

Chapter 7

A Research of the Influence on the Consumer Behavior From CSR Information Embedded in the Process of Online Purchasing

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ABSTRACT

As the online purchasing is becoming prevalent, more and more corporates started to show their CSR information in the processes of online retail. For example: some CSR information could be showed in the “COMMODITY DETAILS”. Could this kind of information affect consumer behavior? By recognizing three types of embedded CSRC information, according to the consumer behavior experiments, this paper will show CSR’s influences on the consumer behavior such as evaluation of the company, purchasing intention, and purchasing intention. By the comparison of the results after three types’ CSR communication, we found that CSR information could significantly affect consumer behavior and the consumer response will differ from different types of CSR information embedded.

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INTRODUCTION

It is one of the most important blasting fuses that consumers' awareness of corporate social responsibility(CSR) which led to the movement of CSR. An increasing number of enterprises not only paid more attention to their CSR behaviors but also to the CSR communications(CSRC), especially when the Internet age came with the high-speed and large extension of information exchange. It is found that lots of enterprises tried to lead a CSRC in the process of online retail. For example, some CSR information was included in a description of online products in the e-business, which we call it "Embedded CSRC in E-business" (E-ECSRC).

More tremendous number of works focused on the CSR-consumer binomial have mainly concentrated on understanding how CSR perceptions influence the cognitive, affective and behavioral responses of consumers to the firm (Alvarado-Herrera A et al., 2015). For example, CSR perceptions have been shown to have a positive impact on various types of responses, such as the consumer's purchase intention (Trudel and Cotte, 2009) and attitude towards the firm (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Du et al., 2011; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). But few researches focused in the influence of CSR information in the specific process of online retail. Can E-ECSRC touch their consumers so that company can realize the objective of CSRC? Can E-ECSRC have an affection on the purchasing intention? If the answer is "yes", what is the deep reason? In addition, how many kinds of E-ECSRC were used now and is there a more effective way based on these good effectiveness?

To seek for the answer of these questions, we conducted a research on the E-CSRC and found two types of CSR information that were embedded in "COMMODITY DETAILS": (1) a screenshot of the CSR news from the third party of media (Type I of the company's E-ECSRC information); (2) a summary or short introduction of the CSR report (Type II of the company's E-ECSRC information). For the reason that the consumer online star-rated system was used in most of the e-commerce platform which could affect the consumer purchasing intention, can an online star-rated system for CSR be designed to promote the affection of CSRC (Type III of the company's E-ECSRC information)?

In this research, we led a consumer experiment to confirm that if the three types of E-ECSRC can effect consumers' perception of CSR, company evaluation and purchasing attention, and if the perception of CSR and company evaluation can affect consumer purchasing attention. The conclusion can help corporations make decisions on their CSRC or improve their sale in e-Business.

HYPOTHESIS AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Effect of CSR on Consumer Evaluations of the Company

Having a pro-social agenda is thought to be a powerful marketing tool upon which to build a company's reputation and gain a competitive advantage through differentiation (Bronn and Vrioni 2001). A majority of investigations attested to the positive effects of people's perceptions of CSR on their evaluations of the company. Based on the experiences of a company's CSRC, consumers establish an inventory in their memory with a combination of attributes, benefits, attitudes, and beliefs about the company, which could be called corporate associations (Brown and Dacin, 1997). Consumers' corporate associations include two major categories and one of them is CSR associations, which deal with the "character of the com-

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