

# Predicting Intention to Participate in Socially Responsible Collective Action in Social Networking Website Groups

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## Abstract

The present study uses the belief-desire-intention (BDI) model to predict group members' intentions ("we-intention") to participate in using a social networking site (SNS) for collective action. Participants reported their beliefs about social influence processes, including their beliefs about subjective norms, group norms, and social identity; they also reported their beliefs about using an SNS for a charitable collective action, which was perceived as corporate social responsibility (CSR). The study applied an integrated research framework in the context of the Facebook group "KolorujeMY," a group with an interest in supporting social causes in Poland. Our structural equation modeling results indicate that social identity has a positive and direct effect on we-intention to use SNS for collective action and that perceived CSR also had a positive and significant impact on we-intention. Similarly, we found that desire has a positive and significant effect on we-intention to use SNS for collective action. Our results also indicate that desire partially mediates the relationship between social influence beliefs and we-intention. Overall, this study provides insight into the understanding of the impact of social influence processes, the role of desire, and perceived CSR beliefs in terms of predicting we-intentions in a social networking environment.

**Keywords:** We-Intention, Desire, Social Influence Theory, Collective Action, Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility, Social Networking Sites

Shuk Ying (Susanna) Ho was the accepting senior editor. This research article was submitted on October 27, 2016, and underwent three revisions.

## 1 Introduction

With the advent of social networking sites (SNS), and in particular, the rising popularity of emerging platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google Plus, and YouTube, it is now easier than ever to socially interact and communicate with friends and family members. The growth and popularity of SNS have created a new world of collaboration and communication (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011), which has also facilitated the formation of groups that, for example, allow people with similar

interests to share information and experiences and learn about current or upcoming events. Since SNS involvement depends heavily on forming relationships with other users within a network (Cheung & Lee, 2010), social networking sites provide an excellent context for interactions devoted to collective social action (Cheung et al., 2011; Cheung & Lee, 2010; Kende et al., 2016).

Previous research in information systems (IS) has mainly focused on individual usage intention (I-intention) (Davis, 1989; Shen et al., 2011; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Bagozzi (2007), for example, examined

autonomous individual decisions to purchase new technology commodities such as video cameras or hybrid-electric vehicles. Although previous studies have greatly broadened our knowledge of individuals' behavioral intentions, these models do not consider important group-related social processes; thus, certain knowledge gaps still remain (Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014).

Furthermore, the previously identified I-intention models may not be ideally suited for investigating the use of many Web 2.0 applications because multiple users often cooperate to engage in specific behaviors. Among other things, SNS technologies facilitate joint efforts and interdependence among user groups (Li, Chua, & Lu, 2005) to achieve the goals endorsed by a group. Predicting the behaviors of SNS group members may be different from predicting independent individual behaviors; the values and norms of collective actions may become highly relevant motivating factors and individuals may take specific actions as a coordinated effort. In addition, social networking sites offer a platform that can connect collective actions among socially conscious users with business organizations that may want to promote their socially responsible actions on SNS. The rapid growth of SNS popularity creates a natural environment for such organization-member cooperation.

People united around a thematic group or virtual community—whether it be a Facebook fan page, YouTube channel, or another social media tool—offer an interesting audience for marketers and researchers interested in behavioral intentions. Such prospective customers typically gather around common interests, often sharing the same norms, values, beliefs, and patterns of behavior. Therefore, SNS should be of special interest to investigators who are interested in predicting socially responsible behavior within a group context. To summarize, the confluence of several factors, including (1) a sharp increase in the adaptation of internet-based SNS platforms, (2) an interest in social causes on behalf of both SNS members and organizations, and (3) an interest among those who join cause-related groups in voluntarily participating in collective action, makes the study of social responsibility in the context of SNS an area worthy of attention, especially because there has been little previous investigation in this area.

The present study investigates individuals' intentions to participate in collective action endorsed by a group, i.e., *we-intention*. Although behavioral intentions are always individual-level constructs, we-intentions are uniquely characterized by an individual's commitment to participate in a group-sanctioned activity, often for the purpose of achieving a group goal. Relatively few IS studies have investigated we-intentions, although a few IS research studies have considered we-intentions in the context of the intention to use online SNS

(Cheung et al., 2011) and participate in virtual communities (Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014).

The objective of the present study is to assess the motives of individual group members to perform collectively, taking into account their beliefs regarding the interests of their SNS groups. This study thus incorporates tenets of social influence theory in conjunction with the we-intention to use SNS for collective action. It is important to assess the effect of different social influence processes as well as the mediating effect of desire on we-intentions. Finally, the present study also incorporates the construct of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a causal and mediating variable, investigating its effect on the we-intention to use SNS for a specific, charitable purpose.

## 2 Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1 We-Intention

The overarching framework for the present investigation is Bratman's (1987) belief-desire-intention (BDI) model. If beliefs and desires predict intentions, then it is important to consider the nature of intentions generally and of we-intentions specifically. A behavioral intention is a determination to engage in a specific, typically goal-related activity. Studies in the field of philosophy have pioneered the conceptual and logical foundations of we-intention (Bratman, 1987; Tuomela, 1995, 2005; Tuomela & Miller, 1988). However, while we-intention has been discussed, debated, and explained by prior research conceptually (Brännback, Carsrud, & Krueger, 2018; Bratman, 1987, 2009; Hindriks, 2011; Petersson, 2015; Searle, 1990, 1995, 2010; Tuomela, 1995, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2013; Tuomela & Miller, 1985, 1988), only a handful of studies have articulated and operationalized the perception of we-intention in various contexts (Bagozzi, Gaur, & Tiwari, 2018; Morschheuser et al., 2017; Shen et al., 2011; Shen et al., 2007; Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014).

There are two distinct and subtle variants of we-intentions, characterized by Bagozzi et al. (2018) as: (1) an intention to perform a group act—i.e., “a commitment of an individual to participate in joint action involve[ing] an implicit or explicit agreement between the participants to engage in that joint action” Tuomela (1995); (2) a communal or collective intention rooted in a person's self-conception as a member of a particular group or a social category—i.e., a group action in which the actors act as agents of the group or category (Bagozzi et al., 2018). In essence, the we-intention is obviously collaborative or coactive. We-intentions can be expressed as: “I intend that our group performs group activity X” or “we will

do X together (with X indicating a joint action)” (Tuomela, 1995, 2005). Bagozzi (2007) elaborates that we-intention reflects “a collective intention rooted in a one’s self-conception as a member of a particular organization ... and action is conceived as either the group acting or the person acting as an agent of, or with, the group” (p. 248).

Tuomela (1995) has highlighted several characteristics of we-intention (See also Cheung et al., 2011; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). First, two or more members of a group typically agree that a specific joint action will produce results that are beneficial for the group. Second, members usually believe that opportunities exist for the joint action to be performed. Third, each member agrees to do his or her own part to contribute to the group action; this may or may not be identical to what others in the group do. When these characteristics are present, then a member can act as an agent of the focal group’s we-intention (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002).

We-intentions are often associated with terms such as collective intentionality, joint action, shared intentions, collective actions, and so forth. These associations are based purely on the existence of human cooperation institutionalized in human social life and, to a certain extent, the nature of social reality itself (Gilbert, 1996; Searle, 1995; Tomasello, 1999; Tuomela, 2007). The collective effort or intentionality of we-intention is built on individuals’ cooperative acts or roles, and, as Searle (1990, 1995, 2010) argues, “intentionality”, whether collective or individual, exists within the minds of individuals. Thus, taking Searle’s argument into account, we argue that we-intention is primarily derived from the mental state of the individual. The we-intention phenomenon in this regard is basically rooted in mental activities—e.g., believing, desiring, imagining, remembering, pretending, fearing, etc. (Wilson, 2017). This explanation, however, is quite difficult to operationalize because it necessitates looking for certain types of mental states inside the minds of group members or participants. As Searle (1990) also argues, we-intentions cannot be reduced to I-intentions because “the notion of a we-intention, of collective intentionality, implies the notion of cooperation.”

