Reaping Relationship Marketing Benefits from Corporate Social Initiatives

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is very prominent on the corporate agenda. Our research examines the individual-level dynamics of how a brand’s social initiatives can generate relationship marketing benefits. We find that positive CSR beliefs strengthen consumers’ relationships with the brand, generating benefits for the brand such as greater likelihood of purchase, increased loyalty, and greater consumer advocacy. More interestingly, we find that not all CSR initiatives are created equal; a brand that integrates its CSR strategy into the core business strategy is likely to reap greater relational benefits from its CSR initiatives. Regarding antecedent conditions of CSR beliefs, we demonstrate that perceived intrinsic (but not extrinsic) motives underlying CSR initiatives play an important role. Our research contributes to both relationship marketing and CSR literature.
Reaping Relationship Marketing Benefits from Corporate Social Initiatives

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is at the forefront of corporate consciousness. For the first time in corporate history, more than half of the top 250 companies in the Fortune 500 list issued CSR reports this year (www.kpmg.com). This burgeoning attention to CSR has been spurred in large part by the rising expectations of a company’s stakeholders. The public increasingly holds corporations accountable for addressing social ills, such as environmental deterioration, human-rights violations, disparity in education, and extreme poverty (Margolis and Walsh 2003; Smith 2003). As a result, companies often view CSR as an essential cost of doing business in a competitive marketplace. The business case for engaging in CSR is further strengthened by marketplace polls and the trade press that suggest that stakeholders reward good corporate citizens: consumers are likely to switch to brands that are socially responsible (www.coneinc.com), and CSR initiatives provide benefits in terms of reputation management, employee recruitment and retention (www.weforum.org).

Despite these advantages, many companies lack a strategic approach to engaging in CSR; as Porter and Kramer (2002) said, “[while] most companies feel compelled to give to charity, few have figured out how to do it well.” Not surprisingly, academic research suggests that the link between CSR investments and business performance is neither straightforward nor simple: there are mixed findings on the relationship between corporate social performance and corporate financial performance (Margolis and Walsh 2003). Even controlled laboratory studies show that the effect of CSR on consumers’ product evaluations is not always positive (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Brown and Dacin 1997). In an era that emphasizes marketing productivity, or return on marketing (Rust, Lemon, and Zeithaml 2004), there is clearly a need for a more sophisticated understanding of the outcomes of CSR investments and the antecedent conditions under which they are likely to occur.
To elaborate, at present, little is known about how consumers’ CSR beliefs are formed. Prior CSR research usually manipulates CSR record via an experiment (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997 study 1; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001), or, the few field studies that have been conducted (e.g., Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004, study 1; Brown and Dacin study 2), directly assesses respondents’ CSR beliefs with little attention to antecedent conditions. Second, prior research has only focused on a limited set of outcome variables such as company and product evaluations (e.g., Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Brown and Dacin 1997), and purchase behavior (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004). As the field of marketing increasingly shifts from transactional to relational exchanges (e.g., Day and Montgomery 1999; Sheth and Parvatiyar 1995), examining the effects of CSR on both transactional and relational outcomes (e.g., loyalty, word-of-mouth) can provide a more comprehensive picture of the returns on CSR investments. Third, the competitive context of CSR investment and its implications for the outcomes of CSR have not been investigated. Given the prominence of CSR on the corporate agenda, it is very likely that all the competing brands in a category have their respective CSR initiatives. A better understanding of the factors that characterize a brand’s CSR strategy and enables it to differentiate itself from its competitors and thereby reap the most benefits from its CSR investment could help marketers improve the effectiveness of CSR strategy. Finally, most prior research has been conducted in laboratory setting with hypothetical scenarios of CSR activities. While such a methodological approach ensures internal validity, external validity is lacking. Field studies examining real-world CSR initiatives of multiple brands are needed both to establish the external validity of prior findings and to investigate outcome variables that by nature are not applicable to be studied in a laboratory setting.

In light of the above, our research objective is fourfold: (1) to identify the antecedent conditions of consumers’ CSR beliefs of a brand, (2) to investigate the effects of CSR beliefs
on both transactional (e.g., brand choice) and relational outcomes (e.g., loyalty, consumer advocacy), (3) to explore brand-specific effects of CSR beliefs, and (4), to increase the external validity of our findings by examining CSR initiatives of multiple brands in a real world setting.

Our research builds on theories of consumer-company identification and relationship marketing. We posit that CSR beliefs are shaped by consumers’ brand-specific CSR knowledge as well as attributions regarding a company’s motives for engaging in CSR. Positive CSR beliefs increase consumer-company identification, which, in turn, leads to greater likelihood of purchase and greater consumer loyalty and advocacy. Importantly, we posit that in a competitive marketplace, not all brands are able to reap the same marketing benefits from CSR investment. Brands that integrate the social issue into their business strategies, and that appeal to the values of their customer segments, are more likely to get higher returns on their CSR initiatives. We test our hypotheses using a web-based survey of yogurt consumers.

Next, we review the relevant literature and propose our conceptual framework and hypotheses. We then describe an empirical survey of yogurt consumers that tests the predicted links in the framework. We conclude with a discussion of our findings’ implications for theory and practice.

**Conceptual Framework**

Before we introduce our framework and hypotheses, a short description of CA (i.e., corporate ability) and CSR beliefs is in order as these two concepts are key to our framework. CA and CSR beliefs are two dimensions of company associations (Brown and Dacin 1997). CA beliefs relate to an organization’s expertise in producing and delivering product and/or service offerings, and CSR beliefs relate to an organization’s status and activities with respect
to its perceived societal obligations. We employ the CA-CSR distinction to characterize key
aspects of beliefs consumers have of a brand. CA beliefs of a brand mostly correspond to the
product-related attributes and functional benefits of a brand. In other words, CA beliefs are
often relevant to fairly basic motivations, such as physiological and safety needs (Maslow
1970), and involve a desire for problem removal or avoidance (Keller 1993). On the contrary,
CSR beliefs of a brand mostly correspond to non product-related attributes and value
expressive benefits of a product, and are important in addressing consumers’ underlying
needs for social approval, personal expression and self-esteem. Prior research suggests that,
compared to CA beliefs, CSR beliefs often reveal fundamental, enduring, and more
distinctive aspects of a brand’s character due to its disparate and idiosyncratic bases (e.g.,
egalitarian employment policies, sponsorship of social causes, environmentalism) than other
CA-based (e.g., manufacturing expertise) facets of the brand schema (Sen and Bhattacharya
2001). Clearly, although relational outcomes such as loyalty depend both on CA and CSR
beliefs (and hence both feature in our framework), our substantive interest in this paper is the
latter.

