

THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATION IN VIRTUAL CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CO-CREATION ON THE GREEN PURCHASE INTENTION IN MILLENNIALS

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Abstract

Virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation initiatives has become a powerful strategic tool for businesses looking to encourage environmentally friendly consumption. The study aims to investigate whether Millennials' participation in virtual CSR co-creation activities will lead to green purchase intentions. This empirical study introduces a moderated mediation effect model, taking virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation as the independent variable, environmental concern as the moderating variable, and virtual community identity as the mediating variable, to explore the impact mechanism of virtual corporate social responsibility on green purchase intention. The results show that Millennials' participation in virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation promotes green purchase intention, environmental concern plays a moderating role in the interaction effect, and virtual community identity partially mediates this effect, which in turn influences green purchase intention indirectly. The research not only beneficial to the long-term development of enterprises, but also of great significance to promoting the sustainable development of the entire society.

Keywords: Virtual CSR Co-Creation, Green Purchase Intention, Environmental Concern, Virtual Community Identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives are no longer exclusively the responsibility of businesses due to the extensive development of online social media technology (Macêdo, 2021). Over time, the business ecosystem has evolved into a community with multiple stakeholders. The old "donation" charity model is giving way to the more recent "interactive" co-creation model (Fan et al., 2020). Online social media platforms offer businesses an easy way to carry out their social duties and significantly encourage customer participation in CSR initiatives (Jurietti, 2017). Consequently, consumer-initiated corporate social responsibility initiatives (like Ant Forest), scholars refer to the phenomenon as "Virtual CSR Co-creation," and they define it as follows: businesses use social media to engage and motivate customers to support their CSR initiatives, as well as to communicate, collaborate, and engage in CSR-related activities together (Korschun & Du (2013). Green products are defined as those that possess attributes associated with the environment, such as energy efficiency, environmental protection, harmlessness, health, etc. (Lin & Huang, 2012).

According to the theory of moral reinforcement, when a person's moral identity is activated, their sense of self as a "ethical person" is reinforced, which motivates them to act morally more consistently in the future. Corporate social responsibility, or CSR, has become an essential

component of overall corporate strategy in order to meet public expectations and gain a competitive advantage due to the growing public awareness of business ethics and sensitivity to social and environmental issues (Chaudhary,2018).Strategic CSR communications are almost as important as CSR activity investments because a company's CSR initiatives can still yield benefits even if its customers are unaware of them (Du et al., 2010).

The generation known as millennials was raised in the epicenter of Internet technology. They use the Internet for communication, purchase, and entertainment, and they are technologically literate. Millennials are more likely to adopt sustainable consumption habits and show greater environmental concern. They also possess a strong sense of social responsibility. (Park & Kim, 2020).According to Vries, CSR interactions in virtual settings have a higher chance of capturing community members' interest and favor and can influence consumer pro-social behavior. Presently, the majority of research on virtual corporate social responsibility centers on organizational levels and theoretical frameworks; studies that are industry-specific are also available. For research on the concept of corporate social responsibility, scholars draw on existing corporate social responsibility theory, stakeholder theory, and value sharing theory to construct it, but no unified standard has been formed. Although some research has attempted to link virtual CSR with consumer reflections, research on virtual CSR and green purchase intention is still very limited (Mubushar,2021).In terms of green purchase intentions, it is questionable whether Millennials are able to simply consider corporate social responsibility (Bhattacharya, 2003).

In addition, a noteworthy limitation of the present research is its disregard for the influence of environmental concerns, community identity, and personal attribute characteristics. This article adds environmental concern and virtual community identity to the analysis, which can better explain the impact of virtual corporate social responsibility on green purchase intention. The purpose of this study is to explore whether Millennials' participation in virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation activities promotes their green purchase intention. This article attempts to construct its model from a comprehensive value co-creation perspective. A model was constructed with virtual corporate social responsibility as the independent variable, green purchase intention as the dependent variable, environmental concern as the moderating variable and virtual community identity as the mediating variable.