In contrast to we-intentions, I-intentions involve individuals independently determining actions without consideration of group goals. The traditional I-intention concept may not adequately explain group-oriented behaviors involving collaborative technologies (Shen et al., 2007). Especially when using SNS platforms, I-intentions may potentially overlook behavior within a group in which members’ collective commitment is fundamentally important. Bagozzi and Lee (2002) explain that I-intention predicts individual-level autonomous behaviors based on independent personal factors, whereas we-intention predicts

behavior that is undertaken as part of a social representation in performing a group act. Tuomela (2007) further observes that the we-perspective can involve individuals acting both as group members and as private persons supporting the group. However, these individuals share and work toward a common goal, using we-intentions to jointly participate in a set of mutually agreed-upon actions (Tuomela & Miller, 1985). In other words, we-intention describes a group of individuals seeking to participate in joint actions for the good of the group. We-intentioned individuals function as group members, whereas in the I-intention scenario, individuals function as private persons (Tuomela, 2006). Moreover, “we-as-a-group” signifies a sense of “we,” in which the intentional subject is we-intentioned and the ontological subject of that we-intention is a single agent (Tuomela, 2006). In this case, “you” and “I” form a group as “we,” and “we” can act as a group in order to jointly undertake a task or act together for a social purpose.

We-intention is not, however, identical to group decision support systems (GDSS) (Barlow & Dennis, 2016; Desanctis & Gallupe, 1987; Dickson, Partridge, & Robinson, 1993; Gopal & Prasad, 2000; Jessup, Connolly, & Galegher, 1990; Rao & Jarvenpaa, 1991; Sambamurthy & Chin, 1994; Sambamurthy & Poole, 1992; Watson, DeSanctis, & Poole, 1988) in terms of group decision-making. GDSS are relevant to technical features, group-decision evaluations, and problem-solving effectiveness, but may not be as applicable to the context of social networking sites. Thus, we-intention to use SNS for collective action may be a more appropriate lens for evaluating individuals’ voluntary decision-making regarding participation in socially responsible group activities.

We-intention highlights individuals’ commitment to group activities, and many social networking sites stress common goals and actions. We-intentions can be explained in terms of group members’ goals. Generally, when more than one individual shares an intention, there must be some goal to pursue (O’Flynn, 2017) that can only be accomplished if individuals jointly commit themselves to a mutual endeavor. According to Gallagher and Tollefsen (2017), when a group of individuals jointly reflect on their actions and shared goals and intentions, they are likely to engage in communicative practices, which can create a sense of duty among members to commit to the group and foster collective group identity (O’Flynn, 2017).

Based on the discussion above, we-intention is an appropriate concept for understanding collaborative activity within SNS. This study focuses specifically on the members of an SNS Facebook group called “KolorujeMY,” which encourages charitable and socially responsible activities among sports fans and soccer players. As will be further discussed below, KolorujeMY advocates for charitable activities and

encourages cooperative, socially responsible activities that allow soccer players and fans to jointly pursue common group goals through CSR activities, which can facilitate a more permanent shared environment, or *culture*. Players and fans who voluntarily become part of this group, tend to share the goals, values, and beliefs of the group, and are likely to act in the “we-mode” by participating in CSR activities that bind individuals together to engage in united actions and produces joint outcomes (Tuomela, 2013). Members of such groups often have mutual and shared beliefs that may form the context for collective action (Tuomela, 2002), and each member’s intention to participate in group activities reflects a we-intention because the individual members regard themselves as part of the group (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). In summary, our study demonstrates that we-intention is a socially shared rather than individual-level variable; this definition is based on arguments derived from studies by Tuomela (1995, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2013) and Tuomela and Miller (1985, 1988) and operationalized using the work of Bagozzi et al. (2018) and Tsai and Bagozzi (2014).

## 2.2 Belief-Desire-Intention Model

Bratman’s (1987) BDI model explains behavioral intentions. The BDI model is often categorized as an agent-based model: Agents make decisions that reflect their cognitive *beliefs* about the environment and other agents’ intentions, both inside and outside of a group. According to Elsenbroich (2014), actions are typically considered in terms of what the most beneficial options for the agent and/or the group would be. The BDI model also incorporates *desire*, which represents an agent’s motivational level to engage in a behavior or accomplish a goal. Thus, the cognitive reasons for acting are turned into a motivation to act (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Finally, *intention* is a cognitive “subjective probability that [the person] will perform the behavior in question,” reflecting a preliminary commitment to a course of action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 12). An actor whose beliefs lead to a strong desire for an outcome forms an intention to act according to these desires (Malle & Knobe, 1997).

One central concept in the BDI model is action desire, e.g., the motivational stimulus needed to transform prior beliefs into an intention to act (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Empirical research supports this perspective and indicates that “implementation desires” mediate belief-behavioral intention relationships (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001; Shen et al., 2011). Specifically, an “action desire” is an important mediator between beliefs and behavioral intention (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001, 2004). Because the BDI model comes from the fields of philosophy and cognitive psychology, there has been little

investigation of this model within the IS field. However, Shen et al. (2011) used an integrated BDI and social influence model to investigate instant messaging in team collaboration, and BDI also provides a theoretical foundation for some artificial intelligence research in IS (Hawes, 2011). Tsai and Bagozzi (2014) show that desire mediates the effects of beliefs on intention to participate in virtual communities and also argue that, compared to beliefs, desire is a more direct determinant of intention to participate. They suggest that the BDI model predicts participation in virtual communities. Thus, the model seems applicable in the present study.

Numerous attributes distinguish desire from intention, among them action-connectedness, perceived performability, and temporal framing (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004). Relative to desires, intentions reflect a commitment to undertake specific actions (“action-connectedness”) that tend to be realistic, goal-oriented, and achievable (“performable”). Further, intention-based actions are typically planned for the near future, often by a specific deadline (“temporal framing”). Finally, intentions generally lead to the creation of detailed plans regarding the implementation of desired behaviors to achieve specific goals. In contrast, desires lack these qualities and usually involve more abstract expressions of one’s wishes. Nevertheless, desires are important as precursors to intentions (Bagozzi, 1992; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004) and as a mediating factor between beliefs and intentions.

## 2.3 Social Influence Theory

Kelman (1958) formulated a theory of *social influence*, whereby others affect individuals’ attitudes and/or behaviors. He identified three different influence processes. The first, *compliance*, occurs when a person responds to attempts to influence, “not because he believes in its content but because he expects to gain specific rewards or approval and avoid specific punishments or disapproval by conforming” (p. 53). The second, *internalization*, occurs when the person finds the goals or content of the desired behavior (or its associated attitudes or beliefs) to be “congruent with his value system” (p. 53) and to be intrinsically rewarding; the person integrates the new behavior with his or her value system. The third, *identification*, occurs when a person’s willingness to accept influence is motivated by a desire “to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or a group.... The individual actually believes in the responses which he adopts.... He adopts the induced behavior because it is associated with the desired relationship” (p. 53).

