



Can a socially responsible casino better retain its management staff? From an internal customer perspective

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate how perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence internal customers' preference and turnover intention. The mediating effect of brand preference on the relationship between CSR initiatives and turnover intention has also been studied.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey was conducted and questionnaires were distributed to a sample in Macau in 2012. Out of these, 138 valid samples were collected among casinos' mid- and senior-level employees having managerial positions (hereafter "managers"). Regression tests were performed in order to validate the hypotheses.

Findings – Managers' preference for the casino brand of their employer can be enhanced by perceptions associated with CSR initiatives. Two CSR initiatives (CSR to stakeholders and to society) significantly decrease managers' turnover intentions, with the impact of CSR directed at stakeholders exerting a stronger influence. Brand preference is a significant mediator of perceptions associated with CSR initiatives and turnover intention.

Originality/value – The current study tries to not only investigate how perceptions associated with CSR initiatives influence an internal customer's turnover intention but is also aimed at understanding how brand preference as a mediator influences turnover intention. Extending the realm of study is important because multiple theories predict different benefits, and assessing the value of CSR therefore requires multiple approaches.

Keywords Corporate social responsibility, Chinese management and leadership, Gaming research

Paper type Research paper



1. Introduction

Developing and maintain good ethics and working practices in the workplace have been considered very important for organizations of all kinds. According to Schmeltz and Denmark (2012), recent developments in these areas have complemented the field

of corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR generally refers to a firm's activities, organizational processes, and status in relation to its perceived societal or stakeholder obligations (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). From a strategic perspective, CSR has fostered interest in academia for more than three decades, and has evolved from "executives' idiosyncratic philanthropic activities" to widespread acceptance as a valuable component of stakeholder management and incorporation into strategic performance models (Kolodinsky *et al.*, 2010). Engaging in CSR behaviors is prevalent across various types of businesses in different industries and countries (Singh *et al.*, 2008; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2009). According to Hoeffler and Keller (2002), corporations have started increasingly to integrate CSR programs into their business strategies in efforts to generate branding preference and benefits (i.e. brand equity).

1.1 Research gap

Although studies examining the link between CSR and marketing have recently emerged and expanded the literature concerning the phenomenon, some scholars suggest that the current understanding of CSR's impacts on branding and customer responses is still insufficient (Singh *et al.*, 2008). The following research gaps in marketing domain are yet to be bridged. First, there are two types of customers: external customers and internal customers. External customers of an organization are not directly connected to it (Kendall, 2007); usually they are end users who buy the organization's products or services. Internal customers are directly connected to an organization, most often as shareholders or employees (Kendall, 2007). It has been acknowledged that good perceptions associated with CSR initiatives or positive CSR beliefs held by external consumers are indeed associated with greater purchase intention and a better attitude toward the organization (Schmeltz and Denmark, 2012; Lin *et al.*, 2011). However, very few marketing studies have focussed on how CSR initiatives may directly or indirectly influence internal customers. To date, most studies have focussed on the direct association between CSR and other organizational outcomes such as financial performance and employee commitment from an organizational perspective (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2009; Turker, 2009a). Hence, it remains unclear as to how CSR initiatives could affect internal customers from the perspective of a brand rather than a specific organization.

Second, the current literature on organizational behavior and human resource management commonly points to a need to study employee turnover intention as a proxy of employee loyalty (Mobley, 1997). Prior studies have shown that preference for an organization leads to stronger organizational commitment and embeddedness, which in turn decreases employee turnover intentions (Lo *et al.*, 2012; Russ and McNeilly, 1995). However, this stream of research largely ignores the influence from a brand-level perspective. Hence, it is rather unclear as to how preference for an organization's brand may influence an employee's turnover intention. This limitation in the literature poses a research gap in marketing and management studies. Evidentially, the most important and the earliest of studies conducted on employee brand preference (Ambler and Barrow, 1996, p. 85) introduced a concept they termed "employee branding" which refers to providing a package of functional, economic, and psychological benefits to employees as a measure of internal brand commitment. Along similar lines, research done by Martin *et al.* (2005) contends that employers could improve retention of existing employees and attract job candidates by developing an outstanding corporate brand image. The value of a strong brand image in the minds of employees is even stronger in service industries, where bad experiences related to dealing with problematic customers

increase their turnover intentions (Poddar and Madupalli, 2012). Keeping these factors in mind, this study investigates the relationship between employee brand preference and turnover intention. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, this study focusses on CSR perceptions of managers rather than regular employees; there appears to be a lack of understanding about the perceptions of CSR from a managerial staff's perspective (Brammer *et al.*, 2007; Turker, 2009a).

