

The Influence of CSR on Brand Relevant Aspects

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Abstract

Companies employ various methods to fulfill their corporate social responsibility (CSR) in order to make a better impression on consumers and play the part of an upstanding world citizen. An important issue is how companies can bring their efforts to the attention of consumers, placing themselves in a more positive light and thereby attracting business.

Using a well-known global corporation, McDonalds, as an example, we explored consumer awareness of CSR through literature review and empirical research by consumer survey. We aimed to study how meeting various facets of CSR affects the brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand commitment of consumers. We also categorized respondents by brand attachment and discussed its effect as a moderator variable.

The study recovered 507 valid questionnaires. These results show that brand attachment has a partially moderating effect. These results can serve as reference for companies formulating CSR strategies.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand commitment

1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has in recent years become a hot topic worldwide, drawing the attention of both businesses and consumers. Aware of the importance of CSR, consumers factor this into their purchasing decisions. Davis (1973) believed that social responsibility is the duty of the decision-maker, who must take action to protect and promote social welfare while at the same time seeking self-benefit. Corporations therefore bear the heavy responsibility of not only pursuing profit but also protecting all parties with whom they have relationships of interest (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2012).

According to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2003), corporations stand to benefit in many ways from fulfilling their CSR; for example, by gaining public approval, greater profit, strengthening their market position, and becoming more competitive. Corporate social responsibility is not only a topic of interest to businesses and consumers; it has also been the subject of much research in the academic world (Jose & Lee, 2007). Most previous studies on CSR-related issues (Swaminathan, Page & Gurhan-Canli, 2007; Araya, 2006) have focused on how corporations can fulfill their social responsibilities and the relevant conceptual framework. Relatively few studies have explored consumer response to corporations fulfilling their social responsibility, which why we have chosen this issue as the subject of our research.

Damiano-Teixeira and Pompermayer (2007) proved that consumers do consider whether a company has fulfilled its social responsibility and seek to reward or punish that company through their purchasing behavior. The influence of CSR on the attitudes of consumers differs by industry (Berens, VanRiel, & Van Bruggen, 2005). Other studies have found that high CSR leads to better appraisals from consumers (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Improving consumer perception is an important motivator for businesses in meeting CSR (Yoon et al., 2006; Giannarakis & Theotokas, 2011; Mejri & De Wolf, 2012), which has become a key link in the relationship

between consumers and product brands. According to Aggarwal & Law (2005), if a brand disappoints consumers, they will lower their rating of and satisfaction with the brand. Hess and Story (2005) found that consumer trust in a brand leads to multidimensional commitments to the brand. Therefore, the factors of satisfaction, trust, and commitment in brand relationships must all be discussed.

Although CSR is relatively important to businesses in this day and age, few studies have covered both the elements of CSR and the constructs of brand satisfaction, trust, commitment and attachment. Referring to the work of Carroll (1991), this study categorized CSR into economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. We explored whether consumer perception of CSR affects their satisfaction with, trust in and commitment to brands, using brand attachment as an interfering variable for comparison.

Using the focus group method, we chose McDonalds as the subject of our research, as it is a well-known global corporation committed to fulfilling its social responsibility, as well as a brand that many consumers are attached to. We based our conceptual framework on previous literature and collected preliminary data through interviews and a questionnaire survey, aiming to understand the implications of CSR and how it is perceived by consumers, as well as how this perception affects their satisfaction with, trust in, commitment and attachment to corporate brands. Our subjects were consumers in Taiwan who had eaten at McDonalds.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

According to the WBCSD (2000), CSR is defined as the continuing commitment by businesses to contribute to economic development while upholding ethical codes and improving the quality of life of the community and society at large. One of the most important duties of corporate decision-makers, CSR means that apart from protecting and pursuing their own benefits, companies must also take action to protect and promote social welfare (Keith & Bloomstrom, 1975; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2011).

