"Too good to be true!"

The Effectiveness of CSR History in Countering Negative Publicity

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Corporate crises call for effective communication to shelter or restore a company's reputation. The use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) claims may provide an effective tool to counter the negative impact of a crisis, but knowledge on the effectiveness of CSR crisis communication is scarce and studies on the implementation of CSR communication during crises are lacking. To help fill this gap, this study investigates whether the length of a company's involvement in CSR matters when it uses CSR claims in its crisis communication as a means to counter negative publicity. We show that the use of CSR claims in crisis communication is more effective for companies with a long CSR history than for those with a short CSR history, and that consumer skepticism about claims lies at the heart of this phenomenon.

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Many real-life examples (e.g., IKEA, The Body Shop, Texaco, Nike) serve to show how fragile company image can be when a corporation is accused publicly of misbehavior. Whether the accusations are true or not, the resulting negative publicity causes particular damage to how consumers perceive the company and its products (e.g., Dean, 2004; De Raaf, 2000; Riezebos, 1996; Rossiter and Percy, 1998). A damaged reputation can impact on the company's sales and profits, especially if it fails to respond adequately to the crisis. For example, Texaco lost up to $1.1 billion after being subject to allegations of discrimination (Bollen, 2004); Nutricia, a Dutch food company that recalled more than 10 million contaminated jars of its baby food, suffered $20 million in losses, lost substantial market share in the Dutch market, and experienced a 7.5% stock price decrease after announcing the contamination (De Raaf, 2000).

In crises such as these, companies must engage in effective communication to shelter or restore their reputation, which has been jeopardized by the negative publicity (e.g., Benoit, 1997; De Raaf, 2000; Sturges, 1994). However, knowledge about effective crisis communication strategies and how consumers react to these efforts remains rather limited in practice (Mitroff, 2001).

A decade ago, crisis scholars argued that corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication might be an effective tool to counter the negative impact of a crisis (Coombs, 1995). Similar to Maignan et al. (1999), we define CSR as the extent to which organizations meet the legal, economic, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities placed

on them by various stakeholders. Since the mid-1990s, business experts increasingly have stressed the importance of social initiatives to build strong company reputations. Several polls also highlight that consumers consider such corporate activities very important (e.g., Cone Corporate Citizenship Study, 2004; MORI CSR Research, 2002). And, academic literature has established that CSR influences consumer evaluations of a company and its products positively (e.g., Brown and Dacin, 1997).

Consumer support for CSR suggests that corporate communication about social efforts could help a company build a reputation that might protect its image against negative publicity or help restore it. Business practices seem to confirm this belief. Varadarajan and Menon (1988), in their survey of case histories, find that companies use cause-related marketing, a specific aspect of CSR, to realize various objectives; including thwarting negative publicity. However, studies that examine the effectiveness of CSR communication during corporate crises have been scarce and investigate only its influence in the context of a product-harm crisis. For example, CSR reduces the risk of brand damage in a product-harm crisis, and consumers tend to hold a company less responsible for a crisis when it possesses a strong CSR reputation (Klein and Dawar, 2004). With just limited studies of the effectiveness of CSR crisis communication, we lack clear information about the effective implementation of proper CSR communication during crises. This study attempts to fill that gap.

Specifically, we determine whether the length of company involvement in CSR matters when using CSR claims as a means of countering negative publicity. Using CSR communication during a crisis represents a type of defense of company legitimacy, but in defending themselves, companies may protest too much, which makes their attempts

seem suspicious to consumers and therefore produces the opposite effects rather than those desired (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). Moreover, the existence of a vested interest and the lack of a strong reputation are known to undermine the credibility of legitimation attempts (McGuire, 1985). CSR communication is ultimately a persuasion attempt of the company to create positive consumer perceptions. Thus, we suggest that companies involved for a long time in CSR activities when the crisis breaks out should be seen as less opportunistic, and should enjoy a stronger reputation in terms of CSR than companies with shorter-term CSR involvement. As a result, the CSR crisis communication should be more effective for companies with a long CSR history than for those with a short CSR history. We also propose that consumer skepticism about CSR claims determines this phenomenon. Therefore, we build our theoretical framework and hypotheses on the basis of the concepts of organizational legitimation and consumer skepticism.