Third, many studies have examined major benefits associated with the CSR of companies and employees. Some well-known benefits among these are related to improving employee satisfaction, which should eventually result in greater retention of employees in the firm (Lee and Park, 2009; Henderson, 2007; Sprinkle and Maines, 2010). However, there are very few studies that investigate the impact of CSR activities in a morally controversial industry such as gaming (Vong and Wong, 2013). The social identification theory suggests that people are more inclined to be identified and be associated with groups and organizations that are congruent with their own image (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Hence, organizations that practice CSR are more likely to attract good employees and retain them. Casinos are often perceived to have negative impacts on society, and evidence suggests that casino hotels do have a fairly high-turnover rate (Kale, 2007; Lo *et al.*, 2012). Thus there are several interesting reasons to examine the impact of CSR on managers' turnover intentions in this industry.

1.2 Expected contribution

The current study attempts to contribute to the existing literature in the following ways. First, it investigates how perceptions associated with CSR initiatives influence internal customers' (specifically managers') turnover intentions, and it also seeks to understand how brand preference may act as a mediator in influencing turnover intention. Most CSR studies focus on impacts to an organization, while this study focusses on the role of an employer's brand. The results of the current research will shed some light on the unanswered questions and bridge the previously mentioned research gaps in the marketing literature. Second, companies today have moved beyond equating success with exclusively accounting-based financial results (Kaplan and Norton, 2007). According to Galbreath (2010), extending this realm of study is important because multiple theories predict different benefits, and assessing the value of CSR therefore requires multiple approaches. Third, prior research on CSR largely examines regular employees (e.g. employee commitment and turnover intention). The current study specifically investigates managerial staff and how CSR affects managers' turnover intention with the mediating role of brand preference. In addition, this study also addresses the effect of CSR in a controversial service sector (the casino industry) because, based on the social identity theory, people are more inclined to be identified and associated with organizations that are congruent with their own image (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Finally, the results of the study provide evidence from the Asia Pacific region that may be significant for marketing/management/hospitality researchers and practitioners.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

The ability to retain employees not only demonstrates that a given firm is a valued place to work (which can elicit positive corporate associations from the public), but several scholars such as Galbreath (2010) also find that retaining employees has positive consequences for firms' financial performance and productivity. In lieu of this,

a major concern for firms is the mechanisms and activities that can enable them to diminish employee turnover. According to Aguilera *et al.* (2007), CSR is an activity that demonstrates concern for both internal and external stakeholders and that is achieved through socially responsible activities. This main feature of CSR activities is likely to impact the level of employee turnover intention. In the current study we adopt the definition of employee turnover intention from the literature (Dougherty *et al.*, 1985) to define it as a staff member's voluntary desire to leave an organization.

With regards to CSR classification, Carroll (1999, p. 283) delineated the CSR construct by stating that "the social responsibility of business encompasses the (1) economic, (2) legal, (3) ethical, and (4) discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations." Maignan *et al.* (1999) define social responsibility as the degree to which firms pursue these four aspects of CSR toward their stakeholders. This definition is widely accepted (Mohr *et al.*, 2001; Matten and Crane, 2003; Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011). CSR activities can take many forms, such as diversity initiatives, recycling programs, the use of environmentally sustainable materials, support of community events, and donations of money to charitable causes (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). This view is further supported and extended by Mohr *et al.* (2001) who clearly divide CSR into two general classifications. The first category discusses CSR in relation to the various stakeholders of the organization (e.g. owners, customers, and employees). The second classification is based the societal marketing concept developed by Kotler and Lee's (2008). The current study applies these two major types of CSR as the components of perceptions associated with CSR initiatives and defines it as a firm's voluntary efforts toward practicing good deeds – that go beyond its economic interest – for the benefit of society and stakeholders. A definition of CSR from a societal perspective, as put forth by Turker (2009b) generally refers to activity that contributes to society's well-being. CSR is gaining more and more importance day by day. CSR is not only drawing the corporate magnates into its circumference, but is also luring educators, social activists, reformists, from all over the world to delve deeper into it (Sharma and Kiran, 2013). Changing market conditions, globalization, and ethical consumerism all are adding interest to the CSR concept. Increased attention to CSR is being driven by several external forces, e.g. pressure from various NGOs, activists, organizations, and governments, that also attempt to hold companies accountable for social issues (Porter and Kramer, 2006). More and more organizations are showing their commitments toward CSR either for enhancing their corporate image or to gain customer favor over competitors. In addition, Pedersen (2010) has indicated that many managers believe firms have growing responsibilities toward local communities and society in general. According to Mohr *et al.* (2001), companies are facing increasing pressure both toward maintaining profitability and behaving in socially responsible ways. This view of Mohr *et al.* (2001) is also supported by Murray and Vogel (1997) who have claimed that corporate CSR activities that address social issues could predispose people to a more positive impression of the business. This is further supported by the research findings of Ricks (2005) that indicates corporate philanthropy activities increase brand equity. Singh *et al.* (2008) also successfully demonstrate that CSR behaviors intended to enhance social interests are positively related to brand image. The research carried out by Singh *et al.* (2008) involved several famous brands and a diversified group of citizens.

