



How Is CSR Perception Formed and When Does It Affect Purchase Intention: A Mixed Method Study in the Turkish Airline Industry¹

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Abstract

Keywords:

CSR, Price Premium, Knowledge, Purchase Intention, Mixed-Method

Studies have most examined the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on a set of perceptual, attitudinal and behavioral outcome variables in the manufacturing industries of the developed economies through simple models that have failed to determine the complex mechanisms underlying how CSR effect is formed and translated into actual purchase behavior. This study aims to identify the factors that shape the effect of CSR on purchase intention in the Turkish airline industry through a mixed method approach. Employing two moderators in the research model which regulate the impact of CSR on purchase intention and triangulation technique in the data analysis, this study identified the factors that are potential barriers to and drivers of the translation of CSR perception into real purchase behavior. It has been found in the quantitative study that CSR has a positive effect on purchase intention in the airline industry, moderated by consumer's CSR knowledge and willingness to pay price premium. Qualitative study exhibits the vitality of sincere and effective CSR practices responding to the needs of diverse stakeholders, and simply summarizes CSR as a process of value co-creation. The originality of this study stems from the mixed method employed in the research design, identifying diverse factors in the qualitative design that shape the impact of CSR in consumer behaviors, and providing statistical rigor and generalizability to the study's findings in the quantitative design. Based on the findings of qualitative and quantitative designs, implications of this study on marketing theory and practice have been mentioned.

KSS Algısı Nasıl Oluşur ve Satın Alma Niyetini Ne Zaman Etkiler? Türk Havayolu Sektöründe Karma Yöntem Bir Çalışma

Özet

Anahtar Kelimeler:

KSS, Yüksek Fiyat, Bilgi, Satın Alma Niyeti, Karma Desen

Gelişmiş ekonomilerin imalat sanayilerinde Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluğun (KSS) bir dizi algısal, tutumsal ve davranışsal sonuç değişkenleri üzerindeki etkisini basit modellerle inceleyen çalışmalar, KSS etkisinin nasıl oluştuğu ve gerçek satın alma davranışına nasıl dönüştüğünün altında yatan karmaşık mekanizmaları belirlemede başarısız olmuştur. Bu çalışma, karma yöntem yaklaşımıyla Türk havayolu sektöründe KSS'nin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini şekillendiren faktörleri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma modelinde KSS'nin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisini düzenleyen iki moderatör ve veri analizinde üçgenleme tekniği kullanılan bu çalışmada, KSS algısının gerçek satın alma davranışına dönüşmesinin önündeki potansiyel engeller ve itici güçler olan faktörler belirlenmeye

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çalışmıştır. Nicel çalışmada, KSS'nin havayolu sektöründe satın alma niyeti üzerinde pozitif bir etkiye sahip olduğu ve bu etkinin tüketicinin KSS bilgisi ve yüksek fiyat ödeme istekliliği tarafından düzenlendiği bulunmuştur. Nitel çalışma, farklı paydaşların ihtiyaçlarına yanıt veren samimi ve etkili KSS uygulamalarının hayati önemini ortaya koymakta ve KSS'yi basitçe ortak değer yaratma süreci olarak özetlemektedir. Bu çalışmanın özgünlüğü, araştırma tasarımında kullanılan karma yöntemden, nitel tasarımda KSS'nin tüketici davranışları üzerindeki etkisini şekillendiren çeşitli faktörlerin tespit edilmesinden ve nicel tasarımda çalışmanın bulgularına istatistiksel kesinlik ve genellenebilirlik sağlanmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Nitel ve nicel tasarımların bulgularına dayanarak, bu çalışmanın pazarlama teorisi ve uygulaması üzerindeki bir takım etkilerinden bahsedilmiştir.

INTRODUCTION

The increase in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in line with the sustainable goals has enhanced the financial performance of businesses (Akdeniz et al, 2021). The use of accessible, renewable and clean energy resources is an equally important issue in line with sustainability goals in sectors with energy consumption (Akdeniz, 2022). Öztay-Çağan (2023) emphasizes the need for a holistic perspective in the concept of sustainability that considers the social, environmental, and economic dimensions, and provides a framework for how sustainability and consumer behavior are interconnected. In their study, Kim et al. (2014) outlined the importance of CSR in the sustainable development.

In return to the goods and services provided to the market, companies create employment and generate profit. Success of the firms are generally measured on the basis of a set of economic metrics. However, in the contemporary market structure, it is expected that achievement of a strong economic success must be complemented by the social endeavors and success (Pradhan, 2018). Therefore, companies must adopt a comprehensive perspective that combines business actives, which aim at satisfying their consumer through value offering exchanges, with not-for-profit activities that prioritize the well-being of diverse stakeholders and the environment (İzmir, 2022). Parallel to the shift in the market structure related to being socially and environmentally friendly, consumers have developed consciousness and awareness for the concept of CSR, leading to the purchase intention and other behavioral intentions for the products of the companies that have clear CSR goals (Leclercq-Machado et al. 2022; Tong and Su, 2018; Zhang and Ahmad, 2021).

Studies conducted in this field have mostly focused on the effect of CSR on consumer behaviors, supporting positive impacts on product evaluation and purchase intention (Pradhan, 2018). Especially, little empirical research has been made for CSR in the developing countries, as most of the CSR studies has focused on developed countries (Zhang and Ahmad, 2021; Ataniyazova et al., 2022). Kim et al. (2014) claimed that studies show mixed results on the link between CSR and purchase decision, ranging from positive to negative and neutral. Consumers tend to reward companies with CSR endeavors via repeat purchase behavior, remain neutral if the company is not interested in CSR, and punish those in corporate hypocrisy acting as if responsible (İzmir, 2021). In fact, the sincere CSR implementations even willing to sacrifice company's core competencies for being solely responsible would end up with negative consequences for the company (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), as the primary expectation of the consumers is the value attached to the company's offerings (İzmir, 2023). The inconclusive findings in CSR-purchase intention link and complex nature of the concept of CSR give rise to additional questions.

There is a need for further research because the link between CSR and consumer motives on purchase decision has not been fully investigated on industry basis, which is stronger for services than manufacturing industries (Al Jarah and Emeagwali, 2017). The number of the studies remains relatively small, particularly within specific industries like the airline industry (Konstantoulaki et al. 2019; Park et al., 2015), and focuses on the developed economies and somewhat simple models such as the relationship between CSR and consumer attitudes/purchase intentions (Ataniyazova et al., 2022; Wongpitch et al., 2016). Öberseder et al. (2011) emphasized that the alleged significant CSR- purchase intention relationship roots in the study

artifacts, resulting from the overemphasis of CSR stimuli in the research settings and various influential factors in the field of consumer behavior. Wang (2020) pointed the lack of research on identifying the mechanisms that shape the impact of CSR on purchase decision-making. The mixed results on the effect of CSR on consumer purchase intention (Kim et al., 2014; Wang, 2020) and arguments on the barriers against the transformation of this purchase intention into actual purchase behavior draw attention to the future research agenda (Öberseder et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2014; Pradhan, 2018).

Although the link between CSR and a set of attitudinal/behavioral intentions has been studied mostly in the developed countries, there is a need for studies conducted in underdeveloped and developing countries, focusing on explaining the mechanisms lying behind how and when the effect of CSR emerge and the factors that determine the formation and enhancement of this effect. There is a set of research gaps that requires being addressed: (1) There is a lack of research in the CSR-purchase intention relationship in the developing or underdeveloped economies, (2) multifaceted nature of CSR requires the explanation of the mechanisms underlying when CSR makes significant effects on purchase intention, (3) CSR-behavioral intentions link is industry specific with limited studies in the airline industry and shows effects at larger magnitudes in services than manufacturing industry, and (4) study artifacts in the link between CSR and consumer behaviors needs mixed method or triangulation research designs to reach further insights and more valid results in the study domain. Employing a mixed method approach, the purpose of this study is to examine what factors determine the effect of CSR on purchase intention in the airline industry in Turkey. Therefore, this study aims to fill these aforementioned research gaps by (1) assessing the influence of CSR on purchase intention within the airline industry of a developing economy, (2) probing and elaborating the mechanisms that shape the impact of CSR, measuring potential moderator effects of consumer knowledge and willingness to pay price premium, which are vital factors for CSR that have been overlooked in the development of consumer behaviors, and (3) employing a mixed method approach to overcome the study artifacts that potentially cause mixed results and failure in the transformation of CSR into actual consumer behaviors.