Bagozzi and Lee (2002) apply Kelman’s theory to group-level social influence processes: They conceptualize (and operationalize) “compliance”-related beliefs in terms of *subjective norms* (beliefs

about the behavioral expectations of important others. They view (Shen et al., 2011) “internalization” as *group norms* regarding shared goals (having overlapping, common goals with group members), and “identification” as *social identity* (a sense of belonging to a group based on feelings of attachment, overlapping values, and importance to the group [Tajfel, 1978]). Bagozzi and Lee (2002) report that social identity, group norm beliefs, and subjective norm beliefs predict we-intentions. Research in IS has demonstrated that these social influence beliefs play an important role in influencing information technology (IT)-related user behavior (Cheung & Lee, 2009; Lee et al., 2006). The importance of social influence beliefs in the context of IT acceptance and usage behavior is also discussed by Davis (1989). Social influence beliefs may also explain the role of we-intention to use SNS for collective action. Each of these social influence factors will now be considered in further detail.

### 2.3.1 Subjective Norms

Subjective norms refer to beliefs about the expectations of important others; these beliefs influence decisions because individuals often seek the approval of other people (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Compliance may arise because of the presence of surveillance by the influencing agent (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) or the psychological awareness that certain behaviors will receive approval from significant others (Shen et al., 2011). Thus, subjective norm beliefs are used in a general sense as the psychological impact of others whose opinions and behavioral expectations are relevant to a particular person (Ajzen, 1991). For an individual, these “other people” could be community members or representatives of an important reference group (e.g., family, friends). Subjective norm beliefs have been shown to relate to both I-intentions and we-intentions (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1a:** Subjective norms have a positive impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

### 2.3.2 Group Norms

Internalization occurs when an individual accepts the influence of the content of the goals or behavior (Kelman, 1958); this occurs because the individual holds the same values as other group members (Dholakia et al., 2004). In this regard, group norms can represent agreement among the members about shared values and goals (Turner, 1991). Eagly and Chaiken (1993) elaborate that these values and goals often include cognitive beliefs, affective attitudes, and abstract moral rules arranged in a knowledge structure (schema).

For a member of a group, group norm beliefs derive, to a large extent, from information communicated among members. However, these beliefs also have the personal meaning that each member ascribes to that information. A strong group norm does not necessarily explicitly create agreement among members concerning exactly how and when to involve members in specific group activities; rather, it may promote implicit consensus about the level of engagement and participation (Dholakia et al., 2004). To the extent that a member’s goals and values are linked with those of other members of the SNS group, then beliefs about group-endorsed behaviors may contribute to a desire to behave according to a group norm. Based on this line of reasoning, a member’s values and goals align with those of other members of an SNS group to participate in collective action. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

**H1b:** Group norms have a positive impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

### 2.3.3 Social Identity

Social identity refers to a person deriving a part of his or her self-concept from belonging to a particular social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Identification occurs when individuals accept influence because they want to maintain satisfying, self-defining relationships with the group (Kelman, 1958). Identification can be operationalized through the concept of social identity. According to Tajfel (1978, p. 63), social identity is “a part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.”

Social identity captures the facets of a member’s identification with a group, such as an interest group on an SNS platform. Members usually believe that they share the same principles or defining attributes and hence may see themselves as interchangeable representatives of the group, as opposed to emphasizing their interests as unique individuals (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005). This psychological state confers a collective representation for the individual who is a member of the group; it often involves cognitive, affective, and evaluative components (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999).

Social identity is an element in cognitive categorization processes. For example, the individual forms self-awareness as a member of a virtual community. The member considers elements of similarity with other members, as well as dissimilarities with nonmembers, heightening the social identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Like other

subjective and group norms, social identity provides a set of beliefs for the BDI model.

Affective social identity includes feelings of attachment and belongingness. Hence, social identity may include affective commitment to the group, described as, “identification with, involvement in, and emotional attachment to” the focal group or organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 253). In brand communities (e.g., automobile clubs), researchers note that members report feelings of “kinship between members” as well as the development of affective relationships between consumers and brands (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005). Through the identification processes, an individual can develop a desire to maintain a self-defining relationship (Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014); this may generalize to activist SNS groups.

Finally, a positive or negative value connotation may be attached to group membership; this may be seen as the evaluative component of social identity (Ellemers et al., 1999). It arises from values pertaining to self-worth coming from membership in the group (e.g., “My religious group is superior because we support each other as well as charitable mission work”). This evaluative element is described in some research as “group-based self-esteem” (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002) or “collective self-esteem” (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Evaluative social identity supports actions that develop in-group welfare (Ellemers et al., 1999).

Taken together, these cognitive, affective, and evaluative processes contribute to one’s social identity. Through these three identification processes, an individual cognitively accepts group membership, develops an attachment for the group, and derives self-worth from embracing the values of the group. Social identity may play a significant factor in a person’s behavioral desires: Bagozzi and Dholakia (2002) show that social identity factors predict desire and intention to participate in a virtual community. These can be easily applied to activist and charitable groups within online communities. Thus, an individual may develop behavioral desires in order to keep a positive, self-defining relationship with other group members and maintain his or her social identity. Consistent with Tsai and Bagozzi (2014), the present study models social identity as a second-order construct that comprises combined variance of the three components. By doing so, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H1c:** Social identity has a positive impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

## 2.4 Desire

Desire is defined as “a state of mind whereby an agent has a personal motivation to perform an action or to achieve a goal” (Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004, p. 71). This

definition implies that desire is an important impetus for attaining individuals’ actions and plays a key role in goal-directed behaviors, although it is less specific and concrete than behavioral intentions (Perugini & Conner, 2000). Also, desire represents a state of mind in which reasons to act (beliefs) are transformed into a motivation to act (Perugini & Conner, 2000). Desire typically leads to an intention to act, either individually (I-intention) or as part of a group (we-intention) (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2004). Therefore, desire is necessary for the development of behavioral intentions.

### 2.4.1 The Mediating Effect of Desire

The BDI model suggests that desire mediates belief-intention relations for a variety of types of beliefs (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Shen et al., 2011). Social influence beliefs emphasizing conformity are formulated through subjective norm beliefs in numerous studies (e.g., Jin & Kang, 2011). Generally, scholars believe that individuals accept social influence to conform to the expected norms of people important to them because individuals expect positive reactions from those important others. While this explanation accounts for some aspects of conformity, it does not include the required incentives to perform. “Desire” to conform is also necessary for subjective norm beliefs to translate into intended behaviors. For example, Shen et al. (2011) propose that desire (motivation) should mediate the relationship between (1) subjective norms, (2) group norms, and (3) social identity and intention to engage in collective action (e.g., by using instant messaging). We anticipate similar effects when considering the role of “desire” on the collective social intention to use SNS for a collective purpose. Thus, we propose:

**H2a:** The effect of subjective norms on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by desire.

In Shen et al.’s study (2011), a group norm emerges when members embrace group-espoused values, goals, or behaviors. Members may even internalize the group’s values (Kelman, 1958). Participants using an SNS group for a collective charitable activity share mutual objectives. Nonetheless, a group norm does not include incentives to act. In line with preceding studies (Dholakia et al., 2004; Shen et al., 2011), the effect of a group norm on we-intention to use SNS for collective action may be mediated by individuals’ desires. For this reason, we propose:

**H2b:** The effect of group norms on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by desire.

Social identity refers to one’s perception of self in terms of the relationship to distinct groups (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002). Being a part of a group (and not being a part of another group) helps many individuals maintain

their self-identity. Moreover, desire is posited to change social identity into an incentive to engage in behaviors consistent with that identity. People who experience satisfying interactions with other members of their group may be more motivated to get involved in specific behavior if the group defines this as an appropriate activity. We thus propose:

**H2c:** The effect of social identity on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by desire.

## **2.4.2 The Direct Effect of Desire**

In accordance with the belief-desire-intention model, desire transforms cognitive beliefs (e.g., the reasons to act) into a motivation to perform, leading to behavioral intentions (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Dholakia et al., 2004; Perugini & Bagozzi, 2001). Tsai and Bagozzi (2014) suggest that, relative to beliefs, desire is a direct antecedent to intentions. From this perspective, it can be assumed that if people are aware of and accept their desires to use an SNS for collective action (e.g., working together for a charitable cause), they will develop a we-intention to do so—especially if they are already part of a related social group. Therefore, we propose:

**H3:** Desire has a positive impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

## **2.5 Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility**

### **2.5.1 The Direct Effect of Perceived CSR**

Perceived corporate social responsibility refers to stakeholders' beliefs regarding an organization's activities pertaining to its ethical, environmental, and social obligations (Brown & Dacin, 1997). Corporate social responsibility, first proposed by Bowen (1953), has been further developed by Carroll (1979, p. 500) as a construct that "encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations." Carroll emphasizes that this responsibility is performed to benefit society and not merely to benefit an organization; therefore, organizational leaders should consider social implications when making decisions (Carroll, 1999). This suggests that CSR is an important concept for evaluating a variety of types of organizations and their perceived attributes. Moreover, CSR can also include the activities of nonprofit organizations, activist groups, or even friendship groups on behalf of social and ethical causes. In the present study, the term "corporate social responsibility" is used in this broad sense.

CSR is multifaceted; Dahlsrud (2008) proposes five dimensions: environmental, social, economic, stakeholder, and voluntariness. The environmental

dimension discusses the natural environment while the social dimension describes the relationship between organizations and society. The economic dimension refers to financial aspects. The stakeholder aspect reflects interactions with interest groups and voluntariness considers actions not prescribed by law. Dahlsrud (2008) further suggests that a significant challenge is in understanding how CSR is socially constructed in specific circumstances for specific types of organizations. Due to the increased popularity of CSR, many types of organizations have adopted social causes. Philanthropy, environmental policies, and cause-related marketing are but a few examples of socially responsible actions. Irrespective of the form, CSR activities are often intended to highlight an image of an organization that is responsive to society's needs (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006).

While CSR is not typically considered in the same context as social networking sites, SNS groups may be a fruitful place to explore CSR beliefs. First, SNS may, by definition, attract a demographic (e.g., younger citizens) that is concerned about CSR. Second, certain SNS, by their name or stated purpose, may exist to promote socially responsible activities. Third, the SNS may be sponsored by an organization (e.g., a for-profit company) that also promotes certain socially responsible causes. Finally, there may be links to external organizations where members can "like" or otherwise support the organization; in return for such online support, the external organization may reciprocate by making a monetary donation to a socially-responsible charity or cause; thus, CSR is relevant to SNS. Further, specific activities may be seen as socially responsible; whether SNS group members see an activity as socially responsible may influence their intention to support or participate in that activity. This logic may extrapolate to many types of activities and online groups: the charitable activities of business organizations, trade groups, or Facebook-type interest groups might be seen as socially responsible, eliciting positive affect from prospective customers and casual visitors to the groups' websites.

Based on the above discussion, the study investigates perceived CSR when a Facebook-type SNS group encourages members to participate in a set of charitable activities. However, service activities are based on voluntary participation in socially responsible actions. In this study, for example, consider a soccer SNS, with numerous soccer clubs listed as sponsors of the site. If the site also sponsors a charity and asks the fans to contribute money (perhaps offering matching donations) or to take other collective action (e.g., volunteering for the charity or publicizing the charity at soccer matches), then fans may interpret the solicitations in one of two ways. They may believe that the sponsorship and associated collective-action requests are appropriate and worthwhile CSR

activities; alternatively, they may regard the sponsors' involvement and requests as just another form of organizational self-promotion. If the latter, then fans may react cynically, and they will not engage in the desired action. This is consistent with writings of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

**H4:** The degree to which a requested action is perceived as high in CSR has a positive impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

### 2.5.2 The Mediating Effect of Perceived CSR

According to Etzioni (1998), communities form based on shared beliefs, history, and identity. Further, many groups perceive themselves in positive terms, and numerous groups endorse charitable activities. Benevolent, collective CSR-related behaviors that are seen as consistent with one's group membership may be more readily embraced than other behaviors. Individuals often choose activities corresponding to their social identities and also support organizations representing those identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Thus, whether a collective action is perceived to be CSR-related may partially mediate the social identity/we-intention relationship.

Moreover, both group norms and subjective norms shape members' perceptions of the attractiveness of

certain behaviors. Researchers suggest that both employees and prospective customers pay attention to an organization's values as well as to the socially conscious activities of those organizations (Brammer & Millington, 2003). Certain collective behaviors may be seen as socially responsible and consistent with both group norms and subjective norms. Such behaviors may be readily endorsed. They may also reinforce the attractiveness of the group, subsequently enhancing shared group norms and the larger organizational culture (Treviño, Butterfield, & McCabe, 1998; Treviño & Nelson, 2010; Turban & Greening, 1997). We anticipate similar, complementary dynamics for both group norms and subjective norms when the behaviors relate to a social networking site's support for a charity. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**H5a:** The effect of subjective norms on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by perceived CSR.

**H5b:** The effect of group norms on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by perceived CSR.

**H5c:** The effect of social identity on we-intention to use SNS for collective action is mediated by perceived CSR.

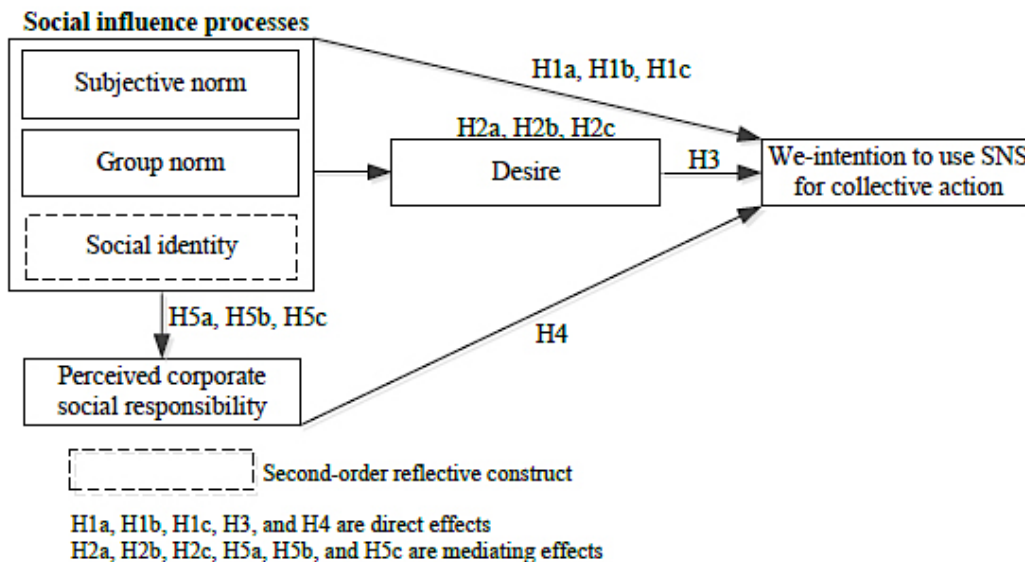


Figure 1. The Research Framework



### 3 Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Conceptual Research Framework

The conceptual framework demonstrates six constructs and proposed relationships among them. There are three independent variables: subjective norms, group norms, and social identity; two mediators (desire and perceived corporate social responsibility); and one dependent construct labeled, “we-intention to use SNS for a collective action.” The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

#### 3.2 Description of Sample

The prospective respondents for this research were the members of a Polish soccer fan group, who were also members of a related site on Facebook that supported numerous charities and nonprofit organizations. This group was a joint initiative of Polish soccer supporters and the soccer clubs who wanted to achieve charitable and socially responsible goals. On the Facebook page, there was a link to a page called “KolorujeMY” (“Let’s color”—a group devoted to renovating orphanages by, for example, painting rooms in bright colors). Contact with soccer fans gave KolorujeMY access to the resources necessary to perform charitable activities. This provided an appropriate site for our research because the common goal of the group had the capacity to stimulate intention to act in the interests of the whole group, with which its members identified and shared values. We received 414 surveys from members of this group.