Hypotheses

CSR and company legitimacy

Using Suchman's (1995, p. 574) framework, which states that "Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions," Handelman and Arnold (1999) distinguish two types of legitimation relevant for our present study: pragmatic and social. A firm gains pragmatic legitimacy through performative actions, which demonstrate the "company's congruence with the norms of the task environment" (Handelman and Arnold, 1999, p. 35), and include decisions about functional attributes, such as price, location, and assortment (e.g., offer products at the

right price and quality). However, pragmatic legitimacy is not sufficient for a company's long-run survival. In the short-term, shifts in consumer tastes and direct competitive threats can change the norms of the competitive environment, so that legitimacy must be earned constantly (Suchman, 1995). To enjoy consumer support in the long run, companies must achieve social legitimacy, which ensues if the company's institutional actions are compatible with the broader social norms of the community, as when it engages in CSR initiatives to donate to charities (Handelman and Arnold, 1999). Social legitimacy is stronger than pragmatic legitimacy in protecting a company against short-run changes in the competitive environment (i.e., because of its CSR associations, the company maintains a positive image even if consumers change their attitudes about the functional benefits of its products). Furthermore, institutional actions strengthen the effectiveness of the performative initiatives, because CSR associations can cause consumers to make positive inferences about unknown functional company benefits.

When a crisis about a company's responsibility arises, the company must defend its social legitimacy. Case evidence shows that companies communicate about their CSR initiatives as a means to defend their reputation (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988), so a company's past performance provides an important piece of information in a crisis. Consumers retain more positive attitudes toward companies with good reputations than toward those with bad reputations (Coombs and Holladay, 1996; Dawar and Pillutla, 2000; Dean, 2004) and the general public seems more willing to forgive a company with a positive performance history than one with a history of problems (e.g., Barton, 1993). That is, a positive performance history results in a halo effect by projecting a positive company image and thereby creating credibility and trustworthiness among the general

public. Referring to a positive CSR history therefore should be an effective means to defend company legitimacy in a crisis situation, but its overall effectiveness likely depends on the length of the CSR history. As Suchman (1995, p. 574) states, "an organization may occasionally depart from societal norms yet retain legitimacy because the departures are dismissed as unique."

Companies with a long history of CSR involvement have earned the trust and goodwill of their stakeholders. This goodwill becomes corporate credit, such that the firm can deviate occasionally from social norms without seriously damaging its reputation (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; Suchman, 1995). In other words, a long history of "good" actions should provide leverage for defending the company against challenges to its legitimacy. Companies with only recent involvement in CSR initiatives, in contrast, do not enjoy this buffer of goodwill earned over the years. Hence:

H1: Consumer perceptions of a company and its products during a crisis are lower for companies with a short CSR history than for companies with a long CSR history.

Consumer skepticism and company legitimacy

Using CSR history as a buffer against the effects of a crisis can be perceived as an attempt to compensate for illegitimacy in one area by displaying legitimate behavior in another. In trying to defend their threatened legitimacy however, companies can "protest too much," which may trigger a vicious dynamic (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). Legitimation involves a process of social construction, negotiation, and labeling (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990); it is a "collective making of meaning" (Neilsen and Rao

1987, p. 524). Therefore, consumers probably are aware of the vested interest the company has in attempting to defend its legitimacy (Ashford and Gibbs 1990), which undermines the company's credibility in claiming legitimacy (McGuire, 1985). Ashford and Gibbs (1990) suggest that the greater the need for legitimation, the more skeptical consumers are of legitimation attempts, a phenomenon also known as the "self-promotor's paradox" (Jones and Pittman, 1982), which represents a crucial caveat to legitimacy management (Suchman, 1995). That is, people tend to discount attempts to defend the self if they perceive the defender as manipulative (e.g., the defense is a ploy to gain acceptance) or self-serving (Baumeister and Scher, 1988).

