

CSR CO-CREATION ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS AS A STRATEGY TO INFLUENCE CONSUMER HAPPINESS

LA CO-CREACIÓN EN MATERIA DE RSC EN PLATAFORMAS DIGITALES COMO ESTRATEGIA PARA INFLUIR EN LA FELICIDAD DE LOS CONSUMIDORES

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Abstract

In the context of digitalization and the expansion of collaborative platforms, the logic of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is undergoing a process of structural transformation. The traditional company-centered and one-way communication approach is gradually being replaced by a co-creation model of responsibility in which consumers, communities, and digital platforms jointly participate in the generation of shared social value. This study analyses how the digital co-creation of platform-based CSR affects consumer happiness, considering the mediating role of collective emotions, social capital and perceived behavioral control. To this end, a structural equation model (PLS-SEM) is applied based on 517 questionnaires collected from active users of CSR platforms in China. The research findings show that the co-creation of digital CSR significantly improves consumers' collective emotions, social capital and perceived behavioural control, thereby affecting their hedonic and eudaimonic happiness. These findings provide a new perspective on how digital platforms can act as ecosystems of happiness, integrating well-being, social responsibility and civic participation into business strategy. Consequently, the study highlights the strategic value of digital participation mechanisms in CSR as catalysts for consumer happiness, providing theoretical and practical implications for the design of responsible management models.

Keywords: CSR, collective emotions, social capital, perceived behavioral control, consumer happiness.

JEL Codes: E62, H30

Resumen

En el contexto de la profunda digitalización y expansión de las plataformas colaborativas, la lógica de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC) se encuentra en un proceso de

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transformación estructural. El enfoque tradicional, centrado en la empresa y basado en una comunicación unidireccional, está siendo sustituido por un modelo de co-creación de responsabilidad, donde múltiples actores; consumidores, comunidades y plataformas digitales, interactúan en la generación de valor social compartido. Este estudio analiza cómo la co-creación digital de la RSC basada en plataformas incide en la felicidad del consumidor, considerando el papel mediador de las emociones colectivas, el capital social y el control del comportamiento percibido. Para ello, se aplica un modelo de ecuaciones estructurales de segundo orden (PLS-SEM) a partir de 517 cuestionarios recogidos entre usuarios activos de plataformas de RSC en China. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que la co-creación de RSE digital mejora significativamente las emociones colectivas de los consumidores, el capital social y el control del comportamiento percibido, afectando así su felicidad hedónica y eudaimónica de los consumidores. Estos hallazgos aportan una nueva perspectiva sobre cómo las plataformas digitales pueden actuar como ecosistemas de felicidad, integrando el bienestar, la responsabilidad social y la participación cívica en la estrategia empresarial. En consecuencia, el estudio subraya el valor estratégico de los mecanismos de participación digital en la RSC como catalizadores de felicidad del consumidor, aportando implicaciones teóricas y prácticas para el diseño de modelos de gestión responsables.

Palabras clave: Plataformas digitales, RSC, co-creación, control percibido del comportamiento, felicidad del consumidor.

Códigos JEL: E62, H30

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has long been considered a supplementary responsibility for businesses, beyond their economic objectives. CSR encompasses more than simply pursuing shareholder value; it also encompasses ethical and responsible obligations to society, the environment, and other stakeholders (Carroll, 1991; Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2024b). The traditional CSR model is largely corporation-centered, emphasizing initiatives that are proactively launched and dominated by firms. The public, consumers, and other stakeholders typically passively accept these activities. This type of CSR primarily takes the form of charitable donations (Saha *et al.*, 2023), environmental donations (Wu *et al.*, 2021), advertising campaigns (Mercadé-Melé *et al.*, 2018), and the publication of corporate social responsibility reports. The fundamental characteristic of these activities is one-way information transmission: companies demonstrate their responsible behavior to the public through external communication channels (Offermann *et al.*, 2024), while the public primarily receives information and forms perceptions.

This traditional CSR model does help enhance a company's reputation and brand image (Kim *et al.*, 2020), and to a certain extent, fosters trust between the company and society. However, it also has limitations. Due to a lack of practical channels for public participation, public awareness of CSR is low (Öberseder *et al.*, 2011), lacking emotional investment and behavioral extension. A company's stakeholders also generally have a low level of awareness of its CSR activities (Du *et al.*, 2010; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2009). Furthermore, CSR activities are weakly connected to the public's daily lives, making it difficult to establish long-term resonance in users' value systems. Consequently, traditional CSR is more of an external statement by company than a genuine social co-creation, and its role in improving consumers' happiness and life experience is limited, although existing research has shown that CSR can significantly improve individual well-being under certain conditions (Mercader *et al.*, 2025).

With the advancement of the internet and digital technologies, the platform economy has continued to evolve. Consumers and businesses can interact more directly (Abbate *et al.*, 2022;

Alghamdi & Agag, 2024; Iglesias *et al.*, 2020). The widespread use of digital tools such as social media, big data, mobile applications, and generative artificial intelligence has profoundly transformed the practice and communication logic of CSR (Song *et al.*, 2025). Unlike the one-way communication of traditional CSR, CSR in a digital context is more transparent, traceable, and interactive. This digital transformation also echoes the views on customer-centric integration and touchpoint synergy in omnichannel management research (Alonso-Garcia *et al.*, 2023), emphasizing the integration of diverse interactive scenarios through digital mechanisms. Digital platforms have enabled new modes of communication between businesses and users, creating instant interactions and feedback loops (Alhumud *et al.*, 2025; Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2023b; Kent & Taylor, 2021), thereby encouraging active public participation in CSR practices. This is especially true in social media environments, where CSR-related content can significantly enhance user interaction and engagement (Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2024). Related research shows that in the context of social media, brand content related to social responsibility is more likely to stimulate user interaction and engagement (Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2022), highlighting the engagement potential of CSR issues in digital communication. Platforms are not only a window for businesses to demonstrate their responsible behavior but also a crucial venue for connecting with users, guiding participation, and co-creating value. Through the intervention of digital technology, CSR behaviors can be recorded in real time, providing immediate feedback and rapidly spreading through the communication effects of social networks (Chu *et al.*, 2020; Okazaki *et al.*, 2020). As a result, the public is no longer just a passive recipient of CSR but has become an active participant in responsible practices and a co-creator of value (Zhou *et al.*, 2024).