#### 3.3 Construct Measurement

**Dependent variable: we-intention.** To measure we-intention, we adopted questionnaire items from previous studies (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Cheung et al., 2011; Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014). To more completely measure the construct, we added additional questionnaire items by framing the conceptual ideas from prior research (Tuomela, 1995, 2005). Together, this set of items measured the extent to which respondents agreed that, as part of a group, they collectively committed themselves to participate in any of the numerous joint activities supporting an online SNS, the KolorujeMy Facebook initiative, over the following two weeks. Note that we-intention focused on individuals acting together to participate in joint charitable action. Specifically, we-intention was applicable in the context of this study where the participants committed themselves to participate in any of the numerous joint activities to support the activities for the KolorujeMY group. This commitment might lead to any of several behaviors: “liking” the KolorujeMY charity online (and thereby raising donations from the soccer clubs and/or corporate sponsors), contributing their own money to the charity,

publicizing the charity, and/or volunteering their time to the charity (e.g., painting and refurbishing orphanages).

**Independent variables.** *Subjective norms* were measured using questionnaire items adopted from previous studies (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Cheung & Lee, 2010; Taylor & Todd, 1995). Note that subjective norms are operationalized based on a social influence process, namely compliance expectations from significant others. *Group norms* were measured with questionnaire items adopted from prior research (Cheung & Lee, 2010; Dholakia et al., 2004). We operationalized group norm beliefs with regard to the social influence process of internalization, measuring the decisions pertaining to the congruence of one’s values with the values of another; group norms measure the degree of the shared goals between the self and each of the group members. For *social identity*, we adopted questionnaire items from previous studies (Bagozzi & Lee, 2002; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Shen et al., 2007; Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014; Zhou, 2011). Social identity is based on identification, which was measured by a sense of belonging to the online KolorujeMY Facebook page, meaning that members regarded themselves to be part of the online community. We operationalized social identity in a manner consistent with Tsai and Bagozzi (2014), where social identity was treated as a second-order construct, combining three identification components: affective, evaluative, and cognitive identity. *Desire* was measured using questionnaire items from prior research (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Perugini & Conner, 2000; Tsai & Bagozzi, 2014). Finally, *perceived CSR* was measured by adopting three questionnaire items from Brown and Dacin (1997). Where necessary, scale items were adjusted to fit the context of the present study.

**Control Variables.** Because of personal (e.g., financial) or external constraints, it is often not clear whether behaviors can actually be implemented. Thus, in addition to the BDI variables identified above, *perceived behavioral control* (PBC) may be an important determinant of intentions (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, the study incorporated a 5-item measure of PBC from prior research (Ajzen, 2002). Additionally, age, education level, and gender of the respondents were tested as control variables (these last three variables were nonsignificant and are therefore only reported descriptively in this paper). All of these items can be found in the Appendix.

#### 3.4 Procedure

A preliminary version of the questionnaire was pretested in order to check the psychometric adequacy of the scales. Based on the acceptable factor loadings and reliability test results, we proceeded to make the questionnaire available to the participants of the final

study. Because the study focused on Polish soccer supporters in an online (Facebook) fan group, the questionnaire was translated into Polish. Online-based questionnaires were used for data collection process; Facebook group members could access the survey via a web link on the fan page. As mentioned above, persons authorized to participate in the survey were Polish soccer fans who were supporters of a nonprofit-oriented Facebook fan page, indicated by their previously “liking” of that page. The data collection process lasted approximately five weeks.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Our dataset includes a total of 414 respondents. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the sample. All of the respondents were Polish. The majority of the study participants were men (79%), and most were young: 54% were less than 25 years old, roughly 34% were between 25-34, approximately 12% were older than 34 years old. At the time of data collection, about 19% of the participants had not completed high school, 36% had graduated from high school, 20% held a bachelor’s degree, and 25% had a master’s degree.

### 4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed using AMOS to test whether the measured variables

characterized the smaller number of constructs, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about the adequacy of each scale. Commonly employed in conjunction with structural equation modeling (SEM), CFA specifies the number of factors that exist within a set of variables, facilitating tests of each scale’s construct validity (Hair et al., 2010). To perform CFA, the goodness-of-fit of the measurement model must verify the internal consistency of the factors after refining the initial scales (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Lu, Lai, & Cheng, 2007). We followed the criteria set by prior research (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2010; Lu et al., 2007). That is, the standard factor loadings and composite reliability should be set to 0.70 while the variance extracted should be equal or higher than 0.50. Table 2 shows that all of the criteria were fulfilled. We also performed the second-order CFA for social identity based on the recommendation of Koufteros, Babbar, and Kaighobadi (2009) by assessing the three factors of cognitive, affective and evaluative social identity. Furthermore, the overall measurement model fit was assessed based on the determinations of prior research (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2010; Lu et al., 2007). The results are as follows:  $\chi^2/df(644.823/296) = 2.178$ , GFI = 0.889, AGFI = 0.858, RMR = 0.059, RMSEA = 0.053,  $p < 0.01$ . These results indicated that the measurement model was acceptable for further analysis. Finally, the Pearson correlations among the variables are presented in Table 3.

**Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents (N = 414)**

Attribute	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Nationality	Polish	414	100%
Gender	Male	327	79.0%
	Female	87	21.0%
Age	17 or under	57	13.8%
	18-24	167	40.3%
	25-34	143	34.5%
	35-44	35	8.5%
	45-54	10	2.4%
	55 and above	2	0.5%
Educational background	Did not complete high school	79	19.1%
	High school	148	35.7%
	Bachelor’s degree	84	20.3%
	Master’s degree	103	24.9%

**Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results**

Constructs	Items	Standard loadings	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Subjective norm	SN1	0.919	0.941	0.696
	SN2	0.814		
	SN3	0.934		
Group norm	GN1	0.902	0.838	0.722
	GN2	0.794		
Social identity	CSI	0.954	0.899	0.751
	ASI	0.922		
	ESI	0.791		
Desire	DE1	0.858	0.914	0.779
	DE2	0.891		
	DE3	0.899		
Perceived CSR	CSR1	0.837	0.867	0.685
	CSR2	0.801		
	CSR3	0.844		
We-intention	WE1	0.901	0.941	0.696
	WE2	0.845		
	WE3	0.859		
	WE4	0.764		
	WE5	0.804		
	WE6	0.803		
	WE7	0.848		