Marketing literature further substantiates consumer skepticism about companies' use of CSR activities as a tool to attain legitimacy. Skepticism about companies' true motivation to engage in CSR emerges in several consumer surveys; for example, Webb and Mohr (1998) find that consumers are more skeptical about the cause-related marketing efforts of for-profit companies than of the same efforts by nongovernmental organizations because they perceive the for-profit companies' motivations as mainly self-serving. Overall, consumers fear that CSR is just a "gimmick" that firms use to manipulate them (Webb and Mohr, 1998, p. 234), which results in negative attitudes toward such firms (e.g., Ellen et al., 2002; Mohr et al., 2001). Corroborating work by Webb and colleagues, Forehand and Grier (2003) show that consumers react negatively to CSR communications when they feel they are being deceived. The belief that CSR is mostly for show or motivated by profit interests rather than altruism also appears in the business press (*The Economist*, 2005).

In connection with the legitimacy approach, consumer skepticism can be explained according to the persuasion knowledge model (PKM) developed by Friestad and Wright (1994). This model integrates theories about attitude change (e.g., Petty and Ciacoppo, 1986) to explain how consumers react to marketing persuasion attempts. It posits that consumers hold and develop knowledge about marketers' persuasion attempts (e.g., advertisements), which influences their responses to these attempts. In addition, the PKM suggests consumers have opinions about the appropriateness and effectiveness of marketing tactics, and their skepticism relates to the amount of persuasion knowledge they use to develop judgments about the persuasive marketing communication (Friestad and Wright, 1994). Increased skepticism regarding the "true" underlying motives of a persuasive message inhibits its effectiveness (Campbell and Kirmani, 2000; Holt, 2002; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999; Vonk, 1998. 1999).

On the basis of the legitimacy approach and PKM, we expect the length of CSR history to serve as a cue that consumers use to derive their perceptions of the motivations companies have to engage in CSR initiatives. Because consumers probably perceive companies with short CSR histories as more accountable for the crisis (i.e., they lack the kind of goodwill that companies with longer CSR histories have), they also likely infer more self-serving and less altruistic motivations for these companies. That is, when companies with a short history use CSR claims in crisis communication, consumers probably view it as a "quick fix" or trick to restore their image. Consumers thus might be more skeptical about the altruistic intent of these companies' CSR, which creates more negative perceptions about the company and its products. In this sense, we expect the

effect of CSR history length on consumers' perceptions to be mediated by the level of skepticism that consumers develop.

H2: Communicating about CSR involvement to defend the company against negative publicity leads to more consumer skepticism when the company has a short CSR history than when the company has a long CSR history.

H3: In a crisis context, skepticism mediates the impact of the length of CSR history on consumers' perceptions of the company and its products.

We present our research model in Figure 1, which includes the length of CSR history, skepticism, and consumers' perceptions, as well as consumer support of CSR as a covariate. This for the reason that consumers vary in their stance toward CSR actions by firms, which influences their responses to these initiatives (Webb and Mohr, 1998). As Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) find, consumers who are more supportive of CSR efforts embrace more positive perceptions of companies involved in CSR than those who do not support CSR efforts, because the former perceive a greater identity overlap with CSR companies than the latter.

INSERT FIGURE 1

Methodology

Procedure and stimuli

To test the hypotheses, we used a between-subject experimental design with two conditions (long versus short CSR history). In both conditions, respondents first read two texts. The first text consists of an official press release from a fictive foreign cosmetic

company planning to open a point of sales in the Netherlands, describing the company, its products, and its CSR activities (i.e., responsible human resources, environmental protection, and charitable contributions to cancer-related organizations). We adapted the content of the text from Swaen and Vanhamme (2004) to the purposes of our study by including a manipulation of CSR history length. These authors showed that the company description is realistic and believable. We used this fictive foreign company to ensure the absence of any a priori knowledge of the company among respondents, which could influence the results.