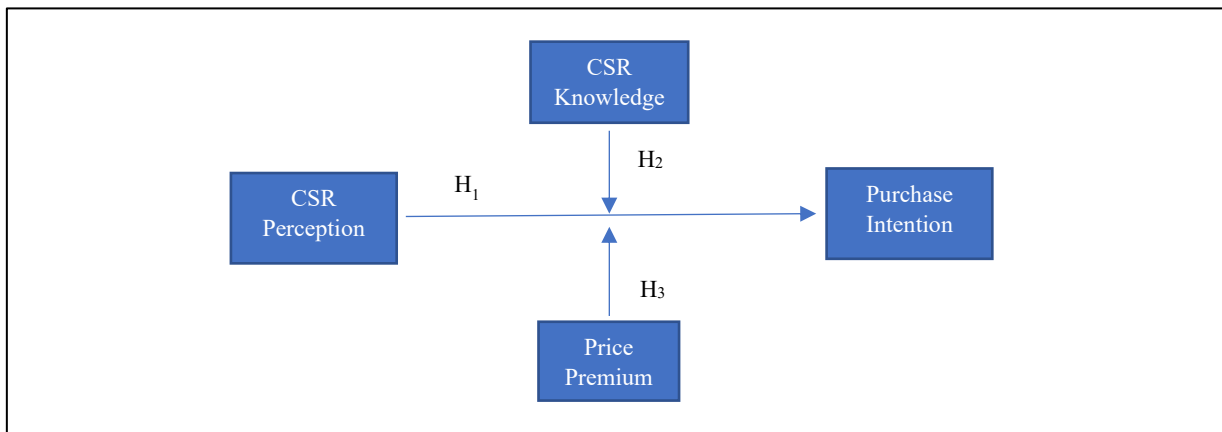
The originality of this study arises from explaining the effect of CSR in the light of two moderators in the research model and the method employed in the research design. Cross-sectional studies with only multiple-choice questions offer insights into research problems but lack causal relationships and depth. When study findings do not align with predicted theories, adding a qualitative phase can reveal new theories, enhancing our understanding of CSR. CSR is dynamic and culturally constructed. Hence, qualitative methods can offer new perspectives in revealing stakeholder experiences, enhancing insight into CSR (Guzzo et al., 2020). This study continues with literature review and formulation of the hypotheses to be tested. Next, the methodological approach of the study is elaborated in detail. Then, results of the study are provided and discussed in the light of pertinent literature. Finally, findings of the study are concluded and implications on the marketing theory and practice are mentioned.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

According to Carroll (1979;1991), CSR is a pyramid of activities that generate various benefits to the society at large, encompassing economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions. Although studies have mostly supported CSR-purchase intention link in diverse industries (İzmir and Turgut, 2019; Leclercq-Machado et al. 2022; Öztay and Birinci, 2019; Tong and Su, 2018; Turgut, 2020; Zhang and Ahmad, 2021), there are studies alleging that CSR and purchase intention relationship has shown mixed results (Öberseder et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2014; Wang, 2020). The mixed results identified in the CSR-behavioral intentions link can be primarily attributed to the continuum on which the company is positioned, ranging from hypocrisy to sincerity (see Fassin and Buelens, 2011). Fassin and Buelens (2011) claimed the perceived dissonance of the consumers between the message and reality in the CSR practices of the company shapes the consumer behaviors. The role of communication is a vitally important phenomena in the formation of the consumer

perceptions as companies intend to position their CSR strategies on a continuum from idealism to hypocrisy, leading to the creation of either shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2019) or negative attitudes and behaviors toward the hypocritical companies, consequently resulting in the devaluation of the concept of CSR (İzmir, 2021). Nonetheless, meta-analyses conducted in this field indicate a positive relationship between CSR and purchase intention, identifying moderating roles of some variables considered important in the CSR studies (Al Jarah and Emeagwali, 2017; Santini et al., 2021; Park et al., 2023). Based on the meta-analysis results and the literature reviewed, hypotheses of the study are proposed and research model is illustrated in the Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Model



Turgut (2020) found evidence for the significant direct and indirect effects of CSR on purchase intention in the airline industry. Similarly, Konstantoulaki et al. (2019) examined consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions towards CSR practices in the airline industry. They found that consumer perceptions of value dimensions and CSR expectations positively impact customer attitudes when purchasing airline services and positive attitudes are linked to purchase intention. Park et al. (2015) examined the effects of economic, social, and environmental dimensions of CSR on satisfaction and a set of behavioral intentions in the airline industry and determined that all CSR dimensions have significant positive impacts and economic responsibility has the greatest effect on both satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Al Jarah and Emeagwali (2017) determined in their meta-analysis that CSR makes positive effects at larger magnitudes on the behavioral intentions in the services industry than it does in the manufacturing industry. They claimed that in service industry, consumers have active roles in the production processes (co-producer) of the service to be offered and hence they are considered as the co-creator of the value. Therefore, it can be said that due to the possibility of direct touch with the company in services, consumers would be more familiar with the organization's activities and their behaviors would be more influenced by these close relationships with the company, which are less likely in the manufacturing industries. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H₁: CSR makes a significant impact on purchase intention in the airline industry.

The empirical studies that examine the effect of CSR on purchase intention lack a holistic perspective encompassing other relevant factors in the consumer behaviors that contribute to the formation of consumer purchase decision making. Studies have mostly focused on the usual suspects (industry, firm size, brand perception etc.) and investigated the impact of CSR on a set of attitudinal and/or behavioral intentions (Santini et al., 2021; Wongpitch et al. 2016). However, according to Wang (2020), mixed results on CSR and behavioral intentions relationship imply that the factors possibly affecting this relationship need to be further investigated, aiming to reveal some answers on the barriers against the translation of CSR into actual behavior. Findings of Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) clearly show that both company-specific factors, such as

the CSR domain and product quality, and individual-specific factors, such as CSR support and CSR-related beliefs, have moderator roles in the development of consumers' responses to CSR initiatives. Potential moderator variables such as industry influence and environmental context (Al Jarah and Emeagwali, 2017); CSR commitment, product type, culture, geographic region, and consumer characteristics (Park et al., 2023), theoretical, methodological, cultural and economic factors (Santini et al., 2021) that could make an impact on CSR-purchase intention relationship have been mentioned in the systematic literature reviews and/or meta-analyses.

Arli et al. (2017) suggest that when consumers perceive corporate hypocrisy in the CSR efforts of a company, their trust in CSR decreases. The reduction of consumer trust in the CSR activities negatively impacts both their perception of the company's reputation and their overall attitudes toward the company. Similarly, Jung and Hur (2023) mention that consumer disconfirmation between the CSR expectations and actual CSR performance- this perceived gap by the consumers is called as corporate hypocrisy- reduces corporate reputation by which consumer-company co-creation behavior is damaged. Therefore, İzmir and Turgut (2019) emphasized that highly knowledgeable consumers are more aware of corporate hypocrisy than the less knowledgeable consumers and hence, their CSR perception does not translate into purchase intention if there is a perceived corporate hypocrisy. Pradhan (2018) claimed that consumers who are CSR aware make their purchase decisions on the basis of their knowledge/experience level. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis about the moderating effect of knowledge is formulated.

