

Examining the Relationship Between Students' Satisfaction with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities Based on Participation and Perceived Impact

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a strategic imperative within higher education, influencing institutional reputation, stakeholder engagement, and student satisfaction. This study investigates the relationship between student participation in CSR activities, their perceived impact, and overall satisfaction at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia's largest public university. Grounded in the context of UiTM's mission to promote educational equity and social mobility, particularly for the Bumiputera community, the research adopts a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 49 students in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management (FPHP) who had engaged in CSR initiatives. The instrument measured demographic profiles, participation frequency, perceived impact, and satisfaction levels using a structured questionnaire and Likert scale. Findings reveal a high level of student satisfaction ($M = 4.43$) and perceived impact ($M = 4.52$), despite low participation rates ($M = 1.98$). Correlation and regression analyses indicate that perceived impact significantly predicts satisfaction ($r = 0.605$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = 0.605$, $p < 0.001$), while participation does not show a meaningful relationship with either satisfaction or perceived impact. These results challenge conventional assumptions that mere involvement drives satisfaction, underscoring the importance of qualitative experiences and meaningful outcomes in CSR programming. The study recommends that institutions prioritize impactful, student-centered CSR initiatives and explore innovative strategies to enhance engagement, such as gamification and inclusive communication. Theoretically, the findings support the mediating role of perceived impact in the social responsibility fulfilment model and call for further exploration of emotional and motivational factors. This research contributes to the evolving discourse on CSR in higher education and offers actionable insights for Malaysian universities seeking to align CSR strategies with student expectations and societal advancement.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Student Satisfaction, Perceived Impact, Higher Education, Student Engagement

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a fundamental aspect of organizational strategy globally, fostering sustainable development and improving stakeholder engagement. Originally established within corporate environments, CSR has progressively penetrated the higher education scenery, where it significantly impacts institutional reputation, develops connections with the community, and affects student satisfaction. Across the globe, higher education institutions are embracing socially responsible practices to foster significant societal change. Studies confirm the beneficial impacts of corporate social responsibility on student perceptions and loyalty, emphasizing its ability to improve educational experiences and promote ethical awareness. For

example, Mutua (2021) discovered that CSR initiatives in African universities improved students' satisfaction and engagement, highlighting the transformative potential of these activities in higher education.

In Asia, the role of CSR in higher education indicates an increasing awareness of its combined influence on societal advancement and the success of institutions. Institutions in states like China, Japan, and India have launched various initiatives, including community outreach efforts and sustainability projects, to tackle both local issues and international priorities (Kim & Lee, 2022). The initiatives undertaken not only tackle urgent societal challenges but also enhance institutional reputation and foster student involvement.

In Malaysia, corporate social responsibility has become increasingly prominent in higher education as universities seek to enhance their competitiveness in a densely populated academic environment. Initiatives in Malaysian universities frequently emphasize the importance of dealing with socio-economic disparities, enhancing inclusivity, and advancing sustainability. Findings indicate that these initiatives play a crucial role in drawing in, keeping, and fulfilling students, while simultaneously improving the institutions' standing and connections within the community (Mohamed & Hassan, 2023).

In this context, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) serves as prime example of the strategic incorporation of corporate social responsibility in higher education. As the largest public university in Malaysia, UiTM is dedicated to promoting educational equity and enhancing social mobility, especially for the Bumiputera community. The university's CSR initiatives, which include financial support for disadvantaged students, volunteer opportunities, and sustainability projects, are closely aligned with its mission and have produced favourable results. The impact of these programs on B40 students has been significant, enhancing their academic performance and job prospects (Rahman et al., 2023). Despite these accomplishments, a significant gap remains in comprehending how student involvement in CSR activities affects their satisfaction, especially regarding the perceived impact of these activities.