The second text consists of a newspaper article discussing the issue of animal testing and accusing the fictive foreign company of using animal testing to develop its products. We borrowed this text from Swaen and Vanhamme (2004), who demonstrate that the newspaper article significantly and negatively influences consumer perceptions.

We counterbalanced the order of the two texts across conditions and manipulated the length of the company's CSR history (long versus short) by including three statements in the press release (heading, text itself, and text box in the middle of the press release with a quote from the company's CEO). These statements depict the company's CSR involvement as either long or short. In the long history condition, the three statements indicate the company has been involved in social responsibility activities for 10 years, whereas in the short history condition, they note that the company started to be active in CSR this year.

After reading the two texts, respondents filled in a questionnaire that measures the dependent and independent variables (company and product perceptions, perceived company integrity, skepticism, and support for CSR causes, including protection of

human, consumer, animal, and employee rights and the environment) and includes questions related to demographics, the perceived purpose of the study (no respondent guessed the actual purpose), and room for any additional comments.

Measures

To measure perceived integrity, we used Gurviez and Korchia's (2002) items— the company is sincere towards its customers, honest towards its customers, and clearly shows interest towards its customers—measured on 10-point scales (1 = totally disagree, 10 = totally agree). Similar to Sen and Bhattacharya (2001), we measured consumers' perception of the company as their overall impression rating (1 = very unfavorable; 10 = very favorable). The product perception measure is similar but measure the overall impression of the products on a 10-point scale. To measure consumers' support for CSR, we asked respondents to state their degree of support for various CSR activities (e.g., environmental protection, animal rights), similar to Sen and Bhattacharya's (2001) approach. Finally, to assess the degree of skepticism consumers hold with respect to claims made by companies, we included Obermiller and Spangenberg's (1998) scale of ad skepticism (9 items, 10-point scales, 1 = totally disagree, 10 = totally agree) in the questionnaire.

Respondents and data collection

A convenience sample of 125 Dutch consumers participated in the study and were randomly assigned to the different conditions. Respondents include owners, volunteers, and employees working for various companies and stores located in major cities in the

Netherlands, as well as acquaintances of the researchers who were not aware of the purpose of the study. We approached potential respondents at home or on company/store premises and asked them to take the questionnaire home and return it within a week. The composition of respondents in this study represents a fairly representative spectrum of the Dutch population in terms of age, gender, education level, and household status (see Table 1).

INSERT TABLE 1

Pretests

Before conducting the experiment, we used a small-scale pretest with 10 non-student respondents surveyed on a train to check our manipulation of the length of the company's CSR history. The respondents viewed either the short or long history version of the press release. All respondents accurately answered a question about the length of the CSR involvement of the company after having read the text.

In addition, we back-translated the stimuli and questionnaires from English to Dutch or French to Dutch and then pretested each for clarity and the absence of ambiguities.

Results

We conducted the usual checks for unidimensionality and reliability for the multi-items scales. Two of the skepticism and one of the integrity items were discarded because they reduced the reliability of their respective measure. We provide descriptive statistics of the study variables in Table 2. Cronbach alphas are .92 for skepticism and .85 for integrity (the Pearson correlation between the two integrity items is .74).

INSERT TABLE 2

As we expected and in support of our first hypothesis, perceived integrity is significantly greater for companies with a long CSR history than for those with a short CSR history (t(123) = 2.079, $p_{1\text{-tail}}$ = .020). Company and product perceptions also are significantly higher but at α = 0.10 (company: t(123) = 1.427, $p_{1\text{-tail}}$ = .078; product: t(123) = 1.350, $p_{1\text{-tail}}$ = .090). In Figure 2, we provide the magnitudes of the respective means.

