

## The impact of CSR posts on social media platforms on customer behavior: The mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth and the reputation of commercial banks




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### ABSTRACT

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Against the backdrop of an escalating emphasis on sustainable development within the banking sector, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has garnered increasing attention as a pivotal determinant in cultivating reputational capital and attracting clientele. This study undertakes a rigorous examination of the impact of CSR enacted on social media platforms (CSR-S) on customer service utilization behavior, mediated through the dual pathways of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and bank reputation (BR). Concurrently, the research investigates the moderating roles of customer engagement (CE) levels and CSR awareness (CA) in the relationships between the mediating variables and service usage intention. Empirical data, comprising 847 responses, were collected from customers across commercial banks in Northern Vietnam and subsequently analyzed employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The findings reveal that: (1) CSR-S exerts a positive and significant influence on both eWOM and BR; (2) eWOM and BR positively drive attitudes towards technology adoption and service usage intention; and (3) both CA and CE attenuate the positive relationships between BR, eWOM, and customer behavior. In sum, this research furnishes practical recommendations to assist banks in optimizing their CSR-S strategies with the overarching objectives of enhancing brand prestige and fostering sustained customer service utilization.

**Contribution/ Originality:** This study focuses on the role of CSR-S in the banking industry in Vietnam, emphasizing the moderation of customer loyalty and customer awareness of CSR-S. This is a new aspect compared to previous studies, providing a deeper understanding of the impact of CSR on customer behavior.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the prevailing global environmental and social dilemmas, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) established by the United Nations advocate for an equilibrium between economic advancement, ecological conservation, and social accountability. In this context, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks have emerged as standards for sustainable development, whereas Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved into a vital mechanism for organizations to demonstrate their commitment to societal and environmental considerations. Nonetheless, in Vietnam, the implementation of CSR, particularly CSR on social media (CSR-S),

remains limited and has not yet gained recognition as a fundamental strategic priority, unlike in countries such as Egypt, South Korea, and India (Ali, Campayo-Sanchez, & Ruiz-Moreno, 2024; Parray, Iqbal, & Mushtaq, 2024).

The emergence of social media has fundamentally altered the way enterprises communicate with consumers, presenting new avenues to enhance the effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through proactive consumer engagement (Fatma & Rahman, 2016). CSR-S surpasses the confines of conventional CSR by facilitating customer interaction, perspective sharing, and the rapid and extensive dissemination of messages (Martínez, Pérez, & Del Bosque, 2014). Within the banking industry, where reputation and trust are paramount, CSR-S is regarded as a promising strategy for bolstering brand reputation and affirming the bank's social role (He & Li, 2011).

This study aims to bridge the theoretical gap related to CSR-S in the Vietnamese banking context, particularly in the context of ongoing digital transformation and the increasing influence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Although previous studies have described the impact of CSR on customer loyalty and engagement in service sectors (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2015; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009), there remains a lack of comprehensive investigations thoroughly examining the specific consequences of CSR-S in the banking sector. Moreover, while the importance of CSR awareness and customer involvement has been recognized as an important determinant of consumer behavior (Carroll & Shabana, 2010; Chang & Lee, 2020), the moderating effect of these variables on the interaction between eWOM, the adoption of technology, and the intention to use the services of customers remains underexplored (Parray et al., 2024; Touni, Albaity, Shamsudin, & Toloie-Eshlaghy, 2022).

Additionally, this study extends the existing theoretical framework by integrating moderating constructs such as customer engagement (CE) and CSR awareness (CA), with the aim of examining the impact of CSR-S on eWOM, bank reputation, attitudes towards technology and services, and customer service intent. Importantly, the investigation sheds light on eWOM's intermediary functions and reputation in the dynamics between CSR-S and consumer behavior, while using robust analytical techniques to ensure the validity and objectivity of the results.

In summary, this study not only strengthens the theoretical foundation of CSR-S but also provides strategic insights for financial institutions that want to implement effective CSR-S initiatives, leverage social media to enhance customer engagement, improve brand reputation, and create a long-term competitive advantage in the contemporary digital context.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

In an increasingly interconnected global context, marked by a heightened awareness of environmental and social imperatives, sustainable development has emerged as an indispensable strategic imperative for economic institutions. Beyond the sole concern of maximizing profits, contemporary businesses have gradually integrated social and environmental considerations into their operating models. This fundamental shift reflects a move from traditional sensitivity to a more conscientious and community-centered approach. In the commercial banking sector, institutions are no longer just means of allocating capital; they are playing an increasingly important role in shaping sustainable development through comprehensive governance strategies. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is recognized as an intrinsic component, enabling banks to meet community expectations and create a significant competitive advantage. The past decade has seen an increase in academic publications exploring the link between CSR and the financial performance of banks, highlighting the long-term academic interest in the topic (Thich, Thanh, & Nhan, 2022). The increasing prominence of CSR prompts us to examine its historical origins and development more closely in terms of its definition.