Our conceptual framework articulates the individual-level dynamics of how a brand’s
CSR initiatives work to generate relationship marketing benefits (Figure 1). We propose that
consumers’ brand CSR beliefs are based on their knowledge of the brand’s CSR initiatives
and their attributions of the motives underlying its CSR. More importantly, we posit that
intrinsic (but not extrinsic) CSR attributions partially mediate the link between CSR
knowledge and CSR beliefs. Furthermore, positive brand CSR beliefs strengthen consumers’
relationships with the brand, resulting in stronger identification, enhanced well-being,
increased likelihood of brand choice and greater consumer loyalty and advocacy. We also
explore the role that CSR support plays in moderating the link between CSR beliefs and
relational consequences (i.e., identification, well-being, brand choice, loyalty and advocacy).
Antecedents of CSR Beliefs

There has been little research examining antecedents of CSR beliefs. Based on a review of the relevant literature, we identify two potential key antecedents: consumers’ knowledge of a brand’s CSR activities (CSR knowledge), and their attributions of motives behind a brand’s CSR initiatives (CSR attributions).

**CSR knowledge.** Though researchers have talked about the importance of CSR knowledge (Mcwilliams and Siegel 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen 2004), its role as an antecedent of CSR beliefs have not been examined. In this research, we define CSR knowledge as consumers’ knowledge of a brand’s social initiatives. This definition implies that, in our context, CSR knowledge is consumers’ knowledge of something positive about a brand. Needless to say, consumers’ knowledge of a brand’s social initiative is a prerequisite for any impact such social initiative may have on consumers’ beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. In a series of focus group studies with real consumers, Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) found that consumers were heterogeneous in terms of their knowledge of brands’ social initiatives. Based on the accessibility-diagnosticity framework (Feldman and Lynch 1989), we posit that consumers with varying levels of CSR knowledge are likely to differ in their CSR beliefs.

Specifically, we hypothesize a positive relationship between the level of consumers’ CSR knowledge of a brand and the favorability of their brand CSR beliefs. The probability of any information being utilized in a judgment is a function of its accessibility and diagnosticity (Feldman and Lynch 1989). Highly accessible information comes to mind more quickly and is, therefore, more likely to be utilized a judgment cue than less accessible information. Diagnosticity refers to the strength of the relationship between cue value (e.g., this brand works for breast cancer) and criterion variable (e.g., this brand is a socially responsible
brand). Cues perceived as highly diagnostic are more likely to be utilized than cues perceived as nondiagnostic. Consumers with a greater level of CSR knowledge about a brand are likely to have the CSR information of the brand accessible in their minds and use it as input to form their brand CSR beliefs. In general, CSR knowledge about a brand should be a diagnostic cue of how socially responsible a brand is. Due to the accessibility and diagnosticity of CSR information, the relationship between the level of CSR knowledge and favorability of CSR beliefs is likely to be positive.

H1: There is a positive relationship between the level of consumers’ knowledge of a brand’s social initiative and the favorability of their CSR beliefs of the brand.

**CSR attributions.** Attribution theory (e.g., Gilbert 1998) has long been used to understand the causal inferences individuals make in their attempts to understand and control their environment. Faced with CSR information of a brand, consumers will try to infer attributes of the brand: whether the brand’s CSR initiatives reflect its disposition of being socially responsible, or simply a means to further its profit objectives. In the field of helping behaviors, attributions are usually classified into extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Batson 1998). Extrinsic motivations have the ultimate goal of increasing a person’s own welfare, while intrinsic motivations have the ultimate goal of enhancing the welfare of the needy. Analogously, we specify that CSR stemming from a desire to do good is driven by intrinsic motives (i.e., a desire to benefit the community, to increase social welfare), and CSR reflecting pursuit of self-interest is driven by extrinsic motives (i.e., a desire to increase sales, to improve corporate image, to cope with competitive pressure).

In our context, attribution theory (Gilbert 1998) suggests that when consumers attribute a company’s CSR initiatives to intrinsic motives, they will draw dispositional inferences from its CSR initiatives (i.e., the company is a socially responsible entity) and form correspondent CSR beliefs. That is, intrinsic attributions will at least mediate the link between CSR
knowledge and CSR beliefs. However, when consumers attribute a company’s CSR initiatives to extrinsic motives, they will refrain from drawing corresponding dispositional inferences (Gilbert 1998).

The important question is whether consumers will react negatively when they perceive extrinsic motives. Although some prior research has shown that when consumers attribute marketing actions to firm-serving motives, negative reactions often ensue (e.g., Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Fein 1996), we hypothesize that, with regard to CSR activities, consumers are tolerant of extrinsic motives. Prior qualitative research suggests that consumers tend to view companies’ engagement in CSR as “win-win solution”, or “two-way street” (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004). Moreover, the 2004 Cone Corporate Citizenship study shows that 76% of Americans agree that “it is acceptable for companies to involve a cause or issue in their marketing” (www.coneinc.com). Further theoretical support for our hypothesis on extrinsic attribution comes from social psychology research on altruism (Batson 1998). Research on altruism finds that helping behaviors are usually jointly determined by egoistic and altruistic motives; purely egoistic or purely altruistic motives for engaging in pro-social behaviors are the exception rather than the rule (Batson 1998). Similarly, consumers are likely to accept firm-serving motives for CSR activities rather than simplistically expecting pure altruistic motives. In other words, extrinsic attributions are not likely to be negatively related to CSR beliefs.

Therefore,

H2: Perceived intrinsic (but not extrinsic) motives will partially mediate the positive relationship between CSR knowledge and CSR beliefs.

Relational Outcomes of CSR Beliefs

While prior research (e.g., Brown and Dacin 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001) has
established the positive effects of a company’s CSR actions on consumers’ attitude toward that company and its products, the potential effects of CSR investment on building stronger, more meaningful relationships with consumers have not been examined. A brand’s CSR initiatives increase consumers’ identification with the brand because CSR increases the attractiveness of brand identity by revealing fundamental, enduring, and distinctive aspects of the brand’s characters (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, and Braig 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001). Since identification helps satisfy consumers’ key self-definitional needs (e.g., who am I?), we contend that relationships built on identification are deep and meaningful, and capable of enhancing consumer well-being and eliciting consumers’ support for the brand. Consumers’ support for the brand will be demonstrated through their purchase, and advocacy such as increased loyalty, favorable word-of-mouth, and greater resilience to negative information. We discuss these relationships next.