H₂: Consumer knowledge on the CSR practices of the companies moderates the effect of CSR on purchase intention.

Ataniyazova et al. (2022) argue that consumers in the developed countries have low price elasticity for the products due to higher welfare and economic standards, often making purchase decisions for the sake of social image and brand uniqueness. Conversely, the consumer profile in the developing economies tend to be more price elastic in their purchase behaviors due to low incomes. Hence, they are prone to abstain from paying price premium and focus on optimum purchase decisions that meet their needs and wants. According to Hanaysha (2020), price is the most elastic element of the marketing mix and therefore, consumers are quite sensitive to the price changes. İzmir and Turgut (2019) supported the relationship of CSR activities with willingness to pay price premium and purchase intention. However, Hanaysha (2020) claimed that price consciousness hinders the willingness to buy the goods and services unreasonably priced. Andrews et al. (2014) supported the interaction effect of price with cause marketing activities, such as CSR, on consumer purchase. Tong and Su (2018) supported moderating effect of price on attitudes and behavioral intentions. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis about the moderating effect of price premium is formulated.

H₃: Consumer willingness to pay price premium to compensate the CSR practices of the companies moderates the effect of CSR on purchase intention.

METHOD

In the literature, the synergy between qualitative and quantitative methods has been emphasized to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the focal phenomenon (Kordestani et al., 2023). This study employs a mixed-method approach and intends to integrate both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are considered as valuable tools when it comes to identifying diverse factors that shape the impact of CSR in consumer behaviors (Guzzo et al., 2020; İzmir and Turgut, 2019). In the context of this paper, the factors reached in the qualitative inquiry are positive CSR, normative CSR, and the traditional dimensions of CSR. The reason lying behind the utilization of qualitative approach is to gain further insights into these three important elements pertaining to the impact of CSR on exchange behaviors of the consumer from a

marketing perspective. İzmir (2023) highlights the importance of focusing on exchange relationship networks developed in the consumer behaviors because marketing as a science is built on these exchange relationships.

Quantitative data analysis provides statistical rigor to the study and it also helps the researcher make generalizability for the study's findings. Therefore, a quantitative approach is also used in this study to determine the influence of CSR on purchase intention, moderated by CSR knowledge and willingness to pay price premium. As selection of one method over the other might accompany some disadvantages, the weakness of qualitative method is it can sometimes fail to capture essential contextual factors, which includes the nuances of human experiences and viewpoints because it works with the structured models and test of hypotheses developed by the researcher (Creswell, 2012). The quantified effects of CSR on purchase intention would not reveal the complete effects of CSR on consumer behaviors, even though two moderator variables were added to the study in order to explain when this effect is significant and what factors could make an impact on this relationship. CSR and purchase intention relationship examined by the help of the statistical methods would fail to capture the entire spectrum of positive CSR, normative CSR, and traditional dimensions of CSR that were qualitatively identified.

In this study, qualitative and quantitative findings were combined. By doing this, validity and comprehensiveness of the results will be enhanced and hence stronger insights will be gained into the concept of CSR and its implications for consumer behaviors in which purchase intention is specifically focused. Bryman and Bell (2011) claimed that using triangulation technique, researchers intend to cross-check the results of the same study obtained from one research approach with those from another approach. It is believed that his technique enhances the overall validity and reliability of the findings and researchers, hence, would like to combine the strengths of the different approaches in data analysis. Based on the suggestions of Bryman and Bell (2011), triangulation approach has been adopted in the data analysis of this study. In order to provide enhanced validity and reliability of the findings, qualitative themes were integrated with quantitative measurements and then discussed in the light of the relevant CSR literature.

Sampling and Data Collection

The population for this study comprises individuals residing in Turkey. Data was collected using convenient sampling method. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through an online survey using Google Forms. Participant consent was obtained through the online questionnaire process, and respondents were assured that their answers would be kept anonymous and confidential, and only used for scientific purposes. A within-group design was employed in the quantitative data collection phase for two leading brands selected in the Turkish airline industry following the methodology of Turgut (2020). In line with the study's objectives, data collected for two different brands for the same constructs were combined in the analysis to focus on the research model, controlling the possible confounding effects of brands. Qualitative data collection part has been fulfilled based on the suggestions of İzmir and Turgut (2019).

Sample of the quantitative design is composed of 267 participants, while sample of the qualitative design is 141. Qualitative and quantitative data were concurrently collected from the same participant pool. Qualitative study participants were drawn from those involved in the quantitative design who expressed a willingness to engage in the qualitative part. In the qualitative phase, participants were posed one closed-ended and three open-ended questions regarding their overall perceptions of CSR.

Measures

In this study, two unidimensional latent variables are used, measuring CSR and purchase intention. Moderator variables are measured by single items. CSR is measured based on Baygöl-Özpinar (2015);

Lichtenstein et al. (2004), and Turgut (2020). Purchase intention, the key determinant of consumer behaviors, is measured by Hausman and Siekpe (2009), and Cakici and Shukla (2017). CSR knowledge, determining the participants' level of knowledge about the corporate social responsibility activities of the companies used in the study, and price premium, determining the willingness to pay price premium to support the projects the socially responsible companies carry out, are measured using the study of İzmir and Turgut (2019). All the questions in the quantitative design were measured on five-point scales. In the end of the quantitative section of the questionnaire, qualitative part started. In this section, one closed ended and three open ended questions were presented to the participants. Qualitative questions were formulated based on the study of İzmir and Turgut (2019), who conceptualized CSR with a set of positive and normative dimensions. Items of the scales, moderator variables in the quantitative section and the questions in the qualitative section were presented in the Appendix.

Data Analysis

Two different data analysis techniques are used as this research has been built on a mixed method approach. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. Participants answered to the open-ended questions in the qualitative part of the questionnaire regarding their overall perceptions of CSR. Subsequently, their written responses in the questionnaire were content analyzed and related codes and themes were reached using Gioia approach (Gioia et al., 2013). On the other hand, quantitative data was analyzed using regression and moderation analyses by SPSS 25.0 and PROCESS macro (v4.2 for SPSS) of Hayes (2022). In order to examine the effect of CSR on purchase intention, testing the validity of H₁, a simple regression analysis was used. Conversely, to identify the effects of the moderator variables on the CSR-purchase intention link, PROCESS macro was utilized, specifically running “model 2” in the templates, to test the simultaneous effects of two moderators.

Development of the Codes and Themes

Following the framework outlined by Gioia et al. (2013), qualitative analysis has been completed. Through this approach, a summary of the data structure was created (refer to Figures 3, 4, and 5), facilitating the transparent tracking of the conversion process from interview data to final themes. Adhering to the methodology as guided by Gioia et al. (2013) and aligning with Figures 3, 4, and 5, the illustration of the data structure starts with identifying “1st order concepts” derived from the raw interview data. Then, relevant concepts sharing similar characteristics are refined into “2nd order themes”. Lastly, “aggregate dimensions” are formed as the highest data cluster, encompassing positive CSR, normative CSR, and traditional dimensions of CSR. The qualitative analysis and data structure development were executed by the author and then expert opinion was taken by an independent researcher who is expert in qualitative data analysis to enhance the reliability of the investigation. This approach provides possibilities for the visualization of the data structure. The visual nature of the data structure promotes transparency in the qualitative analysis process and intends to provide concrete evidence for the potential data cherry-picking concerns in the qualitative methods, in general (Gioia et al., 2013).

