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Examining the role of individuals' perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment in corporate-nonprofit partnership CSR advertisements

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ABSTRACT

Effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) advertising depends on the nature of the partnership and how it is communicated in messages about CSR initiatives. Guided by the Symbolic Sustainability Model (SSM), this study investigates the effects of communication about CSR initiatives comparing differing CSR approaches through a 2×2 between-subjects factorial experiment. After viewing a hypothetical CSR-based advertisement, participants ($N=433$) rated their perceptions of initiative effectiveness and attitudes toward the initiative. Compared to a donation-based initiative, a CSR partnership had an indirect, positive effect on audience evaluations, which was mediated by perceptions of the likelihood of the corporation's sustained commitment to the partnership. The advertising that emphasized a partnership outperformed a donation-focused CSR initiative because participants perceived that the sponsoring corporation was invested in helping the cause for an extended period. The findings indicate that audiences are likely to perceive partnerships and donations positively; however, partnership initiatives may have stronger positive, indirect effects because they may be more likely to signal sustained commitment. The findings support the Symbiotic Sustainability Model (SSM) and demonstrate the efficacy of the SSM for CSR advertising. For practitioners, the findings point to strategies that may be helpful amidst the proliferation of CSR advertising.

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), defined as the notion that organizations, especially industry leaders, should be held accountable for addressing issues pertinent to the societies in which they operate, has become a pervasive business and communication construct (Carroll 1999; Ihlen, Bartlett, and May 2011). One way that organizations can demonstrate their commitment to CSR is by partnering with nonprofits to address societal issues such as hunger (see Feeding America and General Mills).

Corporate/nonprofit organization partnerships are increasingly common, and the implementation of corporate/nonprofit organization partnerships as CSR initiatives has increased

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in the last 15 years (Mutch and Aitken 2009; Shumate and O'Connor 2010; Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020). To inform CSR advertising practice, the growth and prevalence of such initiatives underscores the need for further research about perceptions of these partnerships. To that end, this study compares the effectiveness of two types of CSR initiatives, corporate-nonprofit partnerships and cause-related donations, on individuals' perceptions. Different types of CSR initiatives display different features – each of which likely affects how audiences perceive those initiatives (Waddock 2008). This study compared partnerships and donations to determine if individuals perceived one more favorably based on the features of each type of CSR initiative and its findings indicate perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment mediate the effects of the type of CSR initiative on attitudes toward the initiative and perceptions of initiative effectiveness. By demonstrating that advertising about CSR partnerships can bolster audiences' perceptions of their value (especially if the advertising communicates corporate commitment to the partnership), this study adds new information to the robust body of advertising research that has examined the effectiveness of CSR advertising and cause-related marketing efforts on cause-brand partnerships (Aghakhani, Carvalho, and Cunningham 2020; Bergkvist and Zhou 2019; Choi 2020; Diehl, Terlutter, and Mueller 2016; Holiday et al. 2021; Li, Kim, and Alharbi 2021; Schaefer, Terlutter, and Diehl 2020; Taylor 2014, 2018).

This article proceeds as follows: The first section reviews the symbiotic sustainability model (SSM) and research on the factors that affect perceptions of CSR initiatives as the theoretical foundation for this study. The second section presents the experimental design used in this study followed by a summary of the results. In summary, the results indicated that perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment mediate the effects of the type of CSR initiative on attitudes toward the initiative and perceptions of initiative effectiveness. The final sections discuss the practical and theoretical implications of the findings and the limitations and considerations for future research. Namely, this research provides empirical support for the SSM, demonstrates the efficacy of the SSM for advertising research, and provides value for practitioners looking for strategies to break through amidst CSR proliferation.

The symbiotic sustainability model (SSM)

The SSM is a communication-based explanation of corporate–nonprofit partnerships, and to-date, it is the only communication-based theory that examines corporate–nonprofit partnerships and offers testable propositions (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020; Shumate and O'Connor 2010). Much of the advertising research assumes that brands and products have associations tied to them and those affect how messages from those brands/products are perceived. While there are some similarities between current theories used to explain corporate-nonprofit partnerships such as balance theory (Basil and Herr 2006) and SSM, what makes SSM distinct is that it not only theorizes the relational triads and their fit as proposed in balance theory (individuals, firm, and charity) but SSM also theorizes the 'essence' of each portion of the triad, the 'nature' of the linkages among those relational triads, or the new organization identity formed via the creation of the partnerships.

The SSM asserts that corporate–nonprofit partnerships are 'distinct interorganizational communication relationships that are symbolized to stakeholders' (Maktoufi,

O'Connor, and Shumate 2020, 191). The theory holds that partners and their stakeholders communicate the character, existence, and value of the corporate–nonprofit partnerships with each other and external stakeholders (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). Stakeholders' evaluations of the communicative construction of the partnership have direct implications for its value such that their value depends as much on the success of the communication about the partnership as the concrete resources invested.

Drawing from organizational identity research, the SSM argues that corporate–nonprofit partnerships allow the partners to communicate new or changed organizational identities reaching different audiences in ways that can be more effective (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). As such, existing SSM research has focused on the fit between the identities communicated by each partner as well as audiences' existing ideas about the identities of the partners. Audiences' a priori evaluations of the nonprofit and the corporation might influence those evaluations, but the communication about the partnership also creates an opportunity for persuading audiences about the legitimacy of the efforts, and perceptions of the initiative itself are central to these evaluations (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). Bringing SSM into conversation with existing cause-partnership literature provides more robust means of evaluating audiences' perceptions of the previous effectiveness or likely future effectiveness of initiatives and the motives of the corporate partner.

Perceptions of initiative effectiveness and corporate motives

The CSR literature has well explored the ethical complexities that CSR poses for corporations and practitioners (Heath and Waymer 2017, 2019; Ihlen, Bartlett, and May 2011; Oh, Bae, and Kim 2017; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). A growing body of CSR research – particularly in advertising and consumer psychology – has also examined the effectiveness of CSR initiatives by focusing on individuals' perceptions of initiative effectiveness and subsequent attitudes, including skepticism, toward these initiatives (Lafferty and Goldsmith 1999; Priester and Petty 2003; Skarmeas and Leonidou 2013). Studies related to individuals' attitudes toward initiatives have centered on which features are required for initiative efficacy, and several have examined how corporations create initiatives based on the presence of certain features that have been found to resonate with individuals (Drumwright 1996; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Marín, Cuestas, and Román 2016). Understanding how individuals perceive initiative characteristics should be part of a larger effort to gauge how corporations can effectively communicate themselves to audiences, which is a central concern of the SSM.