2. THE RESEARCH MODEL

Virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation is a type of corporate social responsibility that uses social media to establish a two-way symmetrical dialogue between users and enterprises, despite the fact that previous scholars have analyzed it based on different perspectives and scenarios. The "interactive" aspect of virtual CSR co-creation is overlooked in the participation process.

This study uses the “user participation process “as the research perspective to analyze the dimensions of virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation (Jiang et al.,2022).Consumer participation in virtual CSR co-creation refers to the specific behavior of consumers voluntarily participating in online corporate responsibility activities for the welfare of others or society,

including both behavioral and emotional participation. The driving factors for consumers' participation in virtual CSR co-creation are mainly divided into three aspects: consumer factors, CSR project factors and environmental factors. Consumer factors include consumer needs and perceptions. CSR project factors mainly include the implementation of the project and the social effects caused. Environmental factors are the environmental characteristics of virtual CSR co-creation. Consumer factors, specifically including hedonic needs, social needs, personal achievement, empathy for public welfare and self-reinforcement. This article selected information sharing, CSR, interpersonal interaction and hedonic value.

Information sharing refers to customers share consumer knowledge, ideas and creativity as they express their needs. Businesses and consumers share information from past accumulated learning, idea creativity, and real-life situations and roles, building capabilities in the process to co-create value (Ranjan & Read, 2016). Corporate social responsibility means that consumers will have a higher sense of social responsibility, be willing to be charitable, protect the environment, and adopt more pro-environmental behavior. Interpersonal interaction customers are willing to respond positively to the impact of the company due to context (Shamim et al., 2017). Interaction facilitates understanding, sharing and meeting needs among all parties while assessing and adjusting resource commitments. Hedonic value refers to products that satisfy consumers' pleasure, entertainment or distract consumers from anxiety or work.

2.1 The Relationship between Virtual CSR Co-Creation and Green Purchase Intention

Intention is thought to capture the motivational factors that influence behavior; intention indicates how much effort people are willing to expend and how much effort they plan to expend to implement the behavior (Ajzen, 1969). Most consumers view green products as health or cost-saving options, a pursuit of their environmentally friendly properties. This perception and consumption value are the basis for their choice of behavior (Roy, 2015). Green purchase behavior is a kind of pro-social behavior that is beneficial to the environment and an important way to promote the sustainable development of the environment and society. Groening, (2018) compiled all of the theories regarding green consumers that have been put forth in the literature and divided them into six groups: social confirmation, values and knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and motivations. Joshi and Rahman (2015), who made a distinction between the individual and situational factors that influence green purchase intention and behavior, such as emotions, habits, self-efficacy, perceived consumer effectiveness, values and personal norms, trust and knowledge, etc., and the product attributes and quality, store-related attributes, price, product availability, subjective norms and reference groups, eco-labelling, and brand image. Research on green consumption practices from a corporate social responsibility standpoint is currently lacking.

Millennials can strengthen the reputation of CSR brands, foster a sense of shared purpose, and increase consumer trust by taking part in virtual CSR co-creation activities. Millennials' purchase intentions of environmentally friendly products were influenced by their increased comprehension of sustainable development as a result of their involvement in the event. Martínez et al.'s (2020) study empirically examines this issue in the field of CSR, where they discovered that people's social and environmental awareness affects how valuable they think

unfavorable information about CSR is. Therefore, we hypothesized

H1: Virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation positively affects green purchase intention

2.2 The Moderating Effect of Environmental Concern

An individual's assessment of the importance of environmental issues to their own well-being is reflected in their environmental participation index. People who are highly involved in the environment are typically more concerned with environmental protection practices, whilst people who are less involved in the environment are generally indifferent to environmental issues (Matthes, 2014). The desire to buy eco-friendly products is positively impacted by environmental concerns. Researchers then looked into the moderating effects of various engagement levels and types. Zhang, (2018) The moderating effect of environmental concern on green washing cognition on green purchase intention. Consumers with a higher degree of environmental concern have a more objective understanding of green washing and a higher intention to purchase green products.