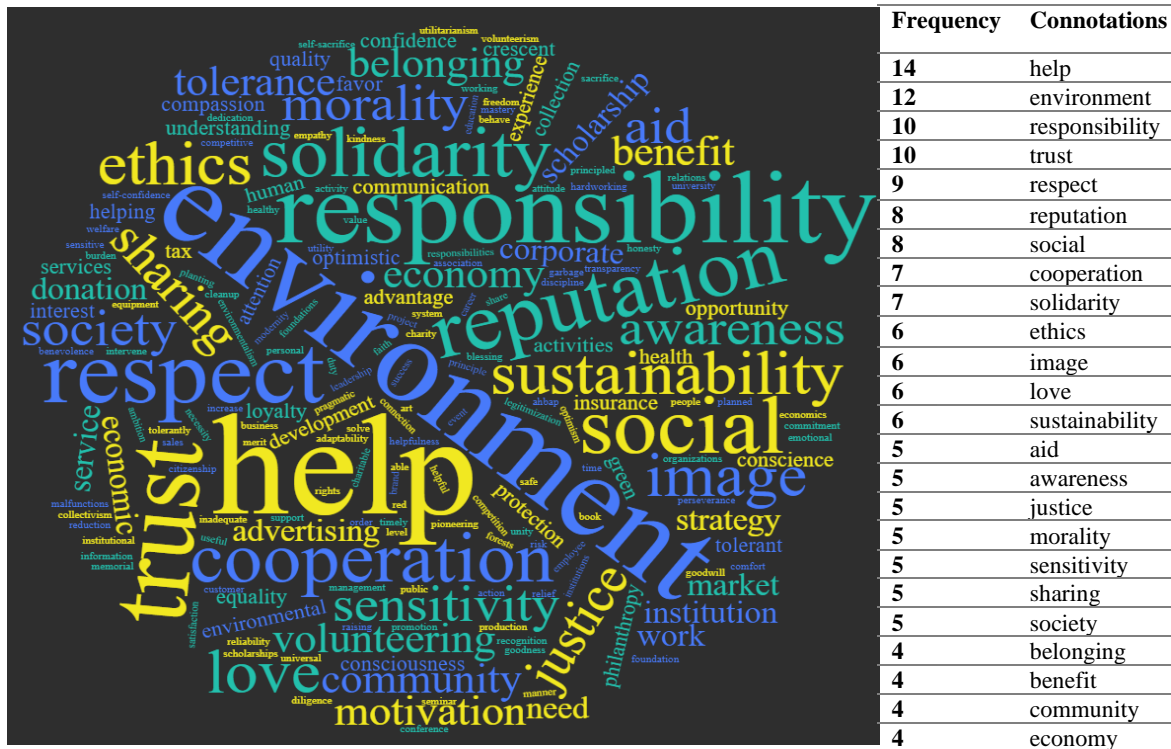
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion on Qualitative Design

Participants of the study were asked to provide three words with which they associate CSR, and the resulting word cloud and frequency of CSR connotations were presented in the Figure 2. The words most frequently associated with CSR by participants include “help”, “environment”, “responsibility”, “trust”, and “respect”. Furthermore, words like “trust”, “reputation”, “cooperation”, “solidarity”, “image”, “sharing”, “belonging”, “benefit” etc. suggest perspectives aligned with value co-creation and relationship marketing in CSR.

Additionally, in the word cloud presented in Figure 2, four basic dimensions of CSR- social, environmental, economic, and ethical- seem quite salient.

Figure 2: Word cloud and CSR connotations



Qualitative results indicate that CSR can be evaluated from three aspects, which are positive, normative and traditional CSR dimensions. **Positive CSR** gives insights into how CSR has been perceived and evaluated by the various stakeholders. **Normative CSR** stipulates how CSR activities ought to be. The distinction as drawn by İzmir and Turgut (2019) is that positive CSR is related to “what is” and normative CSR mentions “what ought to be”. **Traditional dimensionality of CSR** has been shaped on the axis of Carroll’s (1979; 1991) CSR framework. Over time, this framework has been extended by the growing needs developed in the triangle of business-stakeholders-consumer relationships and contributions of the several authors in this field (see, Hoeffler and Keller, 2002; Okan et al., 2015; Öberseder et al., 2014; Pérez et al., 2013; Porter and Kramer, 2019; Turker, 2009). Codes and themes derived from qualitative analysis were illustrated in Figure 3, 4, and 5.

Votaw (1973) claimed that CSR “means something, but not always the same thing to everybody.” and his early evaluation on the concept of social responsibility remains pertinent. Based on diverse CSR definitions of the participants, seven dimensions were reached, as they touched upon various aspects that they considered important in their interpretations of CSR. These dimensions, “Social”, “Economic”, “Environmental”, “Stakeholder”, “Philanthropic”, “Ethical” and “Relationship marketing”, are in parallel with the traditional CSR dimensions in the literature (Carroll, 1979; 1991; Dahlsrud 2008; Okan et al., 2015; Öberseder et al., 2014; Pérez et al., 2013; Porter and Kramer, 2019; Turker, 2009), which are illustrated in Figure 3. Notably, the “Relationship marketing” dimension appears to be a novel approach in the CSR studies. Although there are studies evaluating CSR on the relationship marketing and value co-creation axis (Hwang and Kandampully, 2015; Luu, 2019; Mubushar et al., 2020; Pfajfar et al., 2022; Porter and Kramer, 2019), this perspective represents a relatively novel dimension within CSR research.