INSERT FIGURE 2

In addition, the level of consumer skepticism is higher for companies with a short history than for companies with a long history (t(120) = -2.332, $p_{1\text{-tail}}$ = .011), in support of H2; we again provide the magnitude of the mean in Figure 2.

Finally, the data provide full support to H3. Specifically, to test for full mediation, we conducted three regressions and checked four conditions (Baron and Kenny, 1986, Chumpitaz and Vanhamme, 2003). First, the influence of the independent variable (mediated variable) on the dependant variable must be significant when the mediator is excluded from the regression (see Regression 1, Table 3). The data show a significant impact of the length of CSR history on company perceptions, product perceptions, and perceived integrity, so the first condition is satisfied.

INSERT TABLE 3

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Second, the independent variable must significantly influence the potential mediator. This condition is also met; the length of CSR history has a significant effect on skepticism (see Regression 2, Table 4). Third, for full mediation, the influence of the independent variable on the dependant variable must become not significant when the mediator is included in the regression, and fourth, the mediator must have a significant influence on the dependant variable. As we show in Table 3 (Regression 3), the influence of the length of CSR history on company perceptions, product perceptions, and perceived integrity is not significant, whereas that of skepticism is significant. Thus, all four conditions pertaining to full mediation are satisfied. Further corroborating this result, we find that the Sobel test for mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986) is significant for product perceptions and perceived integrity at $\alpha = .05$ (Sobel test value = 1.968, $p = .049$) and for company perceptions at $\alpha = .06$ (Sobel test value = 1.908; $p = .056$).

INSERT TABLE 4

Discussion

From a marketing communication perspective, crisis accusations are critical because they can have a deleterious impact on consumers' perceptions of the incriminated company and its products. Years of work invested in building a strong company reputation can be annihilated virtually overnight by an article published or broadcast in the media because of the vast attention crises usually attract. The media tend to emphasize crises, especially when their impact makes them newsworthy events for journalists (Heath, 1998). Therefore, companies absolutely must react properly to crises. As is evident from the

literature, CSR involvement might offer an adequate tool to counter the negative impact induced by crises, because consumer awareness of a company's CSR involvement usually leads to positive evaluations (e.g., Brown and Dacin, 1997; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). However, the influence of CSR in crisis situations has been studied only sporadically, so the literature lacks clear guidelines that companies can use to determine their CSR claims in communication strategies and thereby limit the deleterious impact of a crisis. We provide a first step in filling this gap.

Because of the advantages companies can gain from CSR involvement, they largely have embraced CSR initiatives through donations or community programs. Nevertheless, we clearly show that companies facing a crisis should be cautious when using CSR as a tool to defend their reputations. Companies with a long history of involvement in CSR activities have earned the right to mention their good deeds without raising the suspicion of the consumers. However, companies that only recently have started a CSR program have not earned that right. Should these companies give in to temptation and communicate publicly about their newly initiated CSR activities, they will face consumer skepticism, disbelief, and, in turn, negative company and product perceptions, as well as doubts about the company's integrity.

Short-term company CSR involvement seems to act as a cue that triggers skepticism about its underlying motivation, which leads to more negative perceptions of the company, its products, and its integrity. Thus, using the company's brief CSR history as a means to defend its maligned reputation seems to be a gimmick or a quick fix. In contrast, companies with a long CSR track record can dismiss a crisis as a one-time incident, and consumers will tend to believe their more credible CSR claims.

