



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of Multi-Dimensional PCSR on Purchase Intention and eWOM among Vietnamese Young Consumers: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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This study examines the impact of perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) across five dimensions (economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, and environmental) on brand attitude (BA), purchase intention (PI), and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) among young consumers in Vietnam's food and beverage (F&B) industry. A survey of 450 young consumers in Hanoi was conducted using a convenience sampling method. The data were analyzed using partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that PCSR significantly affects BA, PI, and eWOM, with a strong positive relationship between BA and PI, and between PI and eWOM. However, the study did not confirm a significant link between BA and eWOM, contrasting with previous research due to several contextual factors unique to the F&B industry and the cultural landscape of young consumers in Vietnam. These results suggest practical implications for F&B brands to enhance engagement through targeted CSR strategies. Recommendations are also provided for young consumers to engage with brands, helping refine CSR practices and improve offerings.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly competitive global market, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a crucial strategy for businesses seeking to foster stronger relationships with their stakeholders [1]. Among younger consumers, CSR initiatives have evolved from being optional acts of corporate goodwill to fundamental business imperatives. This shift is particularly evident in developing economies such as Vietnam, where socially-conscious young consumers have become a growing influence on corporate behavior through their consumption patterns [2]. These consumers are becoming more informed and vocal, expanding their expectations of businesses beyond economic performance to demand higher accountability in areas such as ethical conduct, environmental sustainability, and philanthropic efforts [3-5]

Despite the rising awareness among young consumers regarding the need for businesses to operate sustainably [6], many still feel that the primary responsibility for these actions lies with producers rather than themselves as consumers. They tend to fail to recognize their potential power to drive more responsible practices [7]. This gap in responsibility perception poses challenges for companies striving to effectively engage young consumers through CSR initiatives.

Stakeholder theory, which emphasizes the importance of balancing the interests of all stakeholders, provides a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between a company's CSR activities and consumer behavior [8-11]. From the consumer's perspective, corporate engagement in multi-dimensional CSR activities can significantly influence their attitudes and behaviors, especially in terms of purchase intention and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) generation. These two outcomes- purchase intention and eWOM are particularly relevant in the digital era, where social media platforms enhance consumer voices and accelerate the spread of opinions about products and brands [12, 13]. From the consumer's perspective, corporate engagement in multi-dimensional CSR activities can significantly influence their attitudes and behaviors, particularly in terms of purchase intention and the generation of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). These two outcomes are especially relevant in the digital era, where social media platforms enhance consumer voices and accelerate the spread of opinions about products and brands [13-15]

While previous studies have explored the impact of CSR on various consumer behaviors, research on the effects of multi-dimensional perceived CSR (PCSR), particularly in the context of young consumers in Vietnam, remains limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the influence of five dimensions of PCSR, including economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, and environmental [16-18] on young Vietnamese consumers' purchase intentions and eWOM behaviors. Using a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how different facets of CSR, as perceived by consumers, influence their decision-making processes and willingness to promote brands online.

The food and beverage (F&B) sector is generally described as a collection of companies that prepare food and drink items for retail and consumer use [19]. This industry includes enterprises involved in the transformation of raw agricultural materials into consumer-ready products [20]. Vietnam's F&B market was one of the most attractive markets globally (ranked 10th in Asia) in 2019 as per BMI. Vietnam has many favorable conditions for being one of the most promising F&B consumption markets in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) [21]. For the past several years, the F&B industry has always been one of the most significant and prioritized industries that contributed to the economic growth in Vietnam [20]. Specifically, in Vietnam, household expenditures are expected to rise steadily between 2022 and 2025, with domestic consumers demonstrating sustained purchasing power for essential goods, particularly in the F&B sector [22, 23]. Given its significant economic contribution and growth potential, this study focuses on consumer behavior within this essential industry.