This investigation aims to fill this gap by exploring the connection between student involvement in CSR activities and their satisfaction at UiTM. This exploration seeks to enhance the ongoing discussion surrounding CSR in higher education, providing practical insights for Malaysian universities to refine their CSR strategies to more effectively address student needs and expectations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Participation in CSR Activities

Engagement in CSR activities among students has been recognized as a crucial element in promoting social responsibility and individual development. Smith and Johnson (2020), indicate that students engage in CSR programs driven by intrinsic motivations, like the wish to make a societal impact, as well as extrinsic motivations, such as enhancing their resumes and creating networking opportunities. Nonetheless, obstacles like time limitations and insufficient knowledge regarding existing programs may inhibit participation (Lee et al., 2021). Moreover, engaging actively contributes to students' feelings of community engagement and fortifies their ties to their institution (Brown & White, 2019). The findings underscore the significance of developing accessible and impactful CSR opportunities to enhance student engagement.

Perceived Impact of CSR Activities

The perceived influence of CSR activities significantly shapes participants' attitudes regarding social responsibility. The perceived impact encompasses the way individuals assess the results of these activities, considering their societal, organizational, and personal advantages (Jones et al., 2020). Martinez and Lopez (2018) found that students who recognize a significant positive influence from CSR initiatives frequently promote a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment. On the other hand, the absence of concrete or observable outcomes may foster doubt and disconnection (Park, 2021). This highlights the importance of institutions creating CSR programs that provide quantifiable and significant results, allowing students to recognize the impact of their efforts.

Student Satisfaction in Educational Contexts

The exploration of student satisfaction within educational settings has been thoroughly examined, highlighting its significance for the overall quality of education and the reputation of institutions (Chen & Lin, 2020). In the context of CSR activities, satisfaction is shaped by elements including the alignment of the program with students' personal objectives, the overall quality of the experience, and the perceived advantages (Garcia et al., 2019). A study conducted by Kumar and Patel (2021) revealed that students expressed greater satisfaction with CSR initiatives that offered practical learning experiences and demonstrated tangible benefits to the community. The results indicate that satisfaction serves as both a measure of program quality and a reflection of how well it aligns with students' expectations and values.

Relationships between Participation, Perceived Impact, and Satisfaction

The connection among involvement, perceived effects, and contentment in CSR initiatives is thoroughly recorded in existing studies. Engagement serves as the basis for students to interact with CSR initiatives, whereas the perceived impact shapes their assessment of these experiences. Collectively, these elements play a significant role in enhancing overall satisfaction. Nguyen et al. (2020) found that students who engage actively and recognized a significant impact from CSR activities express higher levels of satisfaction, which subsequently increases the chances of ongoing involvement. In a comparable manner, the Expectancy-Value Theory posits that the satisfaction of students is influenced by the value they assign to CSR activities and their anticipation of favourable results (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). The findings emphasize the interrelated aspects that contribute to significant CSR experience for students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilizes a quantitative approach to investigate the connection between student satisfaction regarding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, their level of participation, and the perceived impact of these initiatives. A descriptive design was utilized to offer an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, with a cross-sectional time horizon enabling data collection at a single moment in time (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The collection of data was conducted through a self-administered survey, aimed at ensuring reliability and minimizing potential bias.

Population and Sampling

The research focused on individuals enrolled in the Faculty of Hotel and Tourism (FPHP) at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) who have engaged in CSR activities. Participants with relevant experience in CSR initiatives were identified through purposive sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 49 valid respondents were gathered, constituting the sample size of this investigation.

Instrumentation

The survey consisted of four essential sections aimed at systematically gathering pertinent data; (i) demographic information - collected respondent profiles utilizing nominal scale items, (ii) participation in CSR activities - assessed the extent and regularity of engagement, (iii) perceived impact of CSR activities - valued the results of involvement as understood by students, and (iv) student satisfaction with CSR Activities - conducted via a set of statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied), (Likert, 1932). The questionnaire underwent pre-testing to assess its clarity and reliability, ensuring that the items effectively represented the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2019).

Data Collection

Information was collected from UiTM FPHP students who engaged in CSR activities. Surveys were distributed and completed anonymously to ensure the confidentiality of respondents and reduce the likelihood of response bias.