Carroll (1991) developed the four-tier Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility, economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic; those have been refereed and evidenced by many researchers (Wu & Lin, 2014). Wood (1991) expanded Carroll's "four domains of Corporate Social Responsibility" and proposed that Corporate Social Performance (CSP) (Carroll, 1999) including principles of corporate social responsibility, processes of corporate social responsiveness, and outcomes of corporate behavior (Pinkston & Carroll, 1996). The stakeholder theory makes clear the responsibility of businesses to various groups of protagonists within the society (Freeman, 2004; Ramasamy & Yeung, 2009); the shareholders, as well as the employees, both workers and management (Hou, Fu & Li, 2010). Hou, Fu & Li (2010) furthering divided the legal and moral responsibilities into 11 dimensions.

Since above researchers based on these four constructs of Carroll (1991) to develop or expand their research framework, thus we explored the factors and implications of CSR, as well as measured the awareness of consumers in relation to these four components which is described below:

- 1) Economic responsibility: Underlying all social responsibility, this means that companies are responsible to produce products and services useful to society and offer them at reasonable prices, generating profit and increasing efficiency.
- 2) Legal responsibility: Considered the minimum requirement by society, corporations must honor and comply with all laws and regulations.
- 3) Ethical responsibility: Companies must meet the principles of fairness, justice and prevention of harm, which are all closely related to social ethics. Ethical responsibility extends to consumers, staff, shareholders and community.
- 4) Philanthropic responsibility: Without any legal requirement to do so, corporations are encouraged to participate in charitable ventures, promote the spirit of goodwill, and provide relevant resources or services to society.

2.2 Brand Satisfaction

According to Hunt (1977), satisfaction is a type of behavior resulting from a combination of the customer's previous experience and post-purchase assessment. Brand satisfaction refers to the extent of joy or disappointment that the consumer feels in the brand after the purchase. Day (1984) described satisfaction as the measure of discrepancy between pre-purchase expectations and post-purchase performance. Oliver (1981) believed that satisfaction is the emotion and reaction produced after using a product, and is mainly attributable to the level of surprise the consumer felt during the purchasing experience.

Oliver (1980) suggested three indicators of consumer satisfaction: 1. Equitable Performance: the outcome the

consumer expects after paying the price for the product. 2. Ideal performance: the best outcome the consumer can hope for when purchasing the product. 3. Expected performance: the most desired outcome to the consumer when purchasing the product. Those variables can use to measure consumer satisfaction.

2.3 Brand Trust

Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman (1993) described trust as a willingness to believe in and rely on the other party to a transaction. Brand trust means that consumers are willing to believe in and rely on the brand in question. Trust exists when one party has believes and depends upon the integrity of the other; the implications of trust strongly emphasize the importance of faith. This definition can be broadly applied to seller/buyer or any two parties to an exchange or transaction, as well as to the relationship between consumers and corporate brands (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Many studies have highlighted the importance of trust in relationship management, as it is a vital element in encouraging consumers to commit to purchasing (Dai, 2002). Doney & Cannon (1997) classified trust into two constructs: reliability and goodwill. Johnson and Grayson (2005) suggested another two sub-constructs of trust, being cognitive and affective trust. The viewpoints of the above researchers can use to establish variables to measure brand trust.

2.4 Brand Commitment

According to Lagace, Dahlstorm & Gasseenheimer (1991), relationship commitment develops when a consumer trusts the seller and a type of psychological agreement is established between the parties. Both buyer and seller wish to maintain a valuable relationship, and this is termed commitment (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992). From the client's side, commitment is a type of emotional or psychological attachment to the brand or service provider, a resistance to change (Pritchard et al., 1999). Therefore, commitment implies a desire to maintain a relationship with this brand in the future and a willingness to continue to purchase the brand. Oliver (1996) pointed out that although marketing can change consumer behavior, consumers will continue to buy products offered by the brand they are committed to.

Researchers have tended to measure commitment using diverse constructs; for example, 1. Affective commitment or attitude commitment: Customers are willing to demonstrate their relationship with the organization through their actions or attitudes (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992; Harrison-Walker, 2001). 2. Continuous commitment or time commitment: This indicates that customers believe it is worthwhile to maintain a long-term relationship with the organization (Anderson & Weitz, 1992; White & Schneider, 2000). The viewpoints of the above researchers can use to establish variables to measure brand commitment.