Identification. Consumers form relationships with companies and/or brands, which add and structure meanings in consumers’ life and have broad consequences for self definition (Fournier 1997; Belk 1988; McCracken 1988). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) theorize that some of the strongest consumer-company relationships are based on consumers’ identification with the companies, and that identification helps satisfy consumers’ key self-definitional needs. Identification is a powerful state driven by individuals’ needs for self-definition and social identity that prompts them to develop “a sense of attachment or overlap” (Bergami and Bagozzi 2000) with select entities.

The degree of identification depends largely on the attractiveness of the company’s/brand’s identity to the consumer; specifically, consumers are more likely to identify with a company/brand when they perceive its identity to be enduring, distinctive and capable of enhancing their self-esteem. Since prior research has already established a positive relationship between CSR initiatives and consumers’ identification (Lichtenstein,
Drumwright, and Braig 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya 2001), we expect to find a similar relationship in our case; however, we do not propose a formal hypothesis.

**Consumer Well-being.** Well-being is a subjective sense of satisfaction associated with fulfilling one’s potential (Pollard & Rosenberg 2003). The psycho-social aspect of well-being usually refers to identity, self-concept and self-esteem (Pollard & Rosenberg 2003). We examine the relationship between consumers’ CSR beliefs and their psycho-social well-being. Prior research indicates that the symbolic benefits of a product enhance consumers’ feelings of social approval and feelings of pride and fulfillment (Hoeffler and Keller 2002; Keller 1993). To the extent that consumers believe a brand’s CSR initiatives create favorable user imagery for the brand, and that their purchase of the brand is contributing to the CSR cause, feelings of social approval and self-respect are likely to emerge. Therefore, we believe that a brand’s CSR beliefs will enhance consumer well-being.

We expect identification to at least partially mediate the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumer well-being. Identification with a company/brand that possesses positive qualities (e.g., socially responsible, trustworthy) will enhance consumers’ well-being as this affiliation provides them with an opportunity to see themselves with these positive qualities, strengthening the degree to which a consumer likes him- or herself. Consumers who have favorable CSR beliefs of a brand are likely to feel the reflected glory of the brand’s attractive identity through identification with the brand.

H3-a: There is a positive relationship between CSR beliefs and consumers’ well-being.

H3-b: Identification at least partially mediates the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumers’ well-being.

**Consumer Purchase, Loyalty and Advocacy.** Favorable CSR beliefs will strengthen the consumer-brand relationship, which leads to greater likelihood of purchasing the focal brand
and greater advocacy towards it. Researchers have theorized that identification increases consumers’ support of the organization (Maignan and Ferrel 2004; Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). Identification causes people to become psychologically attached to and care about the organization, which, in turn, motivates them to commit to the achievement of its goals and expend more voluntary efforts on its behalf. Such commitment and voluntary efforts have important consequences that clearly relate to the goals of customer relationship management. For example, we propose that CSR-based identification has the potential to increase consumers’ loyalty to the company’s existing products (i.e., customer retention), willingness to try its new products (i.e., cross-selling opportunities), and consumers’ favorable word-of-mouth. Below, we discuss the relationships between identification and consumers’ advocacy (loyalty, willingness to consume new products, favorable word-of-mouth and resilience to negative information). We distinguish between consumer loyalty and consumer advocacy. Consumers who are brand advocates or champions are not only utterly loyal but also enthusiastically promote the brand and its products to others (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003).

Identification aligns consumers’ interests and behaviors with interests and behaviors that benefit the company. Such alignment proceeds naturally from the congruence between a consumer’s self-definition and the company’s definition (Dutton, Dukerich, and Harquail 1994). The alignment of interests means exertion on behalf of the organization is also exertion on behalf of the self. Organization identification research shows that there is a strong link between identification and identifier commitment in terms of reduced turnover in the employer-employee context (Bagozzi and Bergami 2002), and greater financial and membership-related support in the context of educational and cultural institutions (Bhattacharya, Rao, and Glynn 1995). As consumption is the primary currency of consumer-company relationships, such identification-based commitment is likely to be
expressed through not only one-time purchase of the focal brand but also a sustained, long-term preference for the identified-with company’s/brand’s products over those of its competitors. In other words, consumer purchase and loyalty towards the focal brand are likely to be key consequences of consumer identification.

Beyond purchase and consumption of products, engagement in advocacy behaviors on behalf of the company/brand is likely to be a key manifestation of identified consumers’ voluntary efforts to contribute to the company’s long-term welfare (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003). For example, positive word-of-mouth will be a natural outcome of consumers’ perceived oneness with the company. Another type of advocacy behaviors is consumers’ resilience to negative information about the company/brand. Positive CSR beliefs provide a reservoir of goodwill that will help deflect criticism and overcome negative publicity from an unexpected event or tragedy. Similarly, Klein and Dawar (2004) suggested the role of CSR as an insurance policy to reduce the risk of damage to brand equity in the event of a calamity. We contend that CSR-based identification causes consumers to make more charitable attributions when things go wrong and therefore makes them more resilient to negative information.

Overall therefore,

H4-a: consumers who have favorable CSR beliefs of a brand are more likely to, 1) purchase the brand, 2) be loyal to the brand, 3) be advocates of the brand.

H4-b: identification partially mediates the relationships among CSR beliefs and consumers’ purchase, loyalty and advocacy behaviors.

**Moderating Effects of CSR Support**

The preceding hypothesized relationships about the antecedents and outcomes of CSR beliefs will not be the same across all consumers or all CSR initiatives. In the real world, different brands/companies work for various CSR issues, with which consumers are likely to have
varying levels of personal support. We examine the moderating roles of consumers’ support of CSR issues next.

Consumers have varying levels of support for different CSR issues, as implied in prior research by “cause affinity among key constituents” (Drumwright 1996), “importance of issue to self” (Haley 1996), and “personal relevance” (Creyer and Ross 1997). Because of the need for consistency (Dutton, Dukerich and Harquail 1994) and self-positivity bias, consumers are likely to attach more importance to the CSR causes they personally support; thus the effects of CSR knowledge and CSR attribution on CSR beliefs are likely to be stronger for consumers whose CSR support is high than for consumers whose CSR support is low. Similarly, to maintain a consistent self-image, a brand’s CSR initiatives will lead to more perceived congruence, and thus stronger identification with the brand for high CSR support consumers.

