Effects of the Awareness of University's CSR on Students' Word-of-Mouth Intentions

Oluwatobi A. Ogunmokun[✉] and Seldjan Timur

Department of Business Administration, Eastern Meditteranean University,
Famagusta, North Cyprus
{oluwatobi.ogunmokun,selcan.timur}@emu.edu.tr

Abstract. Under recent circumstances such as globalization, edu-tourism and the privatization of institutions of higher education, the resultant competition in the higher education industry has forced universities to adopt an approach that is more business-oriented to compete in and overcome the challenges of the industry. One of the major challenges facing universities is student attraction and retention, as students face little or no barrier in transferring from one university to another. As a result, universities continue to seek effective ways to remain attractive to prospective students in addition to ensuring that their current students do not leave. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a means for firms to improve societal well-being, it likewise offers the opportunity to have a positive reputation and competitive advantage. Studies reporting the positive effect of CSR on stakeholders' behavior are gradually increasing; thus, universities can use CSR as a part of their competitive strategy and positively influence the behavior of their students. However, for this strategy to be effective, attention has to be given to the significant role played by students' understanding and awareness of the university's CSR activities. This study investigates the association between students' awareness of their university's CSR initiatives and their intentions to recommend their university. This is particularly relevant primarily because studies that have explored the effect of CSR on stakeholders' behavior have hardly considered the higher education sector thus leaving a void in literature this study seeks to fill. The primary data for this study is obtained from a structured questionnaire survey administered to students of Eastern Mediterranean University. Based on a conceptual model developed on the theory of planned behavior (TPB), this study investigates the causative relationships among awareness of CSR activities, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, attitude and Word-of-Mouth intention using PROCESS macro. Theoretically, the present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in this field by recommending and empirically analyzing an extended TPB model to predict students' recommendation intentions as a result of being aware of their university's CSR activities. This study is also relevant to the managers of higher education institutions as the findings suggest they can leverage on their CSR activities to build a reputation and gain competitive advantage.

Keywords: Word-of-Mouth intention · Corporate social responsibility · Universities · Theory of planned behaviour · Higher education

1 Introduction

The increasing expectations of universities globally to satisfy different stakeholders (such as the society, employees, parents, the government and students), and to address social and ecological issues have imposed on them huge social responsibility (Kunstler 2006). In a bid to better respond to these societal demands and expectations, universities have had to glean from the corporate experience. This explains why universities and academia at large are nowadays characterized by managerialism and corporate models, an example of which is the adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies (Hammond and Churchman 2008).

Also, currently, universities are faced with challenges similar to that of corporations; they struggle for funds, good employees, reputation, and student enrolment (which will be clienteles in the case of corporations). As a result, higher education institutions (HEI) are embracing an approach that is more business-like; realizing the significance of corporate image, corporate identity, corporate reputation and are employing socially responsible actions as a strategy to build a reputable image and competitive advantage (Atakan and Eker 2007; Porter and Kramer 2006). Thus, high competition among universities nationally and internationally is a reality (Sanchez-Hernandez and Mainardes 2016); and in a competitive environment, marketing is essential to organizations' growth and survival. In other words, organizations in a competitive market have to remain attractive to prospective customers (which are students in the case of universities) to survive. Therefore, marketing concepts and theories that have been employed in the corporate world are now useful in the marketing of universities (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka 2006). From this perspective, one of the new developments in the marketing of universities is social responsibility (Sanchez-Hernandez and Mainardes 2016). While CSR is a means for universities to enhance societal well-being, implementing CSR strategies provide universities with the opportunity to gain a sustainable competitive edge over competitors (Burcea and Marinescu 2011). The global dynamics and challenges of universities are also valid in the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC). TRNC (which is our study context) is a global edu-tourism hub, and the HEI in TRNC have also begun to adopt an approach that is more business-like, as the dynamics of the country's very competitive higher education sector are not so different from the other parts of the world.

The impact of an organization's CSR activities on the attitudes and behavioral intentions of most of its stakeholder group is well documented in the literature (Rahim et al. 2011; Vahdati et al. 2015; Jung et al. 2018). This study argues that the CSR activities of universities can favorably influence the attitudes and behavioral intentions of their students. However, the effectiveness of this hinges on the students' awareness of their universities' CSR activities. Stakeholders' awareness of an organization's CSR activities is additional advantage to the organization and a prerequisite of benefits like customer retention (Ali et al. 2010; Engizek and Yasin 2017), positive word of mouth (Szymanski and Henard 2001; Zapata-Ramos and Kim 2018) and positive responses (Tian et al. 2011).

Steckstor (2012) described positive word-of-mouth intention (WOM) as the attitude of an individual to engage in complimentary WOM with other consumers. Jalilvand et al. (2017) explained WOM as a sort of informal information about services and products among persons who have used the services or products and individuals

who may be interested in the services or product. WOM has been researched as possible behavioral intentions following an individual's interaction with a brand, service, product, or organization (Swanson and Davis 2003).