In the digital era, the core characteristics of CSR have shifted from traditional one-way communication to a communication logic that integrates platformization and community. Digital CSR co-creation is not limited to individual user participation. First, leaderboard incentives are an external driving mechanism (Mekler *et al.*, 2017). Through forms such as point rankings and public welfare contribution rankings, individual user behavior is transformed into visible group comparisons and incentives, enhancing the fun of participation and strengthening the willingness to continue participating in an atmosphere of competition and cooperation. Second, user-generated content (Sang *et al.*, 2024) reflects the initiative and creativity of users in digital CSR. They are not only recipients of CSR information but also promote the diffusion of CSR values by generating, disseminating, and even adapting CSR-related content (such as sharing public welfare stories, low-carbon living experiences, and public welfare challenges). Through reflective expressions such as leaderboard incentives and user-generated content, the interactivity, participation, and sustainability of digital CSR can be empirically captured.

Driven by digital platforms, CSR has gradually transcended the traditional limitations of one-way corporate responsibility fulfillment, shifting to an interactive model that emphasizes the co-creation of value between companies and users. With this shift, users' psychological experiences and emotional responses have become a new research focus. Academic research on happiness often distinguishes between hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being: the former emphasizes the acquisition of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, while the latter focuses on the pursuit of meaning and self-actualization (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023). Accordingly, some literature has proposed two approaches to happiness, namely hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness, which more specifically address the subjective experience and evaluation of individuals (Ryan *et al.*, 2008). Hedonic happiness focuses on immediate pleasure, satisfaction, and positive emotions, such as joy, relaxation, and contentment; eudaimonic happiness emphasizes deeper values and a sense of social contribution, involving individual self-growth and goal achievement. In contrast, well-being is more of a macro, framework concept, while happiness is more directly related to users' psychological experiences in interactive situations. When the concept is used in the consumer field, to avoid confusion, only the term happiness is used (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*,

2023a). Existing research has confirmed the applicability of the dual-path happiness model in areas such as consumer experience, tourism services, and public welfare marketing (Armbrecht & Andersson, 2019; Li et al., 2025a). Happiness management has also been extended to the level of university entrepreneurship and organizational strategy (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2024c). Furthermore, research in different contexts has shown a significant correlation between happiness and behavioral outcomes. For example, in marketing contexts, emotions play a crucial role in purchasing decisions, and happiness can be strategically stimulated to maintain the consumption cycle (Ahumada-Tello *et al.*, 2025). In organizational management, Happiness Management significantly reduces employee turnover intention by lowering work stress, demonstrating a stress-relief mechanism of happiness (Martínez-Arvizu *et al.*, 2025). In contrast, digital CSR co-creation does not simply promote consumption through emotional stimulation, but rather shapes a more socially meaningful experience of happiness through social participation and value co-creation mechanisms. For the purposes of this article, we ultimately selected hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness as the core analytical dimensions.

The happiness generated by platform-based digital CSR co-creation is not solely driven by individual emotional and cognitive changes but is influenced by community interactions and socio-psychological mechanisms. First, collective emotions are prevalent in online communities (Penelas-Leguía *et al.*, 2023). When users interact with others in virtual tasks, the group atmosphere often amplifies individual positive experiences and strengthens the intensity of happiness. Second, CSR strengthens social capital among users through interactive mechanisms (Lin, 2022), including trust, reciprocity, and the expansion of social networks. This social capital not only enhances a sense of community belonging and social support but also strengthens users' willingness to continue participating. Finally, when engaging in digital CSR activities, users tend to evaluate the effectiveness of their own actions, a phenomenon known as perceived behavioral control (Shi *et al.*, 2025). When users are convinced that their small actions (such as online check-ins, charitable donations, or green consumption) can lead to tangible social or environmental improvements, their sense of meaning and value is strengthened, thereby driving the generation of happiness.