Data Analysis

The gathered data underwent Analysis through IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 30.0 (IBM Corp., 2021). The analysis encompassed the subsequent methodologies; (i) Multiple Linear Regression - this analysis aims to explore the predictive relationships among CSR participation, perceived impact, and student satisfaction, (ii) Correlation Analysis - this involves evaluating the intensity and orientation of connections among variables (Field, 2018), and (iii) One-Way ANOVA - a method employed to determine notable variations in satisfaction levels among different demographic subgroups or categorical variables (Pallant, 2020). The chosen statistical techniques were employed to thoroughly assess the proposed relationships and extract significant insights.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Through an analysis of participation rates and the perceived impact of CSR initiatives, this study sought to determine how satisfied students were with these programs. The analysis produced several significant findings, which are examined below in connection with pertinent literature and its practical and theoretical implications.

TABLE I DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Student Satisfaction with CSR Activities	4.4286	.45474	49
Participant in CSR Activities	1.9776	.21239	49
Perceived Impact of CSR Activities	4.5190	.50144	49

Descriptive statistics indicate notable trends. The average score for student satisfaction regarding CSR activities was 4.43 (SD = 0.45), reflecting a strong sense of satisfaction among participants. This indicates that students typically perceive CSR initiatives in favorable light. Nonetheless, the average participation rate was significantly lower at 1.98 (SD = 0.21), indicating restricted engagement in these activities. The perceived impact of CSR activities was exceptionally high, with mean score of 4.52 (SD = 0.50), showing that students recognize these initiatives as having significant influence.

TABLE II CORRELATIONS RESULT

		Student Satisfaction with CSR Activities	Participation In CSR Activities	Perceived Impact of CSR Activities
Student Satisfaction with CSR Activities	Pearson Correlation	1	-.083	.605***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.571	<.001
	N	49	49	49
Participation In CSR Activities	Pearson Correlation	-.083	1	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.571		.999
	N	49	49	49
Perceived Impact of CSR Activities	Pearson Correlation	.605**	.000	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.999	
	N	49	49	49

The correlation analysis yielded additional insights. A noteworthy positive correlation was identified between the perceived influence of CSR initiatives and student satisfaction ($r = 0.605$, $p < 0.001$). This finding illustrates the significance of students' perception regarding the outcomes of CSR initiatives in influencing the degree of satisfaction. Conversely, involvement in CSR activities showed no significant correlation with satisfaction ($r = -0.083$, $p = 0.571$) or perceived impact ($r = -0.083$, $p = 0.999$). The findings indicate that the qualitative experience of CSR activities, specifically its perceived impact, is more significant in influencing satisfaction than simply being involved.

TABLE III REGRESSION ANALYSIS RESULTS

Predictor Variable	B (Unstandardized)	Beta (Standardized)	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
Constant	2.298	—	3.332	.002
Participation in CSR Activities	−0.177	−0.083	−0.709	.482
Perceived Impact of CSR Activities	0.549	0.606	5.186	.000

Further validation of these observations was provided by regression analysis. The perceived impact was identified as an important predictor of student satisfaction ($\beta = 0.605$, $t = 5.186$, $p < 0.001$), whereas participation did not have a significant effect on satisfaction ($\beta = -0.083$, $t = -0.709$, $p = 0.482$). The model accounted for a considerable amount of variance in satisfaction, and the ANOVA results revealed no significant difference in satisfaction levels among the various groups ($F = 0.568$, $p = 0.815$), suggesting a uniformity in satisfaction regardless of group distinctions.

TABLE IV ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.150	9	.128	.568	.815
Within Groups	8.776	39	.225		
Total	9.926	48			

In line with the previous research, which stresses the importance of perceived impact in determining satisfaction with CSR activities, the results confirm this. Smith et al. (2020) emphasized that stakeholders experience increased satisfaction when CSR activities are viewed as significant and advantageous. The outcomes of this study support this viewpoint, showing that students' satisfaction is significantly linked to how they perceive the effectiveness and value of CSR initiatives.