A few theories have been employed by researchers to predict and explain behavioral intentions. Ajzen (1991)'s theory of planned behavior (TPB), has been used to predict behavioral intentions (Wang et al. 2016). Ajzen (1991) explained that three variables jointly result in an individual's behavioral intention formation. These variables are perceived behavioral control (PBC), attitude, and subjective norms. However, scholars have reiterated over the years that one specific construct that could be added as an extension to boost the predictive ability of TPB is self-identity (Reid et al. 2018). Rise et al. (2010) describe self-identity as a prominent and persistent aspect of an individual's self-perception. This might be in the form of social categorizations that have certain expectations and meanings associated with it (e.g., perceiving oneself to be a 'socially responsible' individual might be connected to certain expectations like recommending a socially responsible organization to friends and family). Therefore, using an extended model of TPB, the present study will investigate the effect of students' awareness of their university's CSR on their word-of-mouth intentions. This is instrumental to deepening the available knowledge on CSR, as literature that has explored the influence of CSR on stakeholders' behavior have hardly considered the higher education sector thus leaving a void in literature this research aims to fill.

The current study continues with a review of relevant literature, which is followed by a development of the study's hypotheses. The methodology by which the study is carried out is presented before reporting the results of the study. In the final section, the findings of the study are discussed.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility Within the HEI Context

The concept of CSR has developed over the years as one of the major subject matter of the current capitalist society. Even though large corporations had been at the center of CSR research, with time and with more progressive studies, other forms of organizations such as small and medium-sized businesses, government organizations and universities were also included (Nejati et al. 2011). Within the HEI context, Vieira et al. (2018) argued that universities could have substantial environmental and social impact. Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar (2008) argued that a number of these impacts are due to the large size of these institutions, huge consumption of materials, expressive movement of vehicles and people, as well as the complex and diversified activities that make up the higher education services. Due to their significant environmental and societal impact, it is expected that universities be responsible to all their stakeholders, the environment, and the society (Nejati et al. 2011). Similarly, Dahan and Senol (2012) highlighted that because of the complexity of the operations of HEI, which constantly overlap with social interest, higher education institutions are under pressure for socially responsible practices.

The CSR actions of universities ought to address economic, environmental as well as social concerns that cannot be detached from the institution's strategic operations and planning, which is central to how the institution interacts with the society as well

as other external and internal stakeholders (Chen et al. 2015). Universities are social institutions, and they are expected to contribute to the social cause, but more recently, CSR has been more important for universities as a growth strategy (Jimena et al. 2011; Nadeem and Kakakhel 2012). Jimena et al. (2011) maintain that universities are riding on the CSR wave to gain a competitive advantage in the higher education sector. One of the motivators for the CSR actions of universities is maintaining a good reputation in the highly competitive higher education sector (Nadeem and Kakakhel 2012). Some studies have also shown that if universities can effectively address the social and environmental concerns of their stakeholders, it will help them in sustaining a competitive edge (Burcea and Marinescu 2011; Dahan and Senol 2012). Students, as an important stakeholder of universities, are important players in the CSR dynamics of universities. Just as investors can provide capital; host communities of universities can provide location and infrastructure; employees can grant leadership and expertise; students can offer word-of-mouth and loyalty to socially responsible universities (Fatma and Rahman 2015). University students today are more conscious of social and environmental issues than ten years ago (Lee 2011). Thus, these students expect their universities to be socially responsible. Hence, universities have included CSR as a value proposition (Dahan and Senol 2012). Furthermore, due to the good reputation, CSR accords to universities (Burcea and Marinescu 2011; Dahan and Senol 2012); stakeholders will be more willing to identify with socially responsible universities. Student, for example, will be attracted to and be willing to identify with socially responsible universities due to its good reputation and also because there is generally an increased sense of environmental and social consciousness among students (Lee 2011). However, according to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) the level of awareness differ among consumers yet being aware of CSR activities has been said to be a prerequisite to the benefits of CSR like purchase intention, loyalty and customer–company identification (Becker-Olsen et al. 2006; Marin et al. 2009; Tian et al. 2011).

3   Theory of Planned Behaviour

This study examined whether, and in what way students' awareness of the universities' CSR will influence their word of mouth intention. For this purpose, the TPB model (Ajzen 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen 2011) is adopted as a theoretical framework to predict word of mouth intentions of university students. Several different studies have endorsed the predictive ability of TPB in consumer behavior (Wang et al. 2016). The TPB (Ajzen 1991) essentially states that behaviors are determined by the intention of a person to perform a particular action. The intention is a reflection of cognitive planning and motivations for engaging in a behavior, and it is dependent on three significant cognitive factors: subjective norm, PBC and attitude (Ajzen 1991; Fishbein and Ajzen 2011).

Attitude is the extent to which an individual has an unfavorably or favorable appraisal of the behavior in question, which is an outcome of the person's mental processes (Ajzen 1991; Lopes et al. 2019). Kotchen and Reiling (2000) stated that attitude is the most decisive factor that governs the behavioral intention of an individual. It has been empirically proven that an individual's positive attitude towards social responsibility often leads to socially responsible behavior. For example, in the green hotel context, Han and Yoon