Our study further highlights that consumer skepticism helps clarify the effect of CSR history in crisis communication and thus extends existing knowledge about the influence of consumer skepticism in marketing communication, a topic that deserves further research attention (Forehand and Grier, 2003). Academic research indicates that consumers tend to be increasingly critical and skeptical about influences by marketers (Eisend, 2004), possibly as a result of the changes that have accompanied the societal transition from modernism to postmodernism. In a postmodern period, society is characterized by pluralism and fragmentation, which creates liberalism in choices and increased insecurity in consumption contexts (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). In this setting, consumers adhere to a variety of values, adopt various lifestyles, and reject the authorities of modernity, making them more experienced, more critical, and more skeptical about marketing influences (Eisend, 2004; Elliot et al., 1993). This general consumer skepticism appears in various CSR surveys, such as the 2004 Cone Corporate Citizenship Study, which reported that a majority of Americans surveyed considered information about CSR activities that they gain from third-party sources (i.e., friends, relatives, government, news organizations, Internet) far more credible than that communicated by sources controlled by the company itself.

If the trend of increased skepticism continues in the future, it might become increasingly difficult and precarious to use CSR involvement in communication campaigns to counter the deleterious effects of a crisis. Companies therefore should avoid falling into the pitfall of being perceived as protesting too much. Practitioners should be aware of the powerful impact of cues that decrease the credibility of their claims; bragging about a short CSR track record is one of them. Companies should also keep in

mind that some demographic variables influence the level of consumer skepticism. For example, consumers are usually more knowledgeable about marketing tactics as they grow older or gain more education (Friestad and Wright, 1994; Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998), which makes older, more educated consumers difficult targets to persuade with marketing tactics. A thorough understanding of the factors that increase consumers skepticism and thorough knowledge of the characteristics of the target market therefore seem essential in crisis situations, because with them, marketers can adapt and fine-tune their crisis communication for specific target markets.

This study investigates only one type of crisis (animal testing accusations) and uses a fictive cosmetic company. Although we have no reason to believe that the phenomenon we discover will not hold in different settings, to increase the external validity of our findings, further research should replicate our study with different types of crises, CSR activities, and companies.

Moreover, additional research might define the minimum length of CSR involvement that will not raise consumers' suspicions, because instead of studying the influence of CSR history as a continuum, we simply contrasted the influence of a short versus long history.

In addition, our recommendations are based on the reactions of consumers; we do not investigate other stakeholders' points of view (e.g., employees, shareholders). The implications of our study are thus confined to external, as opposed to internal, marketing communication practices. It would be interesting to test whether our model also applies to other stakeholders, which would extend its generalizability as well.

Overall, we do not claim that companies should not invest in social activities. Rather, we suggest it is better not to mention such good deeds in a crisis communication strategy when it is likely that the claims will generate disbelief among consumers, such as when the company's involvement in CSR activities has been relatively short. This knowledge should prove helpful for marketing practitioners when they must craft CSR communication strategies for consumers.

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Figure 1. Research model
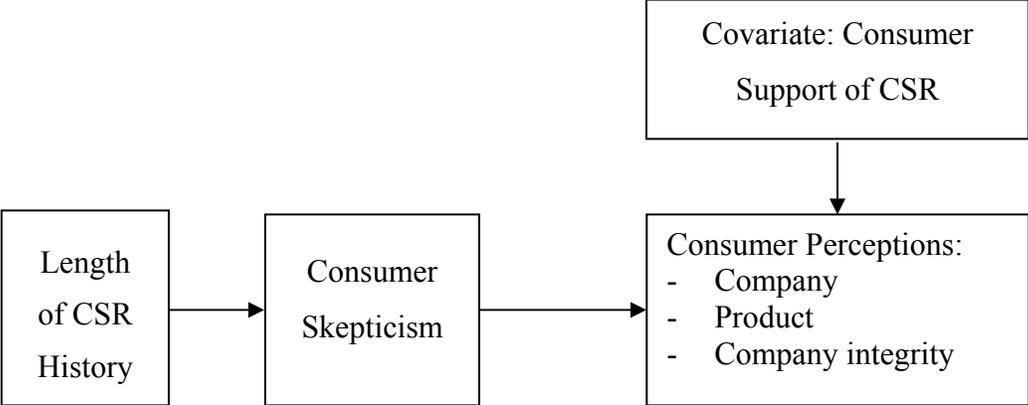
Notes: Although we use text order counterbalancing as an additional covariate in the model, we do not depict it, because its purpose is statistical rather than theoretical.