H5: The hypothesized relationships among CSR beliefs and the relational consequences (i.e., identification, well being, consumer purchase, loyalty and advocacy) are likely to be stronger for consumers whose CSR support is high than for consumers whose CSR support is low.

*Brand-specific Effects of CSR Beliefs*

Given the competitive nature of the marketplace, investments in CSR initiatives are not likely to benefit all brands equally. Instead, a brand needs to do better than and be different from its competitors with regard to its CSR strategy to be able to reap more positive benefits. For example, a brand is more likely than its competitors to benefit from its CSR initiatives when its target consumers know more about its CSR initiatives, perceive more intrinsic motives underlying its CSR initiatives, and support the brand’s CSR issue to a greater extent. Similarly, a brand that integrates its CSR strategy into its core business strategy and makes CSR the essence of the brand will be able to better appeal to socially conscious consumers;
consequently, given that CSR-based brand identity is more effective at engendering identification (Bhattacharya and Sen 2003), it will be able to achieve greater identification and loyalty, and generate more voluntary advocacy behaviors among its target consumers. On the contrary, brands that lack a systematic, integrated approach toward CSR and engage in social initiatives because of competitive or social pressure are less likely to attract the socially conscious consumer, and less likely to generate identification or voluntary advocacy behaviors.

Therefore,

H6: The strengths of relationships among CSR beliefs and the outcomes are likely to vary across brands. A brand that better integrates its CSR strategy into the core business strategy is likely to witness stronger relationships among CSR beliefs and the relational consequences.

Next, we describe an empirical study that tests these hypotheses.

Study

Research Design

We conducted a web-based consumer survey of the yogurt products through Zoomerang software, which is a leading software company specializing in web-based surveys. Our sample was drawn from Zoomerang panelists who reside in the North East, are employed, and purchase yogurt. We choose the yogurt industry for two reasons. First, yogurt is a commonly purchased consumer product with well-known brands in the market. More importantly, the three major yogurt brands that we cover in our research, Dannon, Stonyfield Farm and Yoplait, all engage in CSR activities, but with enough variance in the characteristics of their CSR strategies to make for an interesting study. The variance in these three brands’ CSR strategies will allow us to investigate both the links among the key
constructs in our framework as well as the brand-specific effects of CSR beliefs that we hypothesize.

*CSR initiatives of the three brands.* The three focal brands engage in various CSR activities. Particularly, Dannon has been active in “fighting hunger in America” and has joined forces with America’s Second Harvest, the nation’s largest hunger-relief organization, in the fight to end childhood hunger in the U.S. Stonyfield Farm is known for its environmental responsibility. Some facts of its environmental initiatives include: (1) Organic farming—over 80% of Stonyfield Farm sales are certified organic products which are produced using “earth-friendly” practices, (2) environmental packaging—reducing excessive packaging by switching to lighter weight plastic, (3) Profits for the Planet (PFP) program—under this program the company gives 10% of its profit to efforts that help protect and restore the earth. Some recipients of its PFP support include The Sustainability Institute, Children’s Health Environmental Coalition, and The Rainforest Foundation. Yoplait has been committed to fighting breast cancer. Since 1998, it has been launching “Save Lids to Save Lives”, its signature pink-lid promotion, and it has been the National Series Presenting Sponsor of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation’s Race for the Cure since 2001.

It’s worth noting that of the three brands covered in our study, Stonyfield Farm is the only brand that has really integrated CSR into its core business strategy. The spirit of CSR is reflected in every aspect of its business: the corporate mission, production and packaging, human resources management and importantly, marketing. It has won several awards including “The Green Cross Millennium Award for Corporate Environmental Leadership” from Global Green USA and Green Cross International and “National Award for Sustainability in the Category of Atmosphere and Climate” from the President's Council on Sustainable Development and Renew America.

*Data Collection*
A web-link to the questionnaire was emailed to 11,000 Zoomerang panelists that satisfied our selection criteria, that is, panelists who reside in the North East part of the United States, are employed, and purchase yogurt. We restricted ourselves to the North East as Stonyfield (headquartered in New Hampshire) enjoys full scale distribution in these parts; and we used the employment screen to get a reasonable proportion of consumers that buy branded yogurt. As a token of appreciation and an incentive to participate in our survey, respondents who answered every question in the survey were entered in a drawing for one of two $100 gift certificates for Amazon.com. Overall, we received 3,465 completed questionnaires—representing a 31.5% response rate.

**Sample characteristics.** As can been seen from Table 1, our sampling method succeeded in getting respondents who varied sufficiently on demographic (i.e., age, sex) and socioeconomic (i.e., education, income) status. Majority of our respondents are female, which is not surprising given that it is typical for women to do the grocery shopping.

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**Measures**

The key variables in our study are: CSR knowledge, CSR attributions, CA and CSR beliefs, identification, consumer well-being, brand choice, consumer loyalty and advocacy. All measures except those of brand choice are 5-point Likert scales with verbal anchors attached to each scale position (i.e., “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”). Brand choice was measured by the brand last purchased.

In terms of the questionnaire flow, respondents first provided information on their yogurt brand choice behavior. They selected the brand they purchased most recently, and the brand they purchased most frequently. Respondents chose the option “others” if their choice was not any of the brands listed. Respondents then rated their loyalty, advocacy, well-being and
identification with regard to each of the three brands. Next, respondents provided their CA and CSR beliefs of the three brands. Respondents also rated their CSR support for the issues that these brands are engaged in, as well as their general attitude toward socially responsible brands. Finally, respondents rated their knowledge about each brand’s CSR initiatives and the attributions of the motives underlying each brand’s CSR initiatives. Measures of well-being, CSR beliefs, and CSR knowledge had an “N/A” option in addition to the 5-point scale.

Respondents’ information on age, gender, education and income were collected at the end of the survey.

**Analysis**

We first did some preliminary analysis using 3,465 completed questionnaires, and then removed data that have missing values or “N/A” on key constructs before testing the hypothesized links in our framework.

Based on answers to the question “which brand do you purchase most frequently”, our sample indicates that 39% of the respondents buy Dannon most frequently, 11% buy Stonyfield Farm most frequently and 24% buy Yoplait most frequently.

We found that respondents’ knowledge of a particular brand’s CSR initiative is generally low. Only 5% of our respondents agreed that Dannon works for the eradication of hunger, 25% of respondents agreed that Stonyfield Farm works for environmental initiatives, and 31% of the respondents were aware of Yoplait’s efforts in fighting breast cancer.