2.5 Brand Attachment

Attachment refers to an affectional tie resulting from meaningful interaction between two subjects (Thomson et al., 2005). Blackston (1993) described brand attachment as the result of interaction between a brand and its consumers; a good relationship between brand and consumer is generally determined by consumer perception of the brand, which can strengthen brand attachment. Therefore, brand attachment can be seen as the result of interaction between the consumer and the brand personality that he/she perceives (Fournier, 1998).

According to Esch et al. (2006), brand attachment is the relational bond between consumer and brand. Companies can cultivate brand attachment by meeting the needs of customers and thereby promote purchasing behavior. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found that customers buy more from brands they trust and grow more attached to these brands. So the more trustful and favorably impressed customers are with a brand, the more attached to the brand they become. Since no research explore the effect of brand attachment on CSR relationship model, therefore, that will be the topic of this paper.

3. Hypotheses

3.1 Consumer Awareness of CSR and Its Influence on Brand Satisfaction

Fulfilling CSR is an important way to enhance corporate image and can make customers feel more satisfied with the brand (Mohr & Webb, 2005; Wu & Lin, 2014). Therefore, CSR is directly associated with increasing customer satisfaction, as customers are more satisfied with companies that meet their CSR (Maignan et al., 2005). It increases their utility and value as perceived by customers, thereby enhancing satisfaction and generating non-financial benefit for companies (Marin et al., 2009; Sexty, 2010). The performance of a company in fulfilling its CSR is one of the contributing factors to customer perception of its brand. The more customers identify with the brand, the more likely they are to feel satisfied (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Customers' brand preference can be enhanced by CSR performance (Liu, Wong, Shi, Chu, & Brock, 2014). Meanwhile, companies can influence customer satisfaction in various ways by meeting their CSR (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006).

Based on the four tiers of CSR described by Carroll (1991), we propose the following hypotheses:

H1a: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their economic CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand satisfaction.

H1b: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their legal CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand satisfaction.

H1c: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their ethical CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand satisfaction.

H1d: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their philanthropic CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand satisfaction.

3.2 Consumer Awareness of CSR and Its Influence on Brand Trust

According to Singh & Sirdeshmukh (2000), companies must show goodwill in order to win the trust of consumers, demonstrating that they will put their interests before their own benefit. This image can be achieved through CSR; for example:

- 1) Carroll (1991) proposed that companies focus on pursuing profit, while consumers need quality products at reasonable prices. When companies meet their economic CSR, which fosters trust from consumers (Powell, 1990). Companies can build a sharp competitive edge through relationships of trust with their customers, which are strengthened through economic CSR (Esch et al., 2006).
- 2) Hou, Fu & Li (2010) point out that company comply with all legal regulations to win the trust of consumers. According to Fournier (1998), consumers expect responsible companies to not only comply with legal regulations, but to also adhere to the “implied” rules of contractual relationships, uphold the principles they value and take responsibility for their actions, all of which encourage greater trust from consumers.
- 3) Ethical CSR means that companies do the right thing based on morals, duty, justice and fairness, and prevent their actions from causing harm to others (Carroll, 1999). Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Doney & Cannon (1997) point out that consumers trust a company which fulfilling its responsibilities and obligations.
- 4) Philanthropic CSR refers to companies contributing their resources and giving back to society, generally on a voluntary basis (Carroll, 1991). When studying charities, Langmeyer & Shank (1993) found that those endorsed by celebrities were seen as more professional and trustworthy, and had an easier time soliciting donations, which enhances consumers to trust their brands.

Based on the above, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2a: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their economic CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand trust.

H2b: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their legal CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand trust.

H2c: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their ethical CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand trust.

H2d: Consumer awareness of companies fulfilling their philanthropic CSR has a significantly positive influence on their brand trust.

3.3 The Influence of Brand Satisfaction on Brand Trust

Lee (1991) found that consumer satisfaction is generally built on trust. Brand satisfaction is therefore a guiding factor in brand trust, which can develop from the satisfaction a consumer feels in a product (Franz, Tobias, Bernd, & Patrick, 2006). Garbarino & Johnson (1999) indicated that the overall satisfaction of consumers positively influences their brand trust.