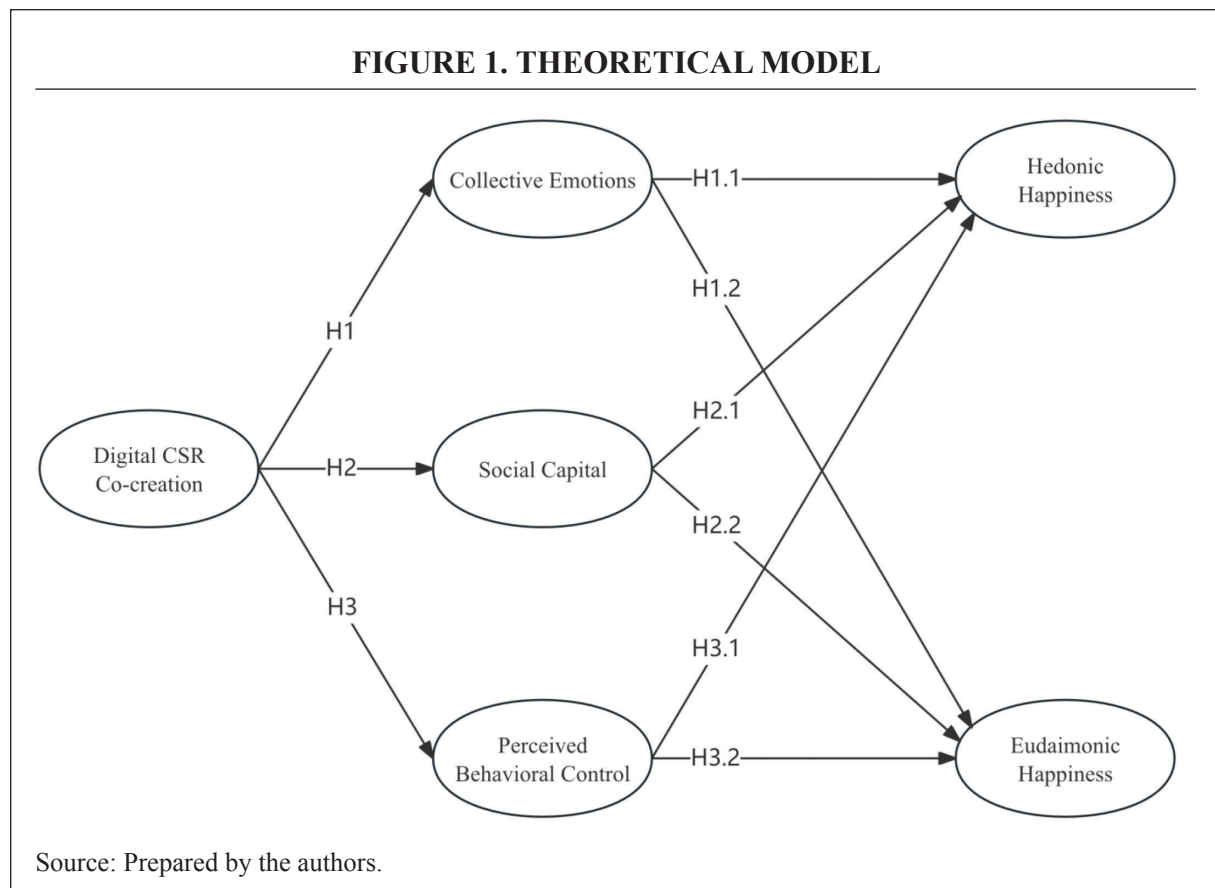
Therefore, platform-based digital CSR is not only a new form of social responsibility but also a crucial mechanism for stimulating consumers' multidimensional well-being. Through interaction and co-creation, it promotes the synergistic generation of hedonic and eudaimonic happiness, extending CSR from social responsibility to the co-creation of happiness. However, existing literature largely fragments its discussion of specific variables or mechanisms, lacking a systematic framework to uncover how group emotions, social capital, and perceived behavioral efficacy synergize to generate the dual pathways of consumer well-being.

While traditional CSR is primarily enterprise-led and one-way, in the context of digitalization and the platform economy, digital CSR emphasizes interaction and consumer participation (Zhou *et al.*, 2024). This transformation not only enhances the transparency and sustainability of CSR practices but also provides users with a new model of engagement and a positive experience. However, current research on digital CSR focuses primarily on firm performance (Han *et al.*, 2024), satisfaction (Rehman *et al.*, 2025), and purchase intention (Gupta *et al.*, 2021). Research on how digital CSR influences consumer well-being through psychological and social mechanisms remains limited. Two key research gaps can be identified. First, limited research has examined how digital CSR influences consumer happiness through integrated psychological and social mechanisms. Second, despite the prominence of the dual-path perspective of happiness in positive psychology, its application to platform-based CSR co-creation remains limited, particularly in terms of developing a unified framework that explains how digital CSR simultaneously contributes to both hedonic and eudaimonic happiness.

To address these gaps, this study makes two main contributions. First, based on the dual-pathway theory of happiness, it explores in depth how CSR co-creation on digital platforms influences consumer happiness through psychological and social mechanisms such as group emotions, social capital, and perceived behavioral control. Second, it constructs and validates an integrative framework to reveal the pathways and interrelationships between different mechanisms in promoting hedonic and eudaimonic happiness. This research aims to deepen understanding of the social-psychological value of digital CSR, enrich theoretical perspectives on CSR and happiness research, and provide theoretical support and practical insights for companies to enhance consumer happiness, strengthen customer retention, and achieve social and environmental sustainability through digital platforms.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study proposes a theoretical model (Figure 1) to explain how platform-based digital CSR co-creation influences consumer happiness. Specifically, digital CSR co-creation is expected to affect both hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness through key psychological and social mechanisms, including collective emotions, social capital, and perceived behavioral control. The model contains 9 hypotheses.



2.1. Collective emotions

Collective emotions refer to a macro-level emotional phenomenon. They are not simply the sum of individual emotions, but rather the shared emotional experiences that emerge from

the interactions of multiple individuals facing the same situation (e. g., emotional contagion, emotional resonance, and polarization) (Goldenberg *et al.*, 2020; Von Scheve & Ismer, 2013). Unlike individual emotions, group emotions not only spread through direct emotional expression and imitation (Barsade, 2002) but are also reinforced by social identification and shared values among group members (Von Scheve & Ismer, 2013). Previous research has shown that group emotions play a key role in teamwork (Barsade, 2002), organizational performance (Barsade & Knight, 2015), and social movements (Van Zomeren *et al.*, 2004). They can enhance cohesion among members, promote cooperation, and enhance the overall sense of efficacy of the group.