(2015) found that attitude leads to environmentally friendly behavior. Subjective norm is the social pressure an individual perceives him/herself to be under, which is influencing him or her to act in a particular manner or execute certain behavior. From the TPB viewpoint, the subjective norm is an important element that influences an individual's behavioral intention (Hameed et al. 2019). It is an individual's feeling regarding certain behavior from society's perspectives. If an individual feels positive regarding society's behavior, such an individual will begin to behave positively. Subjective norm has been reported to significantly influence socially responsible behaviors (Dean et al. 2012; Moser 2015). PBC is an individual's perceived ability to display a particular behavior. It is an individual's perceived difficulty or ease of executing a specific task (Hameed et al. 2019). An individual's ability is measured based on how confident such a person is as regards performing the behavior. An individual who has a belief that he/she is incapable of performing certain behavior because of the want of skills required to display the behavior is not likely to have a strong behavioral intention regardless of the effectiveness of the other TPB model variables (Zhou et al. 2013). PBC has also been empirically linked to socially responsible behavioral intention (Albayrak et al. 2013; Tarkiainen and Sundqvist 2005; Taylor and Todd 1995; Chang et al. 2014). Furthermore, these constructs have been extensively described in the literature as effective predictors of positive word of mouth intention (Fu et al. 2015).

However, taking a cue from prior studies, this study posits an extended TPB model to contain another component, in a bid to amplify the model's prognostic ability. Several researchers think that TPB requires some merger, decomposition or extension for it to support fully, and offer a reasonable defense for their proposed theoretical frameworks in predicting behavioral intentions (Dahiya and Gayatri 2017; Han 2015; Kiatkawsin and Han 2017). These scholars have specified that the predictive power of the three TPB indicators (PBC, attitude, and subjective norms) is somewhat not sufficient in predicting the behavioral intentions of moral individuals. Therefore, self-identity is considered as an inclusion to the TPB framework of this study. The explanation for the ability of self-identity to predict behavior is based on Identity Theory (IT) (Callero 1985). IT describes how a person's expectations of role-appropriate behavior can enforce his/her position in society (Charng et al. 1988). This means that when a subject matter becomes crucial to a person's self-identity, behavioral intentions are consequently attuned. In this study, the measure of self-identity is specifically denoted to as "socially responsible," which can be described as the duty to behave in a way that is beneficial to society at large (Seechi 2009; Seechi and Bui 2018). In this particular framework, socially responsible individuals have socially responsible behavioral intentions because social responsibility has turned out to be an essential part of their self-identity. Scholars have conveyed the legitimacy of adding the construct of self-identity into the TPB model in predicting intentions and behaviors (Smith et al. 2008).

4 Word-of-Mouth Intention

In the literature, a broad range of conditions has been reported to influence and be influenced by word of mouth activities, such as attitudes, perceptions, expectations, and awareness (Brown et al. 2005). According to Berry et al. (1994), much like repurchase,

positive WOM is a behavioral intention that has to do to recommend. The viability of which is an offshoot of positive word of mouth since individuals like to talk about their pleasant experiences and satisfaction with services, brands and organizations with friends and family, persuading others who are prospective customers to purchase (Berry et al. 1994; Zeithaml 2000). In general, studies on WOM (e.g., Mazzarol et al. 2007) revealed that the reason for an individual to be involved in positive WOM varies. Some people are involved in positive WOM for reasons that are altruistic and philanthropic (Sundaram et al. 1998). Identification has also been reported to be a precursor of positive WOM (Brown et al. 2005; Hong and Yang 2009). That is, when an individual's schema overlaps with that of an organization, such an individual tends to identify with that organization by engaging in WOM. According to Arnett et al. (2003), when individuals say positive things about an organization to friends and family, it offers them the means to express their self-identity and the extent to which there is an overlap between the 'self' and the organization, is the extent to which a person will spread WOM concerning the organization. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), people turn out to be champions of the organizations with which they identify. Although there are lots of WOM studies dating back to Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), the limited number has sought to link WOM intentions to its precursors clearly, and they have concentrated more on the direct causality between product-related or service-related features and WOM (Hong and Yang 2009). Scholars have rarely investigated the association between organization-related attributes such as corporate social responsibility and WOM.

5 Hypothesis Development

5.1 Awareness of CSR and Attitude, Subjective Norm, Self-identity, Perceived Behavioral Control and WOM Intention

The awareness of an organization's CSR actions is a good predictor of behavior (Wigley 2008; Maignan 2001). Earlier studies (e.g., Mohr et al. 2001) reported that low knowledge and awareness of an organization's CSR initiatives is a primary issue limiting the people's positive responses to the organization's CSR activities. Increased awareness of CSR activities will influence the attitude of an individual towards the organization (Fatma and Rahman 2015). Increased awareness of the social responsibility of government is also assumed to be the reason for the positive attitudes and increased the perception of one's capability to perform socially responsible behaviors among Chinese energy consumers (Zhou et al. 2013). Awareness of an organization's CSR activities will influence an individual's perception of societal norms (Raub and Blunschi 2014) if the perception is deemed positive, the individual can be influenced to adopt a corresponding self-identity.