This paper makes a significant contribution to the existing literature on CSR in Vietnam, with a particular focus on young consumers. It also highlights the growing importance of eWOM as a crucial outcome of CSR efforts, especially in today's digital consumer landscape. As mentioned above, the study aims to (1) examine how young consumers' perceived CSR influences their overall consumer behavior, and (2) provide suggestions for enhancing the engagement of young consumers through targeted CSR strategies. The findings from this research are expected to offer valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners, guiding businesses in crafting CSR strategies that resonate with young, socially conscious consumers while encouraging these consumers to adopt a more proactive role in promoting sustainable business practices through their purchasing decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research background

Social exchange theory (SET)

Social exchange theory, introduced by [24], [25] and [26] originates from economic exchange theory and explains human behavior in social exchanges. According to this theory, social exchange is understood as the exchange of activities, both tangible and intangible, that involve benefits and costs between at least two individuals or organizations. The theory aims to explain how the behavior of one party (A) can influence and reinforce the behavior of the other party (B), and conversely, how the behavior of (B) can also impact (A).

This theory has been applied across various fields, including business management to analyze employee-organization relationships [27, 28] and marketing to explore customer satisfaction and loyalty [29, 30], as well as purchase intentions [31, 32]. In the context of business-customer relationships, it suggests that customers will respond favorably to companies that actively strive to

provide benefits [33]. Accordingly, customers are increasingly paying attention to CSR initiatives and their perceived benefits to themselves and the community. When customers recognize a company's effective CSR efforts, they tend to develop a more favorable impression of that company, enhancing their brand preference and purchase intentions.

Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which evolved from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)[34-36], is a widely studied model in social psychology for predicting behavioral intentions[37-39]. It was developed to overcome limitations of the TRA, which assumed that human behavior is solely driven by rational thought. According to the TPB, the intention to perform a behavior is influenced by three factors: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC).

The core idea of TPB is that a person's intention to engage in a behavior is the main predictor of whether they will actually do it. Generally, stronger intentions lead to a higher likelihood of performing the behavior [40]. However, it's important to note that this intention is only significant if the behavior is within the individual's control, meaning they can choose whether or not to engage in it.

Hypothesis and proposed model

The relationship between perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) and brand attitude, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), purchase intention

Customers' perception of CSR refers to the degree to which they appreciate and recognize the value of a company's CSR activities, reflecting whether they perceive the enterprise's concern for the environment, community, legal obligations, morality, and the worthiness of such activities [11, 41]. This study adopts the definition of perceived CSR based on [42] pyramid model, further developed in the studies [1, 11, 43] which identifies five dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, and environmental.

Communicating about CSR not only attracts customers but also strengthens their connection with businesses and encourages them to share their opinions online, resulting in eWOM[44, 45]. Consumers' perceptions of a company's CSR initiatives play a crucial role in promoting voluntary behaviors, such as speaking positively about the business in both online and offline[46]. Consequently, a positive customer perception often leads to the dissemination of favorable eWOM regarding CSR efforts, as well as the company's products and services across various social media platforms [47]. Based on this, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: *PCSR has a positive impact on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).*

Research indicates that exposure to brand information and personal experiences can significantly influence consumers' attitudes toward a brand [48]. Positive information and experiences tend to foster a favorable brand attitude. Furthermore, customers' perceptions of a company's CSR activities can enhance and shape their attitudes toward the brand in today's competitive market[49]. These findings align with [50] and [16] who assert that organizations engaged in CSR initiatives tend to receive more favorable evaluations from consumers than those that do not, particularly in the consumer goods and textile sectors. Overall, these studies indicate that CSR programs can positively influence brand attitudes, as consumers often see socially responsible companies as more trustworthy and appealing. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: *PCSR has a positive impact on brand attitude.*

When a business implements CSR activities at a low level, it significantly weakens consumers' purchase intentions, leading them to prioritize lower prices. Interestingly, researchers have noted that consumers often have limited awareness of CSR initiatives[51]. However, when they do recognize these efforts, it positively influences their attitudes, thereby increasing the likelihood of choosing the company's products and services [17, 52]. Current researches clearly underscore the role of CSR practices in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions in the retail sector [16, 53, 54]. Thus, we predict that customers' perception of CSR will have a positive impact on purchase intention.