In digital CSR co-creation scenarios, users use online platforms to record, showcase, and share their charitable activities, pursuing social or environmental goals with others (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2023b). This process not only provides individuals with positive emotional feedback (such as satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment), but more importantly, it fosters a shared collective sentiment through interaction and co-creation. Specifically, witnessing the charitable actions of others creates an emotional resonance, which is further amplified through likes, comments, and reposts (Penelas-Leguía *et al.*, 2023). Witnessing the achievement of a goal together strengthens users' collective pride and sense of belonging. As positive group sentiment accumulates, the platform's charitable atmosphere is continuously strengthened, creating a virtuous cycle.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Digital CSR co-creation is positively correlated with collective emotions.

The Broaden-and-Build Theory in positive psychology suggests that positive emotions not only bring immediate pleasure but also expand an individual's scope of thought and behavior, gradually building psychological resources and social relationships (Fredrickson, 2001). In group settings, the emotions experienced by individuals spread and intensify through emotional contagion and resonance, ultimately forming shared emotions at the group level (Barsade, 2002). This shared positive collective emotions not only strengthen users' emotional connections during interactions but also, at a deeper level, reinforces their identification with social values and the meaning of life. In the context of digital CSR co-creation, the impact of collective emotions on customer happiness is particularly pronounced. On the one hand, collective emotions can directly enhance users' hedonic happiness through the emotional pleasure, satisfaction, and relief brought about by collective participation. When users work together to achieve public welfare goals, interactive behaviors such as likes, comments, and shares strengthen emotional resonance, allowing users to gain greater satisfaction from the immediate pleasure (Penelas-Leguía *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, collective emotions may also enhance users' eudaimonic happiness through goal congruence and social identity. When users perceive alignment with group members in values and social goals, they more strongly identify with the significance of public welfare activities, thereby experiencing a sense of self-growth, fulfillment, and social contribution (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023).

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1.1: Collective emotions are positively correlated with hedonic happiness.

H1.2: Collective emotions are positively correlated with eudaimonic happiness.

2.2. Social capital

Social capital can be understood as generated by relationship networks, reciprocity, trust, and social norms (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). It can bring informational, emotional, and cooperative benefits to individuals and groups. In traditional settings, social capital is typically

accumulated gradually through long-term interactions, mutual support, and shared norms. In the context of digitalization and the platform economy, however, online interaction and user participation have become important new channels for the generation of social capital.

Digital CSR co-creation, through community communication, collaborative tasks, and interactive feedback mechanisms, provides important conditions for building trust and reciprocity among users. On the one hand, users' joint actions on the platform around social or environmental goals not only allow individuals to experience value recognition and a sense of accomplishment in practice (Wang *et al.*, 2022) but also strengthen trust and emotional connections among groups. By achieving common goals, users enhance group cohesion and relationship commitment. On the other hand, the interactive mechanisms of digital platforms (such as likes, comments, sharing, and task collaboration) provide users with channels for emotional expression and information exchange (Wang *et al.*, 2022). Social media research also shows that interactive brand content can significantly enhance user engagement and relationship building (Castillo-Abdul *et al.*, 2021), creating conditions for the formation of trust and network relationships. These interactions can amplify emotional resonance (Lu *et al.*, 2024) and promote the flow of useful information and social resources. As the frequency and depth of interactions increase, users gradually accumulate trust and network resources—social capital—that can be leveraged in future collaborations. Over time, this network of relationships based on interaction and co-creation not only enhances users' willingness to cooperate but also fosters an atmosphere of mutual assistance, support, and belonging within the platform. Therefore, digital CSR co-creation is not only a new model for practicing corporate social responsibility but also an important mechanism for promoting and strengthening social capital among users.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Digital CSR co-creation is positively correlated with social capital.

In the context of digital CSR co-creation, platforms provide a variety of interactive mechanisms, enabling consumers to gradually build trust and collaborative bonds through communication and collaboration, thereby promoting the generation and accumulation of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Putnam, 2000). The emotional support and trust mechanisms inherent in social capital not only provide immediate positive experiences but also help individuals achieve deeper self-worth and happiness over the long term (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004). On the one hand, social capital provides users with enjoyable social experiences through interpersonal interaction and emotional support. On CSR platforms, users can receive immediate positive feedback by participating in public welfare challenges, sharing low-carbon lifestyles, and giving likes to others. They can also experience acceptance and recognition from the community through their interactions. This positive social experience provides users with psychological satisfaction and relaxation (Ellison *et al.*, 2007), enhancing their emotional pleasure and well-being, thereby enhancing their hedonic happiness. On the other hand, social capital, through the long-term accumulation of mutually beneficial networks, provides users with a continuous channel for value realization. As users continuously build trust and mutual support through digital CSR co-creation, they gradually perceive their actions as not only personally meaningful but also contributing to the achievement of social and environmental goals. Through this positive connection between personal behavior and social value, users experience eudaimonic happiness through participation (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023).

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H2.1: Social capital is positively correlated with hedonic happiness.

H2.2: Social capital is positively correlated with eudaimonic happiness.

2.3. Perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is a core construct in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It refers to an individual's subjective perception of their ability and control over their ability to perform a particular behavior, taking into account internal capabilities and external conditions. PBC not only directly influences an individual's behavioral intention but may also play an independent role in actual behavior (Ajzen, 2002).