What is especially relevant given the SSM's theoretical framing is that initiative effectiveness may depend on whether or not audiences perceive the CSR initiative as able to fulfill the corporation's commitment to the cause (Beldad, Seijdel, and de Jong 2020; Lafferty and Goldsmith 1999). Individuals tend to discount CSR initiatives if they believe the purpose is merely for publicity rather than a desire to benefit society, and examples of failed initiatives have tended to place too much emphasis on branding the corporate sponsor as 'beneficial' and too little time actually benefitting the cause (Drumwright 1996). A greater focus on the corporation's needs over the needs of the cause may lead individuals to feel that the corporate sponsor was not genuinely interested in benefitting society and instead merely using CSR to benefit

their image. The question of whose interests are represented and whose are marginalized becomes increasingly important, yet difficult, to answer (Boyd and Waymer 2011).

Corporations expect to benefit from CSR, but their genuine interest in societal beneficence also needs to be apparent. For example, the total length of time corporations devote to a cause is a cue for individuals to determine a corporation's motives. In previous work, sustained evidence of supporting a cause were viewed with better intentions than short-term or one-time giving – seen as a mechanism to grow sales (Drumwright 1996; Webb and Mohr 1998). Further, campaigns that lasted more than several years were regarded as credible whereas those that were half a year or less were considered weak or unreliable (Drumwright 1996).

Home Depot's partnership with nonprofit Habitat for Humanity and The National Football League's partnership with nonprofit the United Way are concrete examples of sustained commitment. Home Depot has given more than \$22 million to Habitat's Repair Corps since 2011 and has impacted more than 1,300 veteran homes and families through their partnership (Habitat for Humanity 2019). The NFL has donated more than \$35 million dollars to the United Way throughout the length of its more than 40-year partnership (United Way 2020). United Way affiliates tout their partnership with the NFL, emphasizing that it is the longest continuous partnership of its kind between a major sports league and a nonprofit (United Way 2016). In sum, sustained evidence of supporting a cause should allow managers to create an enduring strategy to benefit the cause, and consumers take note (Dean 2003).

Communicating partnerships

Again, the SSM suggests that the character, existence, and value of corporate–nonprofit partnerships are communicated among the partners and their stakeholders including customers (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). Effective communication about the partnership should theoretically include arguments about initiatives as genuine and likely to work, which can then have positive effects on the evaluations of the legitimacy and social responsibility of partners. Partnerships as one approach can be contrasted with other forms of CSR such as corporate donations. Although both corporate–nonprofit partnerships and one-time corporate donations to a cause may be seen as doing societal good, perceptions of these forms of corporate giving may differ in how they communicate if the initiative is likely to be effective as well as the motives underlying the initiative.

It is therefore not surprising that among CSR initiatives, corporate–nonprofit partnerships are growing more than any other (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020; Mutch and Aitken 2009; Shumate and O'Connor 2010). This type of CSR consists of a for-profit corporation paired with a nonprofit organization in an effort to benefit both parties (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). The nonprofit organization benefits by receiving financial sponsorship, and the corporation assumes its reputation will improve after displaying concern for society. The SSM suggest that the reputational value depends on the communication of the initiative and evaluations of the initiatives and the partners involved. This study takes a deeper look at partnerships as compared to donations to determine what difference, if any, are perceived, and how that might affect individuals' overall evaluations of initiatives. Furthermore, the SSM and CSR

research explicated above suggest that at least one feature of corporate-nonprofit partnerships distinguishes them from other common types of CSR initiatives such as one-time donations: The corporations' sustained commitment to the cause/corporate-nonprofit partnership.

In this study, participants were expected to perceive greater commitment from the sponsoring corporation when viewing a CSR advertisement that included a partnership versus a CSR advertisement that included a donation. Participants who perceived higher levels of corporate commitment within a CSR campaign should have maintained more positive attitudes toward the initiative and higher levels of perceived CSR effectiveness. Our hypotheses were grounded in the SSM's (Shumate and O'Connor 2010) theorizing that when presented with a corporate-nonprofit alliance, individuals will make determinations based on how they view the nature of the relationship. As such, we hypothesized the following:

H1a: Participants will report more positive attitudes toward a corporate-nonprofit partnership than a one-time donation from a corporation to a nonprofit.

H1b: Participants will report greater perceptions of effectiveness for a corporate-nonprofit partnership than one-time donation from a corporation to a nonprofit.

In the first hypothesis, 'positive attitudes' refers specifically to the sentiment stakeholders held in response to CSR advertising about an initiative (Priester and Petty 2003). That is, the SSM suggests that how audiences evaluate the initiative as negative or positive, harmful or beneficial, and so forth are just as important as their evaluations of effectiveness (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020).

Sustained commitment

Unlike other forms of CSR such as a one-time donation, entering into a corporate-nonprofit partnership is characterized by two entities agreeing to make a commitment to a shared interest. Long-lasting image benefits are rarely immediate in partnerships, even though corporations may gain social capital through their initial affiliation with nonprofits (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). It is sustained commitment that bodes well for the overall success of the initiative in terms of benefitting the cause and the corporation's reputation.

For example, research comparing conditional corporate donations (those that are based on a percentage of profits) and unconditional corporate donations (a one-time lump sum independent of profits) found that unconditional donations from a corporation with a neutral reputation were perceived more favorably because they were not linked to a corporation profiting prior to making the donation (Dean 2003). In other cases, the total length of time a corporation was linked to a cause became a cue for individuals to determine corporate motives: Long-term giving in the form of cause-related marketing was viewed with better intentions than short-term or one-time giving, which were seen as merely a way to increase sales (Webb and Mohr 1998).

In the context of developing buyer-seller relationships, researchers have discussed commitment to causes, defined commitment, and described factors that influence perceived commitment (see Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh 1987). Researchers have used product evaluation to examine the effects of consumer perceptions of CSR (see Branco

and Rodrigues 2006). However, these studies did not account for the distinctive, coupled-identity of the corporate-nonprofit partnership suggested in the SSM or how audiences perceive the corporation's likelihood to invest in the CSR partnership or the joint cause they support separate from purchasing intentions. This fact is evident in the Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) economic/capital exchange-centric definition of commitment as 'an implicit or explicit pledge of relational continuity between exchange partners' (p. 19), whereas the SSM argues that the value of partnerships is not necessarily equivalent to resources exchanged.