Although the origins of CSR can be traced back to the 1930s (Agudelo, Jóhannsdóttir, & Davídsdóttir, 2019), a consensus definition of CSR remains elusive. Ferrell, Thorne McAlister, and Ferrell (2010) took a holistic view, arguing that corporations are accountable to a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, consumers, suppliers, and community groups, Lindgreen, Vanhamme, Watkins, and Maon (2017) approached CSR through the lens of transparent communication, defining it as a proactive process whereby

companies anticipate the expectations of stakeholders and frankly disclose relevant economic, social, and environmental information. Bialkova and Te Paske (2021), building on Crifo and Forget (2015), highlight the persistent pressure on businesses, particularly banks, from myriad interest groups to embed CSR within their core operations. Consequently, it is plausible to anticipate that CSR serves as a critical enabler for banks to adapt to the evolving operational landscape (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2021). Castro, Lacap, Garbosa, Jimenez, and Mallari (2022) substantiated this perspective, asserting that CSR encompasses the full spectrum of social practices undertaken by a firm to foster alignment between stakeholders' societal expectations and the enterprise's conduct (Fatma & Rahman, 2016). According to Castro et al. (2022), CSR should not be narrowly construed as a mere collection of isolated voluntary activities; rather, it ought to be recognized as a strategic imperative designed to cultivate positive interaction and foster harmonious, mutually beneficial relationships between corporations and their stakeholders. Crucially, fulfilling stakeholder expectations not only enhances corporate image and reputation but also fortifies stakeholder loyalty and garners sustained support over time.

In an increasingly digitized world, how CSR is communicated becomes just as important as the initiatives themselves. Beyond conventional CSR, the burgeoning realm of CSR communicated via social media (CSR-S) has garnered considerable scholarly attention. Chu and Chen (2019) concluded that "consumer CSR-related activities in social media are defined as the extent to which consumers use social media to engage in companies' CSR communication activities." They further elaborated that "social media, which provides an easy way to share information and a convenient method to establish an individual's self, has become an effective communication channel for consumers to participate in CSR-related activities." More recent scholarship by Ali et al. (2024) introduced an innovative connective model, distinguishing itself from conventional CSR frameworks; online CSR-enabled digital engagement empowers organizations not only to disseminate information but also to actively encourage community participation and interaction across diverse social media platforms. Emphasizing the bidirectional interactive nature between users and businesses, Inversini and Derchi (2024) offered salient findings on CSR communication on social media: "Thanks to its interactive (i.e., two-way) nature (Fatma, Ruiz, Khan, & Rahman, 2020) social media has become a highly interesting tool to directly engage with a variety of stakeholders (Saxton, Ren, & Guo, 2021) including those who are unfamiliar with CSR reports publicly shared on the corporate website (Christensen, 2016; Derchi, Zoni, & Dossi, 2021)".

To further clarify the multifaceted nature of CSR discussed above, scholars have proposed various typologies. Given these divergent yet complementary interpretations, scholars have systematically categorized CSR through different conceptual lenses. For instance, Chang and Lee (2020) categorized CSR into four main dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibility. Economic responsibility requires optimizing profits while meeting customer needs; legal responsibility requires strict adherence to existing regulations and laws; ethical responsibility reflects a company's unwavering commitment to acting in accordance with social norms; and philanthropic responsibility is seen as a means for businesses to contribute to improving the living standards of the community. In contrast, Mohammed and Al-Swidi (2020) classify CSR into three main areas: environmental responsibility, social responsibility, and partner-related responsibility, thereby illuminating the intrinsic link between CSR initiatives and consumer behavior. Environmental CSR, the first of these areas, focuses on conserving natural resources and minimizing negative impacts on the environment. Second, CSR is demonstrated through philanthropic efforts and community development initiatives.

Finally, partner-related CSR emphasizes the importance of cultivating strong relationships with key stakeholders such as employees and suppliers. Their typology highlights the multidimensionality of CSR and reinforces its strategic significance in impacting stakeholder awareness and ultimately organizational success; thus, it can foster emotional commitment from customers, promote positive digital communication, and significantly support improved business performance.

### 3. INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF CSR-S ON CUSTOMER BEHAVIOR

#### 3.1. Theoretical Frameworks

In order to examine the correlation between Corporate Social Responsibility in Services (CSR-S) and consumer behavior within the banking sector, this research utilizes two theoretical frameworks: the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). As posited by TAM (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989), the choice to adopt technology depends on the perceived utility and user-friendliness of the technology. In digital banking, CSR-S can significantly influence customers' recognition of the advantages and accessibility of services, thereby fostering a favorable attitude towards technology and services. Concurrently, the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) incorporates elements of social norms and perceived behavioral control, asserting that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and the bank's reputation can significantly affect customers' intentions to utilize services. Customers' decision-making processes are influenced not only by individual perceptions but also by the perspectives of others. CSR-S contributes to enhancing brand reputation, fostering trust, and promoting the intention to engage with digital banking services.

