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An Experimental Analysis of the Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives
on Beliefs, Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions Within the Context of Corporate
Credibility

by

Ashlea Hudak

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

Recently, the use of corporate social responsibility initiatives has grown in popularity and prominence among organizations as research increasingly suggests that these initiatives positively impact the corporation's bottom line. This study contributes to theory driven research in strategic communications by using an experimental design to test the influence of six distinct corporate social responsibility initiatives, as identified by Kotler and Lee (2005), on the beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intention of message receivers, using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action as a theoretical framework. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitudes about an object are the result of the total of many varying beliefs about the object. This study extends understanding of the Dual Credibility Model by examining the influence of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between organizations and their target publics. This study is uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility beliefs.

Findings do not indicate significant differences among corporate social responsibility initiatives. Only significant differences between using and not using an initiative were found. However, among the initiatives cause related marketing demonstrated the highest mean score, although not a significant difference. CSR initiatives do influence belief sets, specifically CSR beliefs. The corporate credibility/trust belief set showed the strongest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization. Attitude towards the organization demonstrated a significant influence on behavioral intention toward the organization. These results support the theory of reasoned action. Exploratory research found that corporate credibility/trust and corporate credibility/expertise directly and significantly influenced behavioral intention toward the organization, suggesting an extension of the theory within the context of corporate credibility.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Study

Strategic communications practitioners often advise clients to employ elements of corporate social responsibility to build relationships with strategic publics and enhance public perceptions of the corporation. “An essential role of public relations is to maintain or enhance a company’s reputation so it can serve its customers profitably” (Koten, 1997, p. 149). According to Austin and Pinkleton (2001), an organization’s corporate citizenship focuses on factors with civic significance (Kendall, 1996; Austin & Pinkleton, 2001, p. 61). Corporations are progressively seeking to make corporate contributions that support both community and organizational goals. Corporate contributions are intended to benefit communities as well as to improve profitability (Koten, 1997, p. 149).

Over the last few years, the trend towards charitable giving has increased in both the corporate and private sector. According to a Giving USA (2007) press release, overall charitable giving in the United States exceeded \$295 billion dollars in 2006, setting a new record. Corporate and foundation donations contribute \$12.72 billion to this total. “Without the 2005 disaster relief gifts included, corporate giving is estimated to have increased 1.5 percent in 2006” (Giving USA, 2007). Furthermore, Fortune magazine (2006) reports strong confidence in the competitive profitability of organizations that engage in corporate social responsibility initiatives and corporate giving. “About one in every ten dollars of assets under management in the U.S. — an estimated \$2.3 trillion out of \$24 trillion— is being invested in companies that rate highly on some measure of social responsibility. That’s a \$2.3 trillion wager that socially responsible companies will

outperform companies that don't engage a wide array of stakeholders" (Fortune Magazine, 2006).

Corporate social responsibility is especially relevant to strategic communications because it is important to take a strategic approach to this type of communication (Werder, 2008). "Creating awareness of CSR practices among key stakeholders requires accurate and timely communication" (p. 3). Historically, literature on corporate social responsibility lacks research on the communication methods best employed to accomplish organizational goals through the use of corporate social responsibility initiatives. "By including such techniques, one can enhance the development and overall impact of managing corporate-stakeholder relationships" (Clark, 2000, p. 363).

Many scholars consider strategic communications to be the function within a corporation that should and does engage the organization in corporate social responsibility initiatives. According to Golob and Bartlett (2007), relationships and communication with key stakeholders "forms a central charter for public relations in communicating and creating mutual understanding" (p. 1). According to Hon (2007), there are clients of strategic communications practitioners who possess an advanced understanding of communications principles and values, including the importance of corporate social responsibility (p. 14). Strategic communication provides a framework for corporate social responsibility communication because, by definition, strategic communication encompasses all communications disciplines that further an organization's mission (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Vercic, & Krishnamurthy, 2007).

Background to the Study

Corporations engage in practices that they hope will improve profits as well as relationships with key stakeholders such as investors, consumers, employees, and the community. “Corporations are now finding that stakeholders expect them to have an ethical, and not necessarily financial, interest in their policies and how those policies affect the rest of the world” (Center & Jackson, 2003, p. 387). Companies benefit from contributions to society that minimize the negative effects on the environment.

It is increasingly possible to tie the use of social responsibility initiatives to positive financial results (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Surveys indicate that consumers view corporations that support a cause more favorably than those that do not. “Their buying decisions are influenced by a company’s commitment to a cause, and they believe companies are obligated to give back to the community in some way” (Iacono, 2007, p. 11).

Kotler and Lee (2005) identified six initiative types under which most corporate social responsibility practices and actions fit. They include: 1) corporate cause promotions, 2) cause-related marketing, 3) corporate social marketing, 4) corporate philanthropy, 5) community volunteering, and 6) socially responsible business practices.

The credibility of the corporation engaged in the corporate social responsibility initiative is important because the communications initiative’s success depends on the audience’s perception of the organization. “The success or failure of the entire public relations transaction can hinge on how the source of communication, the spokesperson for the client or organization, is perceived by the intended audience” (Hendrix, 2004, p. 37).

Credibility has been increasingly linked to corporate social responsibility research. Carrigan and Attalla (2001) suggest that ethical behavior is an important factor in determining purchase intention (p. 564). Results of a study by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) indicate that corporate credibility has a significance influence on consumers' attitudes and behavioral intention.

Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action suggests that an individual's beliefs about an object affect their attitudes about the object, that the attitudes affect behavioral intentions regarding the object, and behavioral intentions influence the behavior of the individual (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 14). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitudes about an object are the result of the total of many varying beliefs about the object. "A person's attitude toward some object is related to the *set* of his beliefs about the object but not necessarily to any specific belief" (Fishbein & Ajzen, p.14). The theory of reasoned action, which is based on the conceptual relationships between the variables of belief, attitude, behavioral intention, and behavior, offers a framework for the study of the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on audience receiver variables, including belief sets about corporate credibility and social responsibility.

Purpose and Hypotheses

This study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This study is

uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. Therefore, it asks the following research question and tests a related hypothesis.

RQ1: How do corporate social responsibility initiatives differ in their influence on receiver belief sets?

H1: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence receiver belief sets.

P1.1: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate credibility beliefs.

P1.2: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs.

This study seeks to extend Werder's (2008) research that examined the effects of corporate social responsibility initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action. This study uniquely focuses on the link between corporate social responsibility initiatives and their impact on corporate credibility beliefs. It extends the research of Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell's (2002) Dual Credibility Model and seeks to understand the influence of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between corporate social responsibility initiatives and their subsequent influence on receiver attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the organization, and behavioral intention toward the organization. Therefore, it posits the following hypotheses and related propositions:

H2: Receiver belief sets influence receiver attitude sets.

P2.1: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.2: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.3: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

P2.4: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

H3: Receiver attitude sets influence receiver behavioral intention sets.

P3.1: Attitude toward the ad influences behavioral intention toward the organization.

P3.2: Attitude toward the organization influence behavioral intention toward the organization.

Significance of the Study

This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge about corporate social responsibility initiatives. It is uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility. As such, it attempts to contribute to strategic communications theory development, practice, and pedagogy.

This research seeks to position corporate social responsibility within a strategic communications framework. It seeks to contribute to theory development through an experimental methodology testing the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives outlined by Kotler and Lee (2005) on receiver's beliefs, attitudes, and

behavioral intention. This research tests the theory of reasoned action in a new context. As one of the first strategic communications theory-driven studies to address corporate social responsibility using the framework of the theory of reasoned action, this study extends application of the theory and contributes to marketing literature on the topic of corporate social responsibility.

This study will influence strategic communications and marketing practice through the identification of the most successful corporate social responsibility initiatives and the contingent environment in which they are effective. This knowledge will benefit practice as organizations can plan corporate social responsibility strategies that will help them reach their goals, which may include improved relationships with key publics, increased financial earnings, and brand awareness.

This research will, over time, also impact strategic communications pedagogy through the accumulation of case studies demonstrating the use of successful corporate social responsibility initiative strategies. This study may influence how educators teach strategic communications and inform strategic communications students about corporate social responsibility. With minimal research on this topic within the strategic communications context, this study will also serve as a building block for further strategic communications theory-driven research in the area of corporate social responsibility.

Findings of the study will be valuable to strategic communications theory, its practitioners, educators, marketing professionals, and organizations in general. The findings of this study will benefit practitioners through the creation of new knowledge and support of previous information about corporate social responsibility effectiveness.

Educators will embrace the extension of knowledge, as there is currently very little evidence-based research in this area, and actively impart this information to their students. Organizations and corporations will benefit from the practical knowledge gained through this study. An understanding of the most successful corporate social responsibility initiatives will help organizations more effectively communicate to achieve their goals.

The next chapter contains a review of relevant literature. This is followed by the methodology, which describes the methods and procedures used to conduct this research. The results chapter provides a review of the data analysis and research findings. The discussion chapter provides an overview of the findings of this study, as well as its significance and limitations. Finally, the conclusion offers directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Recently, the use of corporate social responsibility initiatives has grown in popularity and prominence in the U.S. as corporations progressively seek to make strategic corporate contributions that support both the community and their bottom line. This study seeks to contribute to strategic communication theory through the development of an understanding of corporate social responsibility initiatives. According to Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Van Ruler, Vercic, and Sriramesh (2007), strategic communication is defined as the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. Strategic communication, a developing field that seeks to meet the needs of today's changing corporate communications climate, constitutes all communications disciplines that further an organization's mission, thus providing a framework for the study of corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility.

Although their specific activities can be conceptualized in various ways—from coordinating administrative functions to product promotion and relationship building—all of these disciplines involve the organization, defined in its broadest sense, communicating purposefully to advance its mission. This is the essence of strategic communication. It further implies that people will be engaged in deliberate communication practice on behalf of organizations, causes, and social movements (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 4).

This research seeks to examine corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility in the context of strategic communication management. The following section reviews literature relevant to this study. The literature review brings together the concepts of corporate social responsibility, corporate credibility, and the independent and dependent variables of the theory of reasoned action.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Boone and Kurtz (2005) define social responsibility as “marketing philosophies, policies, procedures, and actions that have the enhancement of society’s welfare as a primary objective” (p. 89). In addition, social responsibility has close ties with the public relations practice of symmetrical communication. “According to this philosophy, the mission of public relations is to develop and maintain win-win situations for the organization and the publics on whose goodwill its success depends... the implications of evolving relationships can have long-term, measurable effects on the bottom line” (Austin & Pinkleton, 2001, pp. 274-6.) Research suggests that ethical behavior is a factor in determining purchase intention (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001, p. 564).

Corporations engage in practices that they hope will improve profits as well as relationships with key stakeholders such as investors, consumers, employees, and the community. According to Boone and Kurtz (2005), companies benefit from contributions to society that minimize the negative effects of the company on the environment and community. “Social responsibility demands that marketers accept an obligation to give equal weight to profits, consumer satisfaction, and social well-being in evaluating their firm’s performance” (Boone & Kurtz, 2005, p. 88).