In general, poor managerial treatment significantly decreases employees' commitment to organization (Shore *et al.*, 2008). Inappropriate treatment, which leads perceptions of justice and injustice, have been linked with a wide variety of employee attitudes and

behaviors including commitment, and a number of counter normative negative behaviors such as theft and more general unethical behaviors (Treviño *et al.*, 1999, 2006). Enhancing employees' commitment through CSR practice became a possible direction to follow. Several empirical studies (Brammer *et al.*, 2007; Maignan and Ferrell, 2001; Peterson, 2004) which investigate the impact of CSR on employees tend to focus on specific dimensions of employees' organizational commitment. According to Husted (2000), owing to the multidimensional nature of CSR activities to society, these socially conscious practices can influence a wide range of organizational attitudes and behaviors beyond organizational commitments. Aguilera *et al.* (2007) suggest that CSR can frame employees' perceptions of organizational justice and affect organizational citizenship behavior. After the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 in Phuket, Thailand, many firms actively engaged in various CSR efforts aimed at restoring local communities, including raising funds, providing support for rebuilding homes and schools, sponsoring orphans, and by heartfelt and encouraging public relations. According to Henderson (2007), "caring" outreach activities have significantly enhanced these firms' brand image. Most of their employees have shown higher loyalty because of these CSR initiatives, compared to their loyalty before them (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2010). Thus, it is evident from these studies that CSR indeed plays an important role in determining the loyalty of employees toward their firms.

Social identity theory suggests that individuals tend to reinforce their self-esteem and bolster their self-image by identifying with groups and organizations which are recognized for their social engagement and responsibility (Brown, 2000). This is further supported by several empirical researches done in this domain (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Maignan and Ferrell, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001) which help us understanding how social identification explains CSR's influence on employees. To further extend this research, Colquitt *et al.* (2001) have put forward that if irresponsible behavior is demonstrated by a firm, employees may view this behavior as unjust or socially irresponsible, and this could potentially lead to higher turnover. However, if a firm's actions demonstrate good citizenship, employees assess the firm as one that is just and socially responsible, which is likely to lead to less turnover as individual and organizational goals converge. As these previous studies relate to the possible link between societal perceptions associated with CSR initiatives and internal customers' turnover intention, the following is hypothesized:

- H1.* The higher a company's perceived CSR initiatives toward society (societal CSR), the lower managers' turnover intention.

As mentioned, this study follows studies from Mohr *et al.* (2001) and Kotler and Lee's (2008) to divide CSR into two categories and to investigate them, respectively. Besides CSR to society (*H1*), the other concerns CSR to stakeholders. The definition of stakeholders, which is applied in current study, includes "business owners, shareholders, customers, suppliers, employees and local community" based on Mohr *et al.* (2001) and Torres *et al.*'s (2012) studies. The importance of CSR to stakeholders has been verified by many studies. As per Pelozo and Shang (2011), CSR activities have the potential to create stronger relationships between firms and stakeholders. Along similar lines, Turker (2009a) summarized that CSR includes a company's responsibility to act in ways that affect stakeholders positively and that go beyond its economic interest. More recently, Torres *et al.* (2012) concluded that CSR activities pertaining to various stakeholders (shareholders, employees, suppliers) has a positive effect on

global firms through gaining better perceived brand equity. More specifically, the social identity theory argues that firms that do not demonstrate behavior consistent with employees' moral or ethical frameworks are likely to suffer negative consequences (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Turker, 2009a). If irresponsible behavior is demonstrated by a firm, employees may view this behavior as unjust or unfair, which could potentially lead to lower organizational commitment and higher employee turnover (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001). Based on the above discussions, it is reasonable to assume the following:

H2. The higher a company's perceived CSR initiatives to stakeholders, the lower the managers' turnover intention.