Another related CSR concept is organizational commitment. Although the concept is present in the CSR literature, it differs from the conceptualization of likelihood of sustained commitment. Organizational commitment is a concept central in organizational psychology, human resources, and management literature used to describe the affiliation of employees with their organizations that has been applied to external stakeholders' evaluations of organizations (Brammer, Millington, and Rayton 2007). However, in this study, perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment focus on the audiences' evaluations of the corporations' initiative, not the audiences' sense of affiliation with the corporation.

Perceptions of authenticity are also related to perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment (Ellen, Webb, and Mohr 2006; McShane and Cunningham 2012). Researchers have found that stakeholders' perceptions of authenticity are vital both to the acceptance and success of CSR programs (Beckman, Colwell, and Cunningham 2009). Although perceptions of authenticity and perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment are similar and likely related concepts, they are not interchangeable. For example, corporations might demonstrate their authenticity, an organizational trait, through sustained commitment to a nonprofit and its cause, organizational actions. At the same time, organizations can behave in other ways to demonstrate authenticity separate from sustained commitment.

Corporations entering into partnerships should also understand they will be held publicly accountable for providing all that was promised to the nonprofit, and the relationship is constrained 'by the commitments made by both parties as the alliance was communicatively constituted' (Shumate and O'Connor 2010, p. 592). As nonprofit organizations are their own entities with their own voice, they can publicize shortcomings or false promises made by the corporation through their own communication, which could harm the corporation's image; although, their ability to do so may be limited by power differences between the corporation and nonprofit. Nonetheless, Shumate and O'Connor (2010) argued that unlike cause-related campaigns such as 'illiteracy awareness' or charitable donations to 'underprivileged inner-city youth', the partner nonprofit *and* the audiences evaluating the partnership may hold the sponsor corporation accountable for delivering on their promises, especially those made publicly (p. 592). Compared to partnerships, cause-related campaigns and charitable donations do not center the partner as an arbiter of corporate behavior. We therefore also hypothesized that perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment would mediate the relationship between CSR type and perceptions of CSR effectiveness and attitudes toward the CSR, because of the nature of the relationship suggested by partnerships. We therefore forwarded the following hypotheses:

H2a: The effect of CSR type on attitudes toward the initiative will be mediated by perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment to the cause.

H2b: The effect of CSR type of perceptions of initiative effectiveness will be mediated by perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment to the cause.

In sum, the SSM holds that communication about partnerships matters, because the value of the partnership stems from what stakeholders come to believe about them. At the same time, the SSM makes clear too that audience differences likely also influence those evaluations (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020).

Involvement moderates the effects of CSR type on commitment

Individuals' memories about brands and organizations are formed by cognitive associations that are related to brand name and brand perceptions in consumers' minds (Khan et al. 2012). Friestad and Wright (1994) modeled how individuals attempt to understand a corporation's motives and argued that when individuals view a message containing a corporation's explanation of their societal contributions, they are more likely to cognitively elaborate or think more and more systematically about the message. That is, the communication about partnerships works in part because it elicits a different sort of processing of the messages about initiatives.

For example, scholars have noted that an initiative must first prove its effectiveness before an individual is likely to attribute positive feelings toward it (Priester and Petty 2003), but even so, individuals may view an initiative as effective, yet remain apathetic. Indifference may stem from their lack of interest or lack of involvement with the particular cause or their inability to deem it as personally relevant (Brown and Dacin 1997). Involvement is a key audience factor in evaluations of messages in general (O'Keefe 2015). Involvement refers to the connection audiences' see between themselves and the initiative and partners. Involvement is defined as the personal relevance that a person has in a particular situation or issue (Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981). Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006) found that the more involved with a cause a person is, the more a corporate sponsorship will resonate with them, making them more likely to have positive attitudes toward the initiative. Involvement also evokes deeper engagement with narratives used in organizational messaging (Barbour, Doshi, and Hernandez 2016). Cultivating involvement is key to reaching audiences, as evidenced by making the personal relevance of risk communication central to audiences (Sellnow et al. 2017). Taken together, this research suggests that corporations must do more than promote that initiatives exist; they should do so in ways that foster greater involvement.

Individuals' involvement with the initiative, the sponsored cause, and the partners should moderate the relationship between the approach to CSR and the evaluations of the nature of the corporation's commitment to the initiative in particular. Greater involvement should magnify the positive relationships hypothesized between CSR type and perceptions of sustained commitment, because it should prompt a more thoughtful evaluation of the nature of the partnership itself. That is, participants who

see themselves as connected to the partnership should also make more elaborate evaluations of the sustained commitment communicated in CSR advertisements.

The operationalization of involvement is spatial distance, which is also seen as leading to different levels of construal in construal level theory (CLT, Liberman et al. 2007; Park and Morton 2015). CLT posits that spatial distance affects the extent (high or low) to which individuals think about an event, idea, or individual. When individuals are engaged in low-level construal, they are focusing on the present in great detail, whereas individuals engaged in high-level construal focus on the bigger picture, not the intricate details. Thus, when spatial distance is manipulated in an advertisement, that manipulation should influence how concretely (low construal) or abstractly (high construal) an individual perceives an advertisement (Henderson et al. 2006).

H3: Participants will perceive greater sustained commitment from a partnership when in a high involvement condition than when in a low involvement condition.

The greater involvement should heighten the effects of messaging about partnerships per the SSM framework as well. The involvement should intensify the core mechanism of the SSM, the degree to which 'stakeholders when presented with a partnership make determinations about how partner identities fit together and evaluate the shared identity of the partners' (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020, 194).

Methods

This study examined participants' ($N=433$) perceptions of one-page corporate CSR advertisements that varied in terms of CSR type and involvement. A 2×2 factorial experiment (see Table 1) was designed with two between-subject variables: CSR type (partnership versus one-time donation) and involvement (high versus low). After completing the informed consent process, participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions (HP, LP, HC, LC) in which they read one message (See Appendix A). After reading the assigned CSR message, participants completed a questionnaire (See Appendix B).