H3: *PCSR has a positive impact on purchase intention.*

The relationship between brand attitude and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)

Brand attitude reflects consumers' feelings toward a brand [55], indicating a favorable inclination toward specific products or services [56, 57]. It captures consumers' preferences, impressions, and expectations of the benefits provided by a brand [58]. [14]found that a positive attitude toward a brand significantly influences word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations. Furthermore, consumers who have a strong preference for their brands are more likely to share their experiences with others[59]. According to[60], young customers are motivated to promote their favorite brands on social media for two main reasons: genuine love for the brand or the desire for benefits in return, such as exclusive content. They may also share brand-related posts to enhance their online reputation. Young customers are likely to promote brands online only if they can identify with those brands. Thus, a positive customer attitude toward a company can lead to positive (eWOM) about the company's products and CSR initiatives [47]. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H4: Brand attitude has a positive impact on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Marketing and advertising strategies heavily rely on fostering positive brand attitudes to encourage brand choice [56, 61]. [62] Emphasized that when consumers maintain a positive attitude toward a brand, it significantly enhances the importance of their purchase intentions. Furthermore, brand attitude plays a crucial role in influencing repurchase intentions [57, 63]Thus, the study proposes the hypothesis:

H5: Brand attitude has a positive impact on purchase intention.

The relationship between purchase intention and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM)

Several studies have demonstrated the relationship between purchase intention and the tendency to share information with others about brands and products. In the study by[64], findings revealed that experiential purchases were more likely to be shared on social media compared to material purchases. Additionally, other research has emphasized the role of personal traits, particularly self-monitoring, in influencing information-sharing intentions. Users often share shopping information to build and reinforce their self-image, and as such, the level of self-monitoring can affect their intention to share purchase information.

Specifically, high self-monitors are more concerned with their social image and pay closer attention to social cues, while low self-monitors are more self-focused and less influenced by presentational factors[65]. As a result, individuals with high self-monitoring are more likely to communicate their experiences and recommendations to others, both online and offline. High self-monitors are particularly sensitive to social information in their environment, which helps them assess the appropriateness of their self-presentation in any given context. Extensive research supports this idea, showing that high self-monitors, more than low self-monitors, tend to rely on social information to guide their behavior and adjust their self-presentation based on social cues [64, 66]. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H6: Purchase intention has a positive impact on on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

Based on the overview of previous research and the mentioned theoretical foundations, the theoretical model is proposed in Figure 1.

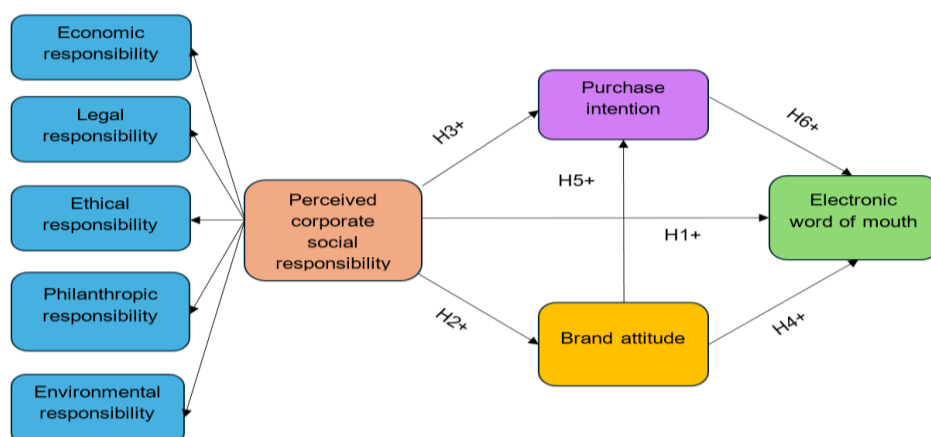


Figure 1: Theoretical proposed model

METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection

The study utilized a convenience sampling method to collect data for analysis. The minimum sample size was determined by the rule of five times the number of measurement items in the model (29 items), resulting in a minimum sample size of 145. The survey was conducted among young consumers (under 25 years old) in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, with a population of approximately 10 million inhabitants. The survey was conducted at F&B stores in Hanoi. On the day of the survey, we approached customers after their purchase and asked if they were willing to participate. Only those who agreed were given the link to the Google Form to complete the survey. We applied the non-probability method to achieve the necessary sample size. After two months of data collection, from August to December 2023, the study obtained 450 valid responses, which were used for the final official analysis. The characteristics of the surveyed consumers are described in Table 1.