*A regression weight was fixed at 1.000.*

**Table 3. Correlation Matrix among Research Variables**

Variables	Mean	Standard deviation	Subjective norm	Group norm	Social identity	Desire	Perceived CSR	We-intention
Subjective norm	4.146	1.346	1.000					
Group norm	4.878	1.144	0.618**	1.000				
Social identity	4.531	1.054	0.722**	0.670**	1.000			
Desire	4.654	1.190	0.613**	0.603**	0.759**	1.000		
Perceived CSR	5.534	0.877	0.594**	0.541**	0.662**	0.629**	1.000	
We-intention	5.000	1.092	0.636**	0.639**	0.778**	0.833**	0.658**	1.000

*Note: \*\*correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

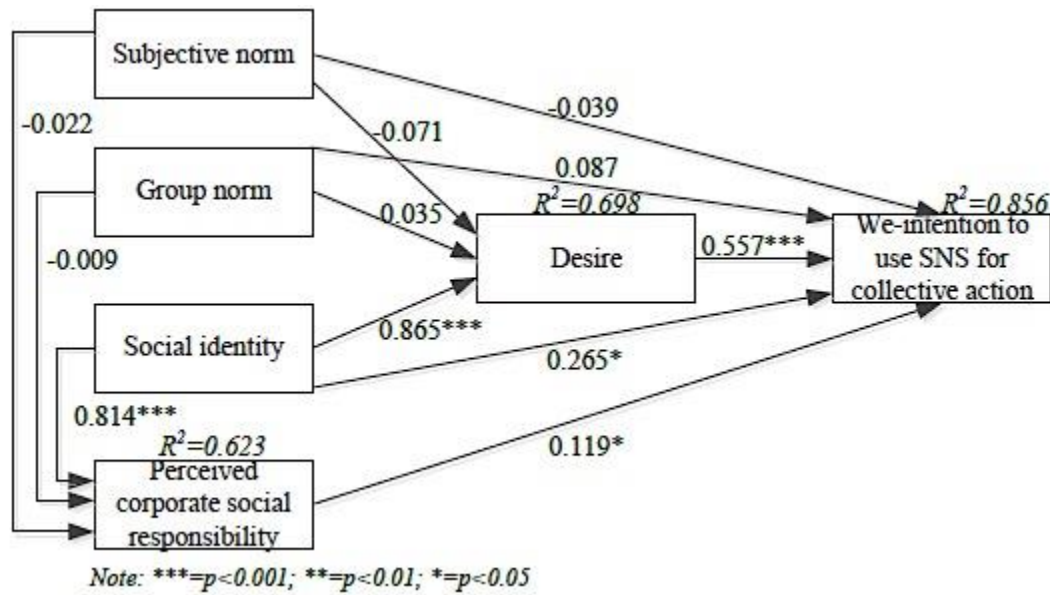


Figure 2. SEM Overall Results

Table 4. Standardized Path Coefficients of the Structural Model

Hypothesis	Standard coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value	Model fit statistics
Hypothesis 1a: Subjective norms → We-intention	-0.039	0.046	-0.739	0.460	$\chi^2/df$ (671.294/299) = 2.245; $p$ = 0.000; GFI = 0.885; AGFI = 0.855; NFI = 0.940; CFI = 0.966; RMR = 0.059; RMSEA = 0.055
Hypothesis 1b: Group norms → We-intention	0.087	0.055	1.633	0.103	
Hypothesis 1c: Social identity → We-intention	0.256*	0.122	2.316	0.021	
Hypothesis 3: Desire → We-intention	0.557***	0.064	8.999	0.000	
Hypothesis 4: Perceived CSR → We-intention	0.119*	0.071	2.275	0.023	

Notes: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$

Table 5. Mediating Effects Results

Hypothesis	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Result	Conclusion
H2a: Subjective norms → Desire → We-intention	0.159**	0.515***	Partial mediation	Supported
H2b: Group norms → Desire → We-intention	0.203**	0.513***	Partial mediation	Supported
H2c: Social identity → Desire → We-intention	0.342***	0.502***	Partial mediation	Supported
H5a: Subjective norms → Perceived CSR → We-intention	0.347**	0.327***	Partial mediation	Supported
H5b: Group norms → Perceived CSR → We-intention	0.419**	0.299***	Partial mediation	Supported
H5c: Social identity → Perceived CSR → We-intention	0.671**	0.171**	Partial mediation	Supported

Notes: \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$

### 4.3 Structural Equation Modeling

According to Gerbing and Anderson (1988) and Jöreskog and Sörbom (1996), SEM is designed to assess the relationships among constructs in order to identify the latent variables in the conceptual model and further determine the direction and significance

levels of the relationships (also see Hair et al. (2010)). In this regard, the direct effects were the representation of the hypothesized structural relationships between the constructs. Furthermore, we performed SEM to test the direct effects, using the criteria from previous research (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Hair et al., 2010; Lu et al., 2007). Figure 2 shows the overall results of the SEM.

The results show that subjective norms had a negative but insignificant effect on we-intention ( $\beta = -0.039$ ,  $p = 0.460$ ); thus, Hypothesis 1a was rejected. This is consistent with some prior empirical research (Cheung et al., 2011; Shen et al., 2011). One plausible explanation might arise from the fact that Facebook provided multiple fan pages. As such, members may have joined several fan pages and some of them may have found it difficult to develop an actual sense of belonging to one specific group or they may have solicited opinions outside of this specific group. Because the items asked about the opinions of people who “are important to them,” these important others were not necessarily limited to those in the online group. Group norms had a positive but also insignificant effect on we-intention ( $\beta = 0.087$ ,  $p = 0.103$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 1b was rejected. This result was also consistent with previous research (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Cheung & Lee, 2010).

One explanation for this result is the possibility that some individuals did not completely accept the group’s goal even if they participated in the group’s collective activities. Perhaps some individuals who joined the Facebook community group did not fully understand or endorse the group’s goals or the expectations placed upon them. To guard against such problems, groups should ensure that members become familiar with and accept the group’s goals when using an SNS for collective action. However, we did find that social identity had a positive and significant effect on we-intention ( $\beta = 0.256^*$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 1c was supported. Further, desire also had a positive and significant effect on we-intention ( $\beta = 0.557^{***}$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), supporting Hypothesis 3. Similarly, perceived CSR had a positive and significant effect on we-intention ( $\beta = 0.119^*$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ); thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported. Table 4 summarizes the direct effect results.

#### 4.4 Mediating Effects Results

To test the hypothesized mediating effects, we employed the bootstrap- $t$  method (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993). This is a statistical test that assumes a normal distribution and generates the distribution of  $Z$  directly from data. We followed the bootstrap- $t$  method (Cheung & Lau, 2008; Efron & Tibshirani, 1993) by testing each model one at a time. Consequently, the mediating effect results showed that the relationship between subjective norms and we-intention was partially mediated by desire (direct effect:  $\beta = 0.159^{**}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.515^{***}$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2a. The mediating results also showed that the relationship between group norms and we-intention was partially mediated by desire (direct effect:  $\beta = 0.203^{**}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.513^{***}$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2b. Likewise, desire partially mediated the relationship between social identity and we-intention

(direct effect:  $\beta = 0.342^{***}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.502^{***}$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2c.