Participants

This study used a convenience sample of 433 undergraduate students aged 18-28 with an average age of 20, enrolled in a required public speaking course at a large university in Texas. The study including the participation of students was supervised by the university's institutional review board. Most participants were female ($n=263$, 61%). Participants were recruited by an electronic posting to the course's webpage. The study was anonymous, and an additional questionnaire followed the study that allowed participants to enter personal information to receive extra credit. Assuming a two-sided, t-test comparing independent groups ($\alpha=0.05$), a sample size of 433 participants would have sufficient power to find small effects ($d=0.02$; power $[1 - \beta]=0.95$).

Table 1. Conditions of the 2×2 Experimental design.

High Involvement – CSR Partnership (HP), $n=108$	High Involvement – CSR One-time Donation (HC), $n=118$
Low Involvement – CSR Partnership (LP), $n=115$	Low Involvement – CSR One-time Donation (LC), $n=92$

Stimuli and experimental conditions

The study stimuli (see Appendix A) were intended to represent that which might be found on a corporate webpage or a one-page spread in a magazine. All four conditions used the same environmental cause and the same hypothetical corporate source in their advertisement. All four messages also had the same formatting, with a brief biographical paragraph about the hypothetical sponsoring corporation and a statement about its respective CSR program that followed. To manipulate CSR type, two of the conditions mentioned a corporate-nonprofit partnership as the corporation's CSR campaign, and the other two mentioned a cause-related donation CSR campaign.

In the partnership messages, a hypothetical nonprofit was also included. This study chose hypothetical corporations and nonprofits to avoid participants' associations with real organizations and to focus on the communication effects irrespective of familiarity. Additionally, the sponsoring corporation was part of an industry that was not at that time under any particular public scrutiny. The sponsoring corporation was not related to environmental issues in terms of production or practice to avoid confounding perceptions of fit.

To manipulate involvement, the stimuli included high involvement versions that mentioned the cause as located in close geographic proximity to participants, and the low involvement mentioning the cause as located at great distance. Previous studies that manipulated involvement by varying the geographic proximity of an issue to participants guided this design. Adjusting an issue's location can increase its perceived relevance (Petty, Cacioppo, and Goldman 1981).

Measures

Attitudes toward the initiative

Attitudes were measured using Priester and Petty (2003) 6-item, 7-point semantic differential index. The semantic differential items asked participants to evaluate the message they viewed as negative-positive, harmful-beneficial, foolish-wise, bad-good, and unfavorable-favorable. This study found it exceeded orthodox criteria for reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$, see Table 2).

Perceptions of initiative effectiveness

To measure participants' perceptions of initiative effectiveness, a modified version of Menon and Kahn (2003) perceived CSR index was used. The 7-point, Likert-style index included the following 5 items: (1) [This corporation] is genuinely concerned about

Table 2. Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	SD	N	α	2	3	Means (SDs) by CSR Type	
							Partnership	Donation
1 Attitude toward initiative	5.57	0.99	430	0.93	0.32	0.38	5.61 (0.99)	5.52 (0.99)
2 Initiative Effectiveness	5.35	0.91	433	0.89		0.77	5.42 (0.89)	5.27 (0.91)
3 Likelihood of Sustained Commitment	5.21	0.94	432	0.86			5.32 (0.90)	5.10 (0.97)

Note. Index means, standard deviations, number of participants responding, Cronbach's alpha, and zero-order correlations. All correlations are significant ($p < 0.01$).

consumer welfare, (2) [This corporation] believes in philanthropy and giving generously to worthy causes, (3) [This corporation] is likely to follow environmental rules and policies, (4) [This corporation] is highly involved in environmental activities (5) [This corporation] is genuinely concerned about environmental issues. The wording of items 3, 4, and 5 were modified to fit the environmental issue in the hypothetical advertisement. Previous research found that the measure met orthodox reliability standards (Menon and Kahn 2003) as did the present study ($\alpha=0.93$, see Table 2).

Perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment

To the researchers' knowledge, a measure of sustained commitment to the cause/corporate-nonprofit relationship did not exist in literature though related work makes clear its conceptual importance. Measures of CSR perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment to the cause/corporate-nonprofit relationship were developed for this study. Five Likert-style items measuring perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment included (1) The corporation demonstrated a real interest in making an impact to help the cause, (2) The corporation is capable of long-lasting beneficial effects toward the cause, (3) The corporation will more than likely make a large impact toward helping the cause, (4) The corporation seemed to feel strongly about helping the cause, and (5) This corporation seems like they will support the cause for a long period of time. This measure met also orthodox criteria for reliability ($\alpha=0.86$, see Table 2).

Manipulation checks

A check of the CSR-type manipulation asked participants to respond to four Likert-type items that described the key contents of each hypothetical advertisement. They indicated their agreement or disagreement with each of these items on a 7-point scale, and these items read as follows: (1) The corporation mentioned a defined partnership with a specific nonprofit organization, (2) The corporation mentioned donating a specific percentage of money to the cause, (3) The corporation mentioned a particular promotional campaign with a date range, and (4) The corporation did *not* mention a time frame for how long the sponsorship would last. The purpose of this manipulation check was not to assess the effects of the message, but to verify that they noticed the message features important for this study (O'Keefe 2003). Consistent with these expectations, participants in the partnership conditions were more likely ($t[430] = -10.77, p < 0.01$) to report that the advertisement that they viewed included a specific partnership with a nonprofit ($M=5.57, SD=1.44$) than those in the donation conditions ($M=3.85, SD=1.85$). Participants in the corporate-nonprofit partnership conditions were also more likely ($t[430] = -9.65, p < 0.01$) to report that the advertisement that they viewed did *not* mention a time frame for how long the sponsorship would last ($M=5.65, SD = 1.61$) than the donation conditions ($M=3.94, SD=2.07$). Also as expected, participants in the donation conditions were more likely ($t[430]=23.21, p < 0.01$) to report that their advertisement mentioned a specific campaign date range ($M=5.76, SD=1.54$) than in the corporate-nonprofit partnership conditions ($M=2.37, SD=1.50$). Participants in the donation condition were also more likely ($t[429]=27.64, p < 0.01$) to report their advertisement mentioned donating a specific percentage of

money to the cause ($M=6.00$, $SD=1.28$) than in the partnership conditions ($M=2.27$, $SD=1.50$).