Looking at respondents’ attribution of CSR initiatives, we found that mixed attributions were common, that is, respondents perceived both intrinsic and extrinsic motives behind each
brand’s CSR initiative. Particularly, factor analysis of the attributions measures\textsuperscript{1} for each brand consistently revealed two factors. Furthermore, the correlations between intrinsic attribution and extrinsic attribution of the three brands were low, mostly below .10, supporting the notion that intrinsic and extrinsic attributions are two dimensions, not two end points of one scale.

Comparing respondents’ support for various CSR issues that these brands engage in, we found that fight against breast cancer is the most widely supported CSR cause\textsuperscript{2}, with 51% of our respondents supporting it, followed by environmental protection, with 49% supporting it. The percentage supporting eradication of hunger was 37%.

In accordance with our research objectives, to test hypotheses about CSR-related constructs, we excluded from our analysis respondents who chose “N/A” on measures regarding CSR knowledge and CSR beliefs (n=2,163), and who had missing values on other items (n=240), reducing the total number of respondents to be included in our test of the hypotheses 1,062. While limiting our analysis to those who have provided ratings on their CSR knowledge and CSR beliefs on all three major brands of the yogurt category limits the generalizability of our results, it is important to note that at this point our objective is theory-testing. The important issue here is whether our sample is an appropriate context for testing our theory. Since we are not attempting to generalize an established model to a new population or project a descriptive statistic from a sample to some larger population, the possibility of respondent bias is not a major concern in research such as ours (Hunt 1990; Morgan and Hunt 1994).

Of the 1,062 respondents that are included in our final analysis, 38.61% (n=410) buy Dannon most frequently, 12.24% (n=130) buy Stonyfield Farm most frequently, and 24.61% (n=262)

\textsuperscript{1} The attributions measures include 4 items: this brand works for XX (the actual social initiative the brand supports) because it (1) is genuinely concerned about being socially responsible, (2) wants to have a good reputation, (3) wants to make a profit, (4) feels competitive pressure to engage in such activities.

\textsuperscript{2} We speculate that the majority of our respondents being female may partly account for the popularity of the cause “fight against breast cancer”.

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buy Yoplait most frequently.

**Measure Validation**

Using the cleaned dataset (n=1,062), we validated the proposed measures by assessing the item-to-total correlations for items in each proposed scale. As shown in Table 2, the constructs are internally reliable. The Cronbach coefficient $\alpha$ for consumer advocacy is .77, and the 3 items were averaged to form the measure of consumer advocacy. The Cronbach coefficient $\alpha$ for CA beliefs is .83, and the 4 items were averaged to form the measure of CA beliefs. The two items of CSR beliefs are correlated at .55 and were averaged to form the measure of CSR beliefs. For CSR attributions, we had four items to tap into the extrinsic and intrinsic motivations: 1) genuinely concerned about being socially responsible, 2) to have a good reputation, 3) to make a profit, 4) to cope with competitive pressure. Factor analysis of these four items with varimax rotation revealed two factors, with reputation motive cross-loading on both factors. Therefore, we used the item “genuine concern” as the measure of perceived intrinsic motive, and the average of the two items “profit motive” and “competitive pressure” as the measure of perceived extrinsic motive. The correlation between the two items of extrinsic motive is .69.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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To better understand the differences across brands, in Table 3 we summarize the means of the variables of each brand as rated by all respondents and by each brand’s loyal customers (i.e., frequent buyers). The overall brand ratings show that Dannon’s CA ratings are the highest (F=30.43, p<.0001) and Stonyfield’s CSR ratings are the highest (F=43.98, p<.0001). Furthermore, average ratings by each brand’s loyal customers reveal an interesting pattern. We find that loyal customers of Stonyfield hold more favorable attitude towards the item “socially responsible brand” than loyal customers of either Dannon or Yoplait do (F=20.66,
p<.0001), and they also support Stonyfield’s CSR issue to a greater extent than loyal
customers of Dannon or Yoplait support their respective brands’ CSR issues (F=23.93,
p<.0001). Taken together with our description of the brands’ social initiatives above, in terms
of H6, this preliminary analysis suggests that Stonyfield is able to attract a more socially
conscious and supportive customer base, perhaps because it has better integrated its CSR
strategy into its overall marketing. In turn, this may manifest in a stronger role played by
CSR in strengthening Stonyfield’s relationship with its customers. We will return to this
pattern in our discussion of the brand-specific effects.

Before proceeding with the tests of hypotheses, we address the issue of common method bias.
As is well known, common-method bias can be a problem in a survey study such as ours, as
dependent and independent variable data are collected from the same respondent. To examine
the extent of this bias in our context, in line with Podsakoff and Organ (1986), we used
Harman’s one-factor test. The results of the principal components factor analysis revealed
that there are five factors with eigen values greater than 1.0, which account for 64.25% of the
total variance. Overall, common method variance does not appear to be a problem because
several factors were identified and there is no general factor in the unrotated structure
(Podsakoff and Organ 1986).

**Tests of Hypotheses**

Multiple regression analyses and logit choice models are used to test the predicted links in
the conceptual framework. Wherever necessary, we mean centered the continuous variables
for data analysis.

**Antecedents of CSR beliefs.** Results of regressions that test the antecedents of CSR beliefs
are presented in Table 4. In line with our expectation, CSR knowledge is positively associated with CSR beliefs ($b=.43$, $p<.0001$). Intrinsic attributions partially mediate the relationship between CSR knowledge and CSR beliefs. Following Kline’s (1998) approach to calculating direct and indirect effects, we find that 21.5% of the total effect of CSR knowledge on CSR beliefs is mediated by intrinsic attributions, whereas only less than 1% of the total effect of CSR knowledge on CSR beliefs is mediated by extrinsic attributions. Therefore, the results provide support for H1 and H2.

Insert Table 4 about here

Consumer identification. As shown in Table 5, as expected, CSR beliefs are positively related to consumer’s identification with the brand ($b=.42$, $p<.0001$). Moreover, the relationship is stronger when consumers’ CSR support is high, as indicated by the positive interaction effect ($b=.05$, $p<.01$).