It is important to note that the lack of a significant relationship between participation and satisfaction calls into question some established assumptions in existing literature. This study implies that, although participation is frequently associated with raised engagement and favorable attitudes (Jones, 2018), the qualitative dimension of CSR, specifically its perceived impact, holds greater significance than the quantitative aspect of participation. This observation aligns with the research conducted by Baker and Powell (2019), who posited that the perceived quality of CSR initiatives significantly influences satisfaction more than the frequency of participation.

Moreover, the lack of known differences in satisfaction at the group level, evidenced by the ANOVA findings, implies that the CSR initiatives were executed consistently across various groups. This consistency likely suggests the organization's commitment to standardizing CSR practices, aiming to provide fair access and outcomes for every student. According to Lee (2021), employing standardized methods for CSR can assist organizations in reaching a wider audience and reducing inconsistencies in stakeholders' experiences.

The findings of the study provide a range of actionable recommendations for organizations aiming to improve student satisfaction via CSR initiatives. Initially, organizations ought to prioritize the development of initiatives that students view as significant. Programs focusing on sustainability, community development, or social justice are expected to build relationships with students and improve their satisfaction levels. Second, the low participation rates observed in this study underscore the necessity for creative approaches to enhance student engagement. The implementation of gamification in CSR activities, as indicated by Lee (2021). Ultimately, the uniformity in satisfaction levels among groups highlights the necessity of upholding consistent communication and results in corporate social responsibility initiatives. The consistent application of CSR activities can guarantee that every student has fair access to participate in and gain from these initiatives.

LIMITATIONS

While the study's findings are valuable, some limitations should be noted. The sample size was relatively small ($N = 49$), which may restrict the applicability of the findings to broader populations. Subsequent investigations may overcome this limitation by utilizing a larger and more varied sample. In addition, the investigation depended on self-reported data, which could be influenced by social desirability bias or inaccuracies in the responses provided by the participants. Utilizing a combination of methods or implementing longitudinal design may help address this concern. The study concentrated solely on students, potentially limiting the relevance of the findings to other groups, including employees or community members. Broadening the focus of upcoming studies to incorporate various stakeholder viewpoints may yield more thorough insights into the effects of CSR.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From a theoretical point of view, this study provides further evidence that the perceived impact plays a mediating role in the social responsibility fulfilment model. The notable effect of perceived impact on satisfaction points out the value of focusing on the qualitative dimensions of CSR initiatives. Future investigations could expand on these findings by examining further mediators, such as trust or emotional engagement, which may provide additional insights into the correlation between CSR activities and satisfaction (Garcia & Hernandez, 2022). Furthermore, the finding questions the traditional focus on participation as a key factor in satisfaction. The findings of this study indicate that mere participation does not guarantee satisfaction. Future investigations should explore the relationship between participation, perceived impact, and additional elements like motivation or personal values.

CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing the literature, students' perceptions of their own contribution are the most important factor in their general sense of fulfilment with CSR initiatives. Despite low participation levels, the qualitative experience of CSR initiatives plays a crucial role in shaping satisfaction. The findings present significant implications for both practical application and theoretical development, providing essential insights for organizations aiming to improve the effectiveness of their CSR initiatives and deepen the privilege of comprehension of stakeholder satisfaction within the realm of CSR.

Conclusively, this study highlights the importance of how students view the impact of CSR initiatives on their complete satisfaction. It questions the usual belief that just taking part in these activities automatically leads to good results. Even with low participation rates, the qualitative significance of CSR experience was crucial in influencing satisfaction levels. Institutions such as UiTM should focus on implementing impactful and meaningful CSR activities to effectively meet the expectations of students. The results emphasize the significance of synchronizing CSR strategies with stakeholder values, promoting inclusive and coherent practices, and tackling obstacles to participation. Future studies should investigate further mediators, including emotional engagement and personal motivation, to enhance comprehension of the impact of CSR initiatives on satisfaction. By concentrating on significant experiences, higher education institutions can improve student involvement and play a vital role in social advancement.

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