A manipulation check for involvement asked participants to respond to two, seven-point, Likert-type items modeled on previous research: (1) How important are environmental issues in Texas (or England) to you personally? (2) To what extent do you think environmental issues in Texas (or England) affect you or those around you? Participants were more likely to report that environmental issues were important to them and those around them ($t[429]=10.32$, $p < .01$) in the high involvement conditions ($M=4.04$, $SD=1.50$) than in the low involvement conditions ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.08$), consistent with expectations.

Findings

H1: Comparing the effects of differing CSR approaches effect on attitudes toward the initiative and perceived initiative effectiveness

The first hypothesis predicted that participants would have more positive attitudes toward the initiative (H1a) and greater perceptions of CSR initiative effectiveness (H1b) when viewing a corporate-nonprofit partnership than when viewing a one-time donation (see Table 3). An omnibus ANOVA test compared CSR type on perceptions (specifically, the main effect of a partnership versus a donation on attitudes toward the initiative and initiative effectiveness). H1a and H1b were not supported. There were no significant differences in attitudes toward the initiative ($F [1, 426]=0.77$, $p=0.38$, $partial \eta^2 =0.002$) or perceptions of initiative effectiveness ($F [1, 429]=2.58$, $p=0.11$, $partial \eta^2 = 0.006$) when participants were exposed to the partnership message conditions versus the donation message conditions. Therefore, these results suggest CSR partnerships were no more likely to produce positive attitudes toward the initiative or perceptions of initiative effectiveness than CSR donations, inconsistent with H1a and H1b.

H2: Perceptions of the likelihood of sustained corporate commitment as a mediator

Table 3. Mediation models.

		(M) Likelihood of sustained commitment			(Y) Attitudes toward the Initiative			
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	p		Coeff.	SE	P
a. Perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment as a mediator between CSR type and attitudes								
X (Partnership)	<i>a</i>	0.21	0.09	0.02	<i>c'</i>	−0.01	0.09	0.92
M (Likelihood of sustained commitment)		–	–	–	<i>b</i>	0.40	0.05	<0.01
Constant	<i>i</i> ₁	5.10	0.07	<0.01	<i>i</i> ₂	3.48	0.25	<0.01
<i>R</i> ² = 0.01				<i>R</i> ² = 0.15				
<i>F</i> (1,427) = 5.45, <i>p</i> =0.02				<i>F</i> (2,426) = 36.84, <i>p</i> <0.01				
b. Perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment as a mediator between CSR type and initiative effectiveness								
X (Partnership)	<i>a</i>	0.22	0.09	<0.01	<i>c'</i>	−0.01	0.06	0.84
M (Likelihood of sustained commitment)		–	–	–	<i>b</i>	0.74	0.03	<0.01
Constant	<i>i</i> ₁	5.10	0.07	0.02	<i>i</i> ₂	1.50	0.16	<0.01
<i>R</i> ² = 0.01				<i>R</i> ² = 0.59				
<i>F</i> (1,430) = 5.80, <i>p</i> =0.02				<i>F</i> (2,429) = 308.01, <i>p</i> <0.01				

H2a and H2b predicted that the perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment to the cause/corporate-nonprofit partnership would mediate the effects of CSR type on the dependent variables, initiative effectiveness and attitudes toward the initiative. Specifically, we hypothesized that that the effect of CSR type on attitudes (H1a) and perceptions of initiative effectiveness would be mediated by the perceptions of the likelihood of sustained corporate commitment to the cause (Figures 1 and 2).

The results report the independent variables' (*X*) effect on the mediator (*M*), as well as the mediators' effects on the dependent variable (*Y*) for each model through the bootstrapped coefficients, standard errors, 95% confidence intervals, and the *R*². This approach follows Hayes's (2009) recommended OLS regression approach with bias-corrected bootstrap resampling with 10,000 iterations. The same data are then reported for the combined models of direct and indirect effects as an indicator of explanatory power (see Table 3).

Regarding H2a, perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment mediated the relationship between CSR type and attitudes toward the initiative (see Table 3-a).

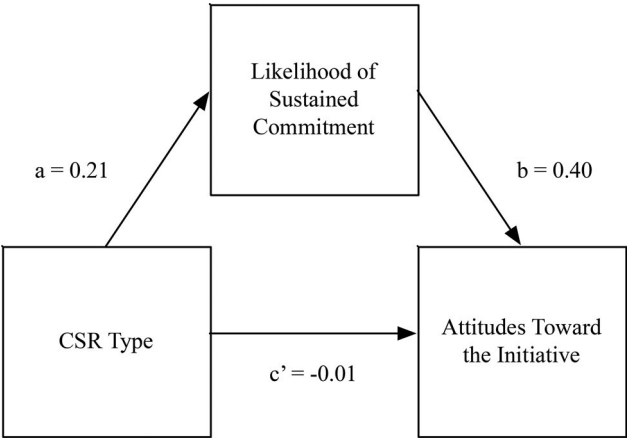


Figure 1. Likelihood of sustained commitment as a mediator of CSR type's effect on consumer attitudes toward the initiative.

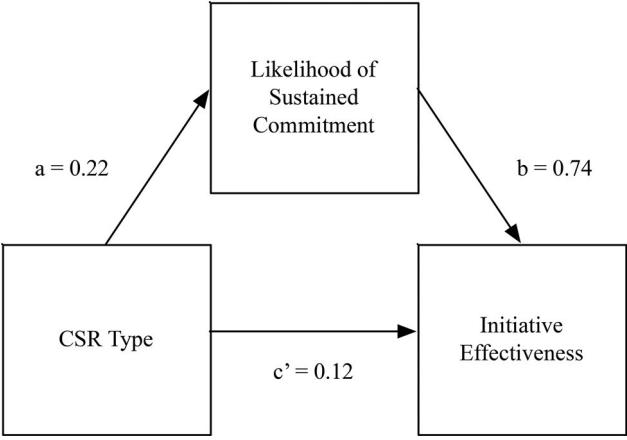


Figure 2. Likelihood of sustained commitment as a mediator of CSR type's effect on perceptions of initiative effectiveness.

Although corporate-nonprofit partnerships did not have a direct effect on the outcome of attitudes (as discussed in H1a), perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment did mediate a positive, indirect effect (*coefficient*=0.08; *SE*=0.10; *CI*=0.02, 0.18). Hypothesis 2a was supported. Likewise, per H2b, perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment mediated the relationship between CSR type and perceptions of initiative effectiveness when participants evaluated a corporate-nonprofit partnership initiative (*coefficient*=0.15; *SE*=0.09; *CI*=0.03, 0.29) (see Table 3-b). In sum, H2a and H2b were supported. There was an indirect effect of CSR type on perceptions of initiative effectiveness and attitudes toward the initiative, when a likelihood to sustained corporate commitment was made clear within the initiative.