Furthermore, the results showed that perceived CSR partially mediated the relationship between subjective norms and we-intention (direct effect:  $\beta = 0.347^{**}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.327^{***}$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 5a was supported. Perceived CSR also partially mediated the relationship between group norms and we-intention (direct effect:  $\beta = 0.419^{**}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.299^{***}$ ), supporting Hypothesis 5b. Finally, the relationship between social identity and we-intention was partially mediated by perceived CSR (direct effect:  $\beta = 0.671^{**}$ ; indirect effect  $\beta = 0.171^{**}$ ); thus, Hypothesis 5c was supported. Table 5 shows a summary of the mediating-effect results.

#### 4.5 Control Variable Results

We used perceived behavioral control as the control variable for this study. The results showed that perceived behavioral control had an insignificant effect on we-intention to use SNS for collective action ( $\beta = 0.132$ ,  $p = 0.056$ ). However, by using a median split, those high in PBC were more likely to intend to participate in the we-intention goals of helping the orphanages than those who were low in PBC (mean = 5.40 vs. 4.50). Thus, believing that one has the resources and can achieve the group goals was clearly related to goal-related we-intention to use SNS for collective action.

### 5 Discussion and Conclusion

#### 5.1 Discussion

Building on Bratman’s (1987) belief-desire-intention framework, the present study tested a theoretical model that incorporated social influence beliefs and CSR beliefs on we-intentions to use SNS for collective action. The study adds to our knowledge in several ways. First, the study supports the BDI model within an online social networking context. Desire partially mediated all the belief-intention relationships. Second, the study uses collective intentions (“we-intentions”), which have been studied far less than autonomous, individual intentions; our findings empirically clarified several determinants of we-intentions. Third, the present study provides valuable insights into the understanding of the impact of social influence process beliefs (subjective norms, group norms, and social identity) on we-intention to use SNS for collective action. Social identification plays a particularly significant role in the development of we-intentions. Finally, this study tested whether beliefs about social responsibility were a partial mediator of the relationship between social influence beliefs and we-intention. The perceived CSR beliefs exhibited both a partial mediation effect and a direct statistical effect on

we-intention. This was an important clarification because, although social responsibility beliefs had been largely neglected in previous studies of planned behavior, perceived CSR beliefs could be relevant for many types of online collective action. Thus, the present study empirically clarifies the nature of this relationship within a social networking context. Overall, the study supports the proposed model, predicting we-intention to engage in collective action by members of an online group.

## **5.2 Theoretical Implications**

The integration of social influence theory, belief-desire-intention model, and the consideration of perceived CSR contributed to the prediction of the we-intention concept, and this integration contributes to the IS literature. This study provides valuable insights into the understanding of the impact of social influence beliefs (regarding subjective norms, group norms, and social identity) on we-intention to use SNS for collective action. The results show that the various social influence process beliefs have mixed direct effects on we-intentions. This study shows that social identity has a strong, positive, and significant impact on we-intention to use SNS for collective action. These results are consistent with prior research (Cheung & Lee, 2010; Shen et al., 2011). Participants who identified more strongly with the KolorujeMY Facebook group were more likely to intend to participate in the group's charitable activities than other participants who placed less importance on the group for their social identities.

The present study also makes a theoretical contribution by applying the BDI model to predict we-intention, and by confirming the important role of desire in predicting behavioral intentions. Desire partially mediates the relationship between subjective norms and we-intention to use SNS for collective action. The finding that the expectations of important others exerted a strong effect on desire may have been due to the voluntary and charitable nature of the collective activity. Similarly, we found that desire produced partial mediating effects on the relationship between group norms and the we-intention to use SNS for collective action. These results are also consistent with prior research (Shen et al., 2011). We found that desire acts as a motivational stimulus in order to accomplish the goals of an online group when those goals and the individual's goals aligned. This finding may have been partially due to the nature of the online platform being used by the group, since SNS, such as Facebook, seem to produce a conducive environment for the collective achievement of group goals. Moreover, our finding that desire partially mediates the relationship between social identity and we-intention is consistent with the BDI model, which indicates that for those who identify strongly with an SNS group, desire acts as a

motivational stimulus to transform social identity into a we-intention to engage in collective action. These results are also consistent with prior research (Shen et al., 2011). More generally, our findings extended the BDI model to predicting we-intentions within the context of activist SNS groups and to highlighting the role of desire as a partial mediator between (1) subjective norms, group norms, and social identity; and (2) we-intention. This set of findings is also consistent with previous empirical research (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Dholakia et al., 2004; Shen et al., 2011). Thus, our research demonstrates that desire is a significant antecedent for we-intention phenomena.

Another theoretical contribution is that perceived CSR predicts the we-intention to use SNS for collective action. While previous research has investigated CSR in the context of individual beliefs and behaviors (e.g., individual purchase intentions), this study extends such research to investigate this issue in the context of participation in collective behaviors. Our results demonstrate a significant, positive and direct relationship with we-intentions, suggesting that perceived corporate social responsibility is an important factor in the involvement of online community members. This finding is consistent with previous conclusions concerning the impact of social responsibility beliefs on the prosocial behavior of individuals. For example, it is consistent with Maignan's study (2001), which found that socially oriented motives cultivated supportive actions toward organizations. Indeed, our findings demonstrate that the perceived CSR of using SNS to help orphanages partially mediated the relationship between social identity (identifying with the KolorujeMY Facebook group) and the we-intention to use SNS for this type of collective action. This showed strong use of SNS for socially responsible actions, which may operate similarly to other traditional platforms that organizations use to perform CSR-related activities.

Moreover, the incorporation of perceived CSR might add value to the rising trend of SNS group members being influenced by group activities such as crowdfunding and fundraising activities for social causes. In such cases, members' involvement could be influenced through the presence of perceived CSR. Celebrity endorsement may also be effective in encouraging group members to take part in group actions if it is perceived to be socially responsible. Although our study applies we-intention in the specific context of soccer fans, the effects of perceived CSR might generalize to other sports or affinity groups.

Although critics might argue that the threshold for some forms of behavioral action—such as clicking a “like” button to support improving orphanages—was relatively low within online groups, participation did raise funds and awareness. Raising prosocial topics among individuals with a certain level of sensitivity

could also be transformed into other forms of action. While many soccer fans may have had limited initial knowledge about the charity, through the SNS group, they became aware of the group's social goals and many decided to participate in socially responsible actions to contribute toward group goals. Thus, perceived CSR had a direct effect on we-intention and perceived CSR also acted as an important mediator between social identity and we-intention.

### **5.3 Practical Implications**

This study also offers valuable guidelines for managerial practice. First, the social influence process of social identity predicted both desire and we-intention to use SNS for collective action. In our study, sports fans who were members of the SNS and whose social identity was strongly tied to the group had a strong tendency to indicate their attachment and feeling of belongingness toward the SNS fan page by participating in the collective activities of the group. Generalizing from this finding, many organizations and professional associations that currently maintain groups within SNS virtual communities might cultivate the social identity of their members, which could influence community members to embrace the collective action goals of the group. Furthermore, administrators of Facebook group pages should consider social identity as an important factor as they seek to strengthen relationships among group members and attract other SNS users to join the group.

Second, practitioners should consider the relevance of desire. Associating with a narrowly described market segment allows for easier identification of the desires of individual members of the group, and thus intensifies their willingness to identify with a social cause (and perhaps a corporate sponsor). If group members have a motivational impetus, this will help members act together to achieve group goals. Managers and marketers should encourage members to develop a shared desire to engage in collective action, perhaps by emphasizing their shared social identity.

