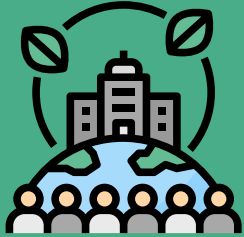
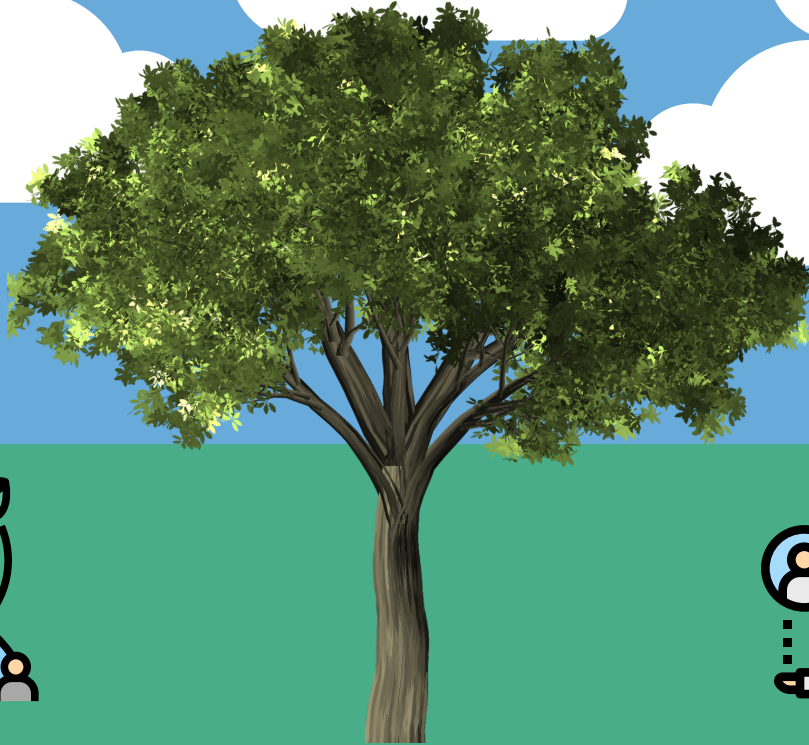


E-CSR & CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Investigating the impact of environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives on consumer behavior and purchase intention: the mediating role of how tightly linked environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives are to products

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1. An Introduction

Environmental degradation has gained particular concern among consumers in recent years. Given that consumer purchasing decisions are a key driver of companies' strategies and practices, this research seeks to assess the impact of organizations' environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives (E-CSR) on consumer behavior, purchase intention and brand attitude. Companies often partake in CSR initiatives to demonstrate their social and environmental responsibility and contribution to broader societal concerns through philanthropy, activism, or ethically-motivated practices.

2. Existing Literature

Existing academic literature suggests that the level of fit between a company and the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative they undertake is a key moderator to the impact that CSR initiatives have on consumer perception and behavior. While certain research substantiates the claim that higher linkage of CSR initiatives to products positively influence consumer perceptions, others have opposed this ideology. Findings have shown that the impact of CSR linkage as a moderator to the impact CSR has on consumer behavior is contextually defined.

3. Narrowing In

This study distinguishes itself from existing literature by specifically examining how the linkage of E-CSR initiatives to the product that a corporation provides is a moderator to the impact that E-CSR has on purchase intention and consumer perceptions

It is hypothesized that companies with products that are tightly linked (integrated) to the E-CSR initiative will increase consumer purchase intention and positive perceptions more than companies with products that seem unrelated (peripheral) to the E-CSR initiative.

4. Methodology

Study 1: The objective of study 1 was to conduct a qualitative investigation into consumers' thought processes and perceptions when purchasing a product that incorporates a E-CSR initiative. The study was comprised of several open-ended questions where participants were asked to describe their consumer thought processes

Study 2: In this study, 818 participants answered several closed-ended questions for consumers to convey their perception of E-CSR initiatives, their environmental values, and demographic characteristics. Specifically, participants are asked to report on their likelihood to purchase, perception of authenticity, effectiveness of E-CSR, willingness to pay, and net promoter score based on randomized conditions of E-CSR initiatives with different levels of linkage.