H3: Involvement moderates the effects of CSR type on perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment

Hypothesis 3 predicted that involvement would intensify the effects of CSR type on perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment. A test of the between-subjects effects revealed no significant interaction between involvement and CSR type conditions ($F[1,428]=0.06$, $p=0.40$, partial $\eta^2 < 0.01$). Post hoc, to explore the relationships further, we conducted follow-up tests and also found no significant differences between participants in the high and low involvement conditions regarding participants' evaluations of the likelihood of sustained commitment ($F[1,428]=0.21$, $p=0.65$, partial $\eta^2 < 0.01$). We also substituted the measure of involvement used in the manipulation check surmising that the experimental manipulation may have been ineffective, but that perceptions of involvement might act as a mediating state (O'Keefe 2003). Modeled as a covariate, the two-item measure of involvement was directly, positively associated with perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment ($F[1,428]=5.68$, $p=0.02$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.01$, $r=0.12$); however, again, perceptions of involvement did not moderate the effect of CSR type on perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment ($F[1,428]=0.97$, $p=0.29$, partial $\eta^2 < 0.01$). H3 was rejected.

Discussion

With SSM as a theoretical foundation, this study sought to compare perceptions of two common forms of CSR initiatives, corporate-nonprofit partnerships and one-time cause-related donations. SSM posits that the value of corporate-nonprofit partnerships is constituted through communication (Shumate and O'Connor 2010). By testing the effect of CSR type on attitudes toward the initiative and perceived initiative effectiveness, this study adds a new dimension to CSR advertising literature in terms of understanding how individuals differentiate (or do not differentiate) between two common types of CSR conveyed through advertising tactics. In addition, this study also examined the mediating effects of corporate commitment as captured in CSR type on attitudes about corporate-nonprofit partnership initiative and perceptions of initiative effectiveness.

Implications for the practice of selecting the most effective CSR initiative

Previous scholarship has suggested that partnerships, among other types of CSR, communicate a level of commitment that is likely to be seen as genuine because it

allows for the utilization of resources over a longer period than that of a one-time corporate donation (Mutch and Aitken 2009). Scholarship has also noted that genuine attentiveness to the needs of both the corporation and the cause is more readily apparent in a corporate-nonprofit partnership. The support for H2a and H2b provided evidence that the type of CSR initiative indirectly affected individuals' attitudes and perceptions of initiative effectiveness mediated by perceived likelihood of sustained commitment as a mediator.

Though the findings suggested different outcomes from what was originally expected regarding partnerships' effect on attitudes and perceptions of effectiveness, advertisers can still note some valuable implications about the results in making strategic choices about CSR initiatives. This study's findings suggest that individuals may evaluate corporate-nonprofit partnerships and corporate donations in similar ways, and both types of CSR were viewed quite positively. However, corporate-nonprofit partnerships were more likely to have an indirect effect on perceived initiative effectiveness and attitudes toward the initiative through perceptions of likelihood of sustained commitment. Furthermore, to the extent that donations did have positive effects on the outcomes, participants' evaluations of donations hinged on their perceptions that the donation indicated a likelihood of sustained commitment.

These findings are valuable because of their implications for those who are interested in creating a CSR campaign. It may be that individuals are likely to perceive similar levels of commitment from corporations who claim to benefit a cause, regardless of whether the initiative is a partnership or a corporate donation. The specific type of CSR matters to the extent that it communicates sustained commitment. This finding falls in line with CSR scholars' suggestions that sponsoring a cause that fits with the corporation's mission may increase the genuineness of the CSR initiative, regardless of the type of CSR tactic (corporate-nonprofit partnership or donation) through which it is employed (Becker-Olsen and Hill 2006).

Implications for advertising research and practice inspired by the symbiotic sustainability model (SSM)

The SSM is a theoretical CSR framework that until now has not been used in the discipline of advertising (see Shumate and O'Connor 2010; Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020). With its focus on stakeholders' evaluations of corporate-nonprofit partnerships and its careful articulation of the emergence of new identities through partnerships, the SSM offers advertising researchers a robust framework to interrogate corporate-nonprofit partnerships, perceptions of their effectiveness, attitudes toward the partnership, and attitudes and perceptions of the messaging emerging from the partnership and the separate organizations.

Current cause-related marketing research examines how balance theory could be used to make predictions about consumers' responses to cause-related marketing partnerships. It examines a consumer's attitude toward a brand, along with the consumer's attitude toward a cause, and predicts their perceptions of cause-related marketing compatibility (Yun et al. 2019). Although this study does not have 'fit' or cause-related marketing compatibility as conditions, our findings suggest that research on perceived compatibility or fit as a factor in CSR advertising should not just

consider attitude strength towards the entities but also the possibility of stable and sustained partnerships.

Similar to Yun et al. (2019) research, SSM would predict that the perception of a sustained or stable partnership could influence positively individuals' attitudes toward the partnership and perceived effectiveness of related messaging and advertising. SSM would also predict that, not just the intensity of that influence but its very nature including the importance of perceptions of effectiveness, sustainability may be redefined in the communicative construction of the identity created in the partnership. On a more conceptual level, SSM would ask researchers to examine further what factors audiences deem necessary for them to perceive a sustained or stable partnership is in place, what factors do corporations deem constitute a sustained or stable partnership, and in what ways are these factors influenced over time through the communicative enactment of the partnership.

Future research should consider if communicating fit and the intention of sustained corporate commitment to the partnership can together have multiplicative effects on attitudes about CSR initiatives and perceptions of initiative effectiveness. To date, research inspired by the SSM has tended to focus on the importance of fit. The fit between a corporate source and their sponsored cause also can influence perceptions of the CSR advertising initiative, as underscored in SSM theory (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020; Shumate and O'Connor 2010) and existing advertising research (de Jong and van der Meer 2017; Nan and Heo 2007; Seok Sohn, Han, and Lee 2012). Early research in this area demonstrated that individuals tend to perceive initiatives as more effective when the corporation's mission naturally relates to its reason for sponsoring the cause (Becker-Olsen and Hill 2006; Simmons and Becker-Olsen 2006). However, in recent years, scholars have explored this topic of fit more deeply by delineating among corporate-nonprofit partnerships (a form of fit), message fit, and stakeholder evaluations of both (Maktoufi, O'Connor, and Shumate 2020). The findings of this study point to the need to examine how CSR type and perceptions of the likelihood of the sustainability of initiatives interact with fit, and this study also contributes a measure of perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment that was found to be reliable and can be used in such research. This research suggests that they may have complementary or magnifying effects to the extent that they communicate the relationship between partners will be a long-lasting, genuine, and meaningful one.