Measurement

All constructs in the model were derived from previous studies [42, 45, 56, 67-72]. Specifically, the Perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) variable is reflected through sub-constructs including economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, environmental with 19 measurement items referenced from [42, 56, 68, 72]. Brand Attitude (BA) was measured using 4 items, referenced from [56, 61]. Purchase Intention (PI) was measured by 3 items referenced from [67, 70], and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) was referenced from [45, 71] with 3 items. The items were translated from English to Vietnamese and then back-translated to ensure consistency with the original meaning in the source questionnaire. As a result, 29 questions were developed and used for the survey in this study. The content of the measurement items for the constructs in the model is described in the tables (convergent validity tables in section 4).

Data analysis

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using Smart PLS 4.0 to evaluate the model hypotheses. As noted by Hair, Hult [73], PLS provides substantial value for causal analysis in behavioral studies. Moreover, PLS is a versatile multivariate method capable of addressing complex research challenges, including those involving second-order constructs, unobserved variables, and intricate variable interactions? It is particularly effective for calculating p-values through bootstrapping when sample independence is assured and normal data distribution is not required [74].

The study employs a two-stage approach to analyze hierarchical component models (HCMs) [75, 76]. In Stage 1, the measurement model for the first-order latent variables—ECO, LEG, ETH, PHI, and EVN—is assessed using the following indicators: Convergent validity and external consistency reliability. In this stage, the study applies the repeated indicator approach to evaluate the measurement model [73, 75]. According to Sarstedt, Ringle [75], second-order constructs are not evaluated based on their repeated indicators. These indicators only confirm that the higher-order structure is specified; they do not represent the actual measurement model of the higher-order construct. The evaluation of the second-order construct's measurement model is carried out in Stage 2.

Stage 2 involves assessing the second-order latent variable's measurement model using the following criteria: (i) convergent validity, (ii) multicollinearity assessment via the VIF index, and (iii) testing the relationship between the latent variable and observed variables through outer weights [73, 75]. In this stage, the scores of the first-order latent variables are used as indicators in the second-order measurement model. To test the second-order measurement model, the study utilizes data from the Latent Variable section in the PLS Algorithm results from Stage 1 to convert the second-order latent variable into a first-order latent variable.

Once the measurement model is validated, we proceed to evaluate the structural model results through the following steps: evaluating structural model collinearity, examining the size and significance of path coefficients, R² of endogenous variables (in-sample prediction), f² effect size (in-sample prediction), predictive relevance Q² (primarily in-sample prediction), and PLSpredict (out-of-sample prediction) [73, 77].

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographic characteristics		Number (n = 450)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	231	51.30
	Female	218	48.40
	Other	1	0.2
Education	Secondary school	2	0.4
	High school	65	14.4
	University (student/graduated)	357	81.6
	Master	14	3.1
	Other	2	0.4
Outcome (mil VND/month)	No income	181	40.2
	< 1 mil	31	6.9
	1 - < 5 mil	180	40.0
	5 - < 10 mil	33	7.3
	10 - < 15 mil	19	4.2
	= 15 mil	6	1.3
Occupation	Student	326	72.4
	Employed	73	16.3
	Self-employed	45	10.0
	Other (please specify)	6	1.3
Frequency of Use of Products in the F&B Sector	Very Frequently	56	12.4
	Frequently	140	31.1
	Occasionally	187	41.6
	Rarely	42	9.3
	Never	24	5.3
	Other	1	0.2
Budget for eating out (mil VND /month)	< 0.5 mil	15	3.3
	0.5 - < 2 mil	236	52.4
	2 - < 5mil	179	39.8
	5 - < 10 mil	15	3.3
	> = 10 mil	5	1.1

RESULTS

The measurement model of the low-order constructs

A close analysis of the results in Table 2 indicates that internal consistency reliability exceeds 0.70 but remains below 0.95[73]. Furthermore, most indicator loadings are greater than 0.70, resulting in an AVE value greater than 0.50, which satisfies the recommended threshold. Based on these internal consistency metrics, including Cronbach’s Alpha, Rho, Composite Reliability (Pc), and AVE, as well as the indicator loadings, the measurement model’s convergent validity for the study (the low-order constructs) is confirmed [78].