Wang et al., (2016) feel that people who are highly concerned about the environment are more likely to engage in green purchase behavior, and that environmental concern has a major regulatory influence on green emotional appeals. Consequently, we draw the conclusion that consumers' cognitive attitudes and behaviors are altered by environmental concern, which is an inherent element. We think that people who have high environmental concerns are more likely to be worried about environmental issues and to be willing to buy green items. Therefore, we hypothesized

H2: Environmental concern moderates the relationship between virtual corporate social responsibility and green purchase intentions.

2.3 The Mediating Effect of Virtual Community Identity

Community identity theory is extended in the online setting by virtual community identity. In the online virtual world, community identity plays a crucial role in bridging the emotional gap between users and the platform. Users identify as belonging to the community when they acknowledge and follow its norms and standards (Bagozzi, 2006). Users' sense of identity and community membership will grow as a result of their interactions with virtual communities. Users' behavior will be encouraged by their sense of belonging, such as their increased loyalty to the brand community, which will increase their favorability and awareness of the community (Huang, 2014).

McGowan, (2016) research has found that social identity is a mediator, and cognitive social identity affects consumers' purchasing decisions through the attribution of emotion and social value. Huang et al., (2014) conducts research on customer experience value and reactions in brand communities. The study found that the experiential value generated by customers in Weibo interactions promoted corporate identification and purchase intention by affecting community identification. Bandura, (1989) pointed out that the sense of efficacy for specific fields, specific tasks, and specific problems can predict individual behavioral intentions.

Collective efficacy can enhance environmental intentions by increasing people's awareness of the groups they belong to and their own influence (Jugert et al., 2016). This sense of community identity directly affects consumers' green purchasing intentions. This obviously means that virtual community identification is an important factor affecting consumer green purchasing behavior. Therefore, we hypothesized

H3: Virtual community identity mediates the relationship between virtual corporate social responsibility and green purchase intentions.

Based on the above theoretical derivation and research hypotheses, we constructed a conceptual model of how virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation affects consumers' green purchase intention. This model considers factors such as Millennials' environmental concerns and virtual community identification that influence green purchase intentions, as shown in Figure 1