According to Kotler and Levy (1969), customer behavior is the specific actions of individuals when making purchasing, usage, and disposal decisions regarding products or services. Customer behavior when using banking services encompasses the entire psychological and behavioral process, from recognizing a need to deciding to use the service. This process involves searching for, evaluating, and selecting suitable services. Banking services not only meet needs such as loans and savings but also provide additional utilities like payments, investments, and financial consulting. Recently, the development of digital banking, with services like Internet Banking, Mobile Banking, and ATMs, has offered greater convenience to customers.

Overall, the above theories provide a solid analytical framework for studying the impact of CSR-S on attitudes towards technology and service, as well as customers' intentions to use the service, while also clarifying the mediating roles of eWOM and bank reputation (Appendix 1).

#### 3.2. Hypotheses Development

Firstly, the study conducted by Su, Huang, van der Veen, and Chen (2014) concluded that CSR exerts a strong impact on the bank's reputation and on personal relationships with customers, thereby enhancing the bank's brand image. Investment in CSR not only brings social value but also serves as an effective strategy to improve reputation, build trust, and promote sustainable business performance. More specifically, the study by Bianchi, Bruno, and Sarabia-Sanchez (2019) found that CSR has a positive impact on brand image, both emotionally and cognitively, as CSR reflects the core values of the company (He & Li, 2011; Martínez et al., 2014). Furthermore, Turban and Greening (1997) emphasized that companies with high CSR rankings are often associated with superior reputations. The hypothesis regarding the relationship between CSR and bank reputation suggests that positive CSR activities generate trust and strong emotional responses. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H: CSR has a positive impact on Bank Reputation.*

CSR was also identified as a crucial factor driving electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) among customers, especially in the context of digitalization. Jalilvand, Nasrolahi Vosta, Kazemi Mahyari, and Khazaei Pool (2017), along with Castro et al. (2022), confirmed that CSR directly and positively influenced eWOM behaviour by strengthening consumer trust and enhancing positive corporate perceptions. Previous studies further highlighted the key role of social media as an effective platform for disseminating CSR initiatives (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Lee, Oh, & Kim, 2013). Consumers were more likely to engage in positive eWOM when they perceived clear social values embedded in the company's activities (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009). In the banking sector, CSR was demonstrated to promote eWOM through user-generated content such as online reviews and comments (Tong, Wong, & Lui, 2012), thereby enhancing both economic value and customer relationship strength. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*H<sub>2</sub>: CSR positively influences eWOM.*

Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, and Vitale (2000) asserted in their study that the reputation of an online shopping platform served as a key driver of consumer usage confidence, thereby exerting a positive influence on consumers' attitudes toward online services. Furthermore, Kimiagari and Baei (2022) noted that reputation not only affected attitude but also influenced the level of recognition and perception customers held regarding the service delivery capabilities of firms, which enhanced enterprise credibility and played a critical role in building trust and encouraging consumers to engage with the offered services (Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2009). Within the banking context, possessing a robust reputation contributes to customers' sense of security, facilitating the acceptance of both technology and services provided by financial institutions. Hence, the following hypothesis was proposed:

*H<sub>3a</sub>: BR positively influences attitudes toward technology and services.*

Brand reputation is an important intangible asset that significantly influences customer perceptions and behavioral intentions (Jufri et al., 2022). Particularly in the banking sector, high levels of behavior were demonstrated to strengthen trust, shape attitudes, and encourage customers to decide to use services (Caruana, Cohen, & Krentler, 2006; Hengboriboon, Naruetharadol, Ketkeaw, & Gebombut, 2022). Empirical research demonstrated that both cognitive and affective evaluations of brand reputation contributed to stronger purchase intentions (Balakrishnan & Foroudi, 2020; Qalati et al., 2021). In the financial services industry, a strong reputation helps mitigate customer uncertainty and fosters trust in products and services. Based on this foundation, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H<sub>3b</sub>: BR positively influences customers' intention to use the service.*

Drawing upon the insights of Kudeshia and Kumar (2017) and Shankar, Jebarajakirthy, and Ashaduzzaman (2020), electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) exerts a direct influence on consumer attitudes, a construct acknowledged as pivotal for the establishment of customer-based brand equity (Lane & Jacobson, 1995; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Specifically, the cultivation of positive attitudes through favorable brand evaluations engenders enduring brand preference and subsequently bolsters purchase intentions (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Wu & Wang, 2011). Nevertheless, the impact of eWOM is not invariably advantageous; negative eWOM has the potential to undermine attitudinal favorability (Chiou & Cheng, 2003; Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). Furthermore, the findings of Lee and Cranage (2014) reveal a nuanced perspective, indicating that a strong consensus observed within online reviews can paradoxically amplify negative perceptions. Consequently, the following hypothesis is posited:

*H<sub>4</sub>: eWOM exhibits a positive effect on attitude towards technology and service.*

Building upon earlier research highlighting the prominent role of eWOM in social relational dynamics, Wang, Wang, and Wang (2018) elucidated how eWOM arising from both strong and weak social ties affected consumers' purchase intentions. Consistent with Berger's (2014) assertion, close relationships typically involve personalized communication exchanges, including direct product experiences. Concurrently, Rahaman, Hassan, Asheq, and Islam (2022) analysed the influence of eWOM on purchase intention within social media platforms, demonstrating that users often relied on eWOM as a foundational basis for critical decision-making regarding product and service selection (Daowd et al., 2021). Specifically, both exposure to and active participation in eWOM exchanges significantly increased the likelihood of forming purchase intentions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Therefore, to rigorously examine the relationship between eWOM and customers' intention to use services, the following hypothesis was developed:

*H<sub>5</sub>: eWOM exerts a positive influence on customers' intention to use services.*

These days, social media plays a significant role in shaping how people think about digital banking. When customers come across negative comments or reviews, it can quickly impact their perceptions and decisions. However, that impact is not always straightforward. According to Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2015), if customers already believe that a bank behaves ethically and is genuinely committed to corporate social responsibility (CSR), they are more likely to question negative feedback rather than accept it as fact. Choi and La (2013) take this further, suggesting

that when CSR efforts are seen as authentic, customers tend to develop long-term trust in the institution - including trust in its digital direction. This trust can make them more open to exploring digital products, even in the face of mixed or negative eWOM. In other words, CSR doesn't just improve brand image; it may also help customers feel more confident navigating online opinions and adopting new technologies.

This leads to the following hypothesis.

*H<sub>5c</sub>: CA moderates the relationship between eWOM and attitudes towards service technology adoption.*

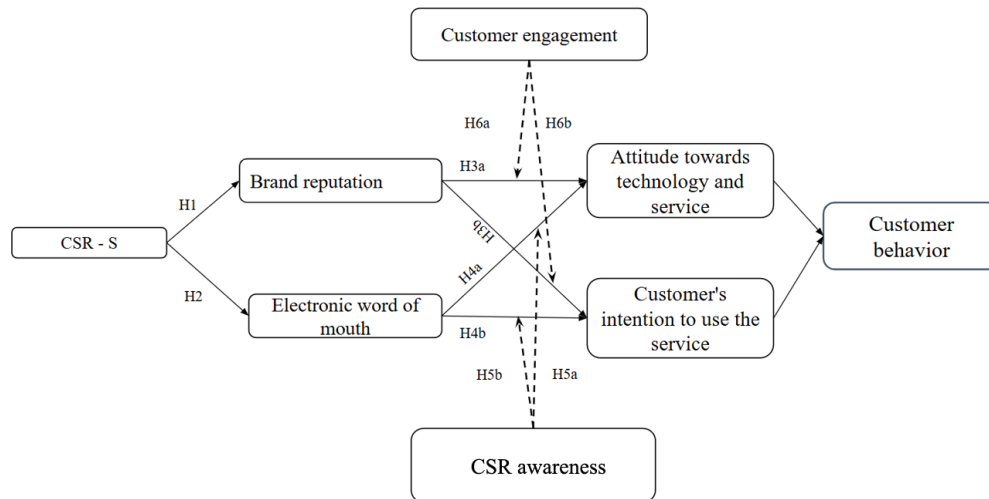


Figure 1. Model proposed by the authors.

Figure 1 illustrates that CSR awareness (CA) develops through what customers observe and experience as benefits from a company's CSR activities. These perceptions help shape how they evaluate whether the business is genuinely meeting its social responsibilities. In the banking context, Du et al. (2010) suggests that when customers have a favorable impression of a bank's CSR efforts, it can strengthen their trust and in turn, make them more open to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) information. Moreover, empirical work by Chang and Lee (2020) indicated that customer perception of CSR, mediated by eWOM, exerts a strong positive influence on purchase intention. In today's digital era, eWOM has emerged as a vital communication channel due to its rapid and widespread dissemination of information. Positive CSR awareness can encourage customers to share favorable experiences about the company on online platforms, thereby propagating a positive corporate image within broader communities. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*H<sub>5c</sub>: CA moderates the relationship between eWOM and customers' intention to use services.*

Research has consistently underscored the importance of proactive communication and genuine engagement with stakeholders as foundational elements for cultivating robust organizational relationships (Grünig & Huang, 2000; Yang & Grünig, 2005). In accordance with Freeman (1999), stakeholder theory, enduring relationships are posited to significantly shape stakeholder behavior. Notably, Yang (2007) observed that efficacious engagement and relationship management serve to enhance brand reputation. Customer Engagement (CE), conceptualized as discretionary contributions extending beyond transactional exchanges (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014), has been shown to fortify brand relationships (Dijkmans, Kerkhof, Buyukcan-Tetik, & Beukeboom, 2015) and foster positive behavioral outcomes (Levy & Hino, 2016). Nevertheless, the moderating role of customer engagement in the nexus between brand reputation and customer behavior remains an underexplored area. Consequently, the following dual hypotheses are proposed:

*H<sub>6</sub>: CE moderates the relationship between BR and CB, specifically concerning:*

- a. BR and attitudes towards technology and service adoption.*
- b. BR and the customer's intention to use the service.*

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Data Collection

This research employed a questionnaire incorporating a five-point Likert scale to elicit data from banking customers in Vietnam. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), executed via Smart PLS 4, was utilized to examine the impact of CSR-S on customer behavior, mediated by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and bank reputation. Furthermore, supplementary insights were garnered through semi-structured interviews. Table 1 presents data indicating that the survey targeted banking customers across Vietnam, employing a random sampling methodology to ensure representativeness. Of the total respondents, 63.8% identified as female, and a significant proportion (69.1%) fell within the 18-25 age bracket, with students constituting the majority (66.8%). MB Bank emerged as the most frequently selected institution (27%), followed by Vietcombank and BIDV (approximately 14% each). Overall, the reported levels of banking service utilization and customer satisfaction were notably high. The measurement scales were meticulously adapted from established and reputable scales developed by Ali et al. (2024), Fatma et al. (2020), Archana, Kumar, Singh, and Sharma (2024); Poolthong and Mandhachitara (2009), and Benmansour (2016). They were further refined based on the outcomes of preliminary interviews and expert feedback obtained from professionals within the Vietnamese banking sector. The research investigation was conducted by the authorial team from January 5th to February 8th, 2025, in Vietnam, resulting in a final dataset of 847 valid responses.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile (N=847).

Criterion	Response	%	Criterion	Response	%
Gender	Male	36.2	Occupation	University student	66.8
	Female	63.8		Office worker	18.4
Age	18 - 25	69.1		Government employee	9.2
	25 - 30	15.0		Lecturer	3.4
	31 - 40	7.7		Other	2.1
	41 - 50	4.4	Bank currently used	BIDV	14.3
	Over 50	3.9		Agribank	8.7
Education level	University	69.1		Vietinbank	8.5
	Postgraduate	15.0		Vietcombank	14.9
	College	7.7		Techcombank	11.7
Income	< 10M VND	69.4		MB Bank	27.0
	10 - 20M VND	22.8	Shinhan Bank	1.8	
	20 - 50M VND	5.9	Other	13.1	
	> 50M VND	1.9	Services	Service 1	42.0
Usage frequency (Times/Week)	0 - 5	27.3		Service 2	8.3
	5 - 10	28.6		Service 3	59.1
	Over 10	44.2		Service 4	3.9
					Service 5
				Service 6	26.2

### 4.2. Data Analysis

Employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), this study undertakes a rigorous analysis of the proposed research framework. PLS-SEM has become an increasingly popular approach in social science research, especially when analyzing causal models with medium to small sample sizes or when data do not meet the assumptions of normal distribution (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2017). This makes it particularly useful for studies like ours. In this context, the main goal was to explore how digital-based CSR-S influences customer service usage behavior, with eWOM and BR acting as mediating variables. With a final sample of 847 respondents, the study far exceeds the recommended minimum based on the "tenfold rule" for reflective models, as outlined by Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt (2013), ensuring sufficient statistical power.

We used SmartPLS 4.0 to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement scales, as well as to test the research hypotheses in a structured and systematic manner. Additionally, following Hayes (2009), we examined the indirect effects of CSR-S on customer behavior through the mediating roles of eWOM and BR.

Specifically, where "a" represents the direct path coefficient from the independent variable to the mediator, and "b" denotes the coefficient from the mediator to the dependent variable, the existence of a significant indirect effect is affirmed when the product of "a × b" attains statistical significance. Concurrently, we also scrutinized the moderating influence of two key variables, namely Customer Engagement and CSR Awareness, on the relationships between the aforementioned mediating variables and the respective dependent variable.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1. Reliability and Validity

To begin with, the authors assess the measurement model by examining outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The results of the outer loadings assessment for the measurement model are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 confirms construct reliability and validity, with Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.7 (Devellis, 2012; Hair et al., 2013). All variables have AVE > 0.5, indicating a strong representation of their constructs. The SmartPLS-SEM results show that most of the indicators loaded well onto their respective constructs. Only one item came in just under the commonly suggested 0.7 threshold (Hair et al., 2017) but still remained within an acceptable range.