Finally, using social networking sites provides great opportunities for marketing strategies, as SNS allow for building and maintaining relationships with the consumer at a fairly low cost. The features of social influence processes enable SNS members to collaborate and SNS groups also offer marketers a relatively homogeneous group of potential customers concentrated in a single online location. Members of SNS groups have the capacity to achieve their goals, especially if activities are built into the context of social responsibility and nonprofit, charitable motives that are consistent with members' social identities. Thus, SNS groups can offer affiliated organizations the opportunity to build a socially responsible brand image that can provide potential future benefits for both group members and brand owners.

### **5.4 Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

The interpretation of our findings highlights some issues that limit this research. First, this study is limited to one network group analysis. This present study acknowledges that the "group concept" in this regard, may not unequivocally and completely reflect and/or capture the idea of we-intention. The use of a single network group thus limits the multilevel analysis in this study. Future research on we-intention should use multilevel modeling to capture group interaction dynamics to allow further investigation on the distinction between individual and group-level comparisons.

To perform multilevel analysis, it is necessary to collect data in a way that ensures that researchers put some level of checks or mechanisms in place. For instance, an individual respondent should choose to identify a group member group or other person with whom he or she normally interacts. This will help researchers identify those who serve as active members, for example, on virtual community platforms. In addition, while employing an informant method (Seidler, 1974) could be helpful, this study collected data from a whole group. Future research should reexamine some of the works on functional relations among constructs at different levels of analysis or models—for example, models such as additive, direct consensus, referent shift, dispersion and process composition (Chan, 1998). The models introduced by Chan (1998) could help future research identify and mitigate the ways in which both I-intention and we-intention are measured and analyzed.

Second, although our study sought to overcome the conceptualization issues of "we-intentions," we were unable to fully solve the operationalization component of "we-intentions." Our study operationalizes we-intention more closely on the individual's we-intention belief, or, more accurately, the "perception of we-intention." Thus, we call for additional empirical research on this important consideration to find more alternative ways to measure we-intention. Simultaneous research on both individual-level and group-level effects and comparisons could further advance the understanding of we-intention.

Third, factors predicting we-intentions may also be somewhat different in other kinds of communities (e.g., ethnic heritage groups vs. soccer fans). Employing other types of interest groups gathered around common goals is another fruitful avenue for future studies. Furthermore, only a broad category of behavioral we-intention was assessed. Future research might, for example, query specific behaviors, each requiring varying levels of time and monetary commitment. In our study, only one type of sponsor was employed—a soccer organization, which already enjoyed fan base support. It is possible that other types of sponsoring

firms (e.g., corporations) with varying ethical reputations might elicit different types of reactions. Thus, further research in this area is needed.

Fourth, building a general conceptual model is limited by the homogeneity of the respondents: we purposely used a well-defined group so that we could assess the effects of group norms on intention to engage in group-endorsed behavior. However, the sample was a mono-national group comprised exclusively of soccer fans with an interest in social causes; further, it was mostly male and mostly young. It is possible that because they self-selected into the group, the respondents do not represent a broad spectrum of reactions and collective behaviors. This might limit the generalizability of the findings. Thus, future research could use a cross-cultural study (or at least a group that is not obviously tied to the type of collective behavior being studied) to examine the effects of social influence processes on we-intention to use SNS for collective action. Another plausible approach would be to employ self-determination theory to potentially capture the perceived locus of causality in order to determine the different kinds of motivations that ultimately lead to the achievement of individuals' goals.

Finally, our study is embedded in the context of Facebook as a tool of communication and virtual place of community. It remains unclear whether the findings are generalizable to different types of online communities using different modalities (e.g., Second Life).

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The present study demonstrated strong support for a belief-desire-intention model that predicted we-intentions among group members to use their SNS for collective action in support of a charitable cause. The results demonstrated that social influence beliefs, particularly social identity beliefs, influenced the intention to engage in collective behavior through the mediating variable of desire. Beliefs about whether supporting the specific charity was socially responsible for the group (perceived CSR) also had direct and mediating effects on we-intentions. Finally, the study extended prior research by showing that these variables were applicable to online groups endorsing collective behaviors. Future research should continue to explore such online groups, as social networking continues to attract members.

## **Acknowledgments**

We would like to thank the senior editor, Professor Shuk Ying (Susanna) Ho and the two anonymous reviewers for their support and valuable feedback during the review process that helped us greatly improve the paper.



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## Appendix

Table A1. Measurement Items

Construct	Measures
Subjective norms	The rating scale for these items was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
SN1	Most people who are important to me think that I should use a social networking site (SNS) for collective action during the next two weeks.
SN2	Most people who are important to me would approve of me using an SNS for collective action during the next two weeks.
SN3	Most people who have an influence on my behavior think that I should use an SNS for collective action during the next two weeks.
Group norms	Using an SNS for collective action during the next two weeks [with the online KolorujeMY Facebook fan group] can be considered to be a goal. For each of the members in your group, please estimate the strength to which each individual has this as a goal. The rating scale for group norm items was 1 = <i>weak</i> to 7 = <i>strong</i> .
GN1	Strength of self's goal.
GN2	Average of the strength of group members' goals.
Social identity	The rating scale for each of the social identity items was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
<i>Cognitive</i>	
CSI1	My personal identity overlaps with my group identity (with which I may act collectively through an SNS during the next two weeks).
CSI2	My personal image overlaps with my group identity (with which I may act collectively through an SNS during the next two weeks).
CSI3	My personal values overlap with my group identity (with which I may act collectively through an SNS during the next two weeks).
<i>Affective</i>	
ASI1	I have a strong sense of attachment to the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
ASI2	I feel a strong sense of belongingness to the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
ASI3	I feel a strong feeling of membership in the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
<i>Evaluative</i>	
ESI1	I am a valuable member of the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
ESI2	I am an important member of the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
ESI3	I am an influential member of the group with which I may act collectively through an SNS during next two weeks.
Desire	The rating scale for these items was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
DE1	I desire to use an SNS for collective action during next two weeks.
DE2	My desire for using an SNS for collective action during next two weeks can be described as: _____
DE3	I want to use an SNS for collective action during next 2 weeks.
Perceived CSR	After seeing photographs of orphanages being painted and restored and the logo of KolorujeMY, participants were asked to make the following ratings. The rating scale was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
CSR1	This is a socially responsible action.
CSR2	This action is more beneficial to society's welfare than many other actions.
CSR3	This activity contributes something to society.

**Table A1. Measurement Items**

We-intention	The rating scale for each of the we-intention items was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
WE1	I intend for our group to use an SNS for collective action during next two weeks.
WE2	We (i.e., the group of community friends identified above) intend to use an SNS for collective action during the next two weeks.
WE3	I believe that I will use an SNS to make my own contribution to a collective action during next two weeks.
WE4	I believe that we (i.e., the group of community friends identified above) will use an SNS to perform the collective action together during next two weeks
WE5	Because of my membership in a group, I am obliged to use an SNS for a collective action during next two weeks.
WE6	Because of my membership in a group, we (i.e., the group of community friends identified above) are obliged to use an SNS for a collective action during next two weeks.
WE7	We will use an SNS together for a collective action during next two weeks.
Perceived behavioral control	The rating scale for each of the perceived behavioral control items was 1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 7 = <i>strongly agree</i> .
PBC1	It is easy to use a Facebook fan page for collective action during next two weeks.
PBC2	I am confident about using Facebook fan pages for collective action during next two weeks.
PBC3	I know how to use a Facebook fan pages for collective action during next two weeks.
PBC4	How much control do you believe you have over using Facebook fan pages for collective action during next two weeks?
PBC5	It is mostly up to me whether or not I use a Facebook fan pages for collective action during next two weeks.
<i>Note:</i> Measurement items translated from Polish	

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