Research suggests that the social responsibility initiatives of a corporation improve its financial bottom line. “A wide range of benefits have been experienced by corporations that adopt and implement socially responsible business practices, and there appears to be an increasing ability to link these efforts to positive financial results” (Kotler & Lee, 2005 p. 211). According to the marketing literature of Boone and Kurtz (2005), social responsibility initiatives can benefit financial success as well as relationships with customers and employees (p. 30). Other benefits of corporate social

responsibility include decreased operating costs, spreading community good will, creating brand awareness and preference, building partnerships, enhancing employee well being and satisfaction, as well as establishing solid brand positioning (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

The shift towards more socially responsible corporations also results from the increase of choices for consumer purchase. Since there are more choices for consumers in the marketplace, they are increasingly using additional information, such as the ethical actions of a company, to help decide what products to purchase.

In our global marketplace, consumers have more options and can make choices based on criteria beyond product, price, and distribution channels... consumers are also basing their purchase decisions on reputation for fair and sustainable business practices and perceptions of commitment to the community's welfare. (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 208)

Increased corporate reporting has increased the importance and use of corporate social responsibility (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Technology and the improved access to news and information have also helped boost corporations' socially responsible initiatives. Recent corporate financial scandals and resulting disastrous bankruptcies have led more large organizations to declare their social responsibility openly in hopes of boosting credibility and gaining consumer trust, according to Maignan and Ferrel (2004, p. 3). Overall, consumers are now more aware of corporations' actions and behaviors towards the environment and the community, thus they are more likely to make purchase decisions based on this knowledge (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 209). According to Ellen, Web, and Mohr (2006), company spending on social causes has grown tremendously in the last few years. Furthermore, indices of corporate credibility are increasingly using corporate responsibility as a key factor (12Manage, 2007; Ellen, Web & Mohr, 2006).

There are many ways corporations can integrate corporate social responsibility into their organizations and practices. Kotler and Lee (2005) identified six initiative types under which most corporate social responsibility practices and actions fit. They include: 1) corporate cause promotions, 2) cause-related marketing, 3) corporate social marketing, 4) corporate philanthropy, 5) community volunteering, and 6) socially responsible business practices.

Corporate Cause Promotion In cause promotion, the corporation provides “funds, in-kind contributions, or other corporate resources to increase awareness and concern about a social cause or to support fundraising, participation, or volunteer recruitment for a cause” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 23). This initiative utilizes persuasive communication to engage consumers by getting them to contribute to the cause through donations, volunteering, or other means. Many times, the corporation is approached by a non-profit organization seeking support for its cause. Other times, the corporation will develop its own campaign or join others’ campaigns that include similar views and interests.

Excellent examples of corporations utilizing cause promotion include Washington Mutual, which supports teacher recruitment by identifying ways to help address a growing teacher shortage. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), Washington Mutual sponsored a town hall meeting to discuss the issue, in addition to publicizing the event by paying for and distributing flyers in the community.

Ben & Jerry’s is also very active in cause promotion. In 2002, the icecream company collaborated with a popular music group, The Dave Matthews Band, and an environmental group, SaveOurEnvironment.org, to help create awareness about global warming. The group created “One Sweet Whirled,” a campaign to create concern over

the issue of global warming. The programming included the creation of a new ice-cream flavor of the same name, as well as a concert tour and CD by the Dave Matthews Band, and a comprehensive Web site with links to more information about global warming (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 55).

Cause Related Marketing Cause related marketing initiatives rely on consumer action to initiate corporate contribution. “In cause related marketing (CRM) campaigns, a corporation commits to making a contribution or donating a percentage of revenues to a specific cause based on product sales” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 81). This initiative type is different than the others in that it is the most reliant on the consumer. Furthermore, the corporation stands to gain financial profit through consumer spending on products that will initiate the corporation’s donation to a cause. Since this initiative entails heavy promotional efforts and paid advertising, the marketing department of the corporation is most likely to organize this type of initiative, according to Kotler and Lee (2005).

Many organizations participate in cause related marketing. Washington Mutual is engaged in cause related marketing, according to Kotler and Lee (2005). The “WaMoola for Schools” program seeks to fulfill school wish lists by donating approximately five cents from every voluntarily-enrolled customers’ purchases made on a Washington Mutual check-card. Other corporations, such as Avon, raise funds for charitable causes by donating a portion of their profits on a certain item. Avon’s “Heart of the Crusade” breast cancer awareness pin sells for \$3, and 83% of this price is returned to the breast cancer cause (Kotler & Lee, p. 90). QVC and the American Legacy Foundation together support the cause of women struggling with tobacco addiction with the “Circle of

Friends” pin, of which \$5 of the \$16 price is donated back to the American Legacy Foundation (Kotler & Lee, 2005, pp. 91-92).

Corporate Social Marketing Focusing mostly on behavior change, corporate social marketing involves a corporation’s support for the “development and/or implementation of a behavior change campaign intended to improve public health, safety, the environment, or community well being” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 114). This type of corporate social responsibility initiative may include goals to educate and create awareness; however, the main goal of this type of campaign, and what makes it different than the other types, is the focus on influencing a specific behavior change.

According to Kotler and Lee (2005), Washington Mutual is involved in corporate social marketing programs in addition to its other many corporate social responsibility campaigns. The bank’s “School Savings” program provides “students with hands-on lessons about handling money responsibly” (p. 28). With this program, Washington Mutual seeks to make a life-long impact on financial habits. Companies such as Subway are also involved in corporate social marketing. Subway utilizes this type of corporate social responsibility by partnering with health organizations such as the North Carolina Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Task Force. As a related effort, Subway offers “healthy, convenient fast food and currently features seven sandwiches with six grams of fat or less” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 119).

Corporate Philanthropy Corporate Philanthropy is the most traditional of all types of corporate social responsibility. “Corporate philanthropy is a direct contribution by a corporation to a charity or cause, most often in the form of cash grants, donations and/or in-kind services” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 144). Donations such as these are crucial for

non-profit organizations. Trends in corporate philanthropy indicate a move towards a strategic approach regarding which organizations to sponsor philanthropically, as well as the move toward long-term rather than short term relationships between organizations.

“Washington Mutual also gives millions of dollars each year to fund the professional development of teachers, leadership training for principals, organizational development for schools, and programs that provide information about school performance to parents” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 31). These cash grants impact the long-term success of the institutions receiving the funds.

ConAgra Foods helps fight child hunger with its “Feeding Children Better” corporate philanthropy initiative, which consists of a large campaign committed to fighting child hunger in the United States. With the campaign, ConAgra funds improvements to food bank technological and transportation systems which will benefit children for years to come (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 150).

Community Volunteering “Community volunteering is an initiative in which the corporation supports and encourages employees, retail partners and/or franchise members to *volunteer* their time to support local community organizations and causes” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 175). The donation of time may include a contribution of skills, knowledge, labor, and personal talents. Corporations often sponsor or help organize these efforts on behalf of organizations or the cause of volunteering itself. Some corporations even offer compensation for the employees’ time away from work. “Corporate support may involve providing paid time off from work, matching services to help employees find opportunities of interest, recognition for service, and organizing teams to support specific causes the corporation has targeted” (p. 175).

“CAN,” or Committed Active Neighbors, is the community volunteering effort established by Washington Mutual that provides support and incentives for eligible employees to volunteer as many as four hours a month with paid time off from work. The volunteers often travel to schools to instruct students about money and credit management (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 31).

Hewlett-Packard participates in volunteerism that supports its vision “of a future where everyone in the world has access to the social, educational, and economic opportunities offered in the digital age” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 182). Their corporation invests in this cause through employee volunteerism efforts in underserved communities, like its, “i-community” program that allows employees to help the citizens learn about technology.

Socially Responsible Business Practices Corporate socially responsible business practices are voluntary structurally ingrained corporate social responsibility initiatives of an organization that protect, benefit, or support a cause or fundamental ethic. “Socially responsible business practices are where the corporation adapts and conducts discretionary business practices and investments that support social causes to improve community well-being and protect the environment” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 208). These practices are not required by law and are chosen for execution by the organization as an action that will benefit the community. These actions go above and beyond the expectations of the corporation. This type of corporate social responsibility initiative “includes a focus on activities that are discretionary, not those that are mandated by laws or regulatory agencies, or are simply expected, as with meeting moral or ethical standards” (p. 208).

Washington Mutual's internal practice of seeking interns from local schools that later may become employees is an example of a socially responsible business practice. Its efforts provide extensive training and job experience to the High School Intern Program (HIP) students. "Among the company's top priorities in support of its commitment to socially responsible business practices is the development of a workforce responsive to the needs of the diverse communities in which Washington Mutual does business" (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 33).

Ben & Jerry's engages in socially responsible business practices, beginning with the corporation's mission statements. The icecream company not only has a product mission that is focused on "promoting business practices that respect the earth and environment," but it also has a "Social Mission" that acknowledges the role that the company has in "initiating innovative ways to improve the quality of life locally, nationally, and internationally" (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 55).

Corporate Credibility

The success of a corporate social responsibility campaign, and the many different types of initiatives utilized, can depend on the perceived credibility of the organizations involved in the programs. Thus, it is important to understand how an organization can be viewed as a source of credible information.

Credibility is based on the perceived trustworthiness, expertness, and attractiveness of the organization (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001; Berlo, Lermert, & Mertz, 1970; Haley, 1996). "Source credibility refers to the believability of sources of information" (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 2004, p. 327). Organizations cannot

physically possess credibility. Instead, credibility is bestowed upon an organization by each individual that comes into contact with the organization.

According to Hendrix (2004), source credibility is one of the key factors in effective communication. “The success or failure of the entire public relations transaction can hinge on how the source of communication, the spokesperson for the client or organization, is perceived by the intended audience” (p. 37). Credibility is in the mind of the individual, thus it can be difficult to establish, cultivate, and maintain. Research has been conducted to determine the variables related to credibility and how corporations can functionally address them to gain success.

Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz, researchers in the 1970s, conducted formative research in source credibility that focused on perceived expertness and trustworthiness and sought to determine factors that led to evaluation of these perceptions (Rubin et al., 2004; Berlo et al., 1970). “Source credibility—ethos, prestige, or image— was originally conceived as a uni-dimensional attitude a receiver has about a source, but this changed...when two lines of research began promoting it as a multidimensional attitude (Rubin et al., 2004, p. 332).”

Haley (1996) investigated what makes an organization a credible sponsor of advocacy advertising and found that one of the key factors is the consumer’s perception of the organization. This study confirmed three measures of credibility; trustworthiness, expertness and attractiveness. Scholars have also sought more information about the consumer’s assessment of source credibility. Slater and Rouner (1996) found that the quality of a message helps mediate source credibility assessment regarding expertness (p. 984).