In the context of digital CSR co-creation, platforms provide convenient participation methods and instant feedback mechanisms, allowing users to contribute with low barriers to entry (Cuesta-Valiño et al, 2024a). Specifically, they can participate in public welfare through virtual tree planting (Zhang *et al.*, 2021), online step donation (Li *et al.*, 2025b), and click-to-support (Wang, 2023). These digital forms of interaction are often directly linked to real social or environmental outcomes. For example, platforms transform users' virtual actions into actual corporate public welfare contributions, thereby strengthening users' perception that their individual actions can lead to real, positive change. This enhanced sense of empowerment and control is a key manifestation of perceived control in digital CSR co-creation. Furthermore, digital CSR's interactive mechanisms (such as visual displays of task progress and collective goal achievement) not only enhance users' immediate feedback experience (Von Ahn & Dabbish, 2008) but also enhance their perception of control over their actions through increased transparency and traceability. Similarly, digital marketing research shows that users' perceptions of the usefulness of online mechanisms and their awareness of privacy significantly influence their attitudes and behavioral responses (Núñez-Barriopedro *et al.*, 2023a), further highlighting the crucial role of cognitive assessment in technological contexts. As users continue to participate and witness the positive connections between their actions and external outcomes, their perceived control over their actions will further strengthen, fostering a stronger motivation for continued participation.

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Digital CSR co-creation is positively correlated with perceived behavioral control.

Increasing PBC enhances happiness through two pathways. First, at the level of hedonic happiness, users experience immediate satisfaction, ease, and pleasure when completing tasks and achieving goals. This satisfaction stems from the belief that "I can do it" and the reinforcing effect of immediate feedback, enabling individuals to experience positive emotions during interactions. Second, at the level of eudaimonic happiness, higher PBC makes it easier for users to establish a direct causal connection between their actions and social/environmental goals. When users are convinced that their actions truly contribute to public welfare outcomes, they experience a stronger sense of self-efficacy, personal growth, and social contribution. This deep experience of meaning not only strengthens individuals' identification with the value of life but also further promotes long-term happiness and motivation for continued engagement (Ajzen, 2002; Caprara & Steca, 2005).

Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H3.1: Perceived behavioral control is positively correlated with hedonic happiness.

H3.2: Perceived behavioral control is positively correlated with eudaimonic happiness.

3. METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire survey for this study was developed to examine individuals' participation in digital CSR co-creation behaviors. All scales used a 5-point Likert scale

(1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to ensure comparability of quantitative data and validity of statistical analysis.

The core variable measurement items of the questionnaire structure are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. CONSTRUCTS, ITEMS AND SOURCES

Variable	Code	Items	Source (Adapted from)
Digital CSR co-creation	CSR1	Whenever I am at the top of the weekly rankings, I think the time and experience on digital CSR platform is worth it.	Xiong <i>et al.</i> , 2022; Bi <i>et al.</i> , 2024
	CSR2	Receiving badges or certificates on digital CSR platform motivates me to engage in sustainable behaviors.	Huang <i>et al.</i> , 2023
	CSR3	I care about my position on the energy ranking list very much.	Chen <i>et al.</i> , 2020
	CSR4	I enjoy creating content related to digital CSR platform	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
	CSR5	I am willing to share my environmental actions or achievements on social media platforms.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
	CSR6	I believe that the content I create or share can inspire more people to participate on digital CSR platform.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
Social capital (SC)	SC1	Using digital CSR platform helps me to interact with my friends.	Bi <i>et al.</i> , 2024; C. Cao and Cheng, 2024; B. Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2022
	SC2	I think that on digital CSR platform helping each other is a fair practice.	Wasko and Faraj, 2005; Cheung and Lee, 2012
	SC3	Digital CSR platform has encouraged me to participate in more environmental public welfare activities.	Shao and Xu, 2023
Collective emotions (CE)	CE1	I feel happy when I see my friends completing public welfare tasks on digital CSR platform.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
	CE2	The enthusiasm of other users on digital CSR platform influences me and makes me participate more actively.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
	CE3	When we participate in CSR activities together on a digital CSR platform, I feel a sense of collective pride.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026
Perceived behavioral control (PBC)	PBC1	I am confident I will complete the game task on digital CSR platform and get the environment protection certificate.	Hu <i>et al.</i> , 2025; C. Cao and Cheng, 2024
	PBC2	While participating in activities on a digital CSR platform, I feel everything is under control.	Z. Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2024
	PBC3	I believe that my actions on digital CSR platform have a positive impact on society and the environment.	Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2026

(continued)

TABLE 1. CONSTRUCTS, ITEMS AND SOURCES (*continued*)

Variable	Code	Items	Source (Adapted from)
Hedonic happiness (HH)	HH1	In my opinion, using digital CSR platform is a pleasant way to spend leisure time.	B. Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2022
	HH2	Playing digital CSR platform will make me feel very happy.	Hu <i>et al.</i> , 2025
	HH3	I feel relaxed while participating in activities on a digital CSR platform.	Bi <i>et al.</i> , 2024
Eudaimonic happiness (EH)	EH1	I feel a sense of achievement when I complete digital CSR activities on a platform.	Yu <i>et al.</i> , 2025; Bi <i>et al.</i> , 2024
	EH2	Using digital CSR platform has kept me in the process of growing and improving.	N. Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2025
	EH3	Using digital CSR platform makes me feel that I am contributing to society.	N. Zhang <i>et al.</i> , 2025

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The questionnaire survey for this study was conducted in 2025. The research object is the user group of digital CSR platform. To ensure the relevance of the sample and the pertinence of the study, the screening criteria are set as follows: respondents have participated digital CSR platform related activity at least once in the past three months. After collection and organization, a total of 517 valid questionnaires were obtained, providing a reliable data foundation for subsequent empirical analysis.