This study adopts the definition from Cobb-Walgren *et al.* (1995) that brand preference is a measure of brand loyalty, defined as the relative preference for choosing and using a particular brand. In a market dominated by several large and heavily branded casino operations, it is reasonable to believe brand preference could exercise positive influence not only on customers, but also on employees. Although the branding concept generally applies to the marketing discipline and management literature generally focusses on organizations, recent studies show that employees prefer to work at a company with higher brand equity when compared to competing companies (Tybout and Calkins, 2011). In fact employees' loyalty is significantly influenced by their job satisfaction and preference for an organization (Chen *et al.*, 2011). Employees who perceive themselves to fit in an organization exercise more commitment to it, and hence are more likely to stay (Lo *et al.*, 2012; O'Reilly *et al.*, 1991). Accordingly, we believe that the effect of organizational preference on employees would be highly influenced by the brand, as representing a broad and specific corporate culture (Keller, 2003). It follows that as employees increase their preference for a brand, they would reduce their intentions to leave. This argument is further strengthened by social identity theory, according to which people who voluntarily identify themselves as a member of a group show a stronger commitment to the group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989):

H3. The higher brand preference managers have toward their employers the lower turnover intention they have.

Sheth and Babiak (2010) provide further support to this line of research by suggesting that practicing good deeds and offering employees a positive working environment has a strong resonance with customers, which leads to an improved brand image. Research on exploring the relationship between CSR activities and working environment in firms conducted by Creyer and Ross (1997) has led to a conclusion that mismanagement of CSR programs and activities can damage a brand's reputation, which leads to negative brand evaluation by stakeholders (Alamro and Rowley, 2011). Research findings from these studies could further be attributed to social identity theory, whereby employees often voluntarily leave an organization due to their perception that its values and culture – especially as reflected in their brand – are incompatible with their own (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Since employees often take pride in organizations that contribute to both society and stakeholders (Porter and Kramer, 2006), it follows that employees' preference for a specific brand should positively influence their loyalty to it. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the relationship between perceived CSR and employees' loyalty-related elements (e.g. turnover intention) may be mediated by their preference for a brand. To further

investigate the role of brand preference in the current study, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H4a. Brand preference plays a significant mediating role between managers' perceptions of CSR to society and their turnover intention.

H4b. Brand preference plays a significant mediating role between managers' perceptions of CSR to stakeholders and their turnover intention (Figure 1).

3. Methodology

3.1 Sampling

The marketing literature recognizes that all employees of an organization are internal customers (George, 1990); internal customers generate goods and services for external customers, and it is important to provide them with a high level of job and personal satisfaction (Mohr-Jackson, 1991). This study focusses on the gambling industry in Macau, which has developed rapidly since 2002 when the Chinese government opened it to foreign investment. In short order, Macau's gaming industry became highly commercialized, market oriented, and internationalized. By 2013 Macau's gambling revenues had led the world for eight consecutive years, easily replacing Las Vegas as the top gambling venue in the world, generating gambling revenue of 45.0 billion USD, reflecting an increase of 12 times in ten years (Gambling Inspection and Coordination Bureau Macau SAR Website, 2013). Perhaps not surprisingly, the gambling industry in Macau has had a transformational impact on the local society as it operates many hospitality sectors (e.g. hotels, transportation, convention venues, shows and entertainment, restaurants, spas, and more) and offers an array of job opportunities for local residents. Macau's gaming revenue accounted for about 85.6 percent of the government's full-year revenue in 2013. The sustained economic boom since 2002, combined with local employment protection policies that restrict the labor supply, have created a labor climate in which employees have high job mobility. Hospitality operators have difficulties retaining loyal employees and are investigating means to reduce the turnover rate (Lo *et al.*, 2012). There are six major casinos run by different

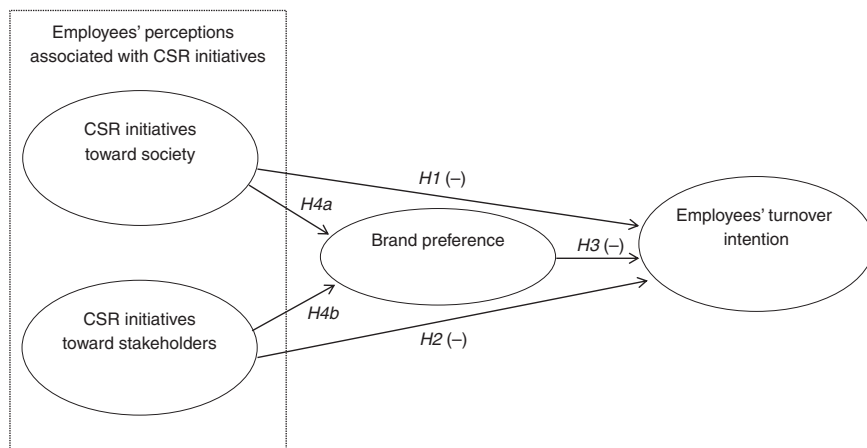


Figure 1.
Conceptual framework

operators in Macau: Grand Lisboa, Venetian, Wynn, MGM Grand, Galaxy, and City of Dreams (generally called “The Big Six” casinos). The usefulness and timing of the current study are further supported because more casinos are increasing efforts toward creating a socially responsible gambling environment, consistent with linkages between CRS and organizational fit and attractiveness, both of which influence turnover rates (Vong and Wong, 2013). This is also directly congruent with the research questions and hypotheses posed in this study.