Research regarding “perceived corporate credibility has been hindered by the lack of a reliable and valid measure” (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001, p. 235). Newell and Goldsmith (2001) thus developed a scale to measure consumer perceptions of corporate credibility by operationalizing corporate credibility as a special type of source credibility. Using data from five studies and over 849 research participants, they formulated a scale based on past credibility research, that measured corporate expertise and trustworthiness as dimensions of corporate credibility. Newell and Goldsmith (2001) used: 1) expertise, the competency and capability of the organization; 2) trustworthiness, the reliability of the organization; and 3) truthfulness and honesty, the honest or misleading practices of the organization (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001, p. 238). They concluded that the eight-item Likert-type scale measuring expertise and trustworthiness is reliable and valid and suggest its usefulness in measuring corporate credibility (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001, p. 245).

Research conducted by Lafferty and Goldsmith (1998) suggested a link between the variables of endorser and corporate credibility and consumer purchase intentions. Furthermore, Lafferty and Goldsmith’s research demonstrated that corporate credibility alone has a significant influence on consumer purchase intentions. “Whereas endorser credibility seems to have a greater influence on attitude-toward-the-ad, corporate credibility seems to have a greater influence on attitude-toward-the-brand and on purchase intentions” (p. 109).

Subsequent research by Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell (2000) supported the finding that corporate credibility plays an important role in mediating consumer receiver variables. “Corporate credibility influences purchase intent because consumer perception

of the trustworthiness and expertise of a company are part of the information they use to judge the quality of the company's products and therefore whether they want to buy them or not" (p. 46).

Dual Credibility Model

Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell (2002) suggest a Dual Credibility Model that "partially predicts and explains advertising effectiveness" regarding endorser and corporate credibility (p. 1). Most importantly, the Dual Credibility Model posits that corporate credibility is positively and directly related to attitude towards the ad and directly related to purchase intentions. In order to test the relationships posed by the model, the corporate credibility scale developed by Newell and Goldsmith (2001) was used to measure corporate credibility in this study.

Results of Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) further support the significance of corporate credibility as a variable that influences consumer receiver variables. They found that "corporate credibility plays an important role in consumer evaluation of advertisements. In addition, a company's credibility seems to have a direct effect on perceptions of brands and of purchase intentions" (p. 8).

The study by Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell (2002) indicated that both corporate and endorser credibility impact attitudes and purchase intentions. Further research also supported the Dual Credibility Model. Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell (2000) found a strong relationship between corporate credibility and attitude toward the brand, which proposes that, "corporate credibility plays an important role in consumers' reaction to advertisements and brands, independent of the equally important role of endorser credibility" (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 43). According to Goldsmith et al.,

(2000) and Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999), corporate social responsibility influences purchase intention. “Product purchase intentions are in part influenced by consumers’ view of the parent company’s good citizenship and the consumers’ confidence in the corporate brand” (Goldsmith et al., 2000, p. 51).

The research conducted by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) suggests a link with Fishbein and Ajzen’s (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action by examining beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intention in the context of endorser and corporate credibility. Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell’s (2002) study examined participants’ assessments of credibility and measured attitudes toward the advertisement, attitude toward the brand, and the intent to purchase the mentioned product.

According to Wheatley (1969), communicators sought to understand the sequence of related concepts between the communicated message and eventual purchase behaviors. This phenomenon developed into an attempt to understand advertising effectiveness, and thus the variable of attitude toward the advertisement.

There are a considerable number of such models of the supposed steps in the communication process, each with some variation of its own... The most general assumption is that a communication or communication campaign of some sort, in order to affect behavior, must first produce some immediate and presumably observable change in people (Wheatley, 1969, pp. 49-50).

Attitude towards the advertisement is a concept that helps mediate advertising effects on attitudes and purchase intentions (Lutz, 1985). “Aad [attitude towards the advertisement] is defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner to a particular advertising stimulus during a particular exposure occasion” (Lutz, 1985, p. 46). Attitude towards the advertisement is an important concept in the

understanding of message persuasion, advertising effectiveness, and “brand attitude” (p. 60).

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action’s conceptual framework is founded on the relationships between the variables of belief, attitude, behavioral intention, and behavior. Developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 2005), the theory suggests that an individual’s beliefs about an object affect his/her attitudes about the object, that the attitudes affect behavioral intention regarding the object, and behavioral intention influences the behavior of the individual. “The totality of a person’s beliefs serves as the informational base that ultimately determines his attitudes, intentions and behaviors” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 14).

Beliefs about an object are formed from pre-existing attitudes and outside influences. The beliefs and evaluations of beliefs lead to the formation of attitudes about the object. “A person’s attitude toward an object is based on his salient beliefs about *that* object.” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 14). The attitude about an object is the result of the total of many varying beliefs about the object. “A person’s attitude toward some object is related to the *set* of his beliefs about the object but not necessarily to any specific belief” (p. 14).

Attitudes lead to the formation of behavioral intentions. “Attitude toward an object is viewed as related to the person’s intentions to perform a variety of behaviors with respect to that object” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 14). The behavioral intention leads to a behavior consistent with the intention. “Each intention is viewed as being related to the corresponding behavior” (p. 15). The actions that result due to the beliefs,

attitude, and behavioral intention are considered to be voluntary. “Since we view most social behavior as being volitional, barring unforeseen events, a person should perform those behaviors he intends to perform” (p. 15).

The theory of reasoned action is founded on the basis that the relationships between the variables of belief, attitude and behavioral intention exist due to rational thoughts. “Our approach...views man as an essentially rational organism, who uses the information at his disposal to make judgments, form evaluations, and arrive at decisions” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 14).

Although attitude is considered the main determinant of behavioral intention, other factors may influence the intent to perform the behavior including habits, memory, skills, and confidence in the success of performing the action due to self-efficacy or necessary resources (Ronis, Yates, & Kirscht, 1991, p. 235). Furthermore, personal motivation to comply with the behavioral intention and perform the behavior may also be influenced by “beliefs that certain referents think the person should or should not perform the behavior in question” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p.16.). These factors, the “subjective norm,” may also determine intention to perform a behavior. The behavioral intention is considered to be a function of both the subjective norm and the attitude.

Subjective norm accounts for any environmental or social influence on the intention to perform the behavior. The subjective norm is composed of the individual’s perceived beliefs about what is normal (normative beliefs), and the individual’s willingness to meet these normal standards (motivation to comply). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), “subjective norm is determined by the perceived expectations of specific referent individuals or groups, and by the person’s motivation to comply with

those expectations” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 302). Individuals and groups that may influence a person’s subjective norm include but are not limited to family, friends, supervisors, or general society. Very often, multiple perceived opinions are considered. As a result, a scale to measure the influence of multiple subjective norms was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen that asks research participants to respond to the statement, “Most people who are important to me think I should/should not perform behavior *x*” (p. 314).

The theory of reasoned action has been utilized in the research of many fields of study other than marketing, strategic communications, and communications including, but not limited to, health promotion, employee and internal communication, industrial engineering, social psychology, tourism, and nutrition.

The theory of reasoned action has been widely used in the area of health communication and promotion. Recent research focuses on topics related to vaccinations, disease prevention, and overall health. Shepherd (2007) explains the importance of the application of the theory of reasoned action in creating a framework for studying food choice. Bonney, Rose, Clarke, Hebert, Rosengrad, and Stein (2007) used the theory of reasoned action along with a health belief model to explain the results of their research about the willingness to accept a vaccine against sexually transmitted disease in their sample of high-risk incarcerated women. Wu (2008) used the theory of reasoned action to investigate communication with Chinese families about organ donation. The findings of Wu’s study indicate that subjective norm is a significant factor in determining discussion about the issue. Swaim, Perrine, and Aloise-Young (2007) used the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior to help predict life-long cigarette use of elementary students. The theory of reasoned action helped explain the results of the

female students; however, the theory of planned behavior helped explain the results of both male and female elementary students.

The theory of reasoned action has been used and referenced in other communications arenas. In the area of marketing and tourism, Jae-Lee and Back (2007) used the theory to help formulate a meeting participation model, which they used to study and further understand the meeting participation behaviors of association members. Results indicate support for past behavior and subjective norm as indicators of intention to participate. Lin (2007) used the theory of reasoned action to study the motivational influences of sharing information using a sample of employees from large organizations in Taiwan. Findings indicate weak support for the influence of organizational reward on employee attitudes and behavioral intentions regarding knowledge sharing.

Social psychology research by Langdrige, Sheeran, and Paschal (2007) used the theory of reasoned to study participants' intention to have children. They performed multiple forms of statistical analysis on data obtained from a sample population in the United Kingdom.

Other areas where the theory of reasoned action has been studied recently include industrial engineering and information technology. The industrial engineering research of Chung and Soo Nam (2007) focused on variables predicting instant messenger use. Results indicated that intention did not predict instant messenger use. The information technology research of Hsu and Lu (2007) examined online gaming customer loyalty using a model derived from the theory of reasoned action and other research models. The findings indicate that "customer loyalty is influenced by perceived enjoyment, social norms and preference" (p. 1642).

Researchers have utilized the variables of belief, attitude, and behavioral intention without referencing the theory of reasoned action; however, the theory is used in this study as it best explains the linear relationship between the variables. Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action is an appropriate theoretical framework for this study because the variables of the theory are the variables of interest in the research. This study examines corporate social responsibility initiatives' influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intention.

Purpose and Hypotheses

This study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test corporate social responsibility initiative influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intention. This study is uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. In addition, this study extends the research of Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell's (2002) Dual Credibility Model and seek to understand the influence and role of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between corporate social responsibility initiatives and the receiver variables of attitude and behavioral intention.

Furthermore, this study seeks to replicate and extend the research of Werder (2008) that examined the effects of CSR initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005)

theory of reasoned action. This study specifically focuses on the link between CSR initiatives and corporate credibility as a belief set and the subsequent influence on the receiver variables of attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the organization, and behavioral intention toward the organization.

To accomplish this objective, a 1 x 8 factorial experiment was conducted to test the following research question, hypotheses, and related propositions:

RQ1: How do corporate social responsibility initiatives differ in their ability to influence receiver belief sets?

Research Question 1 asks whether the numerous corporate social responsibility initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) have a differing ability to impact receiver belief sets.

Werder (2008) found that CSR initiatives influence beliefs about an organization.

Research Question 1 extends this to all six initiative types identified by Kotler and Lee (2005).

H1: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence receiver belief sets.

P1.1: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate credibility beliefs.

P1.2: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs.

Hypothesis 1 tests the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receivers' beliefs about corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility. According to Kotler and Lee (2005), corporate social responsibility increases the image of the organization. Werder (2008) found that CSR initiatives influence beliefs about an organization, especially those beliefs about the organization's contributions to society.

Hypothesis 1 seeks to explore these relationships by empirically testing the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receivers' beliefs about corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility. The propositions related to Hypothesis 1 were developed from the results of previous research and literature on the effects of corporate social responsibility initiatives (Werder, 2007; Kotler & Lee, 2005).

H2: Receiver belief sets influence receiver attitude sets.