H3: The brand satisfaction of consumers has a significantly positive influence on brand trust.

3.4 The Influence of Brand Trust on Brand Commitment

According to Vatanasombut et al. (2008), trust significantly influences the commitment of consumers. Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002) also indicated that brand trust is the foundation of brand commitment and can determine the future behavior of consumers. Brand trust positively affects customer commitment and willingness to re-purchase, as consumers are more likely to re-purchase products from a brand they trust (Bitner, 1995).

Based on the above, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: The brand trust of consumers has a significantly positive influence on brand commitment.

3.5 Interference from Brand Attachment

Consumers buy their preferred brands in order to create associations or express their individuality; this is a demonstration of brand attachment (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998). Esch et al. (2006) believed that after time, mutual relationships develop among brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand commitment and brand attachment. Because different consumers have varying levels of attachment to different brands, it is necessary to segment and separately analyze subjects.

When consumers become more strongly attached to brands, they believe that these brands are an expression of themselves (Aaker, 1996). Consumers identify with the brand, which leads to greater brand satisfaction, trust and commitment, as well as intention to repurchase. Attachments develop between consumers and brands (Park & MacInnis, 2006), particularly in the service industry, where consumers more easily develop emotional attachments to specific brands (Morrison, 1996). Therefore, we can categorize consumers by brand attachment and thereby forecast the purchase behaviour of different consumer groups (Ball & Tasaki, 1992).

Based on the above, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Varying levels of brand attachment interfere in the relational models of CSR.

4. Research Design

4.1 Research Framework

Based on the above literature review, this study explored the influence of CSR on brand satisfaction, brand trust, and brand commitment, using consumer awareness of the four constructs of CSR. We then categorized consumers using brand attachment as an interfering variable, and compared the structural relationships in each group (see Figure 1).

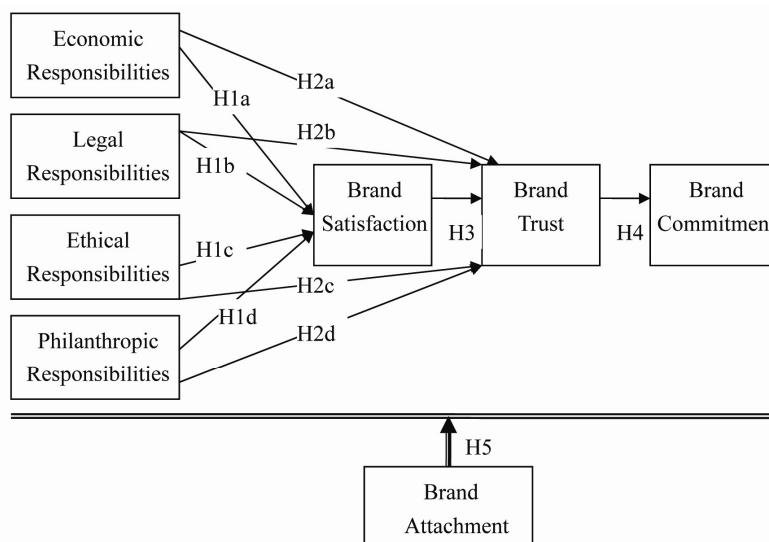


Figure 1. Research framework

4.2 Methodology

We drafted a consumer questionnaire based on the conceptual framework of the literature review and information on CSR gathered from interviews with businesses. The questionnaire comprised six sections, with the first being 19 questions on the four constructs of CSR (see Carroll, 1991); the second being four questions on brand satisfaction (see Oliver, 1980; Day, 1984); the third being four questions on brand trust (see Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson & Grayson, 2005); the fourth being four questions on brand commitment (see Mayera & Schoorman, 1992; White & Schneider, 2000); and the fifth being four questions on brand attachment (see Esch et al., 2006). We used a 7-point Likert scale for the above sections, ranging from

“strongly disagree” (1 point), “disagree” (2 points), “somewhat disagree” (3 points), “neutral” (4 points), “somewhat agree” (5 points), “agree” (6 points), and “strongly agree” (7 points). The sixth and last section comprised eight questions on basic demographics, measured using a nominal scale.