In fact, the reputation and sheer size of casinos are considered external factors that influence managers’ opinions about them. In general, employees of small casinos want to shift to larger ones (primarily for financial and other economic reasons) or they perceive larger casinos to be more active with CSR initiatives (major casinos have more resources and do more corporate image building). To rule out possible bias (e.g. salary concerns, casino size, and reputation) the current study focussed on senior employees at Macau’s “Big Six” casinos who had worked more than four years in current casino and held mid-level management positions (i.e. with a designation of at least pit manager or equivalent rank in administration positions). These criteria were chosen for three reasons. First, senior employees may consider and evaluate more factors when they face opportunities for job turnover; moreover, the concept of loyalty toward an organization can best be applied to people who are very familiar with an organization’s values and culture (i.e. having worked there for a considerable period). Second, employees in management positions have more in-depth and updated knowledge about the casino operation and management (and thus were better able to respond to some survey items). Third, there are no major institutional differences (e.g. the salary, benefits package, bonus offered to employees) across the “Big Six” casinos. Hence, these other factors that drive turnover may safely be ruled out, enabling the study to focus on perceptions associated with the impact of CSR initiatives on turnover intention.

3.2 Data collection procedure

Data were collected from the participants in a two-year long casino management advanced diploma course (2011 cohort and 2012 cohort) conducted by the University of Macau. Participants were all active casino employees with at least four years of experience in the casino/gambling industry, and in managerial positions. After carefully screening the resumes of selected employees, qualified respondents were then invited and instructed to fill in the questionnaire during July and August, 2012; this was considered a suitable time since most of the managers would be attending the diploma course. Another procedural challenge was how to minimize the “social desirability bias,” which can be an issue with investigations concerning CSR or sustainability in general. This bias may be further exacerbated when an interviewer is present; respondents are more likely to rate CSR or sustainability initiatives higher. To minimize the social desirability bias, we interviewed the respondents by pretending to offer them a regular practice about filling a mock questionnaire when teaching “research method” based on respondents’ real working experiences. Respondents had sufficient time to respond to survey items patiently and efficiently; this method also reduced social desirability bias (Liu *et al.*, 2014). The true purpose of the survey was eventually revealed to respondents shortly after all the questionnaires were filled and collected. The respondents were then told that they were free to withdraw their questionnaire if they had any concerns without giving any explanation. Four questionnaires were eventually withdrawn by the respondents.

The survey questionnaire was initially formulated in English and was then translated to Chinese with careful proofreading, using back translation performed by two English-native marketing scholars and two Chinese marketing/hospitality scholars who earned their doctorates in the USA. The questionnaire was pre-tested in June 2012 on 32 respondents who were working in the Grand Lisboa casino and who satisfied the respondent criteria (e.g. four or more years in casino management). After the pre-test, the survey questionnaire was eventually finalized with no any major changes. Finally, 144 survey responses were collected from the main study. After removing two incomplete and four withdrawn questionnaires, 138 questionnaires were identified as eligible for further analysis. Among all the subjects, 70.3 percent were males, 78.3 percent were between 30 and 50 years old, and 53.6 percent held at least a bachelors degrees, the large majority of which were awarded by either Macau Polytechnic Institute or the Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao (IFT) (Table I).

3.3 Measurements

Perceived CSR initiatives. The measures used in the current study have been adopted from well-established scales. With regards to perceived CSR, the literature acknowledges that the construct commonly pertains to aspects relating to the society and stakeholders (Mohr *et al.*, 2001; Matten and Crane, 2003; Pedersen, 2010; Turker, 2009b). For example, research carried out by Lee and Park (2009) has revealed that these play significant roles in the daily operations of the gambling industry. For instance, Harrah’s Entertainment Inc., has implemented “Operation Bet Smart” and “Project 21” to promote and train employees about responsible gambling (Lee and Park, 2009). Harrah’s employees are encouraged to inform their supervisors if they witness any possibly pathological gamblers. Marina Bay Sands and Resorts World Sentosa (both in Singapore) placed no ATMs inside their casinos to avoid some customers’ impulse gambling. The current research adopted a four-item measure of CSR to society (or societal CSR) from Clarkson (1995) and Holcomb *et al.* (2007). We also selected employee-related items and generated a seven-item measure of CSR to stakeholders (or stakeholder CSR) from Turker (2009b) and Clarkson (1995) because these studies’ primary focus is the role of employees from an internal customer perspective. Each item was assessed on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from

Demographics	Frequencies	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	41	29.7
Male	97	70.3
<i>Age</i>		
20-30 years	14	10.1
30-40 years	73	52.9
40-50 years	35	25.4
> 50 years	16	11.6
<i>Educational level</i>		
High school or below	64	46.4
College or undergraduate	61	44.2
Postgraduate	13	9.4

Table I.
Samples’ demographic data

Note: n = 138

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). To ensure face validity, a pilot study was conducted using a carefully selected sample (panel) of experts on a pretest before carrying out a main survey.