P2.1: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.2: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.3: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

P2.4: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

Hypothesis 2 seeks to support the theory of reasoned action through demonstration that belief sets about a corporation's credibility and corporate social responsibility influence attitudes toward the advertisement, (i.e., message) and the organization. According to the theory of reasoned action, beliefs influence attitudes; therefore, Hypothesis 2 seeks to test this theory within the context of corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility as belief sets. Furthermore, previous research regarding the Dual Credibility Model has demonstrated that corporate credibility is positively and directly related to attitude toward the ad (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Newell, 2002, p. 1).

H3: Receiver attitude sets influence receiver behavioral intention sets.

P3.1: Attitude toward the advertisement influences behavioral intention toward the organization.

P3.2: Attitude toward the organization influence behavioral intention toward the organization.

Hypothesis 3 seeks to further support the theory of reasoned action by experimentally testing the influence of corporate attitude sets on behavioral intention sets. The next and last proposition of the theory of reasoned action, that behavioral intention influences actual behavior, is very difficult to test; therefore, it has been left out of this study.

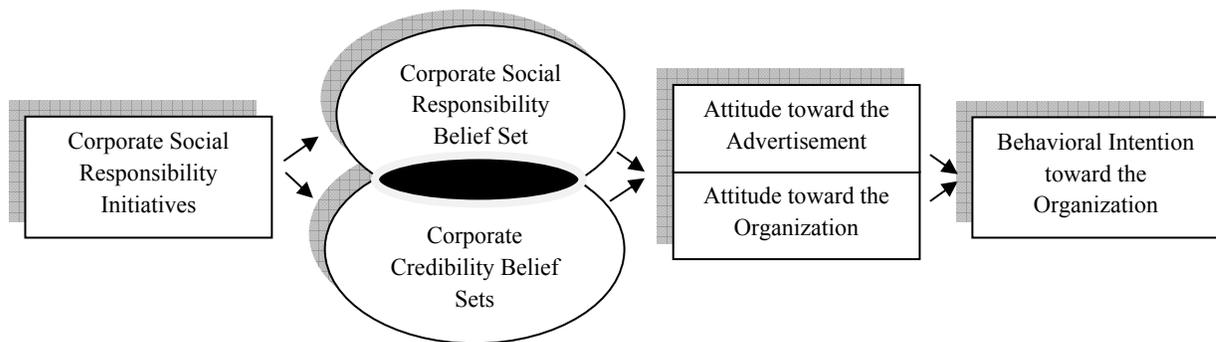
Previous research by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) on the Dual Credibility Model demonstrated support for the influence of corporate credibility on purchase intentions. Hypothesis 3 seeks to explore this relationship further by testing the influence of attitudes toward the advertisement and the organization on behavioral intentional toward the organization.

Figure 1 illustrates the outlined hypotheses of this study. The six corporate social responsibility initiatives, as detailed by Kotler and Lee (2005), are shown in the model to influence the corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility belief sets. Within these two belief sets is an area of overlap. Although corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility are two separate belief sets when considered as areas of research interest for this study, beliefs about corporate social responsibility are often used as one of the many determinants of an organization's perceived credibility (12Manage, 2007; Ellen, Web & Mohr, 2006). These two belief sets are shown in the figure to influence attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization. These attitudes then influence behavioral intention toward the organization. A relationship between

behavioral intention and behavior has been hypothesized in other research; however, that relationship will not be tested in this study due to limitations in methodology and the difficulty of testing this variable.

Figure 1.

Model of hypothesized influence of CSR initiatives on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions



The next chapter presents the methodology used in this study to examine the research question, hypotheses, and propositions. In addition, more information about the participants, stimulus materials and instrumentation will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test corporate social responsibility initiative influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This study is uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets.

In addition, this study will extend the research of Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell's (2002) Dual Credibility Model and seek to understand the influence and role of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between corporate social responsibility initiatives and receiver variables of attitude and behavioral intention. The Dual Credibility Model combines the influences of corporate and endorser credibility; however, this study focuses on the influence of the corporate credibility belief set on receiver variables, and does not address the influence of endorser credibility.

Furthermore, this study seeks to also extend the research of Werder (2008) that examined the effects of CSR initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action. This study specifically focuses on the link between CSR initiatives and corporate credibility as a belief set and the subsequent influence on receiver variables of attitude toward the advertisement, and attitude toward the organization, as well as behavioral intention toward the organization.

To accomplish this objective, a 1 x 8 factorial experiment was conducted to test the following research question, hypotheses and related propositions:

RQ1: Corporate social responsibility initiatives differ in their ability to influence receiver belief sets.

H1: Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence receiver belief sets.

P1.1: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate credibility beliefs.

P1.2: Corporate social responsibility initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs.

H2: Receiver belief sets influence receiver attitude sets.

P2.1: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.2: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the advertisement.

P2.3: Corporate credibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

P2.4: Corporate social responsibility belief sets influence attitude toward the organization.

H3: Receiver attitude sets influence receiver behavioral intention sets.

P3.1: Attitude toward the ad influences behavioral intention toward the organization.

P3.2: Attitude toward the organization influence behavioral intention toward the organization.

To test the hypotheses, a controlled experiment was conducted using stimulus material based on a real organization engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives. Specifically, Chipotle Mexican Grill was used as the target organization in this experiment because it has built a substantial corporate social responsibility campaign, and it serves as an excellent example of an organization engaging in socially responsible business practices. This initiative type, one of the six identified by Kotler and Lee (2005), focuses on practices that are not required by law and that are chosen for execution by the organization as actions that will benefit the community. “Socially responsible business practices are where the corporation adapts and conducts discretionary business practices and investments that support social causes to improve community well-being and protect the environment” (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 208).

In addition, Chipotle utilizes a variety of other corporate social responsibility initiatives. The experimental treatments replicated messages from Chipotle and sought to reflect reality as much as possible and drew from existing knowledge about the visual and contextual trends used in Chipotle’s communications materials in order to build believability.

Participants

Research participants were recruited from a population of undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory mass communications course at a large southeastern university. These students were asked to voluntarily participate in the experiment.

The research experiment was conducted in a large auditorium style classroom on the campus of the university. The responses of 250 participants were included in data

analysis. Of these participants, 178 (70.4%) were female and 72 (28.5%) were male. The average age of participants was 20.

Upon arrival, participating students were assigned to one of eight different experimental conditions derived from the 1x8 factorial, which included treatments for the six CSR types and two controls—a treatment control, and an overall control. Variation in conditions was achieved through the use of booklets containing instructions, preliminary questions, stimulus materials, and an instrument designed to measure the variables of interest.

Stimulus Materials

To achieve the eight experimental conditions, eight different booklets were created which contained instructions, preliminary questions, one of seven stimulus materials, and an instrument testing the variables of interest. The booklets for the treatment conditions contained the same questionnaire. Participants were exposed to one of the eight different conditions however all of the conditions were exposed to the same self-administered instrument to measure the desired variables.

Stimuli and items utilized in the experiment were derived and replicated from the past research of Werder (2008), Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell (2002), Newell and Goldsmith (2001), Zaichkowsky (1994), and Hallahan (1999). Experimental treatments included: 1: Cause promotions, 2: Cause-related marketing, 3: Corporate social marketing, 4: Corporate philanthropy, 5: Community volunteering, 6: Socially responsible business practices, 7: Control for message type, and 8: Overall control.

The seventh condition controlled for the CSR initiative type by containing a message about the organization unrelated to CSR initiatives, specifically, the message

control advertised a new product offered by Chipotle, a breakfast burrito. The eighth condition was designed as the overall control and accounted for variation in opinion and bias regarding the corporation. This condition did not contain any type of stimulus. This group received only the instructions, preliminary questions, and instrument testing the variables of interest. The text of each manipulation is contained in Table 1 and the exact articles are shown in Appendix A. The instrument is shown in Appendix B.

Table 1.

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Cause Promotion	Chipotle Promotes Earth Day Network Causes	<p>For the past four years, Chipotle has supported and worked together with the Earth Day Network (EDN), an organization that was founded by Earth Day organizers to encourage environmental citizenship year-round. Since 2005, Chipotle collaboration has included featuring environmental messages on Chipotle to-go cups during the month of April. The messages encourage environmental protection and suggest simple choices we can make that create a more sustainable world. The Chipotle Foundation also provided financial support to EDN. Chipotle promotes Earth Day activities with in-store messages and volunteer opportunities to educate partners (employees) and customers about the impacts their actions have on the environment. This steers environmental awareness around the world. Through EDN, activists connect, interact, and impact their communities, and create positive change in local, national, and global policies. Additionally, in recognition of Earth Day, Chipotle provides financial support to 42 environmental organizations across North America. Approximately 12,000 partners and customers, including nearly 900 partners in Japan, are involved in Earth Day volunteer projects. Visit Earth Day Network, www.earthday.net to find out how you can volunteer on Earth Day. Then, for more information about how Chipotle contributes and promotes Earth Day Network, go to www.chipotle/csr.com</p>	Chipotle provides funds, in-kind contributions and other corporate resources to increase awareness of Earth Day causes.

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Cause Related Marketing	Chipotle Cause Related Marketing Donates Proceeds to Hurricane Recovery Efforts	Chipotle’s cause-related marketing campaign, Hear Music, was founded in 1990. Hear Music is committed to making a contribution and donating a percentage of revenues to a specific cause. Chipotle is dedicated to creating a new and convenient way for consumers to discover, experience and acquire all genres of great music through its unique selection of hand-picked CD compilations, music and programming for Chipotle retail stores worldwide. Chipotle has a history of collaborating with artists and the music industry to give back to communities through cause related marketing efforts. For example, in response to the tremendous devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, Chipotle and two record labels, Life’s Song and Aqua Soul, teamed up to release the <i>I Feel Soulful</i> , for recovery efforts. The album was not initially conceived as a benefit. After Hurricane Katrina a decision was made to donate the proceeds from CD sales to the victims of the storms, including those in New Orleans, as part of Chipotle’s cause-related marketing. Chipotle committed to donate to the Red Cross \$10 of the purchase price of every <i>I Feel Soulful</i> CD sold in Chipotle company-operated stores in the United States and Canada. In other retail channels, \$3 of the purchase price of every CD sold will be donated to these efforts. This donation will continue for the lifetime of the CD. For more information about how Chipotle responded to Hurricane Katrina with cause-related marketing, go to www.chipotle/csr.com	Chipotle’s cause related marketing campaign committed to making a contribution and donating a percentage of revenues to Hurricane recovery efforts.

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Corporate Social Marketing	Chipotle's Corporate Social Marketing Campaign Motivates Consumer Behavior Change	<p>Chipotle is dedicated to reducing and eliminating trans-fat from the Americans' diets and in 2001 joined the national "Freedom from Trans-fat" campaign alongside other restaurants and retail food providers. Our foods at Chipotle contain zero trans fats. It is universally accepted that this kind of artificially created trans fat is the worst kind of fat, far worse than saturated fat. Dietary Guidelines issued by the U.S. Government state that we should keep trans fat consumption "as low as possible." Back in 2000, we decided to take the trans fats out of all of our food. Chipotle goal is to encourage other individuals in the USA to not only join in the cause of ensuring the health of the country through the elimination of trans-fat from our diets, but also to commit to change personal eating behaviors to reflect the dedication to this cause. What we're asking is to have more Americans reduce and eliminate trans-fat consumption. The time to start eating healthier couldn't be better. January is "Freedom from Trans-fat" month. We are extremely proud of what we have done and you can be too. We are doing the right thing for our customers' health by leading the way on this. Join Chipotle's in an effort to improve Americans' healthy eating habits, starting with your own. For more information about Chipotle's dedication to eliminating trans-fat go to www.chipotle/csr.com</p>	Chipotle's social marketing campaign improves public health and community well-being.