Figure 3: Traditional CSR dimensions

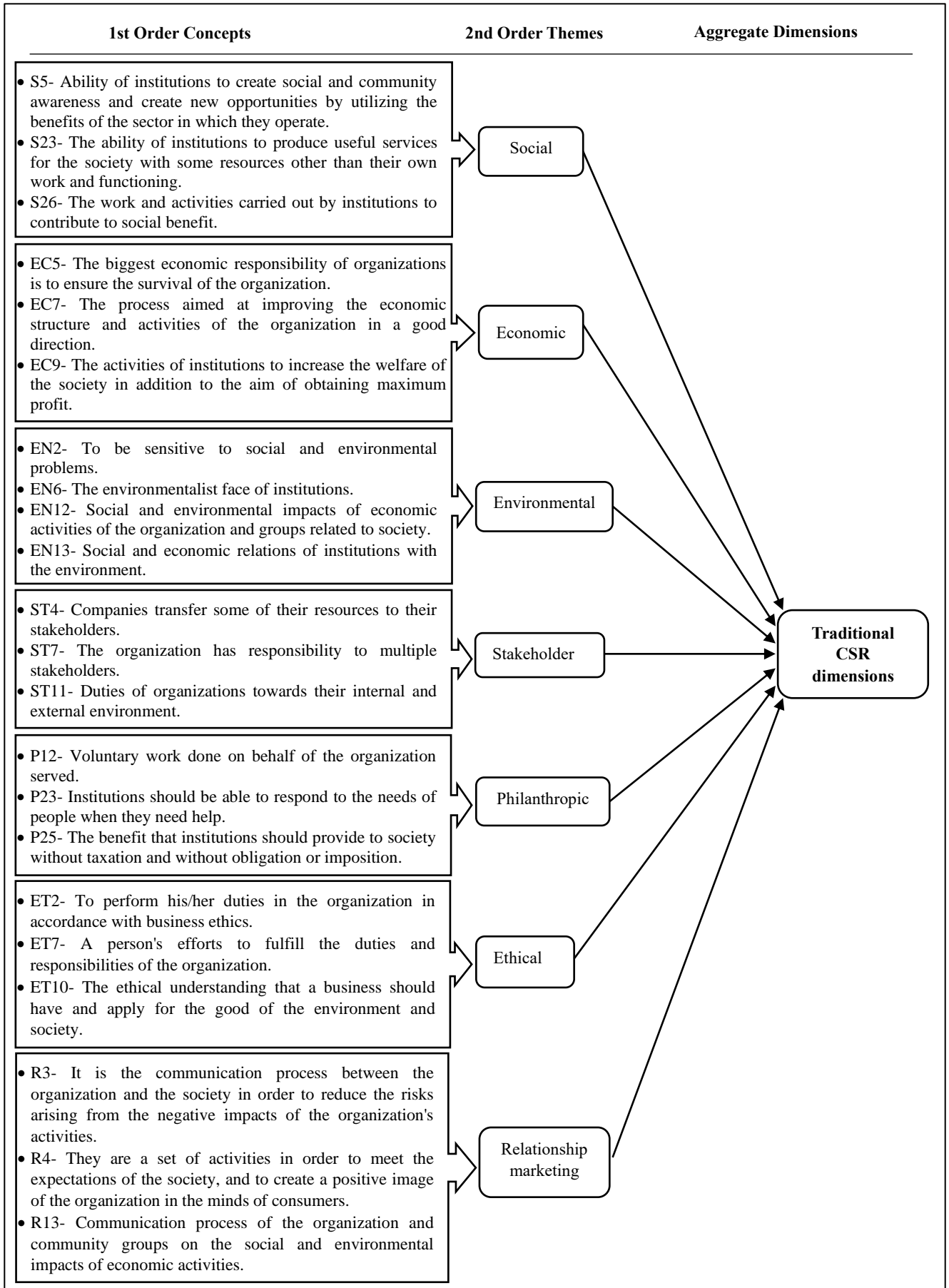


Figure 4: Positive CSR

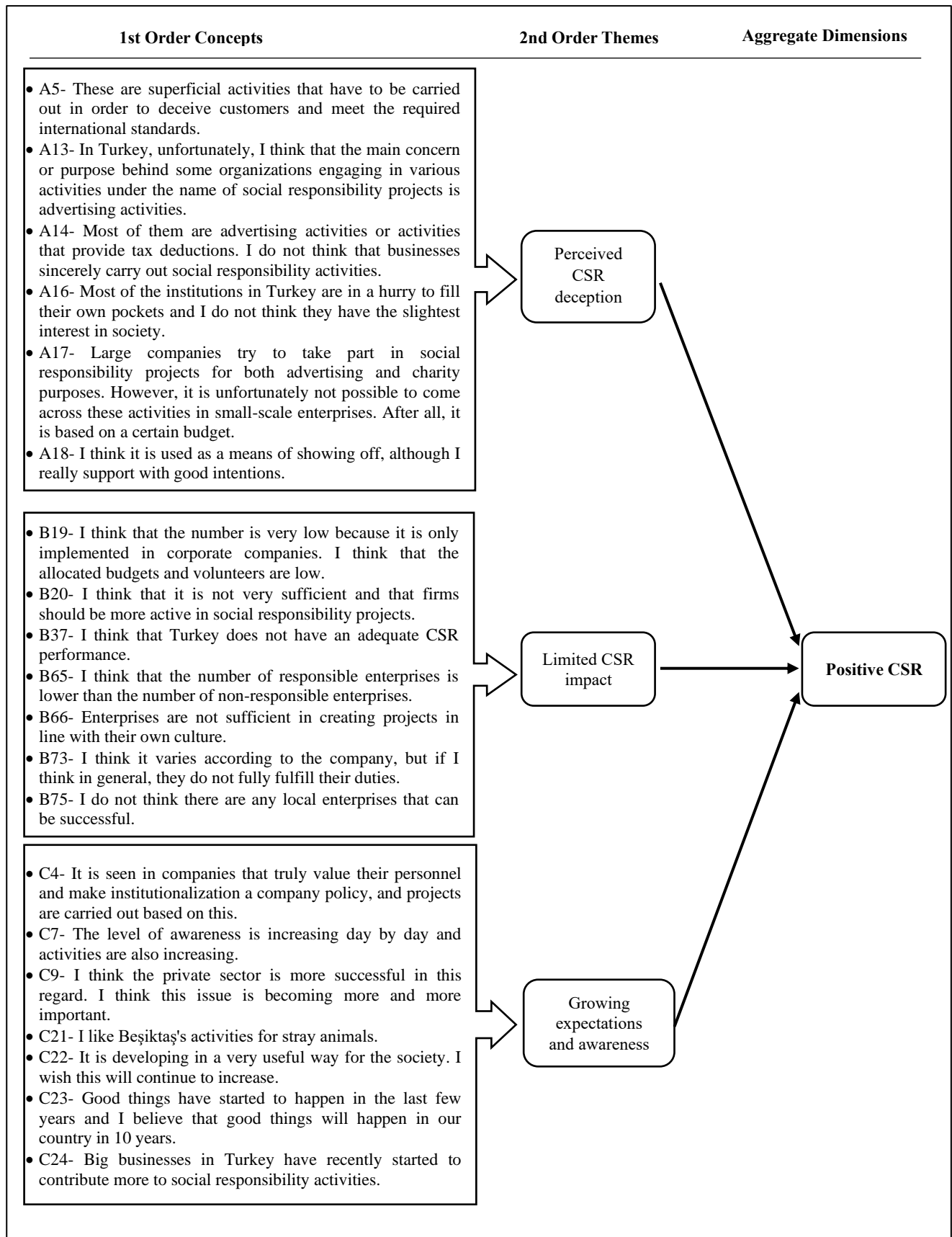
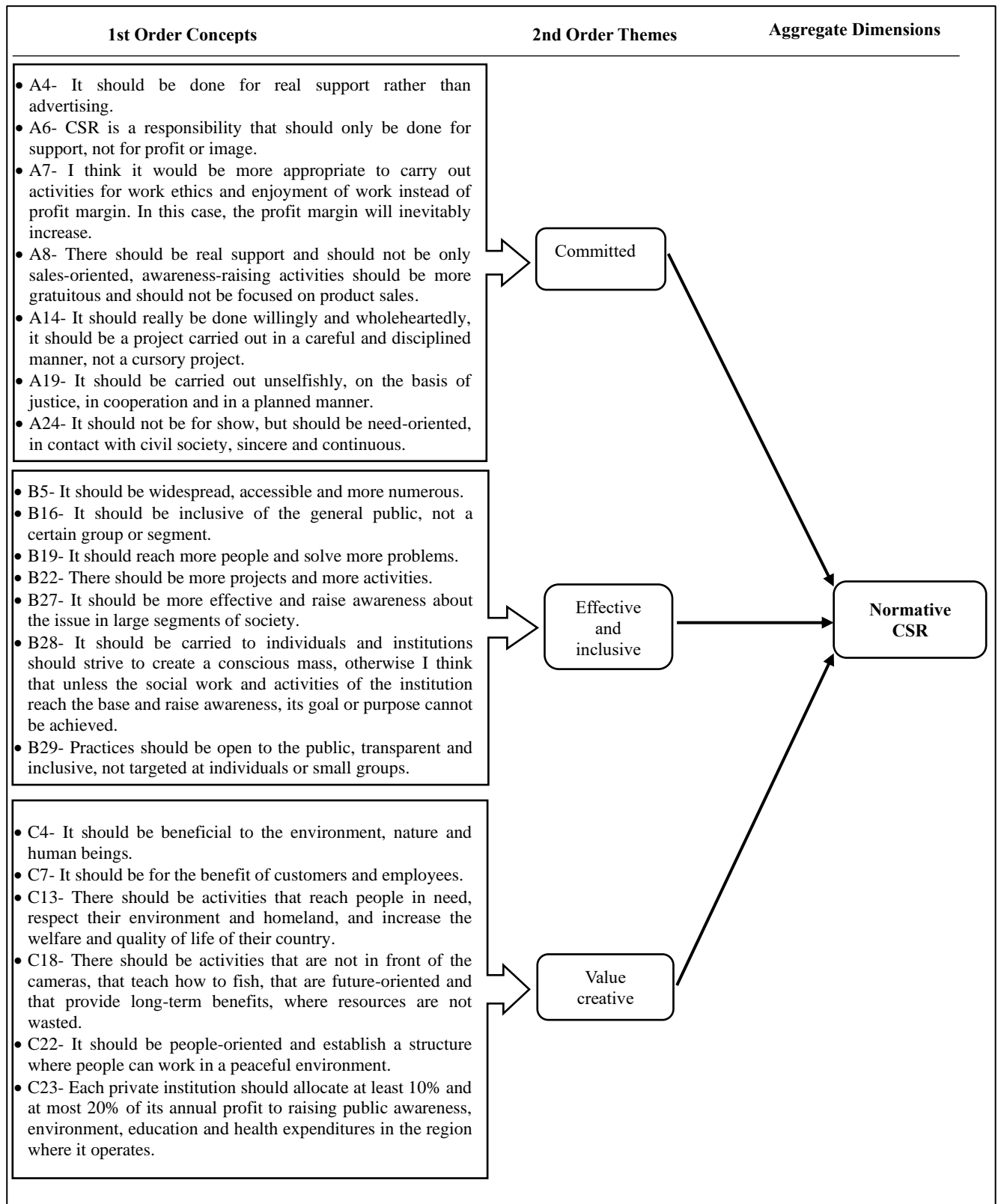