In contrast, involvement did not intensify the effect of CSR type on perceptions of the corporate-partner relationship as theorized. This finding may be interpreted in multiple ways. First, we should take care in interpreting null findings at all, but in this case the design had sufficient power to find even small effects. Second, it may be that the manipulation of involvement was flawed in this study such that proximity did not motivate the more careful processing of the message as expected. However, modeling perceptions of involvement directly instead of the manipulation had similar results. Third, if the manipulation acted as suspected, greater involvement had little effect on evaluations of sustained commitment, meaning that in these data, regardless of their degree of involvement, participants evaluated the connection between CSR type and sustained commitment in similar ways. Specifically, both types of CSR could communicate sustained commitment, and when they did participants evaluated the initiative positively regardless of their involvement.

An important difference to note in the post-hoc analysis is that although the manipulation of involvement had no significant effect on perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment, the measure of involvement was positively related to perceptions of the likelihood of sustained commitment. When participants felt involvement with the issue regardless of their experimental condition, they may have evaluated the initiative as marked by sustained commitment. Then again, involvement and perceptions of sustained commitment may have been correlated but not causally linked. The relationship is complicated by the fact that increased elaboration does not guarantee positive results. If individuals evaluate evidence more intensely but find it lacking, they will still be more likely to reject it, and greater involvement may also be associated with increased counter-arguing. Nonetheless the findings suggest that future research should better disentangle if distance affected the processing of messages in terms of construal level because it would have implications for how CSR advertising messages should be designed.

Limitations and opportunities for future research

These findings should be read mindful of the limitations of the study. First, it is unlikely people will view or will be exposed to a message or campaign where they are unfamiliar with the source *and* the publicized nonprofit. This study chose hypothetical CSR initiatives to control for preexisting perceptions, but these findings are limited in that they can only explain how viewers perceive credibility if familiarity is *not* a factor. In day-to-day life, this lack of familiarity is likely not the case. Likewise, the hypothetical nature of the stimuli may have contributed to the complications with the involvement manipulation described above. Nonetheless, the findings point to the value of future research that incorporates real-world examples and that considers the mediating role of perceptions of sustained commitment.

Second, the scale used to measure likelihood of a sustained CSR commitment while reliable in orthodox terms has limitations because we used it to assess individuals' perceptions of a fictitious company. For example, it may be that perceptions of involvement here acted akin to trust and credibility especially because it may have been difficult for participants to judge the sustained commitment of a hypothetical corporation. If participants had struggled to make such a determination that might explain why perceptions of involvement were directly related to perceptions of sustained commitment but did not interact with CSR type. In attempting to remove company familiarity as a variable that could affect this study, we limited its generalizability because what companies need are for consumers to be aware of CSR activities and recall them positively. In a future research project, the scale may need to be altered to also measure how believable consumers found corporate claims of sustained commitment. This research should consider perceptions about corporate motivations grounded in specific organizational examples, complexities we controlled for here. The SSM also suggests that audience members will try to ascertain if the CSR is just for publicity or if this cause is wholly relevant to the organization and its stakeholders. This distinction is important because consumers may perceive a conflict between the corporation's financial interests and the best interests of the cause or nonprofit organization.

Third, this study was conducted with undergraduates at one university, meaning that generalization is inherently limited. Even so, this sample provided reasonable

evidence about the underlying mechanisms of effects that CSR advertising can have on evaluations of initiatives. Nonetheless, this limitation is important for the findings regarding the equivalent perceptions of partnerships and donations. Other audiences may not view them as favorably as this sample.

Finally, readers should note that this study used only one message design for each of the four conditions. Messages can be composed in an unlimited number of ways and with a variety of features (Jackson 1992), but the manipulation change in message features between conditions (e.g., message text) required acute differences be made. For example, this study used a toy company as a hypothetical example and doing so might have interacted with the variables of interest in ways we cannot predict. Likewise, the donation partnerships mentioned a time frame, which may have interacted with perceptions of sustained commitment. Although it seems realistic that a donation campaign would have a limited time frame, we might have mentioned the long- or short- term commitment of the partnership as well. We did not include this specific message element to simplify the experimental comparison, but in doing so, we may have inadvertently introduced another confounding factor relevant to perceptions of sustained commitment. Additionally, combinations of message features such as the length of text, specific wording, typesetting, images, and so forth have their own effects on participants. Future research should include message replications. Doing so would also allow for the use of real-world examples by generalizing across the message replications to control for the idiosyncratic reactions to any particular example. The findings of this study suggest that future multiple-message experimental research could usefully focus on CSR type while at the same time including measures of the perceived likelihood of sustained corporate commitment. Furthermore, this study, although limited as described here, does point to the value of identifying and testing what should be communicated in CSR advertising about partnerships *and* donations to make clear that the relationships among organizations are meaningful, robust, and sustainable.

Conclusion

Corporate social responsibility initiatives are ubiquitous in the current business culture. As individual expectations of corporations increase beyond business achievements, their expectations of corporate CSR initiatives also increase. Its limitations notwithstanding, this study's findings are valuable because they suggest relevant implications for practitioners who are interested in creating a CSR advertising campaign. An emphasis on the likelihood of sustained corporate commitment is key to increasing positive perceptions in light of growing CSR competition especially because the findings indicate that individuals tend to view both partnerships and donations positively. Understanding how to increase positive perceptions amidst CSR proliferation should allow practitioners to consider using another tactic to help overcome consumer skepticism and potentially increase corporate reputation.

Disclosure statement

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Appendix A. Stimuli messages per condition

CONDITION 1 HP: HIGH INVOLVEMENT PARTNERSHIP



Moxar Toys Inc. is one of the largest toy manufacturers in Texas.