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Corporate Philanthropy	Chipotle's Corporate Philanthropy Lends a Helping Hand	<p>Over the years, Chipotle has created and maintained a deep connection with the people and families who care for and nurture the dairy cows that produce up to eight gallons of milk a day. This natural way has worked well for man and cow for eons. So, why mess with it? Unfortunately, someone has. Agricultural chemical companies have formulated a synthetic hormone that is injected into a cow to artificially increase milk production. Recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) is used in the United States, but banned elsewhere. Those synthetic growth hormones end up in the milk we drink. That is why Chipotle has donated over \$1 million dollars to the "Got Better Milk" campaign, a collection of small dairy farmers against the use of Recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH). Last October, when we learned of the campaign, our decision to provide assistance through our Chipotle Support Center in San Francisco, CA came without hesitation. After visiting with the farmers and experiencing their plight first-hand, Chipotle began a philanthropic effort to financial and otherwise help support small dairy farms that uphold health and quality standards by refusing to use rBGH on their cows. We think some things should be sacred. Like sour cream. The sour cream at all of our restaurants is free of the synthetic growth hormone, rBGH. We're not scientists, but ingesting hormones with our crispy tacos just doesn't seem like a good idea. For more information about Chipotle's corporate philanthropy and support of small dairy farmers go to www.chipotle/csr.com</p>	Through philanthropy Chipotle provides a direct contribution to the cause in the form of cash grants, donations and services.

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Corporate Volunteering	Chipotle Encourages Employee Volunteering	<p>Building community: Chipotle is proud that so many partners at all levels of the community actively support neighborhood organizations that are important to them through volunteering or charitable giving. No matter the cause, Chipotle partners are making a difference in their community. Make Your Mark: Chipotle believes that volunteerism is vital to a healthy community. With that in mind, we created Make Your Mark, a program that matches our partners' and customers' volunteer hours with case contributions to designated non-profit organizations- \$10 for every hour, up to \$1,000. Caring Unites Partners Fund: The spirit of helping others can be seen everyday at Chipotle through the Caring Unities Partners Fund, a program developed to supporting fellow partners in need. Funded by partners through voluntary payroll deductions and fundraisers, the CUP fund provides financial relief to partners facing extreme emergency situations. Executive Community Leadership Program: Chipotle believes our senior executives can set great examples for other partners while lending their management expertise to non-profit organizations by becoming board members. Our Executive Community Leadership Program facilitates and supports Chipotle executives' service on non-profit boards such as Tampa Parks Association, Conservation International and The Small Farmers Growth Association. Choose to Give: We believe charitable giving is a personal decision. Respecting this, Chipotle designed Choose to Give, a flexible workplace giving program that matches each partner's charitable contributions, up to \$1,000 annually. For more information about Chipotle volunteer programs go to www.chipotle/csr.com</p>	Chipotle supports and encourages employees to volunteer their time to support local community organizations and causes.

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Socially Responsible Business Practices	Chipotle Values Socially Responsible Business Practices	<p>Chipotle believes that we can always do better in terms of the food we buy; better in every sense of the word- better tasting, coming from better sources, better for the environment, better for the animals, and better for the farmers who raise the animals and grow the produce. Our philosophy is our way of doing business.</p> <p>The reasons is as simple as better-tasting burritos, and no less ambitious than revolutionizing the way America grows, gathers, serves and eats its food. We call it Food With Integrity. It is fundamental to everything we do in our restaurants and behind the scenes and it cannot be separated from our product. Chipotle "Food With Integrity" isn't a marketing slogan. And it's not a corporate initiative that will ever be finished or set aside to make room for other priorities. And, since embracing this philosophy, it's had tremendous impact on how we run our restaurants and our business. It's even influenced the way we view other aspects of our business, from the materials and systems we use to design and build our restaurants, to our staffing and training programs. We like the food we serve today. And, because of our Food With Integrity philosophy, we're confident that we'll like it even more down the road. This means new and higher expectations from all of us about what we consume every day as Food With Integrity is a constant process of searching and improving. And you're part of making it happen, every time you come in. For more information about Chipotle "Food With Integrity" philosophy go to www.chipotle/csr.com</p>	<p>Chipotle Food With Integrity isn't a marketing slogan, it's the fundamental way we do business/ It's not a corporate initiative that will ever be finished or set aside to make room for other priorities.</p>

Table 1. (cont.)

Corporate Social Responsibility Treatments

CSR Initiative Type	Headline	Message Text	Pull Quote
Message Control	Chipotle Introduces New Breakfast Burrito	<p>The alarm goes off, you hit snooze. The alarm goes off again, you hit snooze again. So, you're not a morning person. If you are longing for a Saturday morning, sit-down-style breakfast, that you can eat on the go, it is time that you tried Chipotle's new breakfast burrito. The new Chipotle breakfast burrito is everything good about a weekend breakfast, ready to go. Freshly prepared by hand, the breakfast burrito is a complete breakfast, wrapped up in a warm and easy-to-eat tortilla. Your choice of breakfast sausage, bacon or a traditional Chipotle meat, scrambled eggs, cheese, fajita vegetables, beans and salsa makes this breakfast a complete meal to start your day right. We make it right in front of you. You choose exactly what you want. This may mean a little more salsa, a little less cheese, whatever you'd like. Breakfast at Chipotle is no different. You can build your version of the perfect burrito for breakfast as well as for lunch and dinner. Morning never tasted so good. A satisfying breakfast makes all the difference and it is a lot easier to handle inside a tortilla. Chipotle breakfast burrito's are one more reason to get up in the morning. All you have to do is hold on and enjoy. For more information about Chipotle, go to www.chipotle.com</p>	<p>The new Chipotle breakfast burrito is everything good about a weekend Breakfast—ready to go.</p>

After viewing one of the experimental conditions, participants were asked to complete an instrument containing items that measured their beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intention toward Chipotle. Specifically, scales were created to measure the following variables: 1) salient beliefs (about corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility); 2) attitudes (toward the advertisement and the organization); and 3) behavioral intention (toward the advertisement and the organization). In addition, items also measured elements of corporate credibility identified by Newell and Goldsmith (2001), specifically expertise, trustworthiness, and truthfulness/honesty.

Instrumentation

The instrument used Werder (2008), Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell (2002), and Newell and Goldsmith (2001), Zaichkowsky (1994), and Hallahan (1999) as guidelines to replicate and extend previous research. Separate items were created to measure corporate belief sets about Chipotle's social responsibility, corporate credibility attitude toward the advertisement, attitude toward the organization, attitude toward corporate social responsibility involvement, subjective norm, and behavioral intention.

To measure beliefs about Chipotle's social responsibility, a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) was used to measure the following five items taken from Werder (2008): 1) I believe Chipotle engages in ethical business practices; 2) I believe that Chipotle is a socially responsible organization; 3) I believe that Chipotle positively contributes to the community; 4) I believe that Chipotle is a bad corporate citizen (reversed); and 5) I believe that communities are negatively impacted by Chipotle (reversed).

To measure beliefs about Chipotle's corporate credibility, two beliefs sets were tested including expertise and trust. Newell and Goldsmith (2001) developed a scale to measure perceived corporate credibility using the variables of trustworthiness and expertise. Their research indicates that these elements are most applicable to corporate credibility (p. 236). Therefore, to measure beliefs about Chipotle's corporate credibility expertise and trust, measures developed by Newell and Goldsmith (2001) were utilized.

To measure corporate credibility/expertise the following four items were used taken from Newell and Goldsmith (2001): 1) Chipotle has a great amount of expertise; 2) Chipotle is an expert in the food industry; 3) Chipotle is skilled at what it does; 4) Chipotle does *not* have much knowledge of the food industry (reversed).

To measure corporate credibility/trust the following five items were used taken from Newell and Goldsmith (2001): 1) I trust Chipotle; 2) Chipotle makes truthful claims; 3) Chipotle is an honest organization; 4) I do *not* believe what Chipotle tells me (reversed); and 5) Chipotle misleads consumers about its products (reversed).

To measure attitude toward the advertisement, one item developed by Werder (2008) was used: 1) This advertisement is effective in promoting Chipotle as a socially responsible organization. In addition, two sets of four semantic differential items taken from Werder (2008), were created to measure attitude towards the advertisement. The first set of items used the statement, "My attitude toward the Chipotle advertisement is:" and was rated on scales anchored by *positive/negative* (reversed), *good/bad*, *favorable/unfavorable* (reversed), and *disapproving/approving*. The second statement, "I consider messages from Chipotle to be:" was rated on scales anchored by

biased/unbiased (reversed), *not credible/credible*, *trustworthy/not trustworthy* (reversed), and *not convincing/convincing*.

To measure attitude towards the organization, one item developed by Werder (2008) was used: “I like Chipotle.” Next, four items taken from Werder (2008) were created to measure attitude towards the organization. A scale was included using three 7-point semantic differential-type items. The statement, “My attitude toward the Chipotle as an organization is:” was rated on scales anchored by *positive/negative* (reversed), *good/bad*, *favorable/unfavorable* (reversed), and *disapproving/approving*.

To measure attitude towards corporate social responsibility involvement, a scale was developed using measures from Zaichkowsky (1994) and Hallahan (1999). Zaichkowsky (1994) developed a 10-item personal involvement inventory that focuses on the major elements of involvement and personal relevance. Hallahan (1999) used items drawn from and extending Zaichkowsky’s (1994) personal involvement inventory.

To measure attitude toward corporate social responsibility involvement, a scale was included using four 7-point semantic differential-type items. The statement “The advertisement made me feel that corporate social responsibility:” was rated on scales anchored by: *involves me/doesn’t involve me* (reversed) (Zaichkowsky, 1994), *is irrelevant to me/ is relevant to me* (Zaichkowsky, 1994), *concerns me/doesn’t concern me* (reversed) (Hallahan, 1999), and *personally affects me/doesn’t personally affect me* (reversed) (Hallahan, 1999).

To measure subjective norm, a scale developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), was included. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), multiple perceived opinions are important in the development of an individual’s perceived subjective norm. As a result, a

scale to measure the influence of subjective norms was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) that asks research participants to respond to the statement: “Most people who are important to me think I should/should not perform behavior *x*” (p. 314).

Therefore, to measure subjective norm, a scale developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), was included using three 7-point semantic differential-type statements including: 1) Most people who are important to me think *I should/should not* eat at Chipotle; 2) Most people who are important to me think *I should/should not* value corporate social responsibility; 3) Most people who are important to me think *I should/should not* purchase products from a socially responsible organization.