4 RESULTS

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a data analysis method for studying complex causal relationships between multiple variables. At present, there are two main methods for estimating relationships in structural equation models, including PLS-SEM and CB-SEM. This article chooses PLS-SEM as the empirical model analysis method. The main reason is that PLS-SEM is suitable for models that are in the exploratory stage and need further development (Hair *et al.*, 2011). This article aims to explore how platform-based digital CSR co-creation affects hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness through collective emotions, social capital, and perceived behavioral control. This study is exploratory. This study employed SmartPLS 4 to estimate the proposed model using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

4.1. Evaluation of measurement models

Firstly, there is a reliability test. In PLS-SEM, it is necessary to conduct evaluation tests on reflective variables. In the structural model of this article, all latent variables are reflective variables. The reliability test results are shown in Table 2. This article conducted a calculation and verification of factor loadings, and all factor loadings were higher than the recommended value of 0.7. This article tested the Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) of each latent variable (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). The Cronbach's alpha

of all latent variables is greater than 0.70, and the Composite Reliability (CR) exceeds the recommended value of 0.80, indicating good internal consistency and measurement stability of each latent variable.

TABLE 2. RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

		Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Digital CSR co-creation	CSR1	0.84	0.916	0.934	0.704
	CSR2	0.875			
	CSR3	0.857			
	CSR4	0.836			
	CSR5	0.837			
	CSR6	0.787			
Collective emotions	CE1	0.887	0.898	0.936	0.83
	CE2	0.925			
	CE3	0.92			
Social capital	SC1	0.924	0.831	0.891	0.732
	SC2	0.887			
	SC3	0.746			
Perceived behavioral control	PBC1	0.788	0.778	0.87	0.691
	PBC2	0.831			
	PBC3	0.872			
Hedonic happiness	HH1	0.902	0.881	0.924	0.803
	HH2	0.925			
	HH3	0.859			
Eudaimonic happiness	EH1	0.859	0.849	0.909	0.769
	EH2	0.891			
	EH3	0.88			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

In terms of convergent validity, it is tested from the perspectives of “external load” and average variance extraction (AVE). The factor loadings of each latent variable meet the requirements. Meanwhile, Table 2 shows that the AVE value meets the criterion of being greater than 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), indicating that the latent variable has good convergent validity.

In terms of discriminant validity, as shown in Table 3, the square root (diagonal position) of the AVE of each latent variable is higher than its correlation coefficient with other latent variables, which meets the discriminant validity requirements of the Fornell Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The requirement for evaluating discriminant validity using HTMT values is that the HTMT value should not exceed 0.9 (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). According to Table 4, discriminant validity was assessed using HTMT. All HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the constructs are empirically distinct and that discriminant validity is established.

TABLE 3. FORNELL-LARCKER

	CE	CSR	EH	HH	PBC	SC
CE	0.911					
CSR	0.755	0.839				
EH	0.7	0.666	0.877			
HH	0.508	0.616	0.58	0.896		
PBC	0.742	0.646	0.68	0.463	0.831	
SC	0.209	0.21	0.201	0.067	0.271	0.856

Source: Prepared by the authors.

TABLE 4. HTMT

	CE	CSR	EH	HH	PBC	SC
CE						
CSR	0.825					
EH	0.802	0.752				
HH	0.540	0.677	0.667			
PBC	0.896	0.757	0.829	0.504		
SC	0.208	0.217	0.213	0.087	0.321	

Source: Prepared by the authors.

4.2. Structural model evaluation

Prior to testing the structural relationships, collinearity was assessed. All inner VIF values were below the recommended threshold of 3.3, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model.

This study used Bootstrap sampling method (repeated sampling 5000 times) to test the significance of the model path coefficients. The results in Table 5 indicate that most of the research hypotheses have been supported. Specifically, digital CSR co-creation (CSR) has a significant positive impact on collective emotions (CE), perceived behavior control (PBC), and social capital (SC) ($\beta=0.755$, $p<0.001$; $\beta=0.646$, $p<0.001$; $\beta=0.21$, $p<0.001$). Collective emotions (CE) have significant positive effects on eudaimonic happiness (EH) and hedonic happiness (HH), respectively ($\beta=0.436$, $p<0.001$; $\beta=0.368$, $p<0.001$). Perceived behavioral control (PBC) also significantly positively affects eudaimonic happiness (EH) and hedonic happiness (HH) ($\beta=0.353$, $p<0.001$; $\beta=0.208$, $p<0.001$). However, the effects of social capital (SC) on eudaimonic happiness ($\beta=0.014$, $p=0.667$) and hedonic happiness ($\beta=-0.066$, $p=0.103$) did not reach statistical significance, indicating that these two pathway hypotheses are not supported. Social capital did not significantly enhance happiness in digital CSR co-creation contexts, possibly because the social capital formed in platform settings is mostly weak ties and instrumental connections, lacking deep emotional support. In contrast, collective emotions and perceived behavioral control, as more direct psychological mechanisms, are more easily translated into subjective well-being. Therefore, in digital co-creation environments, emotions and a sense of participation play a more crucial role than the relational structure itself.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING RESULTS

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	p-value	Results
H1	CSR -> CE	0.755	26.049	0	Support
H1.1	CE -> HH	0.368	5.674	0	Support
H1.2	CE -> EH	0.436	7.675	0	Support
H2	CSR -> SC	0.21	6.359	0	Support
H2.1	SC -> HH	-0.066	1.631	0.103	Not supported
H2.2	SC -> EH	0.014	0.43	0.667	Not supported
H3	CSR -> PBC	0.646	13.693	0	Support
H3.1	PBC -> HH	0.208	3.646	0	Support
H3.2	PBC -> EH	0.353	6.644	0	Support

Source: Prepared by the authors.