4.3 Pre-test and Pilot Test

Prior to the formal survey, we conducted a pre-test and pilot test of the questionnaire in order to ensure its effectiveness as a measurement instrument. For pre-test, we conducted in-depth interviews with 30 McDonalds consumers selected using convenience sampling. Results showed that the intended meaning of some questions was unclear, leading to amendment of the text.

We then distributed the amended questionnaire to pilot test 100 subjects, again selected using convenience sampling, and analyzed the reliability and validity of results. Analysis outcomes showed that the Cronbach's α of each construct met the > 0.7 criterion (Nunnally, 1978). Item to total correlation coefficients were all > 0.5 (Kerlinger, 1978), indicating strong reliability. Factor analysis showed that the eigenvalue of each construct exceeded 1, cumulative explained variance exceeded 0.5, and the factor loading of each variable exceeded 0.5, showing strong convergent validity (Kaiser, 1958). We then conducted the formal survey using this questionnaire.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Sample Structure

Population in this study was McDonald consumers in Taiwan. We distributed a total of 600 questionnaires through convenience sampling over a period of two months in McDonald store. Some respondents cannot finish the survey due to time limit those in the McDonald store of train station, thus, after eliminating invalid questionnaires, we recovered 507 valid questionnaires, making a recovery rate of 84.5%. Sample analysis showed that 46.5% of respondents were male and 53.5% female; the 21-30 age bracket accounted for the most respondents at 41.6%, followed by the 31-40 age bracket at 26.0%. In relation to place of residence, the highest number of subjects lived in central Taiwan (34.7%), followed by northern Taiwan (32.7%); 57.2% had a university/college level of education and 22.5% had a high school/vocational high school education. Students accounted for the largest group of respondents at 29.8%, followed by those employed in the finance and service industries at 18.9%. As far as average monthly income, 36.1% fell into the NTD10,001-NTD30,000 category while another 29.0% fell into the NTD10,000 or less category. The majority of respondents (54.2%) visited McDonalds two (inclusive) or fewer times per month, and another 29.4% visited three to four times per month.

5.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

We assessed the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's α and correlation analysis. Results showed that the questionnaire had strong reliability overall (see Table 1), according to Nunnally (1978), who suggested that Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.7$ indicates strong reliability, and Kerlinger (1978), who established the criterion of item to total correlation > 0.5 .

According to Kaiser (1958), the eigenvalues extracted using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) must exceed 1, and cumulative explained variation, as well as the factor loading of each variable, must exceed 0.5. The results for this questionnaire exceeded all these criteria, indicating strong convergent validity (see Table 1).

Based on the recommendations of Gaski & Nevin (1985), two constructs have discriminant validity if their correlation coefficient is smaller than their individual Cronbach's α values. We tested the constructs in our study against this principle and found that each had discriminant validity. We referred to local and international research in designing the first draft of the questionnaire, which was modified after discussion with academics and industry professionals to form the pre-test version. The results of pre-tests showed that the questionnaire had content validity. Because we referred to the previous literature in developing the research model and framework, the questionnaire also had nomological validity.