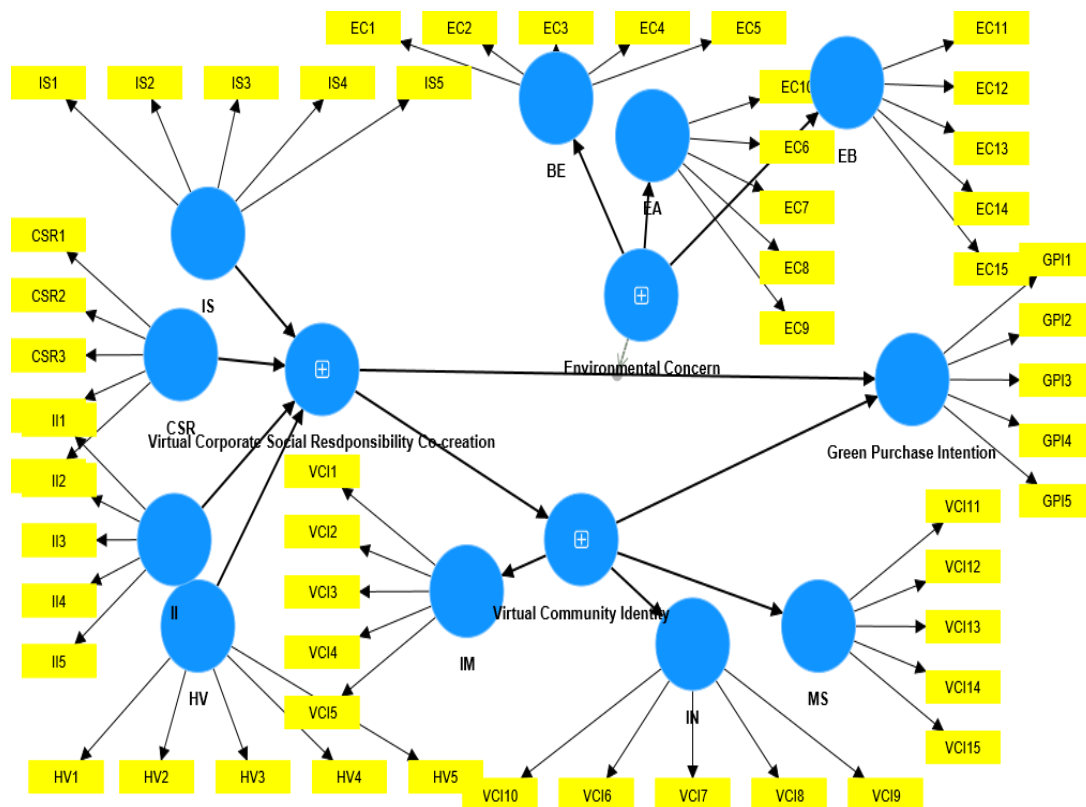


Figure 1: Research Model

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A survey of millennials was used to empirically test the model presented in Figure 2, the sample consists of 609 respondents from Hainan, China. This study employed a non-probability sampling technique in conjunction with a quantitative method. A questionnaire was adapted from past research. The data were collected from the data were collected from millennial

Hainan consumers who took part in online CSR initiatives. There were 700 questionnaires distributed, and 609 were returned by respondents. The strategy scale was taken from the Paul et al. (2016) paper in order to measure the green purchase intention. For information sharing variable the scale was adopted from Flanagan (2006) research; to measure the corporate social responsibility variable, the scale was adopted from Wagner(2009) research; to measure the interpersonal interaction variable, the scale was adopted from YI&Gong (2013) research; to measure the hedonic value variable, the scale was adopted from Baibin (1994))research; to measure the environmental concern variable scale was adopted from Kim and Cheung(2011)research; to measure the virtual community identity variable scale was adopted from Kim& Lee(2011)research. The average variance extracted (AVE) method was utilized to evaluate convergent validity and the composite reliability (CR) method was used to evaluate internal consistency of the measurement model. Using factor loadings, the measurement model first verifies convergent validity, internal consistency, and CR. Following the evaluation of the measurement model in the second stage, the internal model was evaluated using PLS and bootstrapping techniques. In order to validate the hypotheses and test the model, this study used Smart-PLS4. Through 5,000 iterations, a bootstrapping technique was used to determine the path coefficients' statistical significance (Chin, 1998); because of its robustness, researchers currently use this application extensively (Petter, 2007).

Table 1: Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	Composite reliability	AVE
Corporate social responsibility	0.903	0.903	0.928	0.721
Environmental concern	0.93	0.93	0.938	0.701
Green purchase intention	0.91	0.911	0.933	0.734
Hedonic value	0.899	0.9	0.926	0.713
Interpersonal interaction	0.898	0.899	0.924	0.71
Information sharing	0.896	0.897	0.924	0.707
Virtual community identity	0.917	0.918	0.928	0.65

Table 2: Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

	CSR	EC	GPI	HV	II	IS	VCI
Corporate social responsibility	0.849						
Environmental concern	0.34	0.71					
Green purchase intention	0.316	0.396	0.857				
Hedonic value	0.556	0.377	0.305	0.845			
Interpersonal interaction	0.501	0.361	0.32	0.519	0.843		
Information sharing	0.529	0.379	0.273	0.517	0.461	0.841	
Virtual community identity	0.411	0.431	0.456	0.367	0.359	0.374	0.681

CSR, Corporate social responsibility; EC, Environmental concern; GPI, Green purchase intention;

HV, Hedonic value; II, Interpersonal interaction; IS, Information sharing;

VCI, Virtual community identity

Table 3: HTMT

	CSR	EC	GPI	HV	II	IS	VCI
Corporate social responsibility							
Environmental concern	0.371						
Green purchase intention	0.348	0.429					
Hedonic value	0.617	0.412	0.337				
Interpersonal interaction	0.555	0.394	0.354	0.577			
Information sharing	0.587	0.415	0.302	0.575	0.513		
Virtual community identity	0.451	0.467	0.498	0.403	0.394	0.412	