To measure behavioral intention towards the organization, four items developed by Werder (2008) using two 7-point semantic differential-type items: 1) “I intend to purchase a meal or other product from Chipotle during the next month” was rated on a scale anchored by *likely/unlikely* (reversed); and 2) “I plan to eat Chipotle food during the next month” was rated on a scale anchored by *never/frequently*. Next, participants rated the extent to which they intended to purchase products from Chipotle during the next month on a 7-point magnitude measure ranging from *never* to *10 or more times*.

In addition to the variables outlined above, participants were asked to provide demographic information that included gender, age, and area of academic study.

Manipulation Check

Prior to hypothesis testing, a manipulation check was conducted to assess the degree to which the CSR treatments agreed with the definitions of the initiatives as defined by Kotler and Lee (2005). An instrument was developed and administered to 24 students in an advanced undergraduate mass communications class. Participants received

a questionnaire designed to test the clarity of the CSR messages and the degree of agreement between the CSR initiative type and its corresponding definition. The manipulation check employed a simplistic, yet statistically advanced design. Respondents were first asked to read the CSR message on top of the page. Then, they were to read all six of the provided CSR types and corresponding definitions. Instructions were to rate each initiative type's degree of agreement with the CSR message on the page, on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
 Manipulation Check Results

Initiative Type	N	Percent
Cause Promotion	21	88%
Cause related marketing	21	88%
Corporate social marketing	22	92%
Corporate philanthropy	23	96%
Corporate volunteerism	21	86%
Socially responsible business practices	18	75%

Eighty-eight percent of the participants agreed that the cause promotion message matched the cause promotion definition. Eighty-eight percent of the participants agreed that the cause related marketing message matched the cause related marketing definition. 92% of the participants agreed that the corporate social marketing messages matched the corporate social marketing definition. Ninety-six percent of the participants agreed that the corporate philanthropy message matched the corporate philanthropy definition. Eighty-six percent of the participants agreed that the corporate volunteerism message matched the corporate volunteerism definition. Seventy-five percent of the participants agreed that the socially responsible business practices message matched the socially responsible business practices definition.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 for Windows. An alpha level of .05 was required for significance in all statistical analysis. Statistical procedures to test the hypotheses included correlation analysis, linear regression analysis, and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Cronbach's Alpha was used to assess internal consistency of multi-item indexes.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This study seeks to contribute to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test corporate social responsibility initiative influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This study is uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. The mean and standard deviations for each item are reported in Table 3.

The internal consistency of the items used to measure the variables of interest were assessed using Cronbach’s alpha prior to hypothesis testing. The results of these tests are shown in Table 4.

Table 3.
Item Mean and Standard Deviations

Item	N	M	Standard Deviation
Beliefs- CSR			
I believe that Chipotle engages in ethical business practices.	247	5.26	1.261
I believe that Chipotle is a socially responsible organization.	247	5.45	1.264
I believe that Chipotle positively contributes to the community.	247	5.30	1.361
I believe that Chipotle is a bad corporate citizen (reversed).	247	5.65	1.213
I believe that communities are negatively impacted by Chipotle.	247	5.67	1.335
Beliefs- Corporate Credibility-Trust			
I trust Chipotle.	247	4.50	1.239
Chipotle makes truthful claims.	247	4.45	1.069
Chipotle is an honest organization.	247	4.62	1.072
I do not believe what Chipotle tells me (reversed).	247	4.86	1.322
Chipotle misleads its consumers about its products (reversed).	247	4.85	1.231
Beliefs- Corporate Credibility-Expertise			
Chipotle has a great amount of experience.	243	4.40	1.009
Chipotle is an expert in the food industry.	243	4.23	1.111
Chipotle is skilled at what it does.	243	4.77	1.180
Chipotle does not have much knowledge of the food industry (reversed).	243	5.10	1.220
Attitude Toward the Advertisement			
This advertisement is effective in promoting Chipotle as a socially	215	5.48	1.328

responsible organization.			
My attitude the Chipotle advertisement is: positive/negative (reversed)	215	5.44	1.331
My attitude the Chipotle advertisement is: bad/good.	215	5.46	1.259
My attitude the Chipotle advertisement is: favorable/unfavorable (reversed)	215	5.29	1.333
My attitude the Chipotle advertisement is: disapproving/approving.	215	5.39	1.359
I consider messages from Chipotle to be: biased/unbiased (reversed)	215	4.10	1.613
I consider messages from Chipotle to be: not credible/credible.	215	4.74	1.232
I consider messages from Chipotle to be: trustworthy/not trustworthy (reversed)	215	4.60	1.332
I consider messages from Chipotle to be: not convincing/convincing.	215	4.88	1.358
Subjective Norm			
Most people who are important to me think <i>I should/ I should not</i> eat at Chipotle.	241	4.55	1.332
Most people who are important to me think <i>I should/ I should not</i> value corporate social responsibility.	241	5.11	1.284
Most people who are important to me think <i>I should/ I should not</i> purchase products from a socially responsible organization.	241	5.10	1.208
Behavioral Intention			
I intend to purchase a meal or other product from Chipotle during the next month: <i>likely/ unlikely</i> (reversed).	244	3.70	2.203
I plan to eat Chipotle food during the next month: <i>never/frequently</i> .	244	3.32	1.836
During the next month, I will purchase products from Chipotle: <i>never, 1-2 times, 3-4 times, 5-6 times, 7-8 times, 9-10 times, more than 10 times</i> .	244	1.72	1.128

Table 4.
Cronbach's alpha for multiple-item indexes

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Corporate Social Responsibility beliefs	.89	5
Corporate Credibility/trust beliefs	.87	5
Corporate Credibility/expertise beliefs	.79	5
Attitude toward the advertisement	.92	8
Attitude toward the organization	.93	4
Subjective norm	.82	2
Behavioral intention	.86	2

The five items measuring the variable of corporate social responsibility beliefs about Chipotle yielded an alpha coefficient of .89.

The five items measuring the variable of corporate credibility/trust beliefs about Chipotle yielded an alpha coefficient of .87. Furthermore, the four items measuring the variable of corporate credibility/expertise beliefs about Chipotle yielded a coefficient alpha of .79.

The nine items measuring the variable of attitude toward the advertisement yielded an alpha coefficient of .83; however, this value was improved by deleting one of the items. The item that asked respondents to rate messages from Chipotle on a semantic differential scale of 1- 7 from *biased* to *unbiased*, was dropped to produce a coefficient alpha of .92.

The five items measuring the variable of attitude toward the organization yielded a coefficient alpha of .91; however, this value was improved by deleting the item that asked respondents to rate the statement of “I like Chipotle” on a scale of 1 to 7 from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, an alpha coefficient of .93 was obtained.

The three items measuring the variable of subjective norm yielded an alpha coefficient of .67; however, this value was improved by deleting the items that asked respondents to rate the statement “Most people who are important to me think _____ eat at Chipotle,” on scale of 1-7 from *I should* to *I should not*, an alpha coefficient of .82 was obtained.

The three items measuring the variable of behavioral intention yielded a coefficient alpha of .81; however, this value was improved by deleting the item “During

the next month, I will purchase products from Chipotle.” After this item was dropped, an alpha coefficient of .86 was obtained.

The results of the reliability analysis indicate that the scales used to test the variables of interest had strong internal consistency. Carmines and Zeller (1979) state that reliability alphas should not fall below .80. Furthermore, according to Berman (2002), alpha values between .80 and 1.00 indicate high reliability. As all of the reliability coefficient alphas for this study approach or fall in this range, this is an indication of the variables’ strong internal consistency.

Tests of hypotheses

To answer RQ1, H1 and its related propositions were tested to determine the influence of CSR initiatives on the receiver belief sets. To test P1, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate differences in mean scores for the corporate credibility belief sets. The corporate credibility/trust belief set mean scores for each CSR initiative treatment are shown in Table 5. Results of the ANOVA indicate no significant differences among the treatments, $F(7,239) = .290, p = .958, \eta^2 = .008$.

Table 5.
Corporate Credibility/trust belief set mean scores for each CSR initiative treatment

Treatment	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Control Message	4.5667	1.10767	31
Cause Related Marketing	4.5300	.78546	35
Corporate Cause Promotion	4.7308	1.04910	26
Corporate Volunteering	4.6242	.75624	33
Socially Responsible Business Practices	4.7071	.90837	28
Corporate Philanthropy	4.8057	.98517	35
Corporate Social Marketing	4.6485	1.15654	33
Control Control	4.6615	1.00998	26
Total	4.6559	.96506	247

The corporate credibility/expertise mean scores for each CSR initiative treatment are shown in Table 5. Results of the omnibus ANOVA indicate no significant difference among the treatments, $F(7,235) = .565, p = .784, \eta^2 = .017$.

Table 6.

Corporate Credibility/expertise belief set mean scores for each CSR initiative treatment

Treatment	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Control Message	4.5565	1.09869	31
Cause Related Marketing	4.5643	.86250	35
Corporate Cause Promotion	4.5385	.86224	26
Corporate Volunteering	4.7656	.70693	32
Socially Responsible Business Practices	4.6071	.71824	28
Corporate Philanthropy	4.8214	1.13690	35
Corporate Social Marketing	4.6210	.68274	31
Control Control	4.4600	.89466	25
Total	4.6255	.88560	243

To assess P1.2, a univariate analysis of variance as conducted to determine differences in CSR belief mean scores across CSR treatments. The mean scores for the treatments are shown in Table 6.

Table 7.

Corporate Social Responsibility belief set mean scores for each CSR initiative treatment

Treatment	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Control Message	4.7032	1.01570	31
Cause Related Marketing	6.0057	.90422	35
Corporate Cause Promotion	5.5000	1.05262	26
Corporate Volunteering	5.8848	.69827	33
Socially Responsible Business Practices	5.4071	.92453	28
Corporate Philanthropy	5.7314	1.23949	35
Corporate Social Marketing	5.3237	1.07450	33
Control Control	4.9538	1.03585	26
Total	5.4648	1.07674	247

Results of the omnibus ANOVA indicate significant differences among the treatments. $F(7,239) = 6.240$, $p = .000$, $\eta^2 = .155$. In fact, the partial eta squared score indicates that 15.5% of the variance in CSR beliefs is due to the CSR initiatives; however, the significant differences are not between the different initiatives, they are between the controls with no initiative, and any initiative.

Although not significantly different than the other initiatives, the results indicate that the cause related marketing treatment ($M=6.0057$, $SD=.90422$) produced the highest mean among the six treatment types and two controls. This was followed by the corporate volunteering ($M=5.8848$, $SD=.69827$), corporate philanthropy ($M=5.7314$, $SD=1.23949$), cause promotion ($M=5.5000$, $SD=1.05262$), and socially responsible business practices ($M=5.4071$, $SD=.92453$). The corporate social marketing treatment produced the lowest mean among the CSR treatments ($M=5.3273$, $SD=1.07450$). The CSR overall control ($M=4.9538$, $SD=1.03585$) and the treatment control ($M=4.7032$, $SD=1.01570$) produced the lowest means among the eight treatment types.

A Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was not significant, and indicated this assumption was not violated, $F(7,239) = 2.041$, $p = .051$. Therefore, a post hoc analysis was conducted using the Bonferroni procedure to control for multiple comparisons. The post hoc analysis produced significant differences in treatment pairs. The results of these tests are shown in Table 8.

Table 8.

CSR belief ANOVA Bonferroni Post Hoc Results

(I) Treatment	(J) Treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Control Message	Cause Related Marketing	-1.3025*	.000
	Cause Promotion	-.7968	.088
	Corporate Volunteering	-1.1816*	.000
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	-.7039	.215
	Corporate Philanthropy	-1.0282*	.001
	Corporate Social Marketing	-.6240	.383
	Overall Control	-.2506	1.000
Cause Related Marketing	Control Message	1.3025*	.000
	Cause Promotion	.5057	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	.1209	1.000
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	.5986	.548
	Corporate Philanthropy	.2743	1.000
	Corporate Social Marketing	.6784	.163
	Overall Control	1.0519*	.002
Cause Promotion	Control Message	.7968	.088
	Cause Related Marketing	-.5057	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	-.3848	1.000
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	.0929	1.000
	Corporate Philanthropy	-.2314	1.000
	Corporate Social Marketing	.1727	1.000
	Overall Control	.5462	1.000
Corporate Volunteering	Control Message	1.1816*	.000
	Cause Related Marketing	-.1209	1.000
	Cause Promotion	.3848	1.000
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	.4777	1.000
	Corporate Philanthropy	.1534	1.000
	Corporate Social Marketing	.5576	.701
	Overall Control	.9310*	.014

Table 8. (cont.)

CSR belief ANOVA Bonferroni Post Hoc Results

(I) Treatment	(J) Treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Socially Responsible Business Practices	Control Message	.7039	.215
	Cause Related Marketing	-.5986	.548
	Cause Promotion	-.0929	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	-.4777	1.000
	Corporate Philanthropy	-.3243	1.000
	Corporate Social Marketing	.0799	1.000
	Overall Control	.4533	1.000
Corporate Philanthropy	Control Message	1.0282*	.001
	Cause Related Marketing	-.2743	1.000
	Cause Promotion	.2314	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	-.1534	1.000
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	.3243	1.000
	Corporate Social Marketing	.4042	1.000
	Overall Control	.7776	.086
Corporate Social Marketing	Control Message	.6240	.383
	Cause Related Marketing	-.6784	.163
	Cause Promotion	-.1727	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	-.5576	.701
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	-.0799	1.000
	Corporate Philanthropy	-.4042	1.000
	Overall Control	.3734	1.000
Overall Control	Control Message	.2506	1.000
	Cause Related Marketing	-1.0519*	.002
	Cause Promotion	-.5462	1.000
	Corporate Volunteering	-.9310*	.014
	Socially Responsible Business Practices	-.4533	1.000
	Corporate Philanthropy	-.7776	.086
	Corporate Social Marketing	-.3734	1.000

In addition, the treatment control mean was significantly different from the cause related marketing ($p=.000$), corporate volunteering ($p=.000$), and corporate philanthropy treatments ($p=.001$). Cause related marketing was statistically different from the

treatment control ($p=.000$), and the overall control ($p=.002$). Corporate volunteering was statistically different from the treatment control ($p=.000$), and the overall control ($p=.014$). Furthermore, corporate philanthropy was statistically different than the treatment control ($p=.001$), and the overall control was statistically different than cause related marketing ($p=.002$), and corporate volunteering ($p=.014$).

The results support P1.2, but not P1.1. This indicates that CSR initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs, but not corporate credibility beliefs. Therefore, the results of this study show mixed support for H1.

To test H2, first a correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship among variables. The results are shown in Table 9. Linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well receiver belief sets influence receiver attitude sets. Proposition 2.1, the influence of corporate credibility belief sets on attitude toward the advertisement, and P2.2, the influence of corporate social responsibility beliefs sets on attitude toward the advertisement, were tested. The attitude toward the ad measure, the dependent variable, was regressed on the three measures of corporate credibility/ trust, corporate credibility/expertise, and corporate social responsibility.

Table 9.
Belief Set/ Attitude Set Correlations

		Corporate Social Responsibility belief	Corporate Credibility/ expertise belief	Corporate Credibility/ trust belief	Attitude towards the Advertisement	Attitude towards the Organization
Corporate Social Responsibility belief	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.510**	.649**	.641**	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	247.000	243	247	215	243
Corporate Credibility/ expertise belief	Pearson Correlation	.510**	1.000	.615**	.502**	.511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	243	243.000	243	212	239
Corporate Credibility/ trust belief	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.615**	1.000	.671**	.671**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	247	243	247.000	215	243
Attitude towards the Advertisement	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.502**	.671**	1.000	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	215	212	215	215.000	215
Attitude towards the Organization	Pearson Correlation	.623**	.511**	.671**	.778**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	243	239	243	215	244.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results are shown in Table 10. Findings indicate that the three belief set variables account for about 58% of the variance in attitude toward the advertisement. $R^2=.587$, $Adj. R^2=.581$, $F(3,208)=98.487$, $p=.000$. The belief set measures were positive predictors of attitude toward the advertisement. The belief set of corporate credibility/trust showed the strongest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement, $\beta=.420$, $t(210)=6.606$, $p=.000$. The other two belief sets show significance in influencing attitude toward the advertisement, but do not demonstrate as strong a relationship. The belief set of corporate social responsibility shows the second strongest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement, $\beta=.344$, $t(.210)=5.943$, $p=.000$. The belief set of corporate credibility/expertise shows the weakest positive influence on

attitude toward the advertisement, $\beta=.118$, $t(210)=2.110$, $p=.036$. These results support H2, specifically P2.1, and P2.2.

Table 10.

Belief sets influence on Attitude toward the Advertisement

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.388	.296		1.312	.191
	Corporate Credibility /trust belief	.469	.071	.420	6.606	.000
	Corporate Credibility/expertise belief	.142	.067	.118	2.110	.036
	Corporate Socially Responsibility belief	.347	.058	.344	5.943	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards the Advertisement

Proposition 2.3, the influence of corporate credibility belief sets on attitude toward the organization, and P2.4, the influence of corporate social responsibility beliefs sets on attitude toward the organization, were tested. The attitude toward the organization measure, the dependent variable, was regressed on the three measures corporate credibility/ trust, corporate credibility/expertise, and corporate social responsibility.

The results are shown in Table 11. Findings indicate that the three belief set variables account for about 51% of the variance in attitude toward the organization. $R^2=.517$, $Adj. R^2=.511$, $F(3,235)=83.951$, $p=.000$. The belief set measures were positive predictors of attitude toward the organization. The belief set of corporate credibility/trust showed the strongest positive influence on attitude toward the organization, $\beta=.404$, $t(237)=6.168$, $p=.000$. The other two belief sets approached significance in influencing attitude toward the organization, but do not demonstrate a strong relationship. The belief set of corporate social responsibility showed the second strongest positive influence on attitude toward the organization, $\beta=.307$, $t(237)=5.124$, $p=.000$. The belief

set of corporate credibility/expertise showed no significant influence on attitude toward the organization, $\beta=.111$, $t(237)=1.905$, $p=.058$. These results support H2; specifically P2.3, and P2.4.

Table 11.
Belief sets influence on Attitude toward the Organization

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.132	.359		-.367	.714
Corporate Credibility /trust belief	.548	.089	.404	6.168	.000
Corporate Credibility/expertise belief	.162	.085	.111	1.905	.058
Corporate Socially Responsibility belief	.373	.073	.307	5.124	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards the Organization

To test H3, first a correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship among variables. Results are shown on Table 12. Correlation analysis found that the subjective norm variable is strongly and positively correlated with the variables of attitude towards the advertisement($r=.493$, $p=.000$), and attitude toward the organization($r=.484$, $p=.000$). Correlation analysis found that the attitude towards the advertisement variable is strongly and positively correlated with the variables of subjective norm ($r=.493$, $p=.000$), and attitude towards the organization($r=.778$, $p=.000$). Correlation analysis found that the attitude toward the organization variable is

strongly and positively correlated with the variables of subjective norm ($r=.484, p=.000$), and attitude towards the advertisement ($r=.778, p=.000$).

Table 12.
Attitude Sets/ Subjective Norm Correlations

		Subjective Norm	Attitude towards the Advertisement	Attitude towards the Organization
Subjective Norm	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.493**	.484**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	242.000	211	239
Attitude towards the Advertisement	Pearson Correlation	.493**	1.000	.778**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	211	215.000	215
Attitude towards the Organization	Pearson Correlation	.484**	.778**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	239	215	244.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well receiver attitude sets influence behavioral intention toward the organization. Proposition 3.1, the influence of attitude toward the advertisement on behavioral intention toward the organization, and P3.2, the influence of attitude toward the organization on behavioral intention toward the organization, were tested. The results are shown in Table 13. Findings indicate that the two attitude set variables, along with the subjective norm

variable, account for about 17% of the variance in behavioral intention toward the organization $R^2=.177$, $Adj. R^2=.165$, $F(3,210)=14.886$, $p=.000$. The attitude set variables and subjective norm measures were a positive predictor of behavioral intention toward the organization.

Table 13.
Attitude Sets and Subjective Norm influence on Behavioral Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.229	.673		-.370	.734
	Subjective Norm	.029	.111	.018	.266	.790
	Attitude towards the Organization	.462	.160	.314	2.885	.004
	Attitude towards the Advertisement	.206	.195	.116	1.056	.292

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

Attitude toward the organization was the only variable that, on its own, demonstrated a significant influence on behavioral intention toward the organization, $\beta=.314$, $t(210)=2.885$, $p=.004$. Although attitude toward the organization demonstrated a significant influence on behavioral intention toward the organization, attitude toward the advertisement and subjective norm did not demonstrate a significant relationship with behavioral intention toward the organization. The results show mixed support for H3. Specifically P3.2, was supported, but not P3.1. This indicates that attitudes toward the organization influence behavioral intention toward the organization, but not attitude toward the advertisement or subjective norm. Therefore, the results of this study show mixed support for H3. Exploratory research and data analysis found significant correlations between variables other than those hypothesized. Results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14.

