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# Effect of corporate social responsibility motives on purchase intention model: An extension

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## ABSTRACT

The number of empirical studies on the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) motives on the consumer purchase intention is still very small. Furthermore, the models tested in these studies were also relatively simple (including only CSR motives, attitude toward the firm, and/or purchase intention). The present research extends the knowledge in this area of study by proposing and empirically testing an extended model of the effect of CSR motives on purchase intention, with 192 samples participated in the survey. It was found that an altruistic motive positively affects the attitude toward the firm, which in turn affects the purchase intention via the perceived quality and attitude toward the brand.

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## Introduction

Although there have been many empirical studies on the effect of perceived CSR on consumer buying behavior (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Garcia de los Salmones, Herrero Crespo, & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2005; He & Li, 2011; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010; Maignan, 2001; Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2013; Singh, Garcia de los Salmones Sanchez, & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008; Tian, Wang, & Yang, 2011), empirical studies on

the effect of CSR attributions or CSR motives on consumer buying behavior are still few (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Groza, Pronschinske, & Walker, 2011; Lee, Park, Moon, Yang, & Kim, 2009). Furthermore, the conceptual models tested in these studies were relatively simple; these studies generally empirically tested the effect of CSR motives on the attitude toward the firm and/or the purchase intention.

Focus group interviews with a group of Thai consumers and in-depth interviews with Thai senior managers were conducted at the early stage of this study. It was found that

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consumers tend to focus on the firm's CSR motives when they evaluate the CSR policies and activities of a firm while managers are interested to know if and how their CSR policies and activities affect consumer responses toward their brands (that is, brand perception and brand attitude). As such, the objective of this study was to extend the limited knowledge in this area of study by proposing and empirically testing an extended model of the effect of CSR motives on the consumer purchase intention.

The literature review leading to the conceptual model will be presented in the next session. This will be followed by methodology, results, and discussion. The last section includes a theoretical contribution, managerial implications, limitations, and future research directions.

## Literature Review

### *Past empirical studies on the effect of CSR motives on consumer responses*

A literature review on the effect of CSR motives on consumer responses shows that there have been relatively few empirical studies in this field (Ellen et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2009). Furthermore, the consumer response constructs investigated in these studies were mainly the attitude toward the firm and/or the purchase intention. Specifically, Ellen et al. (2006) identified four types of CSR attributions or motives by using hypothetical radio scripts requesting the subjects to make donation to charities. The four types of CSR motives identified were: value-driven motive (the company engages in CSR because it believes that CSR is the right thing to do), strategic-driven motive (the company engages in CSR to increase sales or profit), egoistic motive (the company engages in CSR to take advantage of the cause or non-profit organization for itself), and stakeholder-driven motive (the company engages in CSR because of stakeholder pressures). With regard to the impact of CSR motives on consumer responses, Ellen et al. (2006) found that a value-driven motive and a strategic-driven motive positively affect the purchase intention while an egoistic-driven motive negatively affects the purchase intention. On the other hand, a stakeholder-driven motive does not have a significant influence on the purchase intention.

In their experiment using a fictitious company, Groza et al. (2011) found that value-driven motives and strategic-driven motives positively affect the attitude toward the firm and purchase intention while a stakeholder-driven motive negatively affects the attitude toward the firm and purchase intention. However, the relationship between the attitude toward the firm and the purchase intention was not tested in their study. Note that Groza et al. (2011) used only three of Ellen et al.'s (2006) four motives in their study.

In the context of corporate philanthropy, Lee et al. (2009) conducted a consumer survey on consumer perceptions of motives, attitude, and purchase intention toward firms that conducted corporate philanthropy. They found that a public-serving motive (equivalent to value-driven motive) has a significant positive effect on the attitude toward the firm. On the other hand, a reactive motive (equivalent to stakeholder-

driven motive) and a firm-severing motive (equivalent to strategic-driven motive) do not significantly affect the attitude toward the firm. They also found that the attitude toward the firm has a positive impact on the purchase intention.

In summary, Ellen et al. (2006) identified four types of CSR motives and demonstrated their impacts on the purchase intention. Groza et al. (2011) demonstrated that CSR motives have an impact not only on the purchase intention but also on the attitude toward the firm. Finally, Lee et al. (2009) demonstrated that CSR motives affect the attitude toward the firm, which in turn, affects the purchase intention.

### *The tri-component model of attitude*

The conceptual framework used in these past studies, especially that of Lee et al. (2009), is based on Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Bagozzi's (1981) attitudinal framework of cognition (beliefs about the attitudinal object affect the overall positive or negative evaluation of the attitudinal objective) and conation (behavioral intention toward the attitudinal object). CSR motives can be considered as firm cognitions while the attitude toward the firm can be considered as a firm affect. On the other hand, the purchase intention can be considered as either a firm conation or, more likely, a brand conation. Since consumers are exposed to both a firm's CSR and its products/brands, it is logical that consumers form both attitudinal responses toward the firm's CSR and attitudinal responses toward the brand (that is, brand cognition, brand affect, and brand conation). The literature review shows that the Dual Mediation Hypothesis (MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986) is the appropriate conceptual framework for integrating the two types of attitudinal responses together.

### *The conceptual framework: The dual mediation hypothesis*

MacKenzie et al. (1986) derived the Dual Mediation Hypothesis from the joint cognitive structure/cognitive response model of communication effects (Lutz & Swasy, 1977) and the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981) to explain the role of attitude toward the advertisement as the mediator of advertising effectiveness in their empirical study. The Dual Mediation Hypothesis postulates that a consumer's affective response toward a source is affected by his or her cognitive response(s) toward that source and that the affective response toward that source can affect the cognitive responses and affective response toward another source. Furthermore, the effect of an affective response toward the first source on the conative response toward the first source will be mediated by the cognitive and affective responses toward the second source.

### *Conceptual model and hypotheses*

From the focus group interview, apart from firm cognitions (altruistic motive and self-interest motive) and firm affect (attitude toward the firm), consumers also discussed brand cognition (perceived quality) and brand affect (attitude toward the brand). Based on the Dual Mediation Hypothesis, the conceptual model for this study is shown in Figure 1. According to the conceptual model, any intention to buy the

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