**Table 2.** Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, AVE and factor loading.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Factor loading
Attitude towards technology and services				
AT1	0.794	0.866	0.619	0.780
AT2				0.813
AT3				0.751
AT4				0.801
Banking reputation				
BR1	0.789	0.864	0.613	0.745
BR2				0.823
BR3				0.805
BR4				0.756
Customer's CSR awareness				
CA1	0.778	0.857	0.601	0.799
CA2				0.777
CA3				0.754
CA4				0.770
Customer behavior				
CB1	0.744	0.839	0.566	0.746
CB2				0.694
CB3				0.756
CB4				0.807
Customer engagement				
CE1	0.830	0.866	0.661	0.816
CE2				0.831
CE3				0.813
CE4				0.791
Corporate social responsibility - social media				
CSR1	0.792	0.865	0.617	0.747
CSR2				0.826
CSR3				0.825
CSR4				0.739
Electronic Word of Mouth				

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE	Factor loading
EWOM1	0.791	0.865	0.615	0.739
EWOM2				0.806
EWOM3				0.812
EWOM4				0.778
Customer's intention to use the service				
INTEN1	0.791	0.865	0.615	0.790
INTEN2				0.753
INTEN3				0.801
INTEN4				0.793
CE x BR				1.000
CA x EWOM				1.000

Next, we tested discriminant validity to confirm that the constructs were clearly distinct and did not overlap excessively. Based on Fornell and Larcker (1981) approach, we compared the square root of the average variance extracted ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ ) for each construct with its correlations with all other constructs in the model.

The results in Table 3 indicate that the  $\sqrt{AVE}$  values for all constructs exceed the absolute values of their correlation coefficients with other constructs, confirming the discriminant validity of the measurement scale.

**Table 3.** Discriminant validity.

	AT	BR	CA	CB	CE	CSR - S	EWOM	INTEN
AT	0.787							
BR	0.615	0.783						
CA	0.602	0.595	0.775					
CB	0.663	0.620	0.606	0.752				
CE	0.440	0.437	0.572	0.515	0.813			
CSR - S	0.578	0.566	0.608	0.548	0.521	0.785		
EWOM	0.550	0.578	0.608	0.619	0.655	0.562	0.784	
INTEN	0.727	0.611	0.563	0.708	0.402	0.500	0.551	0.784

### 5.2. SEM Analysis Results

This study rigorously examined the hypotheses using SmartPLS 4.0, assessing the significance of direct relationships, mediating effects, and moderating effects within the model. The majority of hypotheses demonstrated a P-value  $< 0.01$ , indicating strong statistical significance, with the exceptions of H5b and H6b. Table 4 shows that Corporate Social Responsibility-Social (CSR-S) exerted a substantial impact on both Bank Reputation ( $\beta = 0.566$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ) and electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) ( $\beta = 0.562$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ). This underscores the pivotal role of CSR-S in cultivating corporate reputation and fostering effective eWOM. Concurrently, Bank Reputation influenced customer behavior through Attitude towards Technology and Services ( $\beta = 0.093$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ) and Intention to Use Services ( $\beta = 0.156$ ;  $P < 0.01$ ). Furthermore, eWOM demonstrated a comparable, albeit weaker, influence, with  $\beta = 0.057$  and  $\beta = 0.113$ . Additionally, Customer CSR Awareness exhibited a statistically significant moderating effect on the relationship between eWOM and Attitude towards Technology and Services ( $\beta = 0.023$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), but lacked significance for Intention to Use Services ( $\beta = 0.021$ ;  $P = 0.233$ ). Simultaneously, Customer Engagement did not significantly moderate Bank Reputation in H6a and H6b and even displayed a potential inverse relationship, attenuating the impact of Bank Reputation on Attitude towards Technology and Services. The research also analyzed the PLS-SEM Bootstrapping results, employing the f-square ( $f^2$ ) index to evaluate the magnitude of independent variable effects. The findings revealed that CSR-S exerted the most substantial impact on the two mediating variables, with  $f^2 = 0.463$  and  $0.472$ . eWOM and Customer CSR Awareness demonstrated minor effects, with  $f^2 < 0.05$ . Certain variables exhibited negligible effects, such as Customer Engagement ( $CE \rightarrow AT = 0.001$ ;  $CE \rightarrow INTEN = 0.000$ ). Bank Reputation and Attitude towards Technology and Services displayed moderate effects (0.103), while eWOM and Customer CSR Awareness showed relatively weak effects (0.045 and 0.089). In summary, CSR-S emerged as the

most influential factor within the model, significantly impacting Bank Reputation and eWOM. Conversely, Customer Engagement lacked a significant impact and even attenuated the relationship between Bank Reputation and Customer Intention to Use Services.