Therefore this study hypothesizes that:

H_1–H_4: Students' awareness of University's CSR will positively influence the students' attitude, subjective norm, self-identity and perceived behavioral control

5.2 Impact of Attitude, Subjective Norm, Self-identity and Perceived Behavioral Control on Intention

Findings from prior research confirm the ability of self-identity, subjective norms and attitude and PBC to predict individuals' behavioral intention (see Chan and Bishop

2013; Chen and Peng 2012, Han et al. 2010, Kim et al. 2013). In this study, the outcomes of an individual's PBC, subjective norm, and attitude are WOM intentions. Since a person's attitude is understood as the person's overall effect toward a particular behavior, it reveals the person's overall appraisal of the badness or goodness in carrying out the behavior after evaluating the consequences of behavioral beliefs. That is, if an individual has favorable attitudes regarding certain behavior, the person has greater chances of engaging in such behavior. On the other hand, if an individual has a negative attitude regarding certain behavior, such a person is unlikely to engage in such behavior. Hence, this study posits that

H_5: *Student's attitude towards recommending a socially responsible university, will strongly influence the intention to engage in positive WOM about his/her socially responsible university*

Subjective norm is based on what an individual's normative beliefs regarding what most of the people who are important to him/her think and the degree to which such a person is willing to conform to what they think (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). In other words, if social responsibility is regarded as a virtuous deed by a person's significant others, and the person also has a high impetus to conform to his/her significant others, such a person will have stronger intention to engage in socially responsible behaviors. Therefore, if the behavior is acceptable socially, the intent to carry out the behavior is high. For this reason, this study posits that

H_6: *A student's subjective norm will strongly predict the intention to engage in positive WOM about his/her socially responsible university*

Conner and Abraham (2001) believe that an individual's behavior is greatly influenced by his/her self-assurance in his/her capability to display the proposed behavior. When an individual believes that they possess very little control over the performance of a certain kind of behavior due to lack of necessary resources, such an individual's intentions to engage in the behavior may be low even if they have a positive subjective norm and/or attitude about the said behavior. Consequently, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_7: *A student's perceived control to act recommend a socially responsible university will positively influence the intention to engage in positive WOM about his/her socially responsible university*

Consumers identify with organizations when they observe that there is an overlap between their self-identity and the organization's CSR activities (El-Kassar et al. 2019; Lichtenstein et al. 2004). Such identification is seen in more positive behavioral intention towards the organization such as continuance, positive word of mouth communication and loyalty (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004). When customers speak positively about an organization, it provides the means of expressing their self-identity (Arnett et al. 2003). Consequently, the following hypothesis is developed:

H_8: *A student's self-identity as a socially responsible person will positively influence the intention to engage in positive WOM about his/her socially responsible university*

Consumers' awareness of an organization's efforts to be socially responsible is likely to influence their intention to engage in positive WOM about the organization (Kang and Hustvedt 2014). Consumers are very likely to engage in positive WOM about companies they are aware of being sharing their ethical values (Maxham and Netemeyer 2003).

Handelman and Arnold (1999) argued that organizations whose customers are aware not to be violating industry norms associated with social responsibility receive positive WOM. Thus we propose that

   H_9: Awareness of CSR activities will directly influence WOM intentions

6   Methodology and Results

The primary data for this study were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to students of Eastern Mediterranean University. The survey scales of this study were drawn from different constructs' pre-existing measures and adapted to the HEI context. Subjective norm is drawn from Liang et al. (2013); Perceived behavioural control from Kim and Han (2010); positive WOM intention from Prayag et al. (2017); awareness of CSR from Raub and Blunschi (2014) and Maignan (2001); attitude from Ajzen (1991); continuance intention from Kim et al. (2013) and self-identity from Shephard et al. (1995). Demographics of the level of study, gender, and age were included in the second part of the survey questionnaire. The respondents participated voluntarily in the survey by filling the self-administered questionnaires. All responses were on a 5-point Likert scale, from "1: totally disagree" to "5: totally agree". The statistical analyses of the study were performed using AMOS 23.0 and SPSS 23.0. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first carried out to determine the quality of the measurement model (that is, the model fit), discriminant as well as convergent validity. After which, Hayes' (2013) SPSS PROCESS macro was employed in conducting the study model's path analysis. Based on George and Mallery's (2010) recommendation, other analyses, particularly the kurtosis and skewness of the distribution of the variables were also scrutinized, and all were in the −2 to 2 range, which suggests normality of the distribution. The sample consisted of 214 respondents; 57.9% male, 42.1% female. 75.7% aged 18–29 years, 21.5% aged 25–34, and 2.8% aged 35–44. 76% were undergraduate students, 19.6% were Masters Students, and 4.2% were Ph.D. students.

Outcome from the CFA revealed that the data, and the model fits: $\chi^2\,(231) = 362.142$, $p = .000$; χ^2/df = 1.568; CFI = .94; SRMR = .0544; RMSEA = .052. Fornell and Larcker's (1981) conditions were used to evaluate the discriminant and convergent validity of our data. Table 1 shows the standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), internal consistency (α), and composite reliability (CR) of all constructs. Excluding two items from the subjective norm and perceived behavioral control (which were subsequently removed), the other items loaded onto their corresponding latent construct. CR values, as well as Cronbach's alphas, surpassed the 0.70 thresholds. The AVEs exceeded .50 except for that of Awareness, which is 0.481. Although 0.50 is the acceptable threshold of reliability, Malhotra and Dash (2011) argue that reliability can be established via CR alone because AVE is too strict. Hidayah et al. (2019) likewise insisted that latent variables' AVE can still be below 0.50 if its composite reliability is satisfactory.

Each variable AVE's square root was more than the inter-correlations with other variables, as shown in Table 2. Overall, these results sustained discriminant and convergent validity.