Regarding discriminant validity, it is worth noting that some researchers have criticized the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loadings for their inadequate ability to reveal discriminant validity issues. Therefore, this study assesses discriminant validity based on HTMT ratios [79]. The results from the PLS-SEM analysis indicate that the HTMT value between pairs of variables is less than 0.85, confirming that the constructs are conceptually distinct [79].

Table 2: Convergent validity internal consistency reliability of the low-order constructs

Constructs	Indicators	Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability		
		Outer Loadings	AVE	CA	Pa	Pc
Brand attitude (BA)	BA1	0.842	0.735	0.880	0.880	0.917
	BA2	0.874				
	BA3	0.872				
	BA4	0.840				
	ECO1	0.771	0.606	0.837	0.838	0.885

Constructs	Indicators	Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability		
		Outer Loadings	AVE	CA	Pa	Pc
Economic responsibility (ECO)	ECO2	0.741	0.784	0.911	0.912	0.928
	ECO3	0.811				
	ECO4	0.777				
	ECO5	0.789				
Ethical responsibility (ETH)	ETH1	0.868	0.819	0.881	0.882	0.914
	ETH2	0.851				
	ETH3	0.867				
	ETH4	0.874				
	ETH5	0.868				
Environmental Responsibility (EVN)	EVN1	0.886	0.814	0.876	0.877	0.909
	EVN2	0.901				
	EVN3	0.887				
Legal responsibility (LEG)	LEG1	0.871	0.762	0.844	0.845	0.906
	LEG2	0.860				
	LEG3	0.888				
Philanthropic responsibility (PHI)	PHI1	0.900	0.773	0.853	0.855	0.911
	PHI2	0.880				
	PHI3	0.857				
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	0.908	0.761	0.842	0.845	0.905
	PI2	0.883				
	PI3	0.824				

Note: AVE: average variance extracted; CA: cronbach’s Alpha, Pa: Dijkstra–Henseler’s rho; Pc: composite reliability.

Table 3: Discriminant validity of the low-order constructs

	BA	ECO	ETH	EVN	EW	LEG	PHI	PI
<i>Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)</i>								
ECO	0.794							
ETH	0.844	0.832						
EVN	0.727	0.703	0.760					
EW	0.766	0.646	0.706	0.655				
LEG	0.789	0.813	0.837	0.673	0.643			
PHI	0.635	0.664	0.688	0.788	0.644	0.598		
PI	0.822	0.730	0.754	0.679	0.819	0.692	0.630	

The measurement model of the high-order constructs

The results in Table 4 shows indicates that internal consistency reliability exceeds 0.70 but remains below 0.95[73]. Furthermore, all indicator loadings are greater than 0.70, resulting in an AVE value greater than 0.50, which satisfies the recommended threshold. Based on these internal consistency metrics, including Cronbach’s Alpha, Rho, Composite Reliability (Pc), and AVE, as well as the indicator loadings, the measurement model’s convergent validity for the study (the high-order constructs) is

confirmed. Regarding discriminant validity, the results from the PLS-SEM analysis indicate that the HTMT value between pairs of variables is less than 0.85, confirming that the constructs are conceptually distinct [79].

Table 4: Convergent validity internal consistency reliability of the high-order constructs

Constructs	Indicators	Convergent validity		Internal consistency reliability			VIF
		Outer Loadings	AVE	CA	Pa	Pc	
Brand attitude (BA)	BA1	0.842	0.735	0.880	0.880	0.917	2.501
	BA2	0.874					2.237
	BA3	0.872					2.542
	BA4	0.840					2.786
Electronic word of mouth (EW)	EW1	0.890	0.814	0.876	0.877	0.909	2.914
	EW2	0.892					2.779
	EW3	0.893					2.683
Perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR)	ECO	0.877	0.749	0.916	0.921	0.937	2.076
	ETH	0.924					2.129
	EVN	0.844					2.047
	LEG	0.875					2.601
	PHI	0.801					2.333
Purchase intention (PI)	PI1	0.908	0.761	0.842	0.845	0.905	2.601
	PI2	0.883					2.267
	PI3	0.824					1.699

Note: AVE: average variance extracted; CA: cronbach’s Alpha, Pa: Dijkstra–Henseler’s rho; Pc: composite reliability; VIF: Variance Inflation Factors.