CSR, Corporate social responsibility; EC, Environmental concern; GPI, Green purchase intention;

HV, Hedonic value; II, Interpersonal interaction; IS, Information sharing;

VCI, Virtual community identity

Table 4: Formative Construct

Item	outweight	t-value	VIF
Information sharing	0.261	3.319	1.594
Corporate social responsibility	0.407	5.347	1.727
Interpersonal interaction	0.335	4.522	1.553
Hedonic value	0.246	3.121	1.739

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original sample (O)	S.D.	t-value	p-value	f ²
VCSRCC -> GPI	0.155	0.044	3.569	0	0.024
EC x VCSRCC -> GPI	0.223	0.043	5.25	0	0.049
VCSRCC -> VCI	0.476	0.033	14.445	0	0.292
VCI -> GPI	0.219	0.046	4.793	0	0.043
VCSRCC -> VCI -> GPI	0.104	0.023	4.5	0	
EC -> GPI	0.2	0.041	4.785	0	0.041

VCSRCC, virtual corporate social responsibility co-creation; GPI, green purchase intention;

EC, environmental concern; VCI, virtual community identity

Table 6: Predictive Relevance (Q)

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Green purchase intention	3045	2389.231	0.215
Virtual community identity	1827	1565.537	0.143

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Reliability and Validity

The first factor in measuring model assessment is "reliability and validity." The findings show that all items' Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.896 to 0.93, which was greater than

the suggested value of 0.7 (Kannana & Tan, 2005). As shown in Table 1, all indicators meet the reliability requirements. As seen in Figure 2, all indicator values in this study for factor loadings are greater than the 0.50 suggested by Hair et al. (2010). Table 1 displays AVE value results ranging from 0.650 to 0.734, exceeding Hair's (2010) recommended threshold of 0.50.

As a result, there is no issue and all value reliability requirements are satisfied. The square root of the AVEs on the diagonals is shown in Table 2 as boded values, and the values are higher than the correlations between the constructs, indicating that the measurement model Fornell-Larcker method used in this study has discriminant validity. In comparison to other model constructs, the constructs have a strong relationship with their respective indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Chin, 1998). Good validity is demonstrated by the results, as all of the external values of HTMT in Table 3 have correlations less than 0.85 (Awang, 2014).

The measurements of the model that formed the formative indicators are shown in Table 4. Indicator weights range from 0.246 to 0.407, and all indicators are consistent with the Path coefficients greater than 0.20 recommended by Chin (1998b). The T values are all greater than 1.96, indicating that the sample means are significantly different. VIF indicates how much of an indicator's variance is explained by the other constructs' indicators the values are below 5 Gujarati (2009). All four formative indicators in the model meet this criterion.