**Table 4.** SEM analysis results.

Hi	Relationship	Coef. $\beta$	T-statistic	P-value	Effect size	Conclusion
H1	CSR - S → Bank Reputation	0.566	17.562	**	0.472	Supported
H2	CSR - S → Electronic Word of Mouth	0.562	19.186	**	0.463	Supported
H3a	Bank Reputation → Attitude towards technology and services → Customer behavior	0.093	4.878	**	0.090	Supported
H3b	Bank Reputation → Customer's intention to use the service → Customer behavior	0.156	6.203	**	0.103	Supported
H4a	Electronic Word of Mouth → Attitude towards technology and services → Customer behavior	0.057	3.427	**	0.029	Supported
H4b	Electronic Word of Mouth → Customer's intention to use the service → Customer behavior	0.113	4.683	**	0.045	Supported
<b>Moderation Analysis</b>						
H5a	Customer's CSR awareness × Electronic Word of Mouth → Attitude towards technology and services → Customer behavior	0.023	2.000	*	0.013	Supported
H5b	Customer's CSR awareness × Electronic Word of Mouth → Customer's intention to use the service → Customer behavior	0.021	1.192	0.233	0.005	Reject
H6a	Customer engagement × Bank Reputation → Attitude towards technology and services → Customer behavior	-0.036	2.620	**	0.022	Supported
H6b	Customer engagement × Bank Reputation → Customer's intention to use the service → Customer behavior	-0.040	1.793	0.073	0.011	Reject
						<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>
Attitude towards technology and services						0.490
Customer's intention to use the service.						0.462
Customer behavior						0.546

Note: \*\*p < 0.01, \*p < 0.05.

Regarding explanatory power, the R<sup>2</sup> value ranges from 0 to 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates higher explanatory ability, whereas a value approaching 0 signifies lower explanatory power. Based on the obtained results, this model demonstrates a considerable explanatory capacity for all endogenous variables. Notably, Customer Behavior exhibits the highest value (0.546). Overall, the research model achieves a relatively good level of fit.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Through the results of the study, the hypotheses regarding the relationship between CSR-S and customer service usage behavior were tested. The PLS-SEM analysis of 847 valid responses showed that most variables had a positive impact; however, two variables awareness of CSR and customer engagement did not demonstrate statistically significant effects, which could be a factor contributing negatively to customer behavior.

The study showed that the coefficients  $\beta = 0.562$  (CSR-S  $\rightarrow$  eWOM) and  $\beta = 0.566$  (CSR-S  $\rightarrow$  BR),  $p < 0.001$ , demonstrated that when a bank promotes CSR activities on social networks, the level of customer sharing and the bank's reputation are significantly enhanced. This finding supports the results of Fatma and Rahman (2016). Moreover, the impact assessment of banking reputation (BR) shows a strong influence on customer attitudes towards technology and services (ATTIT) ( $\beta = 0.615$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). These findings support the proposition that when a bank has a good reputation, customers will have greater confidence in digital technology services, in line with research by Kimiagari and Baei (2022). In addition, the degree of influence of eWOM on the intention to use the service (INTEN) is proportional to the factor  $\beta = 0.113$  and  $P$ -value  $< 0.001$ , this is consistent with findings by Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) and Cheung and Thadani (2012) also have a similar opinion when indicating that eWOM significantly influences the purchasing decisions of customers, confirming that eWOM can strongly influence consumer behavior in many areas. Conversely, the study showed that the moderating effect of CSR awareness (CA) was weak and statistically insignificant ( $\beta = 0.023$ ,  $f^2 = 0.004$ ), suggesting that the regulatory role of CA is extremely small with no statistical significance. This result is significantly lower than the study by Rodríguez and Fernández (2020), when CA had a positive and meaningful influence on repeat customer behavior. This can be explained by the fact that this research group works in the hospitality sector, where CSR activities are closely tied to the customer experience and are easily recognizable. Additionally, the CE (customer engagement) regulatory variable BR  $\rightarrow$  ATTIT ( $\beta = -0.036$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) showed results consistent with Kini, Savitha, and Hawaldar (2024), which suggested that customer engagement may be a factor that contributes to negativity in customer behavior. Theoretically, the study not only extends the theoretical framework of CSR in the digital environment but also clarifies the dual role of eWOM and reputation as key intermediary factors. Moreover, the study also suggests integrating personal psychological factors (CA, CE) into the study of banking consumer behavior. In practice, the results provide strategic implications for banks in designing more effective CSR activities, especially not just stopping at discrete campaigns but also accompanying them with periodic communication campaigns. At the same time, it is necessary to personalize CSR content to match the different levels of awareness and engagement of each customer group. However, factors that may affect the results, such as the geographical scope being concentrated only in North Vietnam and the data collection remaining subjective based on self-reports by customers, may affect the generalizability of the results on a national scale.

Research has demonstrated that CSR-S not only directly influences customer behavior but also operates through two important intermediary mechanisms: eWOM and bank reputation. The results show that the reputation of the bank impacts attitudes towards the use of technology, services, and the intention to use services. Additionally, two regulatory variables CSR awareness and customer engagement are not delivering as much as expected or may be undermining the positive impact in some new relationships. This opens a new direction for research on the personalization of CSR in marketing strategy and customer relationship management at commercial banks in the digital age.