Turnover intention. Turnover intention was operationalized as an employee's decision to leave an organization voluntarily (Dougherty *et al.*, 1985). According to Griffeth *et al.* (2000), turnover intention has been found to be the best predictor of actual turnover; that is, actual turnover is expected to increase as the intention increases. Prior research shows that turnover intention is a cognitive variable that has immediate causal effect on actual turnover behavior (Bedeian *et al.*, 1991). The current study used a six-item scale adopted from Shore and Martin (1989). Each item was assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Face validity was also checked in a pilot study before carrying out the main survey.

Brand preference. In this study, brand preference was operationalized as managers' overall preference for a "Big Six" casino brand relative to other casino brands. We adopted a four-item measure based on Sirgy *et al.* (1997), Yoo *et al.* (2000), and Jamal and Goode (2001). In the current study, we carefully revised the wording of each item, in order to better suit the context of the current research, and to make brand preference relevant to internal customers. Each item was assessed on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Face validity was also checked in a pilot study before main survey. The scale items used in this study are presented in Table II.

4. Results

4.1 Scale assessment

Bartlett's test of sphericity was conducted for each variable. The results show significance values (i.e. $p < 0.001$) and indicate the presence of non-zero correlation among the items. The overall measure of sampling adequacy was above the cut-off value of 0.5. These results clearly satisfy the fundamental requirements for exploratory factor analysis as put forth by Hair *et al.* (2006). Furthermore, all the estimates for average variance extracted (AVE) were > 0.50 while the primary factor loadings for each item were > 0.70 (see Tables II and III), in support of convergent validity. Moreover, the AVE for each construct was larger than the squared correlations between constructs and the secondary factor loadings for each item were < 0.40 , thereby satisfying the discriminant validity criterion (Eisingerich *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis was performed, and the results show that all the t -values of the items were significant.

Results from factor analysis revealed that the 11-item measure of perceived CSR initiatives can be reduced into two factors: CSR to society and CSR to stakeholders. Cronbach's α value for these two factors was satisfactory (0.92 and 0.90, respectively), and these values are in line to those reported by Turker (2009b). Reliabilities and variance extracted for brand preference ($\alpha = 0.88$, total variance = 70.512 percent) and turnover intention ($\alpha = 0.93$, total variance = 62.544 percent) were also satisfactory. Hence, we proceed and test the proposed relationships in the next section using multiple regression tests.

4.2 Results of hypotheses testing

Results indicate that the overall model for each regressed equation has a good fit with a highly significant F -value and satisfactory R^2 (between 0.289 and 0.497) and adjusted R^2 (between 0.287 and 0.494). All variance inflationary factor values of independent

Factors	Measurements	Factor loading	Eigen value	Cronbach's α
CSR to society	This casino supports non-governmental organizations working in problematic areas	0.72	1.08	0.92
	This casino contributes to campaigns and projects that promote the well-being of the society	0.79		
	This casino makes investment to create a better life for future generations	0.81		
	This casino targets sustainable growth which considers future generations	0.82		
CSR to stakeholders (employee only)	This casino supports employees who want to acquire additional education	0.88	1.14	0.90
	This casino's policies encourage the employees to develop their skills and careers	0.86		
	This casino concerns about employee benefits, protects privacy and promotes diversity, and there is no discrimination on its employees	0.83		
	This casino provides a healthy and safe working environment for employees	0.71		
	This casino complies with legal regulations completely and promptly	0.76		
	The management of this casino is primarily concerned with employees' needs and wants	0.84		
	The casino's managerial decisions related with the employees are usually fair	0.82		
Brand preference	I like this casino brand better than any other brand of casino	0.82	1.38	0.88
	This casino is my preferred brand over any other brand of casino	0.75		
	I feel that this casino's brand is appealing to me	0.88		
	In total I prefer this casino's brand	0.79		
Turnover intention	As soon as I can find a better job, I will quit at this casino	0.94	1.18	0.93
	I often think about quitting my job	0.86		
	In the following year I definitely will not leave the casino I am working for	0.82		
	I am presently looking and planning to leave	0.80		
	Given a completely free choice, I would choose to continue working with my current casino	0.92		
	It is of no importance at all whether I spend my career in this casino	0.85		