Table 1. Constructs reliability, Factors loadings, and Cronbach's Alpha

	Factor loading	CR	α	AVE
Attitude		**0.863**	**0.863**	**0.557**
Att 1	0.811			
Att 2	0.799			
Att 3	0.799			
Att 4	0.787			
Att 5	0.780			
Subjective Norm		**0.802**	**0.764**	**0.504**
SN1	-			
SN 2	0.828			
SN 3	0.749			
SN 4	0.734			
SN 5	0.676			
Perceived Behavioural Control		**0.733**	**0.698**	**0.501**
PBC 1	0.838,			
PBC 2	0.783			
PBC 3	0.552			
PBC 4	-			
Awareness of CSR		**0.73**	**0.717**	**0.481**
Aware 1	0.816			
Aware 2	0.815			
Aware 3	0.656			
Social Self-Identity		**0.74**	**0.731**	**0.59**
SID 1	0.827			
SID 2	0.788			
WOM Intention		**0.9**	**0.899**	**0.75**
Recom 1	0.878			
Recom 2	0.874			
Recom 3	0.858			

Note: (-) represent items removed during CFA

7 Hypotheses Testing

To test the hypotheses of the awareness-behavioral intention link through PBC, self-identity, attitudes, and subjective norms, a parallel multiple mediation analysis was carried out using PROCESS model 4 (Hayes 2013). Before this, an average value of

Table 2. Discriminant validity criterion and intercorrelations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Awareness of CSR	**0.693**					
Attitude	$0.163^{\dagger}$	**0.747**				
Subjective norm	0.399^{***}	0.169^{*}	**0.71**			
Perceived behavioural control	$0.1^{\dagger}$	0.245^{**}	0.508^{***}	**0.642**		
Social self-identity	0.328^{**}	0.184^{*}	0.553^{***}	0.570^{***}	**0.768**	
WOM intentions	0.344^{***}	0.282^{***}	0.405^{***}	0.488^{***}	0.288^{**}	**0.866**

Note: $\dagger = p < .100$; $* = p < 0.05$; $** = p < 0.01$; $*** = p < 0.001$ (2-tailed). Numbers on the diagonal are the AVE's square roots.

all the items in each of the construct was calculated. All the hypothesized direct effects were supported (H_1–H_9) except for the relationship between WOM intention and social identity (H_8) (see details in Fig. 1).
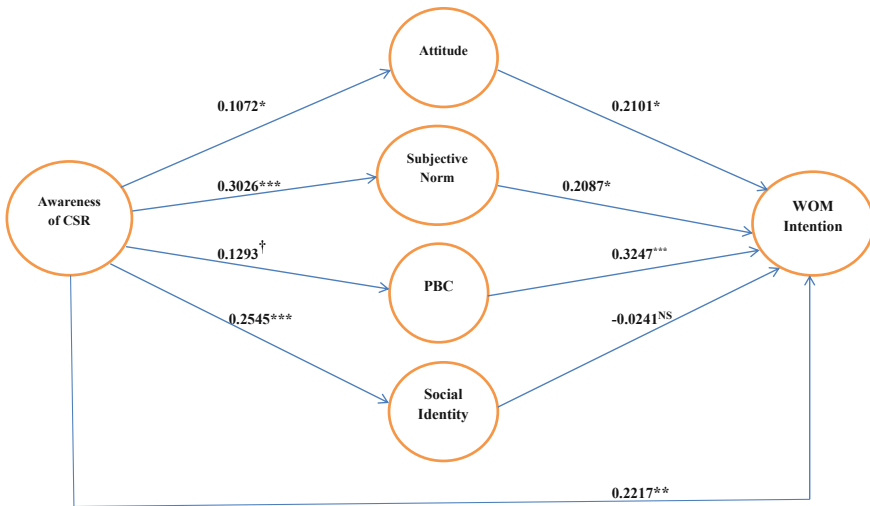

Fig. 1. Research model with analysis results. Note: $\dagger = p < .100$; $* = p < .05$; $** = p < .01$; $*** = p < .001$ (2-tailed).

The statistical significance of the tested indirect effects was provided by a 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence interval (BCa CI) bootstrap with 10,000 resamples. As shown in Table 3, the association between awareness of CSR and WOM intention is jointly and partially mediated by the variables of the extended TPB model (self-identity, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and attitudes).

Table 3. Total, Direct, and Indirect Effect

	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect
Awareness of CSR => WOM Intention	0.3392	0.2217	0.1175
95% BC CI	0.1815–0.4970	0.0672–0.3762	0.0132–0.2342

Note: $p < 0.01$

8   Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that awareness of universities' CSR activities significantly influences the WOM intention of students through a TPB model, extended to include self-identity. This is by the findings of Lee and Shin (2010) and Pomering and Dolnicar (2009), which recognize that awareness of CSR activities influences consumer behaviors. The insignificant relationship between social self-identity and WOM intention is contrary to our proposed hypothesis (H_8); failing to confirm the findings of Brown et al. (2005). This could be explained by Biddle et al. (1987) argument that self-identity, norms, and attitudes do not have the same motivational roots. People imitate norms for fear of external sanction by significant others and follow attitudes based on instrumental reasons. However, people act in harmony with their self-identity based on self-verification reasons. Another argument to support this could be that self-identity might merely be reflecting past performances of behavior and not necessarily predicting a future behavioral-intention (Rise et al. 2010). Unlike self-identity, this study confirms that PBC is a strong predictor of behavioral intentions. This finding confirms the inferences of Carfora et al. (2017).