Table 1. Reliability and validity analysis for formal survey

Measurement indicator	Item to total correlation	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Cumulative explained variance (%)	Cronbach's α
Economic responsibility					
I think McDonalds can boost economic activity in my country.	0.594	0.729	3.482	58.036	0.854
I think McDonalds provides benefit to consumers.	0.706	0.811			
I think McDonalds is economically efficient.	0.501	0.635			
I think McDonalds provides value for money.	0.710	0.811			
I think McDonalds' products are reasonably priced.	0.661	0.776			
I think McDonalds improves the robustness of the market.	0.680	0.793			
Legal responsibility					
I think McDonalds adheres to legal regulations.	0.830	0.895	3.890	77.808	0.929
I think McDonalds adheres to fair trade regulations.	0.815	0.885			
I think McDonalds fulfils its responsibilities.	0.824	0.891			
I think McDonalds meets its legal obligations.	0.804	0.877			
I think the products and services offered by McDonalds are in line with local regulations.	0.785	0.863			
Ethical responsibility					
I think McDonalds meets social expectations.	0.739	0.832	3.794	75.884	0.920
I think McDonalds adheres to standards of integrity.	0.833	0.898			
I think McDonalds protects the interests of consumers.	0.756	0.844			
I think McDonalds is trustworthy and dependable.	0.843	0.905			
I think McDonalds operates in accordance with business ethics.	0.795	0.874			
Philanthropic responsibility					
I believe McDonalds meets social expectations of philanthropy.	0.421	0.733	1.809	60.293	0.669
I believe McDonalds hosts or participates in charitable activities.	0.559	0.840			
I believe the staff at McDonalds participates in charitable endeavours on their own initiative.	0.411	0.752			
Brand satisfaction					
The sales procedures at McDonalds are very efficient.	0.412	0.594	2.578	64.447	0.808
The McDonalds staff is pleasant.	0.682	0.845			
I'm satisfied with the products or services offered by McDonalds.	0.676	0.872			
I've had good experiences using the products or services offered by McDonalds.	0.676	0.867			
Brand trust					
McDonalds is trustworthy.	0.819	0.907	3.090	77.248	0.901
The products or services offered by McDonalds are of reliable quality.	0.808	0.901			
McDonalds puts the interests of its consumers first.	0.712	0.832			
McDonalds is a dependable brand.	0.768	0.874			
Brand commitment					
I will continue to buy McDonalds' products.	0.703	0.846	2.861	71.515	0.866
I would recommend McDonalds' products to others.	0.797	0.900			
I would buy more products when McDonalds has promotional events.	0.745	0.870			
I'm willing to pay a higher price for McDonalds' products.	0.609	0.761			
Brand attachment					
I strongly identify with McDonalds	0.725	0.859	3.015	76.551	0.917
I think that McDonalds can provide me with a greater level of satisfaction	0.738	0.875			
I think that McDonalds products can be used safely	0.791	0.894			
I think that the shopping experience at McDonalds is an important part of my life	0.723	0.838			

5.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

We conducted confirmatory factor analysis of economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, philanthropic responsibility, brand satisfaction, brand trust, brand commitment and brand attachment using AMOS software, to verify the effectiveness of the measurement constructs.

According to rigorous criteria, the ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom must not exceed 3 (Carmines & MacIver, 1981); RMSEA must be smaller than 0.05, and GFI, AGFI, NFI, RFI and CFI must exceed 0.9 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989). Results showed that $\chi^2/df = 1.700$; GFI = 0.922; AGFI = 0.900; NFI = 0.944; RFI = 0.933; CFI = 0.976 and RMSEA = 0.037. The measurement model was shown to have good fitness, with effective indicators that have construct validity.

5.4 Competing Model Analysis

We categorized consumers using the average value (4.55) of responses to the four questions of brand attachment. The 252 respondents with an average of less than 4.55 were categorized as having weak brand attachments which name “group of low brand attachment”; the 255 respondents with an average equal to or greater than 4.55 were classified as having strong brand attachments which name “group of high brand attachment”.

We employed AMOS for competing model analysis of SEM, in order to understand the differences between groups. Results showed $\chi^2/df = 1.501$; GFI = 0.875; AGFI = 0.835; NFI = 0.879; RFI = 0.850; CFI = 0.955 and RMSEA = 0.031, indicating that the models met or came close to meeting the criteria for strong models. Our competing model is therefore satisfactory as it was shown to have good fitness.

5.5 Comparing Relational Models between Groups

The differences of relationship models between the two groups are described below:

Respondents in the group of low brand attachment, awareness of economic and ethical responsibilities had a significantly positive influence on brand satisfaction, supporting H1a and H1c; ethical responsibility was also shown to have a significantly positive effect on brand trust, supporting H2c. Brand satisfaction had a significant positive influence on brand trust, which supports H3, and brand trust in turn had a significantly positive effect on brand commitment, supporting H4. However, the relationships hypothesized in H1b, H1d, H2a, H2b and H2d were not significant, indicating that the key factor of influence on this group is ethical CSR (see model analysis results in Table 2).