Table II.
Factor analysis and reliability test

	1	2	3	4
1. CSR to society	0.78			
2. CSR to stakeholders	0.48	0.53		
3. Brand preference	0.21	0.41	0.66	
4. Turnover intention	0.19	0.24	0.35	0.79

Table III.
Squared correlation and AVE

Notes: The squared correlation and AVE between constructs is provided off-diagonally. Constructs' average variance extracted (AVE) can be read diagonally

variables in this model were <3 ; therefore no significant multi collinearity problems exist. Multiple regression analyses were used to test the impact of perceptions associated with CSR initiatives and brand preference on turnover intention. The results show that the two CSR variables – CSR to stakeholders ($\beta = -0.44$, $p < 0.05$) and CSR to society ($\beta = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$) – produced significant effects on turnover intention; therefore, *H1* and *H2* are supported. Further, brand preference has a significantly negative effect on employee turnover intention ($\beta = -0.55$, $p < 0.001$); thus *H3* is also supported. The mediating effect of brand preference between perceptions associated with CSR initiatives and turnover intention was tested based on Baron and Kenny's (1986) method. The first step is to test the zero-order relationship between employees' perceptions of CSR initiatives and turnover intention. Then employees' perceptions of CSR initiatives should have a significant impact on brand preference. Afterwards, brand preference should significantly predict turnover intention. Finally, the relationship between employees' perceptions of CSR initiatives and turnover intention must shrink with the addition of brand preference to the regression model compared with the zero-order relation. In Table IV (*H4a* and *H4b*), the results show that all the β values for the two CSR variables decreased when brand preference was introduced in each regression equation (CSR to society decreased from -0.52 to -0.45 ; CSR to stakeholders decreased from -0.82 to -0.70). R^2 values increased with the influence of brand preference. Furthermore, the Sobel test proved the significant mediation effects (Sobel value = 5.214 for CSR to society; Sobel value = 6.246 for CSR to stakeholders). Therefore, the partial mediating effect of brand preference on the relationship between perceived CSR initiatives and turnover intention has been supported by the results from *H4a* and *H4b*. However, such mediations are partial which means that brand preference only partly counteracts the negative effects from CSR initiatives to turnover intention.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study verified the effect of two major CSR domains on brand preference and managers' turnover intention in the context of the gaming industry. The results suggest that firms can reduce managers' turnover intention by undertaking various CSR practices. According to Huselid (1995), it is important to reduce employee turnover because loss of human capital in firms is very costly and has dramatic negative effects on their competitive advantage. Management executives continue to suggest that employees are their most valuable asset and that a firm's ability to retain employees is a hallmark and signal of organizational success. More research should help understand

	Independent variable	Dependent variable	Standardized β	R^2 (adjusted R^2)	F-value
Step 1	CSR to society	Turnover intention	-0.52***	0.334 (0.332)	78.25***
Step 2	CSR to society	Brand preference	0.42**	0.289 (0.287)	61.82**
Step 3	CSR to society	Turnover intention	-0.45***	0.412 (0.410)	100.15***
	Brand preference		-0.51***		
Step 1	CSR to stakeholders	Turnover intention	-0.82***	0.358 (0.355)	83.46***
Step 2	CSR to stakeholders	Brand preference	0.71**	0.497 (0.494)	113.42**
Step 3	CSR to stakeholders	Turnover intention	-0.70***	0.442 (0.439)	70.48***
	Brand preference		-0.69***		

Notes: ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Table IV.
Mediating effect test

more fully why employees leave their current organizations and join new ones. This is particularly important in a controversial industry such as gaming. Casinos suffer high rates of employee (including manager) turnover for several reasons, among which is their negative image in the context of traditional Confucianism and Buddhism, which regard gambling as improper (Wong *et al.*, 2012; Hofstede and Bond, 1988). This study may contribute in some small way by answering important research questions such as why employees stay in organizations and to what extent CSR could reduce their intention to leave them.

Another contribution to the literature is that the study reveals the significant effect of the two CSR initiatives on brand preference and on managers' turnover intentions. There is an ongoing debate among marketing scholars as to which dimensions of CSR are most important (Rowley and Berman, 2000). Our findings reveal that CSR to stakeholders has a stronger influence on employees' turnover intention and brand preference than CSR to society. One possible reason might be that since casino managers are by definition stakeholders, CSR to stakeholders is more relevant – and therefore more valuable to them. Not surprisingly, managers regarded societally focussed CSR practices as less important. The findings are congruent with, and can better be explained by agency theory, according to which people place more emphasis on things that are relevant to them (Mobley, 1997; Shapiro, 2005).