Theoretically, the current study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in CSR research by proposing and empirically supporting an extended TPB model to predict students' WOM intentions as a result of being aware of their universities CSR activities. This further confirms the predictive ability of the TPB model in general and particularly its ability to predict WOM intentions. Also, the model tested in the present study incorporated WOM intention. This integration is important since several studies on the attitude-behavioral intention model in social responsibility, and consumer's behavior towards CSR have largely only explored purchase intentions. According to Chu and Kim (2011), WOM is critically important in our world where "friends" attitude towards corporate behavior is only a "click" away. Also, the present study contributes to the studies in higher education since only limited studies have applied the TPB in that field. This is a significant contribution largely because studies that have investigated the influence of CSR on stakeholders' behavioral-intentions have hardly considered the higher education sector.

Managerially, this study reveals that attention has to be given to the significant role played by students' understanding and awareness of their university's CSR activities as this has been empirically proven to influence their WOM intention which is an effective form of promotion and reputation building for the university. Hence, these findings provide further reassurance to universities considering or probably undetermined to invest resources in ensuring sustainable and socially responsible practices.

This study has certain limitations. One of which is the sample drawn from the student population of one university only. This makes it difficult to generalize the findings of this study. Another is that this study focused on the effect of CSR awareness on WOM intentions but has not established any association between intentions and actual behavior. Thus, future studies can examine the link between behavioral-intentions influenced by awareness of CSR and the actual behavior.

References

Ajzen I (1991) The theory of planned behaviour. Organ Behav Hum Decis Process 50(2):179–211

Ajzen I, Fishbein M (1980) Understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs

Albayrak T, Aksoy Ş, Caber M (2013) The effect of environmental concern and scepticism on green purchase behaviour. Mark Intell Plann 31(1):27–39

Ali I, Rehman KU, Yilmaz AK, Nazir S, Ali JF (2010) Effects of corporate social responsibility on consumer retention in the cellular industry of Pakistan. Afr J Bus Manage 4(4):475–485

Alshuwaikhat HM, Abubakar I (2008) An integrated approach to achieving campus sustainability: assessment of the current campus environmental management practices. J Clean Prod 16(16):1777–1785

Arnett DB, German SD, Hunt SD (2003) The identity salience model of relationship marketing success: the case of nonprofit marketing. J Mark 67(2):89–105

Becker-Olsen KL, Cudmore BA, Hill RP (2006) The impact of perceived corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour. J Bus Res 59(1):46–53

Berry LL, Parasuraman A, Zeithaml VA (1994) Improving service quality in America: lessons learned. Acad Manag Exec 8:32–52

Bhattacharya CB, Sen S (2004) Doing better at doing good: when, why, and how consumers respond to corporate social initiatives. Calif Manage Rev 47(1):9–24

Biddle BJ, Bank BJ, Slavings R (1987) Norms, preferences, identities, and retention decisions. Soc Psychol Q 50:322–337

Brown TJ, Barry TE, Dacin PA, Gunst RF (2005) Spreading the word: investigating antecedents of consumers' positive word-of-mouth intentions and behaviours in a retailing context. J Acad Mark Sci 33(2):123–138

Burcea M, Marinescu P (2011) Students' perceptions on corporate social responsibility at the academic level. Case study: the faculty of administration and business, University of Bucharest. Amfiteatru Econ J 13(29):207–220

Bhattacharya CB, Sen S (2003) Consumer–company identification: a framework for understanding consumers' relationships with companies. J Mark 67(2):76–88

Callero P (1985) Role-identity salience. Soc Psychol Q 48:203–215

Carfora V, Caso D, Sparks P, Conner M (2017) Moderating effects of pro-environmental self-identity on pro-environmental intentions and behaviour: a multi-behaviour study. J Environ Psychol 53:92–99

Charng HW, Piliavin JA, Callero PL (1988) Role identity and reasoned action in the prediction of repeated behaviour. Soc Psychol Q 51:303–317

Chan L, Bishop B (2013) A moral basis for recycling: extending the theory of planned behaviour. J Environ Psychol 36:96–102

Chang W, Chang I (2014) The influences of humorous advertising on brand popularity and advertising effects in the tourism industry. Sustainability 6(12):9205–9217

Chen SH, Nasongkhla J, Donaldson JA (2015) University social responsibility (USR): identifying an ethical foundation within higher education institutions. Turk Online J Educ Technol TOJET 14(4):165–172

Chu SC, Kim Y (2011) Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. Int J Advert 30(1):47–75

Conner M, Abraham C (2001) Conscientiousness and the theory of planned behaviour: toward a more complete model of the antecedents of intentions and behaviour. Pers Soc Psychol Bull 27(11):1547–1561

Dahan GS, Senol I (2012) Corporate social responsibility in higher education institutions: Istanbul Bilgi University case. Am Int J Contemp Res 2(3):95–103

Dahiya R, Gayatri (2017) Investigating Indian car buyers' decision to use digital marketing communication: an empirical application of decomposed TPB. Vision 21(4):385–396