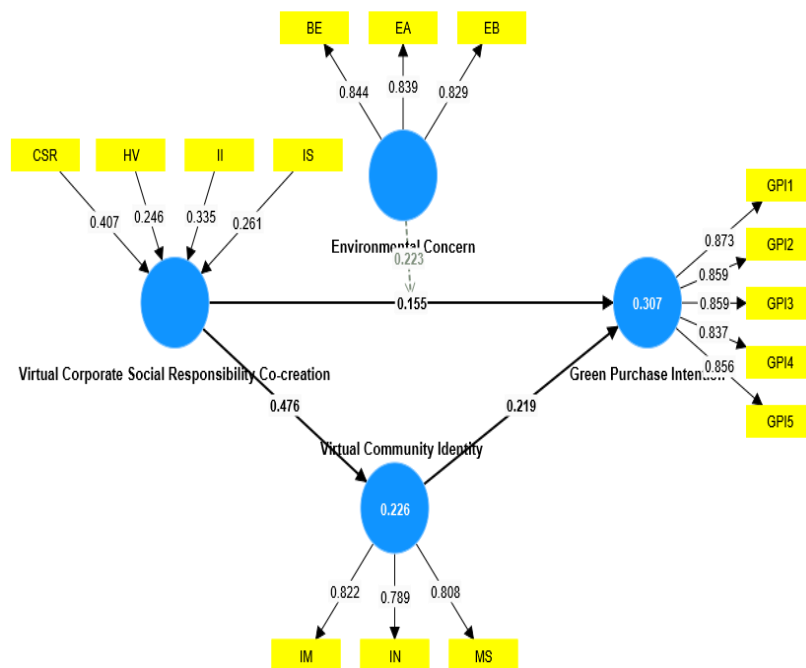


Figure 2: Hypothesis Testing

4.2 Structure Equation Modeling

To test the hypothesis significant level and mediation in the second stage of model testing, the authors employed the bootstrapping method, Blindfolding method and PLS algorithm. According to researchers Hair (2010) and Ringle (2017), effect size (f²) and predictive

relevance (Q2) should be reported, and R2 and T values should be used to assess internal models. All hypothesis are accepted in this study because the t value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than .005.

Hypothesis 1 that is, H1: virtual CSR co-creation has a significant and positive relationship with green purchase intention; information sharing, corporate social responsibility, interpersonal interaction and hedonic value have a positive impact on green purchase intention. Table 5 results show ($\beta = 0.155$, $t = 3.569$, $p < 0.001$), therefore, H1 is accepted. As previously mentioned, test moderator models are also subject to measurement and structural model evaluation criteria (Hair et al., 2017). The study's two-stage methodology is employed in this research to determine if the relationship between virtual CSR co-creation and green purchase intention is stronger or weaker when environmental concern is used as a moderating variable. H2 is accepted, environmental concern moderates the relationship between virtual CSR co-creation and green purchase intention ($\beta = 0.223$, $t = 5.25$, $p < 0.001$). H3: where virtual CSR co-creation has a significant and positive impact on virtual community identity and virtual CSR co-creation significantly predicts virtual community identity through ($\beta = 0.476$; $t = 14.445$; $p < 0.001$). virtual community identity significantly mediates the relationship between virtual CSR co-creation and green purchase intention; hence, H3 is also supported ($\beta = 0.104$; $t = 4.5$; $p < 0.001$).

An overall variance of 72% has been noted for the endogenous variable. According to Cohen (1982) and Chin (1998), the R2 values also reached a satisfactory level of power. According to Gefen & Rigdon (2011), effect size f^2 indicates whether a "exogenous latent construct" has a substantial, moderate, or minor impact on a "endogenous latent construct." A magnitude of f^2 at 0.35 (show large effects), 0.15 (show medium effects), and 0.02 (show small effects) was suggested by Cohen (1982). Only endogenous constructs with reflective measurements should be subjected to the blindfolding procedure, according to Hair et al. (2017). For a given endogenous construct, the proposed model has predictive relevance if Q^2 is greater than 0. There is sufficient predictive power, as Table 6 illustrates, since all of the Q^2 values range from 0.143 to 0.215. In this study, the range of effect sizes between large and medium-sized effects is revealed by the Q^2 result, as indicated in Table 6.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

From the standpoints of value co-creation and brand community, this article offers a fresh understanding of the dynamic relationship between corporate social responsibility and individual prosocial behavior. Based on the viewpoints of the project, the environment, and the customers, this study confirms the relevant elements of virtual CSR co-creation. The main theoretical contribution is the establishment of a comprehensive model for the value co-creation process in green product procurement and the antecedent variables that contribute to sustainable co-creation behavior.

In practical terms, first, businesses can use online communities to direct millennials customers toward green consumption through virtual corporate social responsibility. Second, companies can combine virtual corporate social responsibility activities with environmental protection

elements to promote environmental knowledge, improve millennials users' awareness of environmental protection, and promote green consumption. The third aspect, millennials customers' behavior in choosing products will be encouraged by community recognition. To increase customer stickiness during the virtual community building process, focus should be placed on word-of-mouth and reputation building.

Limitations of the study: First of all, our sample selection is only from Hainan Province, and the sample size is limited. Secondly, we only conducted the analysis from a quantitative perspective, and we can conduct a comprehensive verification from the perspective of qualitative interviews in the future.

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