Table 5: Discriminant validity of the hight-order constructs

	BA	EW	PCSR	PI
Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)				
EW	0.766			
PCSR	0.838	0.763		
PI	0.822	0.819	0.808	

Evaluating the structural model for high-order constructs

Since the measurement model for higher-order constructs yielded satisfactory results, the next step is to assess the structural model to test the study's hypotheses. [73] recommend evaluating path coefficients and R² values to determine the model’s predictive capability. The analysis results in Table 7 indicate R² values of 0.655 for brand attitude, 0.649 for purchase intention, and 0.620 for electronic word of mouth, which [80] classifies as substantial. However, relying solely on R² is not scientifically sufficient, making it essential to also assess predictive relevance using Q². According to [73], a Q² value greater than 0 indicates that exogenous latent constructs have predictive relevance for endogenous latent constructs. The findings of this study show Q² values of 0.652 (brand attitude), 0.503 (purchase intention), and 0.484 (electronic word of mouth), supporting the assumption that the endogenous constructs have strong predictive relevance. Additionally, the inner variance inflation factor (VIF) analysis shows no collinearity issues, confirming that the predictor constructs do not distort the model [81].

The study's results confirm support for five out of six proposed hypotheses, with H1, H2, H3, H5, and H6 showing statistical significance ($t > 1.96, p < 0.05$), while H4, which examines the relationship between brand attitude (BA) and electronic word of mouth (EW), is not supported ($t < 1.96, p > 0.05$). Figure 2 illustrates the structural model, showing path coefficients and p-values for the various constructs. Following [73], the study assesses effect size (f^2) to evaluate the impact of each independent variable on its dependent variable, with [82] classifying effects as small (0.02–0.15), medium (0.15–0.35), or large (>0.35). Table 6 shows that f^2 values for significant relationships range from 0.070 to 1.809, indicating effects from small to medium. Specifically, PCSR exerts a large effect on BA, BA strongly influences PI, while PI has a medium effect on EW, and PCSR shows a small direct effect on EW.

To finalize the global validation of the proposed model, a global fit measure (GoF) assessment for PLS path modeling was conducted. Following the procedure outlined by [83], we computed the geometric mean of the average communality and the average R^2 for endogenous constructs. The GoF value for the model is 0.700 (average $R^2 = 0.641$, average AVE = 0.765), which exceeds the 0.36 threshold for large effect (GoFsmall = 0.1, GoFmedium = 0.25, GoFlarge = 0.36) as recommended by Henseler et al. (2016) (see Table 7 for the GoF computation). Given the satisfactory results from both the measurement and structural models, we conclude that the proposed model exhibits strong explanatory power, with significant predictive relevance and overall validity.

Table 6: Path coefficient results and T-value analysis (hypothesis testing)

Hypo-thesis	Path	Original sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	f^2	Significance ($p < 0.05$)?
H1	PCSR -> EW	0.283	0.066	4.303	0.000	0.070	Yes
H2	PCSR -> BA	0.809	0.024	34.023	0.000	1.899	Yes
H3	PCSR -> PI	0.190	0.057	3.316	0.001	0.036	Yes
H4	BA -> EW	0.095	0.079	1.216	0.224	0.006	No
H5	BA -> PI	0.644	0.053	12.056	0.000	0.407	Yes
H6	PI -> EW	0.473	0.067	7.060	0.000	0.207	Yes