Figure 5: Normative CSR



The intersection of CSR with value co-creation and relationship marketing encompasses the voluntary activities conducted by organizations to enhance their image and reputation, establish long term relationships through trust and commitment, and engage in mutually beneficial exchanges with consumers and stakeholders. As in all other CSR perspectives, the focal point in the value and relationship-oriented CSR is to address societal needs by reducing negative impacts. In that, organizations conduct their economic activities in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. The difference is this new dimension stipulates that CSR should shift from business-oriented manners to consumer-oriented view, and shared value should be co-created through the inclusion of the customers as well as other stakeholders in the formation and implementation of company's CSR projects. R9 summarized the main idea of the relationship marketing dimension of CSR, "*It is the whole of the activities of legal or real persons who fulfill their commercial activities for profit, to use the experience, reputation and target audiences they have gained while carrying out these activities for any problematic situation that needs to be improved and to raise awareness among the public.*".

Next, participants critically evaluated the effectiveness and practical outcomes of firms' CSR strategies in Turkey under the positive CSR theme. Based on this evaluation, three codes were identified, which are namely perceived CSR deception, limited CSR impact, and growing expectations and awareness. Having identified to what extent CSR activities are beneficial and effective in Turkey, participants generated corresponding normative statements to overcome the shortcomings of CSR implementations. Under normative CSR theme, three codes were identified. Based on this theme, CSR should be committed, effective and inclusive, and value creative. Therefore, it is identified that each code in the positive CSR theme has a matching code in the normative CSR themes.

Within the positive CSR theme, 19.5 percent of participants perceived CSR as a form of **deception**. This perceived sense of deception varies among participants, with some viewing CSR as a form of greenwashing. For instance, A3 suggests that firms primarily "... *act in their own interests.*". Conversely, other participants lean towards the belief that CSR ultimately brings benefits, as indicated by the statement of A20: "*There are good ones and bad ones, the important thing is that they are useful to people...*". On the other hand, within the normative CSR theme, 39.1 percent of participants expressed the opinion that firms should be **committed** to their CSR strategies. According to Fassin and Buelens (2011), certain companies act as if they are responsible by employing CSR as a means to advance their questionable strategies, aiming to establish connections with consumers and gain an edge over competitors. Nonetheless, when consumers remain unconvinced of the company's sincere commitment to CSR, it results in a detrimental impact on consumer perceptions and harms the company's image and reputation (Kim et al., 2015). A6 states, "*CSR is a responsibility that should only be done for support, not for profit or image.*". Furthermore, according to İzmir (2022), committed and sincere CSR initiatives naturally cultivate a set of positive attitudes and behaviors, which are just as significant as the financial performance (FP) metrics, as these variables forecast concrete purchase actions, which in turn drive company profits. A7 mentions, "*I think it would be more appropriate to carry out activities for work ethics and enjoyment of work instead of profit margin. In this case, the profit margin will inevitably increase.*". If firms abstain from deceptive CSR strategies and focus solely on sincere and committed CSR initiatives, CSR can realize its full potential and strike a delicate equilibrium between firm interests and the concerns of various stakeholders.

Among the participants within the positive CSR theme, 63.4 percent expressed the belief that CSR has a **limited impact**. B37 asserts, "*I think that Turkey does not have an adequate CSR performance.*". This perceived limited impact might stem from the deceiving and ineffective implementation of CSR strategies by companies, which fail to create substantial value for diverse stakeholders. B20 states, "*I think that it is not very sufficient and that firms should be more active in social responsibility projects.*". The allocation of advertising and communication budgets by certain businesses to promote CSR actions, surpassing the

budgets assigned for actual CSR initiatives, undermines trust in both CSR and the implicated businesses (Porter and Kramer, 2006). B19 states, *“I think that the number is very low because it is only implemented in corporate companies. I think that the allocated budgets and volunteers are low.”*. Waddock and Graves (1997) argue that firms often require slack resources to engage in CSR practices. However, even small companies with limited resources can endeavor to contribute positively within the confines of their available means. Therefore, 28.2 percent of the participants under the normative CSR theme suggest that CSR should be **effective and inclusive**. For the CSR practices of the companies, B19 suggests *“It should reach more people and solve more problems.”*. Similarly, B27 states, *“It should be more effective and raise awareness about the issue in large segments of society.”*. Participants expect effectiveness and inclusiveness from the CSR initiatives. Vanhamme and Grobben (2009) asserted that studies on the effectiveness of CSR projects are scarce. Barnett et al. (2020) emphasized the need for further research in this area to gain a deeper understanding of whether CSR indeed has a meaningful impact in addressing pressing issues. If the CSR projects do not generate benefits to the society at large and solve existing problems of the stakeholders, consumers and other stakeholders might develop skepticism towards the company's actions, potentially eroding their trust and confidence in the CSR initiatives of the company. This could lead to a decline in the company's reputation, as well as in a set of positive attitudes and behaviors towards the company. Hence, CSR initiatives must attain their asserted objectives and include the presence of a wide range of stakeholder groups.

17.1 percent of the participants under the positive CSR theme have **growing expectations and awareness** from CSR initiatives of the firms. C7 states, *“As the level of awareness increases day by day, activities also increase.”*. Emphasizing growing expectations, C23 mentions, *“Good things have started to happen in the last few years and I believe that good things will happen in our country in 10 years.”*, while C9 claims, *“I think this issue is becoming more and more important.”*. Global challenges centered mostly around environmental and social issues, such as climate change, social inequality, and sustainability, attract attention of different stakeholders. Changing consumer preferences for environmentally and socially responsible companies create a chance for competitive advantage. Izmir (2021) claims that companies that effectively engage in CSR can attract talented employees, improve brand image, and build stronger customer loyalty. Therefore, C24 claims, *“Big businesses in Turkey have recently started to contribute more to social responsibility activities.”*. Participants of normative CSR theme draws the directions for the CSR efforts of the companies. 32.7 percent of the participants under the normative CSR theme expects that CSR should be **value creative**. Increased expectations and awareness focus on value driven CSR practices because some participants perceive CSR activities as business-oriented and non-value-creating strategic approaches to enhance sales volume and product pricing. C18 summarizes how CSR strategies should be shaped, *“There should be activities that are not in front of the cameras, that teach fishing, that are future-oriented and provide long-term benefits, and where resources are not wasted.”*. Similarly, C13 states, *“There should be activities that reach people in need, respect their environment and homeland, and increase the welfare and quality of life of their country.”*. Focusing on satisfaction from CSR efforts and adding consumer perspective, C31 states, *“It should be customer satisfaction-oriented and protect the nature and the employees.”*. C31 emphasizes a very important element of CSR that has been long overlooked. Leclercq-Machado et al. (2022) claim that consumers as the most important stakeholder should be satisfied with the CSR initiatives so that positive behaviors can be established. Porter and Kramer (2019) advocated that firms desperately strive to entice consumers to consume more and more of their products. However, the concept of shared value is strictly connected to the policies and practices that improve a company's competitiveness while also advancing economic and social conditions in the communities it operates in. The shared value concept emphasizes the connection between societal and economic progress through a value-driven approach, which bridges the gap between traditionally separate concerns in business and the social sector. Therefore,

participants of this study are prone to think that CSR initiatives should be centered on value creation. The perception and definition of CSR made by C3 summarize the essence of CSR most effectively:

Corporate social responsibility is a form of perception management to create positive associations in the minds about the image of the organization. Through their social responsibility activities, organizations gain intangible values such as loyalty, trust and commitment. While intangible values positively affect and strengthen corporate reputation, financial values will also rise in parallel with reputation. Most people should know that the financial part is not the main thing.