5. Key Findings

The qualitative and quantitative studies conducted demonstrates that companies with products that are tightly linked (integrated) to the E-CSR initiative increase consumer purchase intention and positive perceptions more than companies with products that are unrelated (peripheral) or somewhat linked (partially-integrated) to the E-CSR initiative. Findings have shown that the impact of peripheral and partially integrated E-CSR initiatives on consumer behavior are comparable. The presence of an E-CSR initiative, regardless of its level of fit, were shown to increase positive consumer perceptions and willingness to pay as compared to an absence of any E-CSR initiative. Finally, demographic factors such as consumers' environmental values and income were observed to impact the strength of the relationships.

Table 1. Summary of Results from Quantitative Study Scenario 1

Question	Condition 1: Fully Integrated E-CSR Initiative	Condition 2: Partially Integrated E-CSR Initiative	Condition 3: Peripheral E-CSR Initiative	Condition 4: No E-CSR Initiative
Likelihood to purchase sneaker from this company on a scale of 1-7	6.89 (1.78)	5.93 (2.02)	5.82 (1.75)	5.25 (2.05)
Consumer perception of the company's authenticity in conducting this initiative on a scale of 1-7	6.36 (2.03)	4.84 (2.23)	4.85 (2.19)	N/A
Consumer perception of the company's effectiveness in solving the environmental damage that they presume the firm makes on a scale of 1-7	6.24 (2.04)	4.34 (2.38)	4.31 (2.30)	3.35 (2.18)
Willingness to pay for the sneakers from 50% less than before to 50% more than before	5.93% (18.76%)	-10.55% (23.28%)	-10.93% (22.53%)	-20.63% (19.82%)

Note: Mean scores are presented within the table. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

Table 2. Summary of Results from Quantitative Study Scenario 2

Question	Condition 1: Fully Integrated E-CSR Initiative	Condition 2: Partially Integrated E-CSR Initiative	Condition 3: Peripheral E-CSR Initiative	Condition 4: No E-CSR Initiative
Likelihood to purchase toiletries (Scale of 1-7)	5.58 (1.36)	5.26 (2.14)	4.97 (1.99)	4.56 (2.07)
Consumer perception of the company's authenticity in conducting this initiative on a scale of 1-7	6.54 (1.94)	4.57 (2.24)	4.29 (2.09)	N/A
Consumer perception of the company's effectiveness in solving the environmental damage that they presume the firm makes on a scale of 1-7	6.57 (1.93)	4.13 (2.17)	3.83 (2.20)	3.26 (2.08)
Willingness to pay for the sneakers from 50% less than before to 50% more than before	9.74% (16.92)	-15.18% (24.16)	-16.29% (22.89)	-23.31% (19.10)

Note: Mean scores are presented within the table. Standard deviations are shown in parentheses.

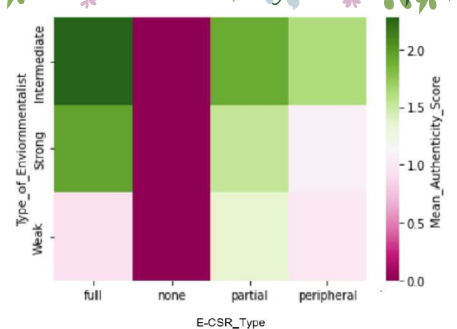


Figure 3. Heat Map displaying relationship between Authenticity Score and Type of consumer Environmentalist for the varying levels of E-CSR fit for scenario 2

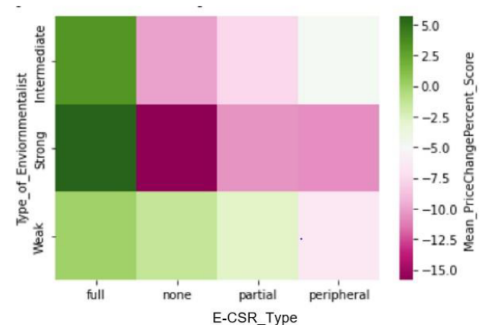


Figure 4. Heat Map displaying relationship between mean percentage change in willingness to pay from -50% to 50% and Type of Consumer Environmentalist for the varying levels of E-CSR fit for Scenario 2