Insert Table 5 about here

Consumer Well-being. The scale of the well-being measure included an “N/A” option. To test the hypothesized links among CSR beliefs, identification, and consumer well-being, we excluded from our analysis those respondents that chose “N/A” option on the “well-being” item, reducing the sample size from $n=1,062$ to $n=637$. The results of regression are also in Table 5. As hypothesized, CSR beliefs are positively associated with consumer well-being ($b=.46$, $p<.0001$), and there is a positive interaction between CSR beliefs and CSR support ($b=.06$, $p<.05$), suggesting that the relationship between CSR beliefs and well-being is stronger when consumer CSR support is high.

To test the mediating role of identification, we ran a set of three regressions (Baron and
Kenny 1986): 1) well-being regressed on CA and CSR beliefs, 2) well-being regressed on CA, CSR beliefs and identification, and 3) identification regressed on CA and CSR beliefs. The coefficient of CSR beliefs dropped from $b=.46 \ (p<.0001)$ in regression 1 to $b=.24 \ (p<.01)$ in regression 2. We found that identification mediates about 47.8% of the total effects of CSR beliefs on consumer well being. The results provide support for H3a and H3b.

**Consumer Purchase Behavior**: We estimated a multinomial logit model to test the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumer brand choice. Based on Guadagni and Little (1983)'s model, we define the probability of individual $i$ choosing brand $k$ as:

$$P_{ik} = \frac{\exp(U_{ik})}{\sum_k \exp(U_{ik})},$$

where $U_{ik} = \sum_j b_{jk} x_{ijk}$.

Further, $x_{ijk} = \text{observed value of attribute } j \text{ of brand } k \text{ for customer } i$, $b_{jk} = \text{utility weight of attribute } j \text{ of brand } k$.

We ran three sets of models. Model 1 uses two brand attributes, CA beliefs and CSR beliefs, as well as the brand-specific constants as the explanatory variables, and consumer’s brand choice as the dependent variable. Model 2 adds an additional independent variable, identification, on the basis of model 1. Model 3 tests the moderating effect of CSR support on brand choice. Table 6 presents the results of all three logit models. Overall, all three models are significant $(p<.0001)$. As expected, CSR beliefs are positively related to likelihood of brand choice (model 1, $b=.62$, $p<.01$). Mediation analysis indicates that identification does not mediate the relationship between CSR beliefs and brand choice. Furthermore, model 3 results show that CSR support does not moderate the relationship between CSR beliefs and brand choice.

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Insert Table 6 about here

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Insert Table 6 about here

23
Consumer loyalty and advocacy. The results of regressions testing the relationships between CSR beliefs, loyalty and advocacy are presented in Table 5. We found that CSR beliefs are positively related to loyalty (b=.11, p<.001) and advocacy (b=.06, p<.01). However, CSR support does not moderate the relationship between CSR beliefs and loyalty or the relationship between CSR beliefs and advocacy. Mediation analysis shows that identification is a key mediator of the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumer advocacy. Specifically, identification mediates 95.4% of the total effect of CSR beliefs on loyalty, and 85% of the effect of CSR beliefs on advocacy.

Brand-specific Analysis. Going back to Table 3, we find that, as compared to the loyal consumers of Dannon and Yoplait, the loyal consumers of Stonyfield know more about Stonyfield’s CSR initiatives and perceive a greater degree of intrinsic motives underlying Stonyfield’s social initiatives, suggesting that Stonyfield has been more effective in communicating their social initiatives to their target consumers. Consequently, Stonyfield enjoys more favorable CSR beliefs among its loyal consumers than Dannon and Yoplait do. Another important feature of Stonyfield’s consumers is that they hold a more positive attitude toward socially responsible brands than the general population; moreover, they support Stonyfield’s social initiative to a greater extent than either Dannon or Yoplait’s consumers (support their respective brands’ CSR initiatives). In other words, Stonyfield is better able to appeal to the social values of its consumers. Based on these observations, in terms of H6, we expect Stonyfield’s consumers to identify more strongly with the brand, be more loyal, and devote more voluntary efforts on its behalf. We describe this brand-specific analysis next.

We use a regression-based framework to test whether the association between CSR beliefs
and identification, loyalty and advocacy differs across brands. Our model is: Outcome variables (i.e., identification, well-being, loyalty and advocacy) =

\[ a + a_1 + a_2 + b_1 \text{CAbeliefs} + b_2 \text{CAbeliefs} \times a_1 + b_3 \text{CAbeliefs} \times a_2 + c_1 \text{CSRbeliefs} + c_2 \text{CSRbeliefs} \times a_1 + c_3 \text{CSRbeliefs} \times a_2, \]

where,

\[ a = \text{intercept}; \]

\[ a_1 = 1 \text{ if the brand is Dannon, else } a_1 = 0; \]

\[ a_2 = 1 \text{ if the brand is Yoplait, else } a_2 = 0; \]

\[ \text{CAbeliefs} = \text{rating of CA beliefs}; \]

\[ \text{CSRbeliefs} = \text{rating of CSR beliefs}; \]

Note that the definitions of the two dummy variables \( a_1 \) and \( a_2 \) indicates that the reference brand is Stonyfield. Thus, a significant regression coefficient \( c_2 \) would indicate that there is a difference in the effects of CSR beliefs between Stonyfield and Dannon. Similarly, a significant regression coefficient \( c_3 \) would indicate that there is a difference in the effects of CSR beliefs between Stonyfield and Yoplait. A negative coefficient indicates that the effect of Stonyfield is stronger than that of the respective comparison brand.

The regression results indicate that, consistent with our expectations, the relationships between CSR beliefs and the outcome variables do vary across brands (see Table 7). Specifically, the relationship between CSR beliefs and identification is stronger for Stonyfield than for Dannon \((c_2 = -0.14, p < 0.05)\), and is stronger for Stonyfield than for Yoplait \((c_3 = -0.12, p < 0.10)\). Similarly, the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumer loyalty is not the same across these brands; specifically, the association between CSR beliefs and loyalty is stronger for Stonyfield than for Dannon \((c_2 = -0.17, p < 0.05)\), and is stronger for
Stonyfield than for Yoplait ($c_3=-.13$, $p<.10$). Moreover, the relationship between CSR beliefs and advocacy is stronger for Stonyfield than for Dannon ($c_2=-.10$, $p<.10$), as well as for Yoplait ($c_3=-.08$ $p<.10$). Although the relationship between CSR beliefs and well-being does not vary across brands; overall, the relationships between CSR beliefs and outcome variables are stronger for Stonyfield than for Dannon or Yoplait, as is in the case of identification, loyalty and advocacy.