This study evaluated the predictive ability of the model using the PLSpredict program. As shown in Table 6, the R^2 and Q^2 prediction values for all latent variables are greater than zero, indicating that the model has good explanatory and predictive power. Specifically, the Q^2 values for collective emotions (CE), eudaimonic happiness (EH), and perceived behavioral control (PBC) are 0.563, 0.427, and 0.407, suggesting moderate to strong predictive relevance. The Q^2 value for hedonic happiness (HH) is 0.326, indicating acceptable predictive ability. In contrast, the Q^2 value for social capital (SC) is relatively low (0.04), suggesting limited predictive relevance. The overall results indicate that the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive power for the main constructs.

TABLE 6. DETERMINATION COEFFICIENT AND PREDICTIVE POWER OF STRUCTURAL MODEL

	R-square	Q^2 predict
CE	0.569	0.563
EH	0.548	0.427
HH	0.279	0.326
PBC	0.417	0.407
SC	0.044	0.04

Source: Prepared by the authors.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Theoretical implications

Firstly, this study introduces the concept of digital CSR co-creation, in response to the trend of CSR transformation from one-way responsibility of enterprises to co-creation between enterprises and users in the digital context (Lin & An, 2025; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; J. Zhang *et al.*, 2024). This conceptual construction not only enriches the extension of CSR

theory in the context of digital platforms, but also provides a feasible measurement framework for subsequent research. Furthermore, it can be embedded within an omnichannel integration perspective, whereby firms achieve collaborative interaction and value co-creation with users through multiple digital touchpoints (Alonso-Garcia *et al.*, 2021).

Secondly, this study introduces three psychological and social mechanisms, namely collective emotions, social capital, and perceived behavioral control, as mediating variables to reveal how platform interactive behavior indirectly affects consumer happiness. Traditional CSR research often suggests that CSR perception directly drives consumer purchasing behavior or brand loyalty (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; Bianchi *et al.*, 2019; Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2004). However, previous studies have shown that the impact of CSR on consumer behavior does not occur automatically, but depends on consumers' emotional identification, attribution judgments (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Vlachos *et al.*, 2009), and psychological mechanisms (Lee *et al.*, 2021). One finding of this study is that, in the context of digital CSR co-creation, social capital does not significantly enhance eudaimonic or hedonic happiness. While digital CSR activities significantly increase social capital, the structural relational resources generated on digital platforms do not directly translate into subjective well-being. This result suggests that in a digital co-creation environment, relational connections may be relatively weak, instrumental, or platform-mediated, thus insufficient to generate immediate emotional pleasure or a deeper sense of meaning. In contrast, collective emotion and perceived behavioral control become important mediating mechanisms. These findings indicate that, in the context of digital CSR, emotional investment and perceived agency play a more central role than structural social resources in shaping consumer happiness. Therefore, this study extends the theory of value co-creation, demonstrating that psychological mechanisms (rather than merely relational assets) are the primary pathways through which digital CSR co-creation enhances consumer happiness.

Thirdly, this study introduces the dual path happiness model into CSR research, enriching the theoretical explanation of digital responsibility practices at the consumer psychological level. Drawing on the perspective of positive psychology, we have clearly distinguished the dual effects of CSR behavior on consumer happiness in two dimensions: emotional pleasure and meaning construction. The empirical results of this study indicate that both are positively influenced by the platform CSR co-creation mechanism, confirming the multidimensional characteristics of happiness (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2023). Incorporating dual pathway happiness into CSR research helps to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how corporate responsibility behavior enhances consumers' subjective well-being through psychological mechanisms, and provides a more explanatory theoretical dimension for measuring CSR effectiveness.

5.2. Managerial implications

Firstly, enterprises should embed CSR co-creation strategy into the core mechanism of the platform and create a consumer-centered responsibility co-creation model. In the context of the platform economy, consumers are no longer just the audience of CSR, but important actors who participate in value co-construction through digital interaction (J. Zhang *et al.*, 2024). Enterprises should establish a consumer-centered CSR system, from low threshold participation (such as donating steps and liking assistance) to deep co-creation (such as public welfare planning and community operation), fully activating consumers' sense of responsibility and emotional connection, so that they can participate in CSR actions synchronously in the consumption process. This role shift helps businesses enhance consumer trust (Iglesias *et al.*, 2020) and loyalty (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2021), achieving a transition from product relationships to value relationships.

Secondly, enterprises should design CSR systems with emotional incentives and behavioral feedback mechanisms to enhance consumers' participation experience and sense of control. This study suggests that positive group emotions and perceived behavioral control are important pathways driving consumer happiness. Enterprises should stimulate emotional resonance among consumers in public welfare scenarios through community interaction, task collaboration, ranking, and virtual gamification design (Jun *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, by visualizing public welfare achievements and tracking their influence, we aim to enhance consumers' awareness of the effectiveness of their behavior and strengthen their self-efficacy of 'I can change'. This not only enhances consumers' psychological satisfaction, but also helps to form a continuous cycle of participation.

Thirdly, companies should promote CSR from instant interaction to long-term resonance, enabling consumers to achieve value co-creation through participation (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Kull & Heath, 2016). Digital CSR should not only provide short-term pleasant user experience, but also stimulate consumers' deep recognition of brand social responsibility through the continuous transmission of value concepts. Enterprises can engage consumers in the sustainable development of the enterprise through real public welfare stories, user generated content dissemination, and sustainable project display (Reppmann *et al.*, 2025), and gain a sense of moral happiness through continuous interaction, thereby enhancing brand loyalty and long-term stickiness. Transforming CSR from a single point of action into a part of consumers' daily lifestyle, truly achieving the synergy and unity of social influence and business growth. However, in the context of multi platform interaction and omnichannel integration, companies may also face operational complexity and performance constraints when implementing such CSR co-creation strategies (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2024a). Therefore, companies need to strike a balance between increasing user engagement and managing system complexity to ensure the sustainable development of CSR co-creation initiatives.