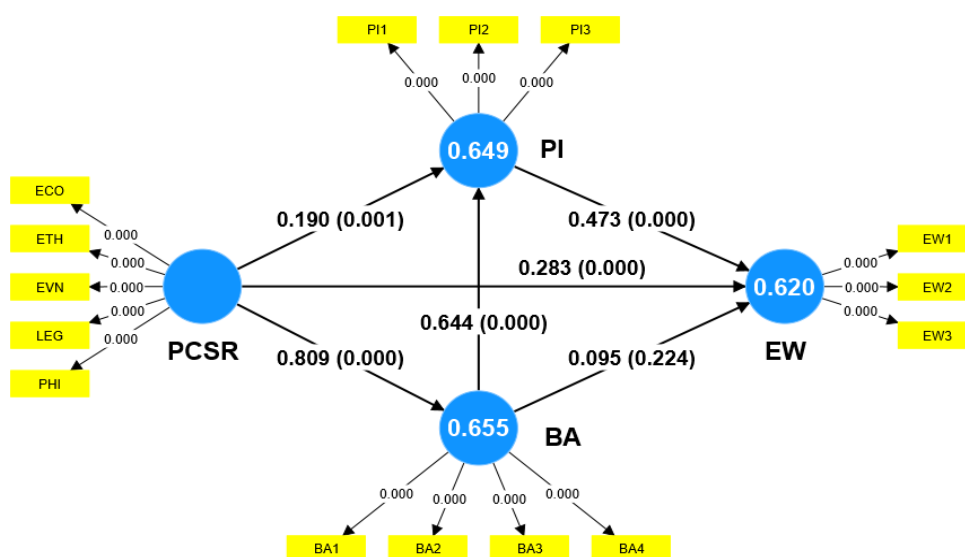


Figure 2: Structural model showing path coefficient and p-values

Note: PCSR: Perceived corporate social responsibility; PI: purchase intention; BA: brand attitude; EW: electronic word of mouth.

Table 7: Results of the global fit measure (GoF) and Q²predict

Constructs	Average variance extracted (AVE)	R-square	Q ² predict
Electronic word of mouth	0.814	0.620	0.484
Purchase intention	0.761	0.649	0.503
Brand attitude	0.735	0.655	0.652
Perceived corporate social responsibility	0.749		
Average AVE	0.765		
Average R ²	0.641		
GoF = $\sqrt{(\text{Average AVE} * \text{Average R}^2)}$	0.700		

DISCUSSION

The findings of our study align with prior research, confirming the significant role that perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) plays in shaping brand attitude (BA), electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and purchase intention (PI), particularly among young consumers in Vietnam's F&B industry. Previous studies have consistently shown that consumers' perceptions of a company's CSR efforts across multiple dimensions (economic, legal, ethical, philanthropic, and environmental) positively influence their attitudes toward the brand [16, 48-50]. This suggests that when companies are seen as fulfilling their social responsibilities, consumers develop more favorable attitudes toward the brand.

Moreover, the significant impact of PCSR on both eWOM and PI found in this study highlights the practical implications for brands in the F&B sector. Consumers who perceive a brand as socially responsible are more likely to engage in positive eWOM, sharing their experiences and endorsing the brand on digital platforms, helping to boost the brand's visibility and reputation. Additionally, this positive perception of CSR efforts leads to stronger purchase intentions, with consumers more inclined to support brands that demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility. This reflects a broader shift in consumer behavior, where social responsibility has become a key factor in how brands are perceived and supported in the marketplace.

The present research demonstrates the significant positive relationship between brand attitude (BA) and purchase intention (PI). Specifically, the result ($\beta = 0.643$, p-value < 0.001) indicates that young consumers with a favorable attitude toward a brand are more likely to consider purchasing its products. This is consistent with previous literature, which emphasizes that a strong brand attitude plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' decisions to engage with a brand's offerings [56, 57, 63]. According to [37], individuals with more positive attitudes are more likely to exhibit behavioral intentions. In the context of the F&B industry, where brand attitude is often associated with aspects such as product quality, ethical practices, and corporate responsibility, a positive BA tends to lead to a greater likelihood of purchase. The relationship between attitude and behavioral intention has been confirmed by prior research, including studies by [84-86]. The implication here is that F&B brands seeking to increase sales and consumer loyalty should invest in building positive brand attitudes, as this could lead to a higher purchase intention among young, socially aware consumers in Vietnam.

The findings from the study also reveal a significant positive relationship between purchase intention (PI) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), as indicated by the results ($\beta = 0.475$, p-value < 0.001). This suggests that young consumers who intend to purchase a brand's products are also more likely to engage in positive electronic word-of-mouth about those products [Zhang et al. (2021)]. This relationship can be interpreted in several ways. When consumers have a strong purchase intention, they are more likely to share their excitement and experiences within their social networks [87]. This aligns with existing research indicating that consumers often communicate their anticipated purchases and positive brand experiences online, impacting the perceptions of their peers [65, 88, 89]. In the F&B industry, peer recommendations greatly influence consumer choices. Positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) creates a virtuous cycle: when young consumers share their purchase intentions or favorable experiences, it reinforces their own intentions and encourages others to consider the brand, boosting its reputation and market reach.