Finally, we also investigate whether there are brand-specific effects of CSR beliefs on consumer brand choice. A multinomial logit model with brand-specific variables shows that while CA beliefs are positively related to brand choice for all three brands, CSR beliefs of Stonyfield and Yoplait (but not Dannon) are positively related to brand choice (see Table 8).

In sum, our analysis shows that Stonyfield is able to reap a much broader range of relationship marketing benefits than Dannon and Yoplait, thus providing support for H6.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications

Our research contributes to three literature streams: attribution theory, CSR and relationship marketing. We show that consumers’ CSR attributions play an important role in forming CSR beliefs. Interestingly, instead of attributing a CSR initiative solely to intrinsic motives or extrinsic motives, consumers usually perceive both intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Intrinsic attributions are diagnostic of a brand’s identity and are positively associated with CSR beliefs. However, there appears to be an asymmetry in that extrinsic attributions have little adverse effect on CSR beliefs. It appears that consumers understand the business motives of CSR initiatives and form favorable CSR beliefs only when they perceive intrinsic motives in a
brand’s CSR initiatives. What is particularly interesting here, however, is that contrary to existing research (Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Fein 1996), we find that extrinsic attributions do not backfire, indicating that consumers are tolerant of firm-serving motives and view CSR initiatives more as a win-win solution.

Second, we add to the CSR literature by demonstrating the brand-specific effects of CSR initiatives. Not all brands are able to reap the same marketing benefits from their CSR initiatives; the ones that integrate CSR strategy into the core business strategy will be more likely to get higher returns on their CSR investment. Merely treating CSR as an add-on to the business strategy is less likely to help strengthen customer relationships.

Finally, we add to the relationship marketing literature by showing the role that CSR plays in strengthening customer relationships. Our findings illustrate how CSR can help strengthen customer relationships and turn consumers into brand champions. Our findings suggest that CSR initiatives help build deeper, more meaningful relationships. Favorable CSR beliefs of a brand satisfy consumers’ need for social approval and self expression and enhance consumers’ well-being. Favorable CSR beliefs bring consumers closer to the brand through identification, which prompts consumers to voluntarily spend extra effort on the firm’s behalf. We find that identified consumers engage in a range of advocacy behaviors such as favorable word of mouth, willingness to try new products, and willingness to forgive the brand if something goes wrong. In sum, our research suggest that CSR initiatives can be a viable relationship marketing strategy to build consumer relationships, increase consumer retention and foster brand advocates.

Managerial Implications

Our results suggest that corporate social responsibility can be a viable relationship marketing strategy that leads to a broad range of company benefits. The finding that CSR initiatives
have the potential to transform consumers into fervent supporters of the brand has important implications for relationship marketing. Despite heavy investment in customer relationship management, the relationships between companies and consumers are troubled at best (Dowling 2002; Fournier, Dobscha, and Mick 2000). For instance, Fournier, Dobscha, and Mick (2000) observed that relationship marketing as it is currently practiced has not brought the companies closer to customers but has sent them farther afield; and these researchers called for ways to build relationships that are not “empty, meaningless, or stressful.” Our findings suggest that CSR is a novel way to build meaningful relationships: it enhances consumer well-being, and satisfies consumers’ essential self-definitional needs. CSR initiatives attract consumers to enter volitionally into relationships with brands that turn them into brand champions.

Our findings on the antecedents of CSR beliefs reveal that awareness of a brand’s CSR initiatives is a key prerequisite for CSR beliefs, yet in reality, consumers’ awareness of brands’ CSR initiatives is surprisingly low. This indicates a key deficiency in most CSR strategies: the need for more effective marketing communication to make consumers aware of brands’ CSR initiatives. Our finding on the low level of CSR awareness confirms the prior research finding that low levels of general CSR awareness are a key stumbling block for companies looking to reap the benefits of engaging in CSR initiatives (Bhattacharya and Sen 2004). Minimal benefits will accrue if consumers are unaware of a brand’s CSR initiatives. Companies need to work harder to make consumers aware of their cause related efforts.

In choosing which CSR cause to engage in and how to position their CSR initiatives, companies need to ask several key questions. How do we differentiate our CSR initiatives from those of the competitors? How can we appeal to the social values of our consumers? While most companies’ CSR efforts are diffuse and unfocused (Porter and Kramer 2002), our research suggests that a good CSR strategy needs to be focused and well integrated into a
company’s core business activities. As Smith (2004) said, developing the right CSR strategy requires an understanding of what differentiates an organization—its mission, values, and core business activities. The presence of strongly held, favorably evaluated CSR beliefs that are unique to the brand is critical to the success of a CSR strategy.

Finally, the asymmetric results related to attributions suggest that while firms ought to work sincerely and over the long term on CSR initiatives to score well on the intrinsic motives front, there is no real need to try and hide that fact that there is “something in it” for them as well. Communication regarding CSR initiatives can be matter of fact and does not have to try to portray an overly altruistic corporate image.

**Limitations and Future Research Directions**

Our study has several limitations. First, we infer causal relationships from a correlational study. While some of theoretical links such as the link between CSR beliefs and identification have been supported in prior experimental research; other links, like the relationship between CSR beliefs and consumer advocacy, need corroboration from future experimental studies that exclude alternative explanations. Second, although our common method bias test indicates that common method bias is not a problem in our study, future research may need to obtain data on consumers’ actual behaviors (i.e., purchase, actual word-of-mouth, actual supportive behaviors during period of negative media report, etc.) rather than self-reported behaviors or behavioral intentions. Such behavioral data will allow us to examine the effects of CSR on actual consumer advocacy behaviors.

This study also gives rise to a number of future research opportunities. First, a central theme from this study is the potential of CSR initiatives in building strong consumer relationships and generating relational consumer behaviors. Given the prominence of CSR on the corporate agenda and the emphasis on marketing productivity, a notable stream of additional research would be to exam the returns on CSR investment. Future research may
need to study the effects of CSR initiatives on actual purchase behaviors and actual word-of-mouth. In addition, it would be fruitful to use Rust, Lemon, and Zeithaml’s (2004 framework for marketing ROI to examine the effects of CSR investment on customer equity.

A strategic insight from our research relates to the brand-specific effects of CSR initiatives. In our research, we find that the brand that integrates CSR strategy into its core business strategy is able to reap more relationship marketing benefits than brands that use CSR as an add-on. However, we did not explicitly examine the causes for the brand-specific effects. Future research may want to isolate out the causal mechanism of the brand-specific effects.