Figure 2. Means for short and long CSR histories
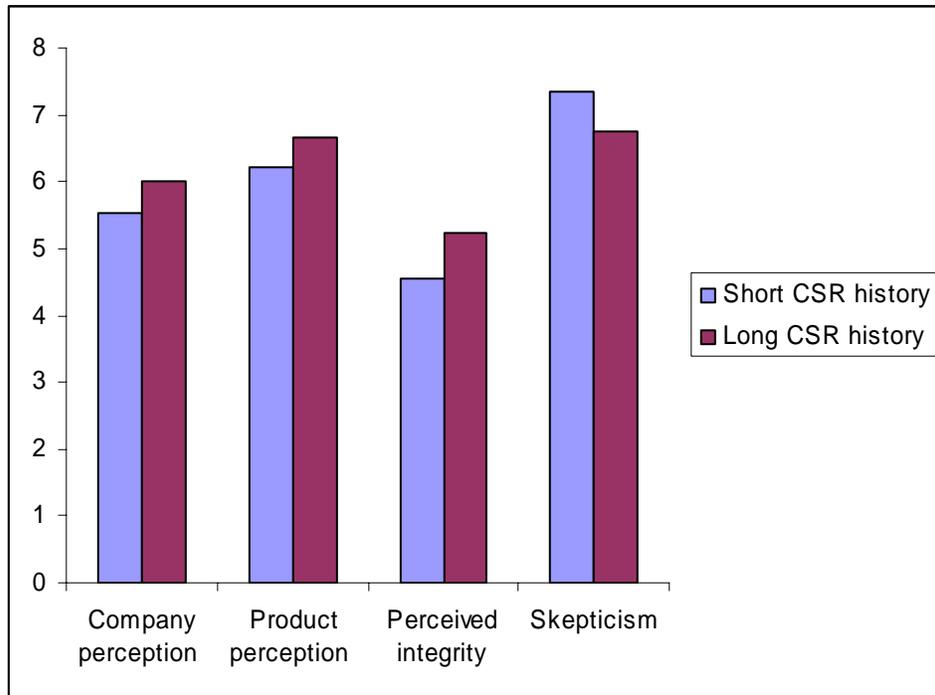
Table 1. Respondent demographics

Variable	
Civil status	Married: 47%; Divorced: 4%; Widowed: 2%; Single: 29%; Living together: 18%
Education	Elementary school: 4%; Professional education: 9%; Secondary school: 50%; Higher education: 37%
Gender	Male: 48%; Female: 52%
Age	Mean: 39 years old; standard deviation: 13 years; range: 19–83 years
Children	Mean: 1; standard deviation: 1; range: 0–3

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for model variables

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Company perception	125	1.000	9.000	5.76	1.873
Product perception	125	1.000	9.000	6.43	1.889
Perceived integrity	125	1.000	10.000	4.896	1.826
Skepticism	122	2.860	10.000	7.032	1.443
Environment	123	1.000	10.000	6.690	1.955
Human rights	125	2.000	10.000	7.310	1.820
Animal rights	125	1.000	10.000	7.290	1.913
Consumer rights	125	1.000	10.000	6.460	2.157
Employee rights	125	1.000	10.000	6.940	1.872

Table 3. Results of regressions 1 and 3 (H3)