Results and Discussion on Quantitative Design

Skewness and kurtosis values of the variables in the dataset were checked for normal distribution, showing the acceptable threshold values of -2 and +2 (George and Mallery, 2010). The reliability of the scales was assessed with Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which should be 0,70 or above (Nunnally, 1978). It was determined that purchase intention scale was reliable (0,890), whereas reliability of CSR scale was low (0,601). In exploratory research, reliability values ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are considered acceptable, while reliability values between 0.70 and 0.90 are regarded as satisfactory to good (Hair et al., 2021). Schmitt (1996) proposed that there is no universally accepted threshold value for reliability, such as 0.70 for Cronbach's alpha because scales with relatively low alpha values might be still valuable under certain circumstances. For instance, the traditionally accepted threshold of 0.70 can be considered flawed if the scale measures knowledge facets because metrics related to knowledge have diverse and non-coherent nature (Taber, 2018). The reliability level of the CSR scale in this study can be considered acceptable because it can be said that the development of CSR perception for a given company requires a certain level of involvement and information gathering and processing. No further assessment for the scales used in this study has been done, as only two latent variables were used in the research model. The other two variables in the model assigned as moderators were measured with single item. Next, the validity of the hypotheses in the study was assessed using simple regression and moderation analyses. The results of the hypothesis tests were illustrated in Table 1.

To test H₁, the influence of CSR on purchase intention was examined through regression analysis in model 1, as the coefficients of the independent variables in model 2, except for the brand variable whose effect is controlled, are simple effects due to the inclusion of the interaction effects (product of CSR perception and CSR knowledge, and product of CSR perception and price premium) in the model. Based on the statistical outcome of model 1, it was determined that CSR significantly affects purchase intention, supporting H₁. Öztay and Birinci (2019) suggested that CSR is positively related to a set of attitudes toward a company and its products. However, Öberseder et al. (2011) argued that these positive attitudes do not always translate into actual behaviors due to overexposure of consumers to CSR stimuli in the research designs, and various influencing factors in consumer behavior such as financial concerns, peer pressure, and consumer perceptions of the company. According to Erçin-Yurcu (2021), attitudes towards green behavior are guided by subjective norms that reflect social beliefs about the expected consequences of the behavior and what others will think. Izmir and Turgut (2019) suggested that understanding the complex relationship between CSR and attitudinal/behavioral constructs might require identifying intervening variables, implying the need for further investigation of the moderators and mediators. Therefore, the effect of CSR on purchase intention, which is one of the most important behavioral outcomes of CSR from the consumer behavior perspective, is further investigated in the model 2 including two possible moderators that can make an effect on the CSR-purchase intention relationship. For the moderation analysis, PROCESS tool was employed. In contrast, when testing H₁, simple regression analysis in SPSS is utilized.

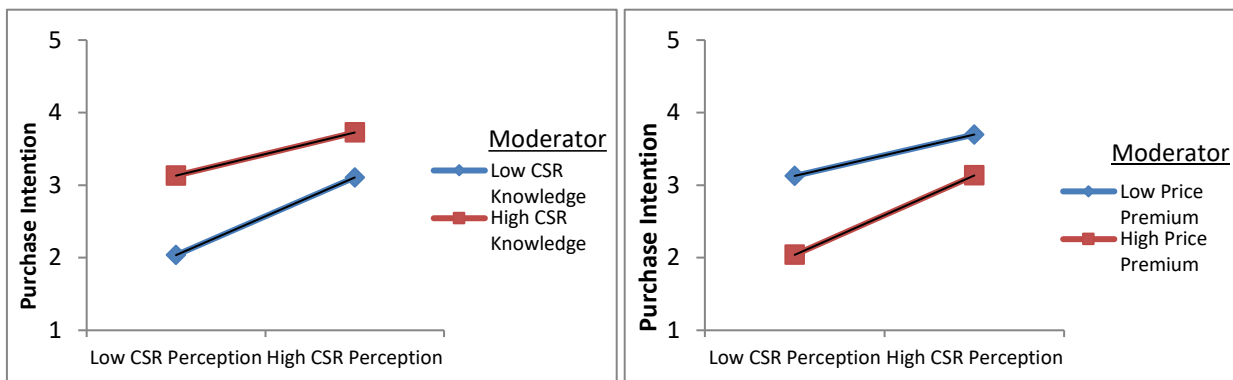
Table 1: Hypothesis tests

Variables	Purchase Intention		Hypothesis test
	(Model 1)	(Model 2)	
CSR Perception	,461***	,416*	H ₁ supported
CSR Knowledge	-	,429**	
CSR Perception * CSR Knowledge	-	-,119*	H ₂ supported
Price Premium	-	-,413**	
CSR Perception * Price Premium	-	,131**	H ₃ supported
Brand	-,406***	-,386***	
R	,450	,479	
R ²	,202	,229	
F	67,237	26,102	
P	,000	,000	

* p<0,05
 ** p<0,01
 *** p<0,001

It was determined that both of the interaction effects were significant, supporting H₂ and H₃. The knowledge of the consumers about a company’s CSR activities weakens the effect of CSR on purchase intention, whereas the willingness to pay for price premium to support the cause of the company’s CSR activities strengthens this effect. These results derived from the slope analysis of the interaction effects are visualized in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Slope analysis of the interactions in the research model



Probing the significant interaction effects, values of the moderators using mean ± SD were presented in Table 2. The effect of CSR on purchase intention gets the strongest level when CSR knowledge is low and willingness to pay for price premium is high. İzmir and Turgut (2019) supported the similar effect of CSR on purchase intention in the food industry in Turkey when consumers have limited CSR knowledge. As consumers become more informed about a company’s CSR activities, their inclination to purchase the company’s products decreases compared to those with lower CSR knowledge. Arli et al. (2017), and Jung and Hur (2023) claimed that when consumers lack trust in company’s full commitment to its promises, it negatively affects the reputation of the company and diminishes the positive attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, knowledgeable consumers are aware of the tactical use of CSR by companies leveraging it for a competitive edge over rivals. Conversely, it seems less knowledgeable consumers base their CSR perceptions primarily on a company’s CSR communications and make purchase decisions based on this positive CSR perception.

Table 2: Conditional effects of the CSR at values of the moderators

CSR Knowledge	Price Premium	Effect	p
1,602	1,792	,461	,000
1,602	2,882	,604	,000
1,602	3,971	,747	,000
2,769	1,792	,322	,000
2,769	2,882	,465	,000
2,769	3,971	,608	,000
3,936	1,792	,183	,041
3,936	2,882	,327	,000
3,936	3,971	,470	,000

Consumers are willing to pay extra for products or services from companies engaged in CSR activities to support the good causes. The consumers with high willingness to pay price premium tend to exhibit a heightened purchase intention for the companies whose CSR efforts are positively perceived. In his experimental design, Wójcik (2013) indicates that positive corporate behaviors of the companies lead to higher purchase intention, but price premium sensitivity of the consumers for socially responsible products might cause adverse effects on sales volume. Similarly, results of Tong and Su (2018) clearly show the interaction effect between CSR and price on a set of attitudinal and behavioral constructs. Ataniyazova et al. (2022) suggest that consumers might express willingness to pay premium price in their purchase decisions for products and services of the companies involving CSR activities, but this willingness may not transform into actual behavior because they simply cannot afford it due to economic reasons. However, Wang (2020) states that consumers purchase products of socially responsible companies at higher prices to encourage their CSR activities. Andrews et al. (2014) supported the moderating effect of price between cause marketing -i.e., CSR- and consumer purchase, showing a U-shaped relationship. Results of this study show that willingness to pay price premium has a potential to translate CSR perception into actual purchase behavior.