Remarkably, the positive influence of purchase intention (PI) on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) among young consumers can be understood through the lens of personal branding. Personal branding serves as a strong online identity that assists them at the beginning of their careers, offering benefits such as differentiation, opportunities to use social media for relationship building, and the ability to make a distinctive first impression reflecting their self-image. These dynamics resonate with the young generation's pronounced need for self-expression [90, 91]. Interestingly, young consumers, who predominantly engage online and are more digital and tech-savvy than previous generations, often share personal insights, including thoughts, feelings, and lifestyle content. By posting about products they purchase or intend to buy, they effectively cultivate their personal brand while simultaneously generating eWOM. This sharing not only enhances their individual identities but also amplifies brand visibility and credibility among their peers.

However, the study does not confirm the relationship between brand attitude (BA) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) ($p\text{-value} = 0.213 > 0.05$). Our observations differ significantly from previous research, which indicated a considerable effect of brand attitude on electronic word of mouth [47, 59]. The discrepancy between our findings and prior studies may stem from several contextual factors unique. One possible explanation is cultural values in developing countries, including Vietnam, may shape how consumers perceive brands and share their experiences. Young consumers often prioritize social trends and peer recommendations over their personal brand attitudes, particularly in the F&B industry, which is heavily influenced by trends [92]. They may be more inclined to share experiences based on the latest food or drink fads instead of remaining loyal to a brand they have a favorable attitude toward. Additionally, the younger generation may be more influenced by practical aspects such as price, convenience, and product availability than by their overall attitude toward a brand. When making purchase decisions or sharing their experiences, they may focus on these immediate factors rather [59] than their feelings about the brand itself. Last but not least, youths are often swayed by peer opinions and social circles. If their friends or influencers endorse a product or brand, they might share their experiences based on that influence rather than their own brand attitudes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, the authors propose the following suggestions for F&B companies to enhance the engagement of young consumers through targeted CSR strategies. Firstly, brands in the F&B sector should actively implement and promote CSR initiatives that resonate with young consumers, such as sustainable sourcing, waste reduction, community involvement, and operational transparency. Marketing campaigns should highlight these initiatives to build positive perceptions of the brand. Secondly, to enhance purchase intention, brands should invest in a strong brand image through consistent messaging that highlights product quality, ethical practices, and alignment with consumer values. This can include targeted advertising, influencer partnerships, and storytelling that showcases their commitment to social responsibility. Thirdly, companies can create platforms or campaigns that allow young consumers to express their personal branding. This could include encouraging consumers to showcase their unique experiences with products through photography, reviews, or social media challenges. By fostering a community where consumers feel empowered to share, brands can strengthen their online presence and build credibility.

Additionally, based on the research findings, the author presents several suggestions for consumers. Firstly, customers should actively engage with their favorite F&B brands on social media. By sharing personal experiences, reviews, and recommendations, they can influence the brand's visibility and help shape product offerings to better align with consumer preferences. Moreover, young consumers should be vocal about their preferences by expressing their opinions on product quality, pricing, and sustainability through social media, reviews, or direct feedback to brands. This proactive approach can assist brands in understanding consumer needs and enhancing their offerings. Finally, customers should provide constructive feedback regarding products and services, whether through surveys, reviews, or direct messages. By sharing their insights, consumers can help brands refine their offerings and better meet their expectations.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant impact of perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) on brand attitude, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and purchase intention among young

consumers in Vietnam's F&B industry. Brands should focus on enhancing CSR initiatives, building positive brand attitudes, leveraging social media for engagement, and aligning with current trends to drive consumer loyalty. By adopting these specific measures, brands can effectively connect with young consumers, increase market visibility, and foster lasting relationships in a competitive landscape.

For young customers, actively engaging with brands on social media by sharing experiences and feedback is essential. They should voice their preferences regarding product quality and sustainability to help shape offerings that meet their needs. Constructive feedback can significantly influence brand improvements, ultimately enhancing their overall experience.

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