Because we make our products for future generations, we think it's important to show we care about our young customers in other ways too. Sustainability is an investment at Moxar, just like the education of our children. We feel it is important to care for the earth now in order to ensure its health in the future, which is why Moxar is proud to partner with Earth Unlimited Inc. to educate consumers on living more sustainable lives.



MOXAR IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH EARTH UNLIMITED INC.



Earth Unlimited Inc. is a non-profit organization based in Texas that is dedicated to protecting Earth's natural habitats by educating consumers about environmental abuse and creating responsible solutions. Thanks to contributions from supporters like Moxar, Earth Unlimited has conserved more than 13 thousand acres of land in Texas by educating consumers on how to live their everyday lives in a more sustainable way.

CONDITION 2 LP: LOW-INVOLVEMENT PARTNERSHIP



Moxar Toys Inc. is one of the largest toy manufacturers in England. Because we make our products for future generations, we think it's important to show we care about our young customers in other ways too. Sustainability is an investment at Moxar, just like the education of our children. We feel it is important to care for the earth now in order to ensure its health in the future, which is why Moxar is proud to partner with Earth Unlimited Inc. to educate consumers on living more sustainable lives.



MOXAR IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH EARTH UNLIMITED INC.



Earth Unlimited Inc. is a non-profit organization based in London, England that is dedicated to protecting Earth's natural habitats by educating consumers about environmental abuse and creating responsible solutions. Thanks to contributions from supporters like Moxar, Earth Unlimited has conserved more than 13 thousand acres of land in England by educating consumers on how to live their everyday lives in a more sustainable way.

CONDITION 3 HC: HIGH-INVOLVEMENT CORPORATE DONATION



Moxar Toys Inc. is one of the largest toy manufacturers in Texas. Because we make our products for future generations, we think it's important to show we care about our young customers in other ways too. Sustainability is an investment at Moxar, just like the education of our children. We feel it is important to care for the earth now in order to ensure its health in the future, which is why Moxar is proud to donate 10 percent of every dollar we earn during our "Save the Trees" campaign, (September 1-December 1) to city-wide conservation awareness programs throughout Texas in order to educate consumers on living more sustainable lives.



MOXAR IS PROUD TO DONATE TO CITY-WIDE CONSERVATION AWARENESS PROGRAMS.



Moxar is dedicated to protecting Earth's natural habitats by promoting programs that educate consumers about environmental abuse and creating responsible solutions. Thanks to contributions from supporters, educational programs have allowed consumers to conserve more than 13 thousand acres of land in Texas.

CONDITION 4 LC: LOW-INVOLVEMENT CORPORATE DONATION



Moxar Toys Inc. is one of the largest toy manufacturers in England.

Because we make our products for future generations, we think it's important to show we care about our young customers in other ways too. Sustainability is an investment at Moxar, just like the education of our children. We feel it is important to care for the earth now in order to ensure its health in the future, which is why Moxar is proud to donate 10 percent of every dollar we earn during our "Save the Trees" campaign, (September 1-December 1) to city-wide conservation awareness programs throughout England in order to educate consumers on living more sustainable lives.



MOXAR IS PROUD TO DONATE TO CITY-WIDE CONSERVATION
AWARENESS PROGRAMS.



Moxar is dedicated to protecting Earth's natural habitats by promoting programs that educate consumers about environmental abuse and creating responsible solutions. Thanks to contributions from supporters, educational programs have allowed consumers to conserve more than 13 thousand acres of land in England.

Appendix B. Questionnaire

Q1. Please give your impressions of the advertisement's CSR initiative on each of the questions below. If you have no feeling one way or the other, please choose 4 as a neutral option.

For Partnership conditions (HP), (LP):

To what extent do you agree with the adjective regarding the corporate partnership?									
1	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
2	Harmful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beneficial
3	Declining	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Improving
4	Foolish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wise
5	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
6	Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

For cause-related donation conditions (HC), (LC):

To what extent do you agree with the adjective regarding the corporate donation?									
1	Negative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Positive
2	Harmful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Beneficial
3	Declining	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Improving
4	Foolish	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wise
5	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Good
6	Unfavorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Favorable

Q2. Please evaluate how you feel about the corporation's environmental CSR policies AND the statement provided by the corporation. Please circle the number that best indicates your agreement with each item. The index is ordered Strongly Disagree (1), Neutral (4) and Strongly Agree (7).

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
1. This corporation is genuinely concerned about consumer welfare	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
2. This corporation believes in philanthropy and giving generously to worthy causes	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
3. This corporation likely to follow environmental rules and policies	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
4. This corporation is highly involved in environmental activities	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
5. This corporation is genuinely concerned about environmental issues	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
6. The corporation demonstrated a real interest in making an impact to help the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
7. The corporation is <i>capable</i> of long-lasting beneficial effects toward the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
8. The corporation will <i>more than likely</i> make a large impact toward helping the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
9. The corporation seemed to feel strongly about helping the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
10. This corporation seems like they will support the cause for a long period of time	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
11. How important are environmental issues in Texas (England) to you personally?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
12. To what extent do you think environmental issues in Texas (or England) affect you or those around you?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
13. The CSR program appeals to people affiliated with the corporation <i>and</i> people affiliated with the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
14. The corporation seemed more interested in promoting itself than the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
15. The CSR program will equally benefit the corporation and the cause it claims to support	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
16. The corporation will benefit more from the CSR program than the cause	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	
17. The cause will benefit more from the CSR program than the corporation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Q3. Please answer the following questions based on what you saw within the message.

1. The corporation mentioned a defined partnership with a specific non-profit organization	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The corporation mentioned donating a specific percentage of money to the cause	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. The corporation mentioned a particular promotional campaign with a date range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The corporation did <i>not</i> mention a time frame for how long the sponsorship would last	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Demographic Information:

What is your major?	[Fill in the blank]
What is your age, in years?	[Dropdown menu]
What classification year are you at your university?	Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
What is your race?	American Indian/Alaska Native
	Asian
	Black or African American
	Hispanic or Latino
	Pacific Islander
	White (non-Hispanic)
	Other
What is your gender?	Male Female

Please note that this partnership is a hypothetical example of a Corporate Social Responsibility campaign and does not actually exist. It has been used as a representation of the forms of corporate CSR that exist today. This study is in no way affiliated with any particular corporation or nonprofit organization, nor does it seek to promote either party in any way other than the educational purposes of this research. [End of Posttest]