Perhaps a more important finding of the current study is the mediating role of brand preference, specifically managers' preferences among the "Big Six" casinos in the study area. Casino employees are looked down upon by the general public or even their family members as contributing to the decline of traditional moral values. Such negative impression of casino employees is a major cause of high turnover (Wan and Kong, 2011). Diverging from prior studies, which predominantly explore the role of CSR on organization preference and fit, the current study assesses the role of manager preference for a brand in considering a turnover. From a theoretical perspective, this suggests that brand preference could be regarded from an employee perspective. Results from the study further reveal the importance of branding in retaining not only customers, but managers as well. The finding may offer a clue to further studies on social identity recognition and self-esteem compensation. In summary, this study extends the literature by introducing the branding concept into managing human resources and managerial sociology.

5.2 Managerial implications

The empirical results of the current study clearly indicate that managers could learn from internal customer opinions about their CSR practices. In the long run, this may help companies in retaining their best talent. The principal finding is that a company can become more preferable and can have a more positive influence on internal customers through CSR efforts and investments. CSR is moving rapidly from being a conceptual study into implementation and the evaluation of CSR initiatives at individual companies. In order to strengthen employees' preference to the company and decrease employees' turnover intention, as Porter and Kramer (2006) suggested, one method for a business is to embrace significant CSR commitment and implementation which should reflect a strong commitment to business ethics, improve internal customers' interests, and support the community's sustainable development (Kakabadse *et al.*, 2005).

To conclude, relatively more CSR attention needs to focus on improving stakeholders' interests. Between the two aspects of social responsibilities, CSR to stakeholders produced the stronger contribution of decreasing the level of turnover intention. CSR to

stakeholder activities can include safe workplace conditions, health care insurance, programs to support on-the-job learning, etc. (Peloza and Shang, 2011), i.e. benefits that stakeholders themselves may find particularly satisfying. While their impact on managers' turnover intention was not as strong, increased efforts of companies toward socially beneficial (i.e. CSR to society) activities also help reinforce employees' preference. For instance, support for education and contributions to civic events (e.g. music, festivals, sport events, etc.) still remain part of the managerial vocabulary when talking about societal responsibilities (Jamal and Al-Marri, 2007; Sääksjärvia and Samiee, 2011).

The concept of CSR – especially with respect to responsible gambling – has gained considerable support and media attention in Macau since the rapid expansion of the gaming industry (Wong *et al.*, 2012). Responsible gambling occurs in a regulated environment where the potential for harm associated with gambling (beyond financial loss) is minimized and people make informed decisions about their participation. Responsible gambling occurs as a result of the collective actions and shared ownership by individuals, communities, the gambling industry, and government to achieve outcomes that are socially acceptable and responsive to community concerns. In addition, about 60 percent of the visitors to these casinos are from mainland China. Chinese consumers tend to have increasing awareness and expectations about business obligations toward the broader society (Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009), so better perceptions associated with CSR initiatives will not only be recognized by both external and internal customers. A socially responsible brand, is likely to decrease managers' turnover intentions and increase Chinese consumers' preference for that brand.

A more important implication from the findings is the important mediating role of brand preference. The conventional linkage between CSR and commitment/turnover is relevant but insufficient in explaining how CSR could impact employees' and managers' decisions to stay or leave an organization. Social identification theory would suggest that working in morally controversial businesses such as casinos, employees, and managers alike face social pressure and are more likely to leave their jobs in the gaming industry if there are suitable alternatives. CSR plays a key role in reducing this tension; our findings suggest that brand equity may be important as well. Because the link between CSR and turnover is viewed through an HR lens, while the link between CSR and brand preference is seen through a marketing lens, this study suggests that organizations might gain by bridging the boundary between these functional units; an integrated system that links HR and marketing on a strategic level can make CSR initiatives more effective.

5.3 Limitations and future studies

As mentioned previously, there are various types of internal customers besides existing employees. This study only focussed on managers. Future studies may consider testing how perceptions associated with CSR initiatives would affect other stakeholders, including other kinds of internal customers. Several other factors associated with the implementation of CSR activities that extend beyond the realm of the current study could be considered, including shareholder, competitor, and supplier concerns.

This study analyzed how perceptions associated with CSR initiatives influence internal customers' turnover intention in the Macau gambling industry. The conclusions might be applied to other CSR programs in different industries by widening product/service categories in future studies (Liu and Brock, 2011). Future research could be carried out from a more generalist stand point and with a much larger sample size in

order to reduce correctional bias. It also could extend to different types of employees, such as part-time or contract workers. Many interesting issues remain unexplored in this area. Because branding strategy and CSR programs differ in their objectives, design, and execution across industries, future research might analyze the effectiveness of programs based on these attributes.

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Further reading

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