One interesting finding in our study is that, contrary to prior research findings (Campbell and Kirmani 2000; Fein 1996), extrinsic attributions do not backfire. Additional research may want to focus on the moderating conditions on the effects of extrinsic attributions. One reason that extrinsic attributions do not boomerang may be that the brands in our study all enjoy positive reputations. A company in a controversial industry (e.g., tobacco) may easily suffer from extrinsic CSR attributions. Also, in our research, respondents all perceive both intrinsic and extrinsic motives for engaging in CSR. We speculate that if there are no perceived intrinsic motives, then extrinsic attributions are likely to backfire. In other words, the null effect of extrinsic motives is contingent on the co-existence of perceived intrinsic motives. Additional research needs to test this speculation.
Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

ANTECEDENTS

- CSR Knowledge
- CSR attributions
  - Intrinsic
  - Extrinsic

OUTCOMES

- CA Beliefs
- CSR Beliefs
- Identification
- CSR Support

Direct effect
Moderating effect

- Consumer well-being
- Brand Choice
- Loyalty
- Advocacy
  - Word of Mouth
  - Try New Products
  - Resilience to Negative Information
Table 1
Background information of respondents (n=3,465)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 21</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate high school or G.E.D</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduated from college</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $20,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$39,999</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-$59,999</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-$79,999</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000-$99,999</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or more</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand choice</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following yogurt brands did you purchase most recently?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which of the following yogurt brands did you purchase most frequently?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am loyal to this brand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Advocacy (3 items)</th>
<th>.77 (Cronbach alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would like to try new products introduced under this brand name.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I talk favorably about this brand to friends and family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If the maker of this brand did something I didn’t like, I would be willing to give it another chance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-being</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buying this brand over other brands makes me feel good about myself.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My sense of this brand matches my sense of who I am.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSR beliefs (two items)</th>
<th>.55 (correlation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. This brand is a socially responsible brand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This brand has made a real difference through its socially responsible actions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CA beliefs (four items)</th>
<th>.83 (Cronbach alpha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Overall, this brand is of high quality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This brand tastes good.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This brand is very nutritious.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This brand provides good value for money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSR knowledge</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This brand works for XXX (the brand’s CSR initiative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSR attributions</th>
<th>--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrinsic motives (one item)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. This brand works for XXX (the brand’s CSR initiative) because it is genuinely concerned about being socially responsible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extrinsic motives (two items)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. This brand works for XXX (the brand’s CSR initiative) because it wants to make a profit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This brand works for XXX (the brand’s CSR initiative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
because it feels competitive pressures to engage in such activities.

---

**CSR support**

To what extent do you support the following issues (the CSR issues that these four brands work for)

---

Table 3

Means of major variables rated by all respondents and by frequent buyers of each brand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All respondents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Frequent buyers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dannon (n=1,062)</td>
<td>Stonyfield (n=1,062)</td>
<td>Yoplait (n=1,062)</td>
<td>Dannon (n=410)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent purchase</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent purchase</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR knowledge</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motives</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic motives</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR support</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude toward CSR</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Antecedents of CSR Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CSR beliefs</th>
<th>Intrinsic Attributions</th>
<th>Extrinsic Attributions</th>
<th>CSR beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSR knowledge</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.08***</td>
<td>.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic attribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.21***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic attribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F statistics</td>
<td>1442***</td>
<td>669.3***</td>
<td>18.28***</td>
<td>665.5***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** P<.0001
* P<.05
Table 5
Outcomes of CA, CSR beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Well being&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs</td>
<td>.34***</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>.94***</td>
<td>.83***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs</td>
<td>.42***</td>
<td>.46***</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.06**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR support</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs X</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>  | .23            | .29                    | .39      | .55      |
F statistics          | 238.76***      | 194.47***              | 505.8*** | 974.16***|

<sup>a</sup> For regression with well being as DV, the sample size is 637*3=1911.
***P<.0001
**P<.01
*P<.05
### Table 6
Multinomial logit model results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dependent variable: Most recent brand choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs</td>
<td>4.80***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs</td>
<td>.62**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs X CSR support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dannon(^a)</td>
<td>.58***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonyfield(^a)</td>
<td>-1.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Squared</td>
<td>696.70***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) these are brand specific constants, indicating the average attractiveness of each brand as compared to Yoplait, whose additive constant is set to be zero. Specifically, with equal CA and CSR beliefs, Danon is perceived to be more attractive than Yoplait, which in turn is more attractive than Stonyfield.

*** p<.0001
**  p<.01
Table 7
Brand-specific effects of CSR beliefs on outcomes\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Well-being(^b)</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs</td>
<td>.30(^{***})</td>
<td>.51(^{***})</td>
<td>.85(^{***})</td>
<td>.78(^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs(_a_1)</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs(_a_2)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.07(^+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs</td>
<td>.52(^{***})</td>
<td>.50(^{***})</td>
<td>.26(^{***})</td>
<td>.15(^{***})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs(_a_1)</td>
<td>-.14(^+)</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.17(^+)</td>
<td>-.10(^+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs(_a_2)</td>
<td>-.12(^+)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.13(^+)</td>
<td>-.08(^+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R(^2)</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F statistic</td>
<td>118.94(^{***})</td>
<td>96.08(^{***})</td>
<td>256.69(^{***})</td>
<td>492.12(^{***})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Brand-specific intercepts omitted for expositional ease. \(_a_1=1\) if the brand is Dannon, else \(_a_1=0\); \(_a_2=1\) if the brand is Yoplait, else \(_a_2=0\).

\(^b\) For regression with well being as DV, the sample size is 637*3=1,191.

\(^{***}\) \(p<.0001\)

\(^{**}\) \(p<.05\)

\(^{+}\) \(p<.10\)
Table 8
Brand-specific multinomial choice model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Brand choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs-Dannon</td>
<td>4.81***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs-Stonyfield</td>
<td>4.91***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA beliefs-Yoplait</td>
<td>4.72***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs-Dannon</td>
<td>.60+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs-Stonyfield</td>
<td>.60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR beliefs-Yoplait</td>
<td>.61*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dannon a                      | .56***       |
Stonyfield a                  | -1.27***     |

Chi-squared                   | 697.00***    |

* these are brand specific constants, indicating the average attractiveness of each brand as compared to Yoplait, whose additive constant is set to be zero. Specifically, with equal CA and CSR beliefs, Danon is perceived to be more attractive than Yoplait, which in turn is more attractive than Stonyfield.

*** p<.0001
*  p<.001
+ p<.05
References