Respondents in the group of high brand attachment, awareness of economic and legal responsibilities had a significantly positive influence on brand satisfaction, supporting H1a and H1b; ethical responsibility was also shown to have a significantly positive effect on brand trust, supporting H2c. Brand satisfaction had a significant positive influence on brand trust, which supports H3, and brand trust in turn had a significantly positive effect on brand commitment, supporting H4. However, the relationships hypothesized in H1c, H1d, H2a, H2b and H2d were not significant, indicating that the key factor of influence on this group is economic CSR (see model analysis results in Table 2).

We further compared the strength of path relationships between the two groups (see Table 2); results were as follows:

- (1) T-tests showed that the influence of economic CSR on brand satisfaction was significantly stronger among those in the group of high brand attachment compared to those with weak brand attachments.
- (2) The influence of legal CSR on brand satisfaction was significant only among respondents in the group of high brand attachment.
- (3) T-tests showed that the influence of philanthropic CSR on brand satisfaction was stronger among subjects with weak brand attachments, although not to a statistically significant extent.

In summary, we found that brand attachment leads to significant differences in the strength of the influence of economic, legal and philanthropic CSR on brand satisfaction. This outcome partially supports H5.

Table 2. The competing model analysis for different groups

Paths	Standardized Regression Weights		T-test
	Group of low Brand Attachment (252)	Group of high Brand Attachment (255)	
H1a: Economic Responsibilities→Brand Satisfaction	0.216*	0.597***	-2.396**
H1b: Legal Responsibilities→Brand Satisfaction	-0.120	0.220*	-2.149**
H1c: Ethical Responsibilities→Brand Satisfaction	0.436*	0.072	1.694
H1d: Philanthropic Responsibilities→Brand Satisfaction	0.142	-0.194	2.299**
H2a: Economic Responsibilities→Brand Trust	-0.096	0.061	-1.257
H2b: Legal Responsibilities→Brand Trust	-0.021	-0.075	0.288
H2c: Ethical Responsibilities→Brand Trust	0.571***	0.454***	1.684
H2d: Philanthropic Responsibilities→Brand Trust	-0.065	-0.060	-0.602
H3: Brand Satisfaction→Brand Trust	0.476***	0.607***	-0.474
H4: Brand Trust→Brand Commitment	0.504***	0.541***	-0.873

Note. * P < 0.05; ** P < 0.01; *** P < 0.001.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions and Discussions

From the perspective of consumers, this study explored the relationships among CSR (economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic), brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand commitment, as well as the differences caused by brand attachment. We find that brand attachment will influence the relation strength of economic, legal and philanthropic CSR on brand satisfaction. We built relational models between each construct and identify valid measurement variables. Our results can provide the fast-food industry with practical concepts and research instruments. Based on analysis, our conclusions and discussions are as follows:

(1) Consumer perception of CSR and its influence on brand satisfaction

- a. Economic CSR had a significantly positive influence on brand satisfaction in both groups, which is in line with the viewpoints of Mohr & Webb (2005) and Bhattacharya & Sen (2003). This shows that the more aware consumers are of a company meeting its economic CSR, the more satisfied they are with its brand.
- b. Philanthropic CSR did not have a significant influence on brand satisfaction in either group, which does not support our hypothesis. This may be because consumers are not aware of any philanthropic endeavors by companies. We suggest that companies invest more effort into charitable and humanitarian projects.
- c. The influence of legal CSR on brand satisfaction was not significant among consumers in the group of low brand attachment; however, this relationship was significantly positive among those in the group of high brand attachment. Conversely, ethical CSR significantly and positively influenced brand satisfaction among those in the group of low brand attachment but had no significant influence among those strongly attached to brands. Notably, this shows that consumers with low levels of brand attachment are the most susceptible to being influenced by ethical CSR, while those with strong brand attachment are the most affected by economic CSR.