## 7. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the studies, a number of recommendations were made for commercial banks as follows: (1) Banks should implement CSR activities in a concrete and consistent manner, encouraging customers to share CSR experiences on social networks through gift programs to enhance the spread effect and brand awareness; (2) Build a CSR strategy with clear, transparent goals attached to a long-term development strategy to enhance reputation and customer retention, using KOLs/KOCs or celebrities to increase trust and coverage of the CSR message; (3) Use CSR as a

strategic tool to meet ESG criteria, creating strategic leverage for sustainable competition in the increasingly intense banking industry.

## 8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES

This study affirms the significant role of social media corporate social responsibility (CSR-S) in shaping customer intentions and technology adoption within the Vietnamese banking sector. However, several avenues for further research remain open. Firstly, this study's focus on a single industry and specific demographic limits its generalizability. Future research should extend to other sectors, such as e-commerce and telecommunications, and examine cultural differences in the impact of CSR-S. Secondly, this study did not address the influence of negative electronic word-of-mouth (negative eWOM). Given that negative information can significantly impact customer trust and behavior, integrating this factor would provide a more comprehensive perspective. Thirdly, this study did not assess the moderating role of customer awareness of CSR on the relationship between bank reputation and customer behavior. If customers are skeptical of CSR, the impact of bank reputation could be substantially diminished. Finally, this study considered only a limited set of variables. Future research should incorporate factors such as customer loyalty, perceived value, and brand image to provide a more holistic evaluation.

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**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, and that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted. Any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study adhered to all writing ethics.

**Data Availability Statement:** Upon a reasonable request, the supporting data of this study can be provided by the corresponding author.

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**Appendix 1. Construct measurement.**

Construct		Items	References
Corporate social responsibility – social media	CSR1	Through social media, I learned that the bank has committed to using a portion of its profits to help the community.	Ali et al. (2024)
	CSR2	I saw that the bank has given back to the community where it operates through social media platforms.	
	CSR3	Through social media platforms, I saw that communities and societies have benefited from the bank's contributions.	
	CSR4	The bank has integrated a charity transfer feature into its Mobile Banking application, allowing customers to donate quickly.	

Construct		Items	References
Bank reputation	BR1	The bank's brand on social media has higher appeal and recognition than other bank brands.	Ali et al. (2024)
	BR2	The bank's brand is highly regarded on social media platforms.	
	BR3	The bank's brand is trustworthy on social media platforms.	
	BR4	The bank's brand on media platforms is considered to have great potential for growth.	
Electronic word of mouth	EWOM1	I will actively interact (like, share, comment) with the bank's social responsibility posts online.	Fatma et al. (2020) and Ali et al. (2024)
	EWOM2	I will encourage my friends and acquaintances to learn more about the bank's social responsibility activities online.	
	EWOM3	The bank's brand is trustworthy on social media platforms.	
	EWOM4	The bank's brand on media platforms is considered to have great potential for growth.	
Customer engagement	CE1	I frequently discuss this bank's services with other customers on social media and seek their advice to resolve issues.	Archana et al. (2024)
	CE2	I tend to use blogs, social media, or community activities to express my views about this bank, especially when there are disputes or disagreements.	
	CE3	I often interact with the bank's posts or respond to other customers on social media.	
	CE4	I often suggest ideas for improving products and services through the bank's posts on social media.	
Customer's CSR awareness	CA1	I see that this bank is concerned with improving the general welfare of society, respecting and protecting the natural environment.	Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2015)
	CA2	I see that this bank clearly demonstrates its commitment to social responsibility through its communication channels.	
	CA3	I believe that this bank's social responsibility initiatives bring real value to the community.	
	CA4	I understand the social responsibilities that a bank needs to fulfill (customers and society).	
Attitude towards technology and services	ATTIT1	The bank's service technology is intuitive, making it easy for me to find the information I need.	Poolthong and Mandhachitara (2009) and Benmansour (2016)
	ATTIT2	I appreciate the use of the bank's service technology.	
	ATTIT3	I am satisfied with the overall service quality of the bank, including the competence of the staff, the reliability of transactions, and the products/services provided.	
	ATTIT4	The bank provides a convenient transaction experience, with good facilities and reasonable fees, offering good value for me.	

Construct		Items	References
Customer's intention to use the service	INTEN1	I plan to continue using this banking service in the future.	Ali et al. (2024) and Benmansour (2016)
	INTEN2	I will recommend this banking service to others.	
	INTEN3	I will use this banking service regularly in the future.	
	INTEN4	I think more and more people will use this banking service.	
Customer behavior	CB1	I regularly use this bank's services for financial transactions.	
	CB2	I am willing to spend more on this bank's products and services.	
	CB3	I have recommended this bank to my friends and acquaintances.	
	CB4	I prioritize using this bank's services when I have financial needs.	

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