5.3. Social implications

Firstly, digital CSR co-creation broadens the channels for public participation in social responsibility, promoting the daily and socialization of responsibility awareness. In traditional contexts, public participation in CSR activities often relies on organizational mobilization or physical accessibility. Platform-based digital CSR leverages low barriers to integrate socially responsible behavior into consumers' daily lives (Cuesta-Valiño *et al.*, 2026; Jiménez-Marín *et al.*, 2021). This digital participation approach is closely related to the impact of digital capabilities on individual well-being and willingness to act (Tello, 2023), prompting philanthropic practices to shift from traditional centralized organizational forms to more everyday and platform-based models. Participatory activities can also enhance consumers' perceived interactivity (Lee *et al.*, 2021), which echoes the emphasis on interactive integration and multi-layered experience structures in online customer experience research (Goyal and Deshwal, 2024). Digital CSR co-creation promotes public awareness and actual participation in social responsibility (Ruiz de Maya *et al.*, 2016), stimulates individual responsibility awareness, and effectively creates a digital social and cultural atmosphere of normalized participation in public welfare. This process not only enhances the widespread dissemination of social responsibility, but also strengthens the public's attention and recognition of CSR, further expanding the social foundation and influence of CSR (Elías Zambrano *et al.*, 2021; Jiménez-Marín *et al.*, 2020).

Secondly, the emotional interaction and community connection mechanism in digital CSR can help rebuild emotional communities in the digital environment. The dissemination

of collective emotions and the resonance of values between communities can stimulate a sense of belonging, identification, and empathy among users in highly digitalized and fragmented information environments (Martínez-Arvizu *et al.*, 2022), with technological and experiential contexts further reinforcing such positive outcomes (Leal-Solís *et al.*, 2025). Related research has shown a significant association between collective emotional capacity and subjective well-being (Ahumada-Tello *et al.*, 2022), further illustrating the important role of group emotions in digital interaction. The collaborative creation of users can stimulate a sense of identity within the group, while also enhancing each user's expectations for the company's social responsibility (Korschun & Du, 2013). The CSR platform promotes emotional communication and mutual encouragement among users through mechanisms such as task collaboration, leaderboards (Robina-Ramírez *et al.*, 2026), and public welfare message walls, alleviating common alienation and apathy in online participation. At the same time, the mutual trust network established among users based on common public welfare goals has invisibly strengthened the accumulation of social capital (Galván-Vela *et al.*, 2024).

Thirdly, platform-based enterprises play the role of social value organizers in CSR co-creation, promoting enterprises from technology service providers to public responsibility entities. In the context of globalization and digitization, enterprises are gradually assuming social governance functions (Scherer & Palazzo, 2012; Salazar-Altamirano *et al.*, 2026). In the era dominated by the platform economy, enterprises are no longer just providers of goods and services, but also providers of value co-creation platforms that allow for the creation of experiential value through interaction (Jurietti *et al.*, 2017). Within the framework of today's globalized and highly interconnected markets, fostering Happiness Management represents a deeper dedication to building business models that are both sustainable and people-oriented (Martínez-Arvizu *et al.*, 2025). Therefore, enterprises have gradually become important hubs connecting the public and social issues (Ravina-Ripoll *et al.*, 2022). Through institutional design and technology-driven approaches, enterprises can embed CSR into platform structures and algorithmic logic, playing the role of responsibility leaders. This kind of responsible co-creation not only helps to enhance corporate social trust and brand warmth, but also strengthens brand value by enhancing consumer participation and trust mechanisms (Saikia & Bhattacharjee, 2024), and constitutes a new path for corporate participation in digital social governance (Hernández García de Velazco *et al.*, 2020). However, interactions and information dissemination on digital platforms can also amplify collective emotions and intensify opinion polarization, thus posing a potential risk of social polarization (Penelas-Leguía *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, while promoting public participation, it is also necessary to strengthen platform governance and guidance mechanisms to achieve a balance between social value creation and risk control.

6. CONCLUSION

This study constructs a theoretical model around how platform-based digital CSR co-creation affects consumer happiness. Empirical tests are conducted based on user data from digital CSR platform. Research has found that digital CSR co-creation can significantly enhance users' sense of hedonic and moral well-being through group emotional and perceived behavioral control, verifying the positive effect of platform participation mechanisms on users' psychological well-being. This study not only expands the cross-disciplinary theoretical integration of digital CSR and happiness, but also provides empirical support and management insights for enterprises and platforms in designing high-quality and sustainable CSR co-creation mechanisms. It also provides a research foundation for building a digital platform ecosystem that combines emotional warmth and social value.

6.1. Limitations and future directions of research

Firstly, the research mainly focuses on digital CSR platform users. However, the platform's gamification mechanism and enterprise resource support may have a structural impact on user behavior. Future research can compare the mechanism differences and effects of different platforms. Secondly, this article uses cross-sectional data, which cannot fully reveal the dynamic causal relationships between variables. In the future, longitudinal tracking studies or experimental designs can be used to test the long-term impact and trajectory of digital CSR co-creation on happiness. Third, the model has not considered the moderating effect of individual user differences on the mediation mechanism. In the future, variables such as value co creation motivation, public welfare identity recognition, and platform trust can be introduced to further enrich the explanatory power of the model and explore the boundary conditions that affect the effectiveness of CSR co creation.

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8. AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualisation, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Methodology, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Data collection, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Data analysis, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Writing – preparation of the original draft, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Writing – review and editing, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.; Supervision, C-V.P., N-B.E. and Y.Y.

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