(2) Consumer perception of CSR and its influence on brand trust:

- a. Ethical CSR had a significantly positive influence on brand trust in both groups, which is in line with the viewpoints of Carroll (1991) and Langmeyer & Shank (1993). This shows that consumers build trust in a brand when they know the company is behaving ethically. The greater their awareness of ethical CSR, the more trust they place in the brand.
- b. Economic, legal and philanthropic CSR did not significantly influence brand trust in either group, which does not support our hypotheses. Evidently, companies generating economic benefit, engaging in philanthropy and adhering to regulations does not directly lead to them gaining the brand trust of consumers. Only ethical CSR leads to a direct increase in brand trust, which is a notable finding.
- c. Brand satisfaction had a significantly positive influence on brand trust in both groups, which matches the viewpoints of Lee (1991) and Franz et al. (2006). This means that the more satisfied consumers are with a brand, the more they are inclined to trust the brand. Therefore, satisfaction is an antecedent to trust.
- d. Brand trust had a significantly positive influence on brand commitment in both groups, which is in accordance with the work of Sirdeshmukh et al.(2002) and Vatanasombut et al.(2008). Once consumers trust a

brand, they re-purchase or recommend its products to others. Therefore, brand trust is an important factor of influence on commitment and willingness to re-purchase.

e. Comparison by group showed that brand attachment mediate to some extent with construct relationships; this is a variable that researchers should be aware of.

6.2 Management Implications

We studied the relationships among the four constructs of CSR and brand satisfaction, brand trust and brand commitment, as well as discussed the differences caused by brand attachment. Our findings are as follows:

(1) In both groups, greater awareness of a company's efforts to meet its economic CSR led consumers to feel more satisfied with its brand. Businesses should emphasize their strategies to fulfill economic CSR and promote the concept that they place priority on creating benefit for consumers as well as shareholders, for example by providing good value for money in their products, thereby enhancing brand satisfaction and encouraging purchases.

(2) In both groups, greater awareness of a company's efforts to fulfill ethical CSR led consumers to place more trust in its brand. Therefore, businesses should put more emphasis on their ethical responsibilities, for example by giving back to society and participating in environmental campaigns, community development and charities. This would create a favorable public impression of the company and foster greater brand trust.

(3) Consumers with weak brand attachments were most affected by ethical CSR, while those with strong brand attachments were most susceptible to the influence of economic CSR. Companies should enhance ethical CSR strategies toward consumers with weak brand attachments, such as protects the interests of consumers and to meet social expectations. Meanwhile, pricing reasonable and economically efficient are important demands for those with strong brand attachments.

(4) In both groups, greater brand satisfaction implied greater brand trust, which in turn led to greater brand commitment. Consumers are loyal to a brand they believe in. In addition to providing products of expected quality, companies should also be aware of the satisfaction and trust levels of consumers and adjust their business strategies accordingly, in order to enhance loyalty.

(5) The influence of economic, legal and philanthropic CSR on brand satisfaction differed significantly between the two groups, with legal and economic CSR having a stronger influence on consumers with strong brand attachments, and philanthropic CSR having a greater effect on those with weak brand attachments. We recommend that companies emphasize legal and economic CSR strategies when targeting consumers strongly attached to brands, for example by providing reasonable prices and adhering to relevant regulations. For those with weak brand attachments, companies can emphasize the philanthropic element of CSR, such as participating in charitable projects.

Consumers with different levels of brand attachment were affected differently by CSR, confirming that this is a key moderating variable. This finding provides businesses with more insight into the distinguishing features of different consumers and allows them to formulate CSR strategies accordingly. It can also provide a new academic perspective and form the basis of future research.

6.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Although our research has produced substantial results, there are still areas to be improved:

(1) We used McDonalds as a case study in this research; however, the results may not be applicable to other industries with different characteristics. We recommend that future studies explore other industries in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the function of CSR in these sectors. Meanwhile, test our framework concept in various industries that can enhance generalization of proposed model.

(2) Subjects were sampled using convenience sampling, which can result in sample error. We recommend that future studies employ random sampling in every geographic area of fast-food store to improve the reliability of results.

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