CONCLUSION

In this study, answers for what constitutes the concept of CSR and when it triggers purchase intention were sought. It is identified that consumer knowledge dampens the relationship between CSR and purchase intention, while willingness to pay price premium strengthens this effect. When consumers have well established positive perceptions or attitudinal and behavioral intentions for a company resulting from its CSR endeavors, at the first sight, it seems as if it is a naturel outcome that this perceptual, attitudinal and behavioral element would positively moderate the impact of CSR perception on purchase intention and many other behavioral intentions. However, this line of thinking might not applicable in each consumer behavior as the price is one of the most elastic components in the marketing mix and consumers tend to be highly responsive to price fluctuations for a specific product or service. In their exchange behaviors with the companies, consumers need to bear various costs of possessing the ownership of a specific product or service such as time, effort, money etc. Hence, consumers' willingness to pay a premium for a product or service from companies engaged in CSR initiatives implies their readiness to support CSR causes and contribute to sharing the costs of the CSR projects. Consequently, although the positive moderating effect of price premium is in parallel to the extant literature, the negative moderating effect of CSR knowledge becomes meaningful considering the insights gained from qualitative analysis. Consumers view CSR as essential from various perspectives, including "Social", "Economic", "Environmental", "Stakeholder", "Philanthropic", "Ethical" and "Relationship marketing". However, consumers develop negative perceptions when they become aware that companies engage in hypocritical and sensationalized CSR activities, using the appearance of responsibility to increase both the profit and sales of their products and services. Qualitative

findings clearly depicted that the consumers in Turkey hold negative perceptions of CSR practices from various angles, indicating a lack of trust in such activities within the country. As a result, consumers with extensive CSR knowledge about a company's practices tend to exhibit fewer positive attitudes and behaviors compared to those with limited knowledge, as they are fully aware of the insincerity in these CSR practices. Conversely, less knowledgeable consumers tend to develop their CSR perceptions based on the CSR communications of the company and the general belief that CSR aims to benefit various stakeholders. As a result, they tend to be less suspicious with the CSR initiatives of these companies in Turkey, which translates to a stronger impact of CSR on purchase intention compared to those of highly knowledgeable consumers.

The knowledgeable consumers seem to be more suspicious with the concept of CSR, and do not exactly trust in company's CSR efforts. Positive CSR theme in the qualitative design summarizes how CSR is perceived in Turkey, pointing to three codes namely, perceived CSR deception, limited CSR impact, and growing expectations and awareness. These codes imply that CSR as a concept has been perceived negatively in general, but a group of consumers still has hope for the future of CSR and there is a growing expectations and awareness to improve the implementations of CSR in Turkey. Based on the shortcomings on the effectiveness and benefits detected in the positive CSR theme, consumers suggested a set of normative statements according to which CSR should be committed, effective and inclusive, and value creative. Although there are various approaches focusing on diverse aspects of CSR, findings of the study imply that CSR strategies should be developed on the basis of value co-creation and building mutually beneficial long-term relationships. Based on the findings of this study, a new CSR definition has been developed. *CSR is a process of co-creating shared value in environmental, social, and governance issues, while developing and sustaining long-term relationships based on mutual commitment, trust, and satisfaction to realize the CSR goals of the firm.*

Implications for Marketing Theory and Practice

CSR as a value co-creation activity seems like a novel approach and it requires collaboration between a company and consumers, including other stakeholders, in the creation of (shared) value. This approach would go beyond traditional notions of CSR because most of the CSR approaches are business oriented and benefits are solely created by the company and then provided to the customers and other stakeholders. This practice is flawed and does not help the formation of a common ground on which CSR strategies and implementations can be discussed and shaped together with the consumers. CSR strategies have been built from the ivory towers of the business world so far, leading to unproductive and non-problem-solving outcomes. The part missed in the formation of the CSR projects is companies fail to understand that if they contribute to the development of a strong and prosperous society, they will excel in such a healthy environment in the course of the time. Value co-creation in CSR can even create a supporting environment for the company, eventually expanding to the development of new and more superior products and services.

Value co-creation in the realm of CSR should focus on developing long term relationships based on mutuality, commitment and trust with consumers and various stakeholders. Consumers are the key stakeholders and they should be regarded as active participants in the formation and implementation of a company's CSR strategies related to social, economic and environmental issues. Involving consumers and other stakeholders in the CSR process and responding to their expectations and values, companies can build long term relationships based on commitment and trust, enhance their reputation and image, and the most importantly create shared value for both the business and its stakeholders. Once the mutuality and long-term relationships are established, consumers will be eager to pay a price premium to flourish the good causes derived from value creating CSR projects. Then, CSR perception turns to purchase intention for the consumers willing to pay price premium. Conversely, consumer claims of corporate hypocrisy are evident in Turkey and there is also information gap for the companies who are sincere in and committed to their CSR

strategies because findings on weakened link between CSR and purchase intention as knowledge increases support these claims. Companies in Turkey should base their CSR policies on the axis of relationship marketing and value co-creation, and work on better CSR communication to convey correct information, creating awareness to change the perspectives of knowledgeable consumers.

Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

Findings of this study is limited to the sample and hence cannot be generalized. The effects of two prominent brands were held constant in order to concentrate on the examination of the research model. However, the changing magnitude of the impact of CSR on purchase intention across different brands could provide vital insights into the role of brands in the formation of CSR perceptions and its translation into purchase intention. Similarly, findings might be specific to the airline industry in Turkey as well as particular brands examined.

Future studies can focus on identifying other potential moderators and mediators that can make a significant impact on the link between CSR and a set of behavioral intentions. Potential moderators on this relationship can be positive perceptual, attitudinal and behavioral elements formed by CSR implementations of the companies, such as reputation, image, trust, commitment, satisfaction etc. This study has advanced CSR theory within the context of relationship marketing and value co-creation. Therefore, future studies should look CSR through the consumer-oriented lenses rather than business oriented one, build and test their research models from pure marketing-oriented perspectives centering on the relationship marketing and value co-creation.

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Appendix

CSR perception (Baygöl-Özpinar, 2015; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Turgut, 2020)

- 1- This business helps the poor.
- 2- This business does not pollute the environment.
- 3- This business cooperates with non-governmental organizations and aid associations.
- 4- This business pays its taxes.
- 5- This business tries to close the gaps in society where the state is not sufficient.
- 6- This business gives back its profits to the communities it does business with to a certain extent.

Purchase Intention (Cakici and Shukla, 2017; Hausman and Siekpe, 2009)

- 1- I will definitely buy the services of this business.
- 2- I may consider purchasing the services of this business.
- 3- I would buy the services of this business for myself.
- 4- I would buy the services of this business for my close circle of friends.

CSR Knowledge (İzmir and Turgut, 2019)

- 1- Please indicate your level of knowledge about the corporate social responsibility activities of the following companies.

Price Premium (İzmir and Turgut, 2019)

- 1- I buy the products of socially responsible companies by paying premium prices in order to support the projects they carry out.

Qualitative questions (İzmir and Turgut, 2019)

- 1- Can you write (at most) 3 words that evoke the concept of corporate social responsibility?
- 2- Could you define the concept of corporate social responsibility in your own way?
- 3- What do you think about the corporate social responsibility activities of businesses in Turkey?
- 4- In general, how should corporate social responsibility activities actually be?