Dean M, Raats MM, Shepherd R (2012) The role of self-identity, past behaviour, and their interaction in predicting intention to purchase fresh and processed organic food. J Appl Soc Psychol 42(3):669–688

El-Kassar AN, Makki D, Gonzalez-Perez MA (2019) Student–university identification and loyalty through social responsibility: a cross-cultural analysis. Int J Educ Manage 33(1):45–65

Engizek N, Yasin B (2017) How CSR and overall service quality lead to affective commitment: mediating role of company reputation. Soc Responsib J 13(1):111–125

Fatma M, Rahman Z (2015) Consumer perspective on CSR literature review and future research agenda. Manage Res Rev 38(2):195–216

Fishbein M, Ajzen I (2011) Predicting and changing behaviour: the reasoned action approach. Psychology Press, New York

Fu JR, Ju PH, Hsu CW (2015) Understanding why consumers engage in electronic word-of-mouth communication: perspectives from theory of planned behaviour and justice theory. Electron Commer Res Appl 14(6):616–630

George D, Mallery M (2010) SPSS for windows step by step: a simple guide and reference. Pearson, Boston

Hameed I, Waris I, ul Haq MA (2019) Predicting eco-conscious consumer behaviour using theory of planned behaviour in Pakistan. Environ Sci Pollut Res 26:15535–15547

Hammond C, Churchman D (2008) Sustaining academic life: a case for applying principles of social sustainability to the academic profession. Int J Sustain High Educ 9(3):235–245

Han H (2015) Travellers' pro-environmental behaviour in a green lodging context: converging value-belief-norm theory and the theory of planned behaviour. Tour Manage 47:164–177

Han H, Hsu LTJ, Sheu C (2010) Application of the theory of planned behaviour to green hotel choice: testing the effect of environmental friendly activities. Tour Manage 31(3):325–334

Han H, Yoon HJ (2015) Hotel customers' environmentally responsible behavioural intention: impact of key constructs on decision in green consumerism. Int J Hosp Manage 45:22–33

Hayes AF (2013) An introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: a regression-based approach. Guilford Publications, New York

Hemsley-Brown J, Oplatka I (2006) Universities in a competitive global marketplace: a systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. Int J Public Sector Manage 19(4):316–338

Hong SY, Yang SU (2009) Effects of reputation, relational satisfaction, and customer–company identification on positive word-of-mouth intentions. J Public Relat Res 21(4):381–403

Hidayah Ibrahim SN, Suan CL, Karatepe OM (2019) The effects of supervisor support and self-efficacy on call centre employees' work engagement and quitting intentions. Int J Manpow 40:688–703

Jalilvand MR, Vosta LN, Mahyari HK, Pool JK (2017) Social responsibility influence on customer trust in hotels: mediating effects of reputation and word-of-mouth. Tour Rev 72(1):1-14

Jimena CEG, Mendoza MET, Ascan TC (2011) Organizational health as an imperative for a Livelihood Loan Program: the case of CBK's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) beneficiaries. J Hum Ecol (Philippines) 1(1):73–92

Jung S, Kim JH, Kang KH, Kim B (2018) Internationalization and corporate social responsibility in the restaurant industry: risk perspective. J Sustain Touris 26(7):1105–1123

Kang J, Hustvedt G (2014) Building trust between consumers and corporations: the role of consumer perceptions of transparency and social responsibility. J Bus Ethics 125(2):253–265

Katz E, Lazarsfeld PF (1955) Personal influence: the part played by people in the flow of mass communication. Routledge, New York

Kiatkawsin K, Han H (2017) Young travellers' intention to behave pro-environmentally: merging the value-belief-norm theory and the expectancy theory. Tour Manage 59:76–88

Kim HW, Gupta S, Jeon YS (2013) User continuance intention towards mobile internet service: the case of WiMAX in Korea. J Glob Inf Manag (JGIM) 21(4):121–142

Kotchen MJ, Reiling SD (2000) Environmental attitudes, motivations, and contingent valuation of nonuse values: a case study involving endangered species. Ecol Econ 32(1):93–107

Kunstler B (2006) The millennial university, then and now: from late medieval origins to radical transformation. Horizon 14(2):62–69

Lee S (2011) Consumers' value, environmental consciousness, and willingness to pay more toward green-apparel products. J Glob Fash Mark 2(3):161–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/20932685.2011.10593094

Lee KH, Shin D (2010) Consumers' responses to CSR activities: the linkage between increased awareness and purchase intention. Public Relat Rev 36(2):193–195

Lichtenstein DR, Drumwright ME, Braig BM (2004) The effect of corporate social responsibility on customer donations to corporate-supported nonprofits. J Mark 68(4):16–32

Lopes JRN, de Araújo Kalid R, Rodríguez JLM, Ávila Filho S (2019) A new model for assessing industrial worker behaviour regarding energy saving considering the theory of planned behaviour, norm activation model and human reliability. Resour Conserv Recycl 145:268–278

Nadeem A, Kakakhel SJ (2012) An investigation into corporate social responsibility (CSR) of public sector universities in KPK. Abasyn Univ J Soc Sci 5(2):14–27