	Company perception					Product perception					Perceived integrity				
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	Sig.	B	S.E.	Beta	t	Sig.	B	S.E.	Beta	t	Sig.
Regression 1:															
(Constant)	9.041	0.768		11.768	0.000	9.035	0.821		11.004	0.000	5.874	0.854		6.878	0.000
Length CSR history[1]	-0.253	0.147	-0.137	-1.726	**0.044**	-0.264	0.157	-0.143	-1.686	**0.047**	-0.324	0.163	-0.179	-1.991	**0.025**
Covariates:															
Environment	0.011	0.090	0.011	0.118	0.906	0.116	0.097	0.122	1.198	0.233	-0.173	0.100	-0.186	-1.718	0.088
Human rights	0.062	0.115	0.057	0.537	0.593	0.000	0.123	0.000	0.003	0.997	0.025	0.128	0.024	0.197	0.844
Animal rights	-0.497	0.105	-0.511	-4.736	0.000	-0.453	0.112	-0.466	-4.040	0.000	-0.066	0.117	-0.069	-0.565	0.573
Consumer rights	0.181	0.120	0.205	1.508	0.134	0.086	0.129	0.098	0.672	0.503	0.279	0.134	0.322	2.085	0.039
Employee rights	-0.188	0.120	-0.189	-1.565	0.120	-0.082	0.128	-0.082	-0.636	0.526	-0.187	0.133	-0.193	-1.402	0.164
Counterbalancing	0.403	0.148	0.218	2.720	0.008	0.244	0.159	0.132	1.536	0.127	-0.096	0.165	-0.053	-0.583	0.561
Regression 3															
(Constant)	11.958	1.058		11.297	0.000	12.624	1.107		11.406	0.000	11.085	1.029		10.769	0.000
Length CSR history[1]	-0.124	0.145	-0.066	-0.851	**0.199**	-0.112	0.152	-0.061	-0.739	**0.231**	-0.114	0.141	-0.062	-0.803	**0.214**
Skepticism	-0.388	0.102	-0.296	-3.813	**0.000**	-0.453	0.106	-0.349	-4.264	**0.000**	-0.720	0.099	-0.562	-7.285	**0.000**
Covariates:															
Environment	0.009	0.089	0.009	0.097	0.923	0.087	0.093	0.089	0.939	0.350	-0.164	0.086	-0.171	-1.901	0.060
Human rights	0.094	0.113	0.084	0.835	0.405	0.028	0.118	0.025	0.238	0.812	0.108	0.110	0.098	0.982	0.328
Animal rights	-0.557	0.102	-0.564	-5.439	0.000	-0.507	0.107	-0.517	-4.739	0.000	-0.182	0.100	-0.188	-1.826	0.071
Consumer rights	0.171	0.115	0.191	1.484	0.141	0.076	0.121	0.085	0.629	0.531	0.261	0.112	0.298	2.328	0.022
Employee rights	-0.175	0.115	-0.175	-1.524	0.130	-0.076	0.120	-0.076	-0.629	0.530	-0.169	0.112	-0.172	-1.512	0.133
Counterbalancing	0.363	0.146	0.195	2.491	0.014	0.176	0.153	0.095	1.152	0.252	-0.142	0.142	-0.078	-1.004	0.317

[1] Dummy variable coded -1 for long CSR history and 1 for short CSR history.

[2] R^2 are .383, .317, and .393 for company perception, product perception, and perceived integrity, respectively.

Notes: *p*-values in bold are one-tailed; all hypotheses are directional hypotheses.

Table 4. Results of regression 2 (H3)

	B	S.E.	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	7.063	0.723		9.770	0.000
Length CSR history [1]	0.301	0.132	0.211	2.278	**0.013**
Covariates:					
Environment	0.012	0.082	0.017	0.150	0.881
Human rights	0.128	0.104	0.148	1.224	0.223
Animal rights	-0.150	0.094	-0.199	-1.599	0.113
Consumer rights	-0.035	0.107	-0.052	-0.329	0.743
Employee rights	0.035	0.107	0.045	0.326	0.745
Counterbalancing	-0.039	0.136	-0.027	-0.288	0.774

[1] Dummy variable coded -1 for long CSR history and 1 for short CSR history.

Notes: *p*-values in bold are one-tailed; all hypotheses are directional hypotheses; dependant variable: skepticism.