictor, that is, behavioural intention is the necessary process for any behaviour [79]. Baker and Crompton [80] also argue that behaviour can be predicted from behavioural intentions. Properly measuring behavioural intentions can thus be used to accurately predict actual behaviour.

Fishbein and Ajzen [81] also state that behavioural intention is a reliable measurement of variables for predicting individual behaviours. Thus, behavioural intentions are behavioural tendencies that can be used to predict individual behaviours. Scholars often define role behaviour as the method or shortcut that allows individuals to actually perform their roles. When an individual acts in accordance with the given norms and behaves as expected, it is called 'in-role behaviour'—this behaviour is mandatory and normative. When the behaviour is neither mandatory nor formally normative, it is called 'extra-role behaviour'. This behaviour is not based on the obligations of the role—to do or not to do something is at the discretion of the actor. This type of behaviour is not rewarded immediately but is not punished either.

In the same sense, when a consumer's behaviour exceeds in-role behaviour, it is usually spontaneous. On the other hand, consumers' extra-role behaviour refers to behaviour that is indirect, unexpected or unrewarded. Such behaviour is voluntary and discretionary [82]. Customers' extra-role behaviour includes making improvements or suggestions about a product or service, purchasing additional services or making recommendations to others through word of mouth [83,84]. Cronin et al. [85] state that consumers' positive behavioural intentions include the willingness to share a company's favourable performance with others, recommend it to others, exhibit loyalty to the company,

purchase more of its products and pay relatively higher prices. In this study, behavioural intentions refer to behavioural tendencies that occur after the consumer accepts a company's CSR initiatives.

In accordance with the aforementioned theory, we propose the following hypotheses:

H5 C-C identification has a positive effect on in-role behaviour.
H6 C-C identification has a positive effect on extra-role behaviour.
H7 Brand image has a positive effect on in-role behaviour.
H8 Brand image has a positive effect on extra-role behaviour.

Many studies on the impact of CSR report that consumers assess companies with a greater number of CSR activities more favourably [86,87]. Such corporations have a halo effect that enables consumers to further increase their satisfaction [88]. D'Astous and Bitz [89] and Sneath [90] report that when consumers think that an activity is attractive, interesting and trustworthy, they identify relatively more with the sponsor of the activity, which creates a more positive image of the sponsor. This positive image can be linked and transferred to the brand owned by the sponsor [91]. Similarly, when companies implement CSR initiatives, consumers are more likely to positively evaluate it, actively share information about corporations that they identify with and that have similar values as them and exhibit relatively more interest in the corporation's products.

When companies and their consumers share a set of values, the companies are more likely to persuade consumers to purchase their products and build relationships with them [92]. Brand image plays a crucial role in business activities as it influences consumers' perception of products and services [93]. Shimp [94] states that the attitude of marketing appeals affects product evaluation, and consumers transfer their perception to the product. When a consumer exhibits a positive attitude towards a company that implements CSR initiatives, the associated behavioural intention is transferred to the focus brand that is related to the CSR activity. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H9 C-C identification has a positive effect on brand image.

The conceptual model in Fig. 1 illustrates all the hypotheses of this study.
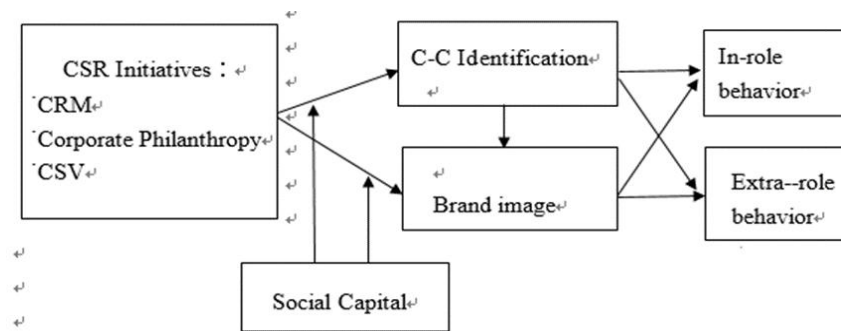
Fig 1. Model of CSR initiatives, C-C identification, brand image and behaviours

3. METHODS

3.1 Design and Participants

As suggested by Brønnand and Vrioni [95], each society has a different culture and economy as well as different views and behaviours regarding CSR. The experimental focus of this study is the individual consumer. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the relevance of C-C identification, brand image and behavioural intentions in different individual conditions of social capital for different types of CSR initiatives.