Nejati M, Shafaei A, Salamzadeh Y, Daraei M (2011) Corporate social responsibility and universities: s study of top 10 world universities' websites. Afr J Bus Manage 5(2):440–447

Maignan I (2001) Consumers' perceptions of corporate social responsibilities: a cross-cultural comparison. J Bus Ethics 30(1):57–72

Malhotra NK, Dash S (2011) Marketing research an applied orientation. Pearson Publishing, London

Marin L, Ruiz S, Rubio A (2009) The role of identity salience in the effects of corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour. J Bus Ethics 84(1):65–78

Mazzarol T, Sweeney JC, Soutar GN (2007) Conceptualizing word-of-mouth activity, triggers and conditions: an exploratory study. Eur J Mark 41(11/12):1475–1494. https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710821260

Moser AK (2015) Thinking green, buying green? Drivers of pro-environmental purchasing behaviour. J Consum Mark 32(3):167–175

Pomering A, Dolnicar S (2009) Assessing the prerequisite of successful CSR implementation: are consumers aware of CSR initiatives? J Bus Ethics 85(2):285–301

Prayag G, Hosany S, Muskat B, Del Chiappa G (2017) Understanding the relationships between tourists' emotional experiences, perceived overall image, satisfaction, and intention to recommend. J Travel Res 56(1):41–54

Rahim RA, Jalaludin FW, Tajuddin K (2011) The importance of corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour in Malaysia. Asian Acad Manage J 16(1):119–139

Raub S, Blunschi S (2014) The power of meaningful work: how awareness of CSR initiatives fosters task significance and positive work outcomes in service employees. Cornell Hosp Q 55(1):10–18

Reid M, Sparks P, Jessop DC (2018) The effect of self-identity alongside perceived importance within the theory of planned behaviour. Eur J Soc Psychol 48(6):883–889

Rise J, Sheeran P, Hukkelberg S (2010) The role of self-identity in the theory of planned behaviour: a meta-analysis. J Appl Soc Psychol 40(5):1085–1105

Sánchez-Hernández MI, Mainardes EW (2016) University social responsibility: a student base analysis in Brazil. Int Rev Public Nonprofit Mark 13(2):151–169

Secchi D (2009) The cognitive side of social responsibility. J Bus Ethics 88(3):565–581

Secchi D, Bui HT (2018) Group effects on individual attitudes toward social responsibility. J Bus Ethics 149:725–746

Shepherd R, Sparks P, Guthrie CA (1995) The application of the theory of planned behaviour to consumer food choice. E Eur Adv Consum Res 2:360–365. http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=11624

Smith JR, Terry DJ, Manstead AS, Louis WR, Kotterman D, Wolfs J (2008) The attitude-behaviour relationship in consumer conduct: the role of norms, past behaviour, and self-identity. J Soc Psychol 148(3):311–334

Steckstor D (2012) Theoretical foundation and model development: the relationship of CM determinants, customer attitudes and buying behaviour. In: Steckstor D (ed) The Effects of Cause-Related Marketing on Customers' Attitudes and Buying Behavior. Springer, Gabler Verlag, pp 39–73

Sundaram DS, Mitra K, Webster C (1998) Word-of-mouth communications: a motivational analysis. Adv Consum Res 25:527–531

Swanson SR, Charlene Davis J (2003) The relationship of differential loci with perceived quality and behavioural intentions. J Serv Mark 17(2):202–219

Szymanski DM, Henard DH (2001) Customer satisfaction: a meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. J Acad Mark Sci 29(1):16–35

Tarkiainen A, Sundqvist S (2005) Subjective norms, attitudes and intentions of Finnish consumers in buying organic food. Br Food J 107(11):808–822

Taylor S, Todd P (1995) An integrated model of waste management behaviour: a test of household recycling and composting intentions. Environ Behav 27(5):603–630

Tian Z, Wang R, Yang W (2011) Consumer responses to corporate social responsibility (CSR) in China. J Bus Ethics 101(2):197–212

Vahdati H, Mousavi N, Tajik ZM (2015) The study of consumer perception on corporate social responsibility towards consumers attitude and purchase behaviour. Asian Econ Financ Rev 5(5):831–845

Vieira KRO, Battistelle RAG, Bezerra BS, de Castro R, Jabbour CJC, Deus RM (2018) An exploratory study of environmental practices in two Brazilian higher education institutions. J Clean Prod 187:940–949

Wang S, Fan J, Zhao D, Yang S, Fu Y (2016) Predicting consumers' intention to adopt hybrid electric vehicles: using an extended version of the theory of planned behaviour model. Transportation 43(1):123–143

Wigley S (2008) Gauging consumers' responses to CSR activities: does increased awareness make cents? Public Relat Rev 34(3):306–308

Zapata-Ramos ML, Kim Y (2018) Is the impact of CSR similar across borders? An exploratory study comparing young adults' perceptions of CSR between Puerto Rico and United States. J Promot Manage 24(1):128–151

Zeithaml VA (2000) Service quality, profitability, and the economic worth of customers: what we know and what we need to learn. J Acad Mark Sci 28(1):67–85

Zhou Y, Thøgersen J, Ruan Y, Huang G (2013) The moderating role of human values in planned behaviour: the case of Chinese consumers' intention to buy organic food. J Consum Mark 30(4):335–344