Exploratory Research Correlations

		Corporate Credibility/ trust belief	Corporate Credibility/ expertise belief	Corporate Socially Responsibility belief	Attitude towards the Advertisement	Attitude towards the Organization	Behavioral Intention
Corporate Credibility/ trust belief	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.615**	.649**	.671**	.671**	.497**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	247.000	243	247	215	243	243
Corporate Credibility/ expertise belief	Pearson Correlation	.615**	1.000	.510**	.502**	.511**	.467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	243	243.000	243	212	239	240
Corporate Socially Responsibility belief	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.510**	1.000	.641**	.623**	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	247	243	247.000	215	243	243
Attitude towards the Advertisement	Pearson Correlation	.671**	.502**	.641**	1.000	.778**	.349**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	215	212	215	215.000	215	213
Attitude towards the Organization	Pearson Correlation	.671**	.511**	.623**	.778**	1.000	.410**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	243	239	243	215	244.000	242
Behavioral Intention	Pearson Correlation	.497**	.467**	.324**	.349**	.410**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	243	240	243	213	242	246.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Exploratory correlation analysis found that the CSR belief set measure is strongly and positively correlated with the measures of corporate credibility belief/expertise ($r=.510, p=.000$), corporate credibility belief/trust ($r=.649, p=.000$), attitude toward the advertisement ($r=.666, p=.000$), and attitude towards the organization ($r=.623, p=.000$).

Exploratory correlation analysis also found that the corporate credibility belief/expertise measure is strongly and positively correlated with the measures of corporate credibility belief/trust ($r=.615, p=.000$), attitude toward the advertisement ($r=.529, p=.000$), and attitude towards the organization ($r=.511, p=.000$).

Exploratory correlation analysis also found that the corporate credibility belief/trust measure is strongly and positively correlated with the measures of attitude towards the advertisement ($r=.711, p=.000$), attitude toward the organization ($r=.671, p=.000$), and behavioral intention ($r=.497, p=.000$).

Exploratory correlation analysis also found that the attitude towards the advertisement variable is strongly and positively correlated with the variable of attitude toward the organization ($r=.818, p=.000$).

Exploratory research and data analysis found that variables other than those hypothesized influence behavioral intention. The belief set variable also influences behavioral intention, $R^2=.290, \text{Adj. } R^2=.281, F(3,239)=32.169, p=.000$. Specifically, the belief set of corporate credibility/trust showed the strongest positive influence on behavioral intention $\beta=.353, t(238)=4.501, p=.000$. The belief set of corporate credibility/expertise also demonstrated a significant influence on behavioral intention, $\beta=.270, t(238)=3.843, p=.000$. Results are found in Table 15.

Table 15

Belief sets influence on Behavioral Intention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-2.163	.644		-3.359	.001
	Corporate Socially Responsible belief	-.059	.129	-.033	-.461	.645
	Corporate Credibility/ trust belief	.711	.158	.353	4.501	.000
	Corporate Credibility/ expertise belief	.583	.152	.270	3.843	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Behavioral Intention

The next section, the discussion chapter, provides an overview of the findings of this study, as well as its significance and limitations. The significance of this study on strategic communications theory and practice will be emphasized. Finally, the conclusion section suggests directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study sought to contribute to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables as well as further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test corporate social responsibility initiative influence on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This study uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. In addition, this study also sought to extend the research of Werder (2008) that examined the effects of CSR initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action. Furthermore, this study extended the research of Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell's (2002) Dual Credibility Model and sought to understand the influence and role of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between corporate social responsibility initiatives and receiver variables of attitude and behavioral intention. This research seeks to contribute to theory development as well as influence strategic communications management practice and pedagogy. Findings of the study are valuable not only to strategic communication practitioners but also educators, marketing professionals, and organizations. One research question was addressed, and three hypotheses and eight propositions were tested.

Werder (2008) found that CSR initiatives influence beliefs about an organization. Research Question 1 of this study extends this to all six initiative types identified by Kotler and Lee (2005). Research Question 1 assessed the influence of the six CSR initiative types identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on receiver belief sets. The belief sets

include corporate social responsibility, corporate credibility/trust, and corporate credibility/expertise. The research question sought to discover whether the numerous CSR initiatives have a differing ability to impact belief sets.

The results of this study extend previous research findings. Werder (2008) found that CSR initiatives influence beliefs about an organization, especially those beliefs about the organization's contributions to society. The results of RQ1 indicate no significant differences among the treatments. In fact, statistical analysis shows that 15.5% of the variance in CSR beliefs is due to the difference in CSR initiative of the treatment. Specifically, the post hoc comparisons for the different treatment variables indicate that the cause-related marketing treatment produced the highest mean among the six treatment types and two controls. The results of Werder (2008) also suggest that cause-related marketing may be the most beneficial to an organization due to its ability to influence beliefs. In this study, as well as Werder (2008), the cause related marketing initiative treatment demonstrated the strongest influence on beliefs, and thus would be the recommended CSR initiative type for organizations to implement.

These results help extend theory driven strategic communications research by broadening the understanding of the influence of corporate social responsibility initiative types on receiver belief sets. The results indicate differences in the initiatives ability to influence beliefs; therefore, applications of this research to strategic communications practice are evident. Results enable evidence- based recommendations to be made to clients, organizations, and corporations looking to enact or revise social responsibility campaigns. Pedagogy is impacted as these findings will be beneficial to future strategic communication practitioners. Thus, the dissemination of these results throughout the

curriculum of strategic communications, marketing, management, and advertising students is important.

Hypothesis 1 further explored the relationships of the corporate social responsibility initiatives on receivers' corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. The propositions related to Hypothesis 1 were developed from the results of previous research and literature on the effects of corporate social responsibility initiatives (Werder, 2007; Kotler & Lee, 2005). Findings of H1 indicate that overall, CSR initiatives do influence individuals' belief sets. Two propositions tested the influence of CSR initiative types on belief sets. Proposition 1.1 tested the influence of the CSR initiatives on the corporate credibility belief set. Proposition 1.1 was not supported as tests did not show significance. Proposition 1.2 tested the influence of CSR initiatives on the corporate social responsibility belief set. Proposition 1.2 was supported as tests did show significance. These results indicate that CSR initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs, but not corporate credibility beliefs. Therefore, the results of this study show mixed support for H1. Overall, these results are supportive of the findings in Werder (2008), that CSR initiatives influence beliefs about an organization.

These findings are applicable to recent and future developments in strategic communications research and theory development. The concepts of corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility are increasingly prevalent in strategic communications research. Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell's Dual Credibility Model (2002) utilizes the concept of corporate credibility, in addition to endorser credibility, in demonstrating relationships between credibility types, attitude toward the advertisement,

and purchase intention. The results of H1 help extend theory by broadening the understanding of the influence of corporate social responsibility initiative types on the receiver belief sets of corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility. Results indicate that CSR initiatives influence corporate social responsibility beliefs, but not corporate credibility beliefs.

Results do not demonstrate a direct influence of the CSR initiatives on corporate credibility belief sets; however, corporate credibility is often noted as a key influence in eventually determining purchase intention. Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) suggest that corporate social responsibility and the company's citizenship influences purchase intention. Strategic communications researchers can use this knowledge to conduct further research into these variables' relationships. Practitioners can use this to inform their practice of strategic communication by maintaining an awareness of the influence of corporate social responsibility.

Two hypotheses tested study-related predictions using a framework derived from Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action. Hypothesis 2 tested the influence of belief sets on attitude sets. Hypothesis 3 tested the influence of attitude sets on behavioral intention. The theory of reasoned action is seen as a valuable theoretical framework for this research through the demonstration of results supporting the theoretical relationships. The results of this study support both H2 and H3, indicating that the theory of reasoned action does provide a framework for this research, which helps add validity to the overall results of the study.

Hypothesis 2 tested the influence of corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility receiver belief sets on attitude toward the advertisement and attitude

toward the organization. Findings indicate that the belief set of corporate credibility/trust showed the strongest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization. The corporate social responsibility belief set showed the second strongest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization. The belief set of corporate credibility/expertise showed the weakest positive influence on attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization.

Hypothesis 2 sought to test the theory of reasoned action within the context of corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility. The results support Fishbein and Ajzen's theory of reasoned action (1975, 2005), because beliefs are shown to influence attitudes. Furthermore, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) suggest that an attitude about an object is the result of the total of many varying beliefs about the object. The findings of H2 are supportive of this concept as multiple belief sets are shown to influence the attitude sets.

Hypothesis 2 also supports Lafferty, Goldsmith, and Newell's Dual Credibility Model (2002) and demonstrated that corporate credibility is positively and directly related to attitude toward the advertisement (2002, p. 1). Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000) also demonstrated a strong relationship between corporate credibility and attitude toward the brand. Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell's (2000, 2002) previous research suggests that corporate credibility influences attitudes about advertisements and brands. Findings of H2 demonstrate a significant influence of the corporate credibility/trust belief set on both attitude toward the advertisement and attitude toward the organization. This supports previous research by Goldsmith, Lafferty, and Newell (2000, 2002).

The results of H2 further extend strategic communication theory by developing an understanding of the concepts of corporate credibility, attitude towards the advertisement,

and attitude towards the organization. Results also support the well-tested theory of reasoned action within the developing strategic communications theoretical framework by demonstrating its conceptual application to strategic communications research. Practitioners can apply the knowledge that beliefs about an organization's corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility, influence attitudes held about the specific message, and the organization. This is beneficial information as it impacts the way practitioners communicate with publics. Educators can embrace this knowledge as well in order to inform the practice of future strategic communicators.

Hypothesis 3 sought to further support the theory of reasoned action by experimentally testing the influence of attitude sets on behavioral intention sets. Hypothesis 3 tested the influence of attitude towards the advertisement and attitude towards the organization on behavioral intention towards the organization. The findings indicate that attitude towards the organization significantly influences behavioral intention towards the organization; however, attitude toward the advertisement did not demonstrate a significant influence with behavioral intention towards the organization. Hypothesis 3 also tested the influence of subjective norm on behavioral intention, but this variable also did not demonstrate a significant relationship with behavioral intention. Overall, these results demonstrated mixed support for H3; P3.2 was supported, but P3.1 was not.

Findings indicate that attitudes toward the organization influence behavioral intention towards the organization, This supports the theory of reasoned action, which states that attitudes lead to the formation of behavioral intention. Furthermore, the results

demonstrate additional rationale for application of the theory of reasoned action to the study of strategic communications.

Past research by Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell (2002) on the Dual Credibility Model demonstrated the influence of corporate credibility on purchase intentions, a behavioral intention specific to consumer buying habits. The results of H3 support and extend these findings. Corporate credibility is established over time, and is a long-term condition. Therefore, it is understandable that attitude toward the organization, also a condition that is established over time, influences behavioral intention more so than the short term condition of attitude toward the advertisement, or subjective norm.

Although the theory of reasoned action provides a framework for this research, exploratory analysis demonstrates additional relationships between the variables of beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intention. Contrary to the framework of the theory, the belief sets of corporate credibility/trust and corporate credibility/expertise were shown to directly influence behavioral intention towards the organization.

Some of the exploratory research suggests findings that are divergent from the provided framework for this research regarding the influences of beliefs on attitudes, and attitudes on behavioral intention. None the less, it is possible that the corporate credibility/ trust belief variable, along with the corporate credibility/expertise belief variable, demonstrate an influence on behavioral intention toward the organization.

This is possible because the corporate credibility belief variables strongly influence the attitude towards the organization variable. As a result of the strong influence, direct influence occurs between the corporate credibility belief variable and behavioral intention. The corporate credibility/trust belief variable demonstrated the