As part of our experimental design, we created a virtual corporation (Green Forest) and a nonprofit organisation (SAVE Polar Bear) along with different CSR initiatives that helped reduce past participants' experiences and reduce the mixed effects of the company and the experience-related variables. To confirm the conditions that can be used, all the experimental participants were asked to evaluate this corporation's different CSR initiatives at an event. The design background of the virtual event was based on the message 'the melting sea ice due to global warming has made hunting difficult for polar bears'. Our intended outcome was for consumers to support the nonprofit organisation and raise funds for its three different CSR initiatives.

CSR studies increasingly focus on the field of business research. Thus, to make the sample more representative, this study recruited final-year students from business schools in Taiwan as the research participants. The participants were familiar with the literature on CSR, had a high level of homogeneity and could contribute to establishing internal validity. The participants were asked to complete a questionnaire in a random manner. Further, the students who participated in the experiment were entered into a sweepstakes to encourage questionnaire completion. The experiment was held in a university teaching room where, upon arrival, each participant was informed that the purpose of the study was to determine how consumers respond to corporations that implement CSR initiatives. The participants read some data and completed a questionnaire that was used to measure their attitudes and behavioural intervention. The experimental process included a pretest and a formal experiment. Each experiment had at least 60 experimental participants and produced different results depending on the experiment.

3.2 Measurement

Multiple item scales were developed to measure each construct. These items were based on previous research and were modified and translated into Chinese to more accurately fit the context of this study. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Social capital was measured by adapting Davern Obel's [96] scale for connections of network relationships [97] and Granovetter's scale for the degree of network tightness. Reciprocal [98] trust, which refers to the trustworthiness of a community, was measured using the scale advocated by Coleman [99] and Foley and Edwards [100]. It comprises the following three items: 1. 'I would be willing to volunteer for public conservation interest groups'; 2. 'I think most people can be trusted'; 3. 'I think that most of the time people try to be helpful'. C-C identification was measured using the scale adapted from Mael and Ashforth [101], which comprises the following three items: 1. 'When Green Forest gains recognition in the market, I will be proud of

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it'; 2. 'I expect other people to identify with Green Forest'; 3. 'I will pay attention to the news published by Green Forest'. The measurement of 'brand image' depends on an industry's products and services [102]. To meet the objectives of this study, the scale developed by Low and Lamb [102] to measure shampoo products was used, including the following items: 1. 'I perceive Green Forest as having a good reputation'; 2. 'I perceive the quality of Green Forest products as good'; 3. 'I have a good impression of Green Forest'. Consumers' in-role behaviour was operationalised as consumer engagement in behaviours that support the company, such as purchasing the company's products. Three statements were adapted in part from Williams and Anderson [103] and Blackston [104]: 1. 'I would like to purchase Green Forest products'; 2. 'Green Forest products appeal to me'; 3. 'I would like to try Green Forest products'. Consumer extra-role behaviours were operationalised as voluntary and discretionary behaviours by an individual consumer that are not directly or explicitly expected or rewarded. Three items were adapted from Piercy et al. [105]: 1. 'I will tell my friends and family about the activities of Green Forest'; 2. 'I would like to participate in activities organised by Green Forest'; 3. 'I would recommend Green Forest to my friends and family'.

3.3 Scale Validation

Table 1 shows the scale reliability, means, standard deviations and correlations of constructs. The scale reliability was assessed using the internal consistency method. Cronbach's α provided a reasonable estimate of internal consistency. These values ranged from .833 (social capital) to .874 (brand image). All values surpassed the recommended value of .7 [106]. Fornell and Larcker [107] suggest using composite construct reliability to examine the internal consistency of multi-item scales included in the model.

As shown in Table 2, the composite reliability of each construct ranged from .899 (social capital) to .95 (C-C identification), exceeding the suggested minimum of .7 [108]. These results show that all multi-item scales of the measurement model demonstrated adequate internal consistency for further analysis of the structural model.

Convergent and discriminant validity tests were performed to determine construct validity. The standardised loadings and average percentage of variance extracted (AVE) were used to measure convergent validity. As noted by Hair et al. [109], factor loading is considered significant at estimates of 0.50 or higher—all loadings in the constructs were higher than 0.50. In addition, all AVE estimates were above 0.5 (see Table 3). To assess discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE in each construct was compared with the correlation coefficients of the two constructs [110]. The results indicate that the variables in the measurement model have acceptable levels of discriminant validity.

Table 1. Measurement scales and their properties

Variables	Mean	SD	C-C	BI	IR	ER
C-C identification	3.636	0.609	1	(0.513**)	(0.486**)	(0.509**)
Brand image	3.634	0.658	0.513**	1	(0.480**)	(0.418**)
In-role behaviour	3.611	0.594	0.486**	0.480**	1	(0.598**)
Extra-role behaviour	3.472	0.613	0.509**	0.418**	0.598**	1

Standard deviation (SD), C-C identification, brand image (BI), in-role behaviour (IR), extra-role behaviour (ER)
$*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$; N = 447 and reliability are reported in parentheses in the diagonal

Table 2. Composite reliabilities and variances extracted from the measurement model

Variables	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
C-C identification	0.950	0.760
Brand image	0.923	0.800
In-role behaviour	0.916	0.785
Extra-role behaviour	0.914	0.884
Social capital	0.899	0.750

Table 3. Data analysis and results

Dependent variable	(I) CSR initiative	(J) CSR Initiative	Mean difference (I-J)	Significance
C-C identification	CRM (M = 3.399)	Corporate philanthropy	-0.234	0.044*
		CSV	-0.493	0.000**
	Corporate philanthropy (M = 3.633)	CRM	0.234	0.044*
		CSV	-0.259	0.025*
	CSV (M = 3.892)	CRM	0.493	0.000**
		Corporate philanthropy	0.259	0.025*
Brand image	CRM (M = 3.347)	Corporate philanthropy	-0.265	0.024*
		CSV	-0.635	0.000**
	Corporate philanthropy (M = 3.61)	CRM	0.265	0.024*
		CSV	-0.370	0.001**
	CSV (M = 3.981)	CRM	0.635	0.000**
		Corporate philanthropy	0.370	0.001**

*p < 0.05, **P < 0.01

Convergent and discriminant validity tests were performed to determine construct validity. The standardised loadings and average percentage of variance extracted (AVE) were used to measure convergent validity. As noted by Hair et al. [109], factor loading is considered significant at estimates of 0.50 or higher—all loadings in the constructs were higher than 0.50. In addition, all AVE estimates were above 0.5 (see Table 3). To assess discriminant validity, the square root of the AVE in each construct was compared with the correlation coefficients of the two constructs [110]. The results indicate that the variables in the measurement model have acceptable levels of discriminant validity.

The means (Table 3) indicate that CSV had a greater impact on C-C identification than corporate philanthropy and CRM. Similarly, CSV had a greater impact on brand image than corporate philanthropy and CRM. Thus, the results show that CRM and corporate philanthropy differ in their relative influence on brand image and C-C identification. H1 and H2 are thereby supported.

H3 and H4 posit an interaction effect between CSR initiatives and C-C identification and brand image, respectively. A significant interaction effect was identified for both C-C identification (F = 3.64, P < 0.01) and brand image (F = 4.218, P < 0.01). The results of a planned pairwise contrast (Table 4) indicate that the effect of CRM and corporate philanthropy on C-C identification and brand image was greater in case of high social capital than in case of low social capital conditions, thereby supporting H3 and H4.

The linear relationships among C-C identification, brand image and behavioural responses (extra-role and in-role behaviour) were analysed through linear structural equation modelling (Table 5). The overall model fit, as indicated by the χ2 statistic (χ2 = 101.584, df = 49, p < .000), was unsatisfactory. However, this is not unusual for such a relatively large sample size (N = 226). For the measurement model, the goodness-of-fit index (GFI; 0.931), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI; 0.890), normed fit index (NFI; 0.937) and comparative fit index (CFI; 0.966) values were satisfactory according to the standards established by Jöreskog and Sörbom [111].

Using the model shown in Fig. 2 and Table 6, the estimated structural coefficients and t test were subsequently examined to evaluate the hypotheses. The test results show that C-C identification had a significant effect on in-role behaviour (β12 = 0.438, t = 4.688, p < .01), extra-role behaviour (β11 = 0.503, t = 5.440, p < .01) and brand image (γ11 = 0.637, t = 7.648, p < .01), thereby supporting H5, H6 and H9. Brand

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image had a significantly positive effect on both in-role behaviour ($\beta22 = 0.271$, t = 3.191, p = .01) and extra-role behaviour ($\beta21 = 0.167$, t = 2.075, p = .038), thereby supporting H7 and H8.

Table 4. Mean comparison of interaction effect

Dependent variable	CSR initiatives	Social capital	Mean	Mean difference (H~L)	Significance
C-C identification	CRM	High	3.458	0.178	0.034
		Low	3.280		0.000
	Corporate philanthropy	High	3.706	0.128	0.034
		Low	3.578		0.019
	CSV	High	4.269	0.595	0.000
		Low	3.674		0.019
Brand image	CRM	High	3.405	0.178	0.018
		Low	3.227		0.000
	Corporate philanthropy	High	3.657	0.079	0.018
		Low	3.578		0.001
	CSV	High	4.372	0.616	0.000
		Low	3.756		0.001

*$p < 0.05$, **$P < 0.01$

Table 5. Results of the mediation nested mode comparative analysis

Fit standards	Standards	Data
x^2	The smaller the better	101.584
x^2/df	< 5	2.073
GFI (Goodness-of-fit index)	> 0.9	0.931
AGFI (Adjusted goodness-of-fit index)	> 0.8	0.890
RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	$\leqq 0.08$	0.069
NFI (Normed fit index)	> 0.9	0.937
IFI (Incremental fit index)	> 0.9	0.966
CFI (Comparative fit index)	> 0.9	0.966

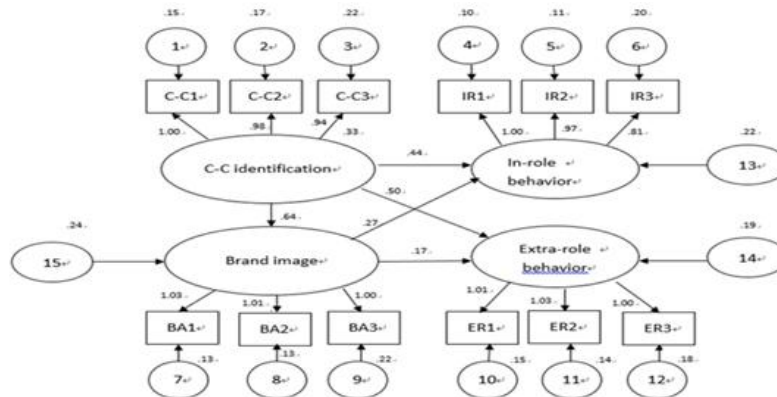**Fig. 2. Structural equation modelling of the framework**

Table 6. Results of the hypotheses' analysis

Hypotheses	CR	P	Data
C-C identification has a positive effect on brand image	7.648	***	Support
C-C identification has a positive effect on in-role behaviour	4,688	***	Support
C-C identification has a positive effect on extra-role behaviour	5.440	***	Support
Brand image has a positive effect on in-role behaviour	3.191	0.001	Support
Brand image has a positive effect on extra-role behaviour	2.075	0.038	Support

*$P<0.05$, **$P<0.01$, ***$P<0.001$*

4. DISCUSSION

Our study accords with Lii [112] as the different types of CSR initiatives had different effects on consumer identification and brand image. Our results indicate that consumers promote follow-up behavioural intentions through identification and corporate image, which is the ultimate goal of a corporation. Depending on the level of social capital, the perception of CSR initiatives differs. Although all of our results reveal positive effects, the intention to participate differs, that is, CSV has the greatest effect on both C-C identification and brand image, followed by corporate philanthropy and CRM.

Because of rising global citizenship awareness, the global economy, politics, society and the environment are seen as interrelated. Also, the speed of information transmission today is extremely high. CSV, a new concept of CSR proposed by Porter in 2010, is becoming more widespread and being increasingly embraced by humankind. Many people hope that corporations will consider sustainable methods to simultaneously achieve mutual commitment and consensus with society, coexist with the environment and pursue their business interests. Businesses can prosper by achieving these goals.

Additionally, unconditional corporate sponsorship remains accepted by the public, but its strength has gradually weakened. Consumers care not just about donations but also whether the recipients have truly benefited as a result of this sponsorship (the controversy regarding donating second-hand clothes is an example of when this is not achieved). We determine that corporations that substantially plan various 'special', 'incidental' and 'embedded' cause-related marketing activities often reap unsatisfactory rewards and find persuading consumers to participate increasingly difficult. CRM is being increasingly scrutinised by consumers, which indicates that they desire relatively more moral behaviour from companies. When implementing CRM, corporations should exercise more caution in assessing their suitability and make their decision-making processes more transparent in order to avoid public scepticism.

4.1 The Moderating Effect of Social Capital

The hypothesised moderating effect of social capital was supported by this study, showing a significant and positive effect on the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer attitudinal evaluations. Specifically, the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer attitudinal evaluations was stronger when consumers perceived C-C Identification and brand image as having a high individual social capital (see Table 4).

4.2 C-C Identification, Brand Image and Behavioural Intentions

Our findings indicate that C-C identification and brand image are key mediators of the relationship between CSR initiatives and behavioural intention. A higher degree of C-C identification and a more positive brand image of CSR initiatives seems to be linked to stronger in-role and extra-role consumer responses, which benefits companies.

5. CONCLUSION

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the term 'social capital' has been used only sporadically by researchers due to a significant degree of controversy and complexity associated with it. Our study indicates that the new generation of consumers is far more globally aware than its predecessor. Additionally, this generation of consumers increasingly prioritises the symbiotic and mutually beneficial prosperity of corporations, other species and the environment alongside the pursuit of profits. Corporations must reflect such changes in consumer attitudes by changing their behaviours.

Simple monetary donations are increasingly considered insufficient. Consumers now expect 'cause-related marketing' to support public welfare, and they also expect corporations to be responsible both to their stakeholders and the environment. Corporations must also consider the object of communication, that is, the social capital of stakeholders. Social capital is the driving force of innovation, and various CSR initiatives are only methods of accumulating it. When a corporation conducts marketing activities, the key goal of its communication with its consumers is to 'be remembered'. Corporations communicate with consumers through their brand and by fostering consumers' identification with it. Typically, enterprises do conduct on-going R&D activities and continue to strengthen their core competencies; however, although innovation is relatively crucial, CSR strategies must also be implemented on the basis of the extent of social capital to achieve the desired benefits.

One key limitation of this study is that its data were collected through convenience sampling; therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution so as to avoid overgeneralisation. Additionally, the most controversial aspect of social capital is the scope of its coverage (OECD, 2001a). Many scholars disagree on the form of this relationship, which increases the difficulty of its measurement. Future research can analyse other perspectives at the macroscopic level or improve the 'cooperation' measurement of social capital.

CSR has greatly evolved over the last half of the century. Today, people are increasingly conscious about CSR activities because of the rapid flow of information, which encourages more CSR-related interactions between corporations and their stakeholders. The optimal moderator is connecting with people, thereby fostering trust, mutual understanding, common values and shared behaviours. Corporations derive from society, that is, a group of people and social capital contains all natural and unnatural of all contacts. We cannot provide solutions for all instances, but we shall strive to connect the core competencies of corporations and build a larger network. On the basis of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), much can be achieved, but the response of individuals and corporations to these SDGs is crucial. Corporations must consider their avenues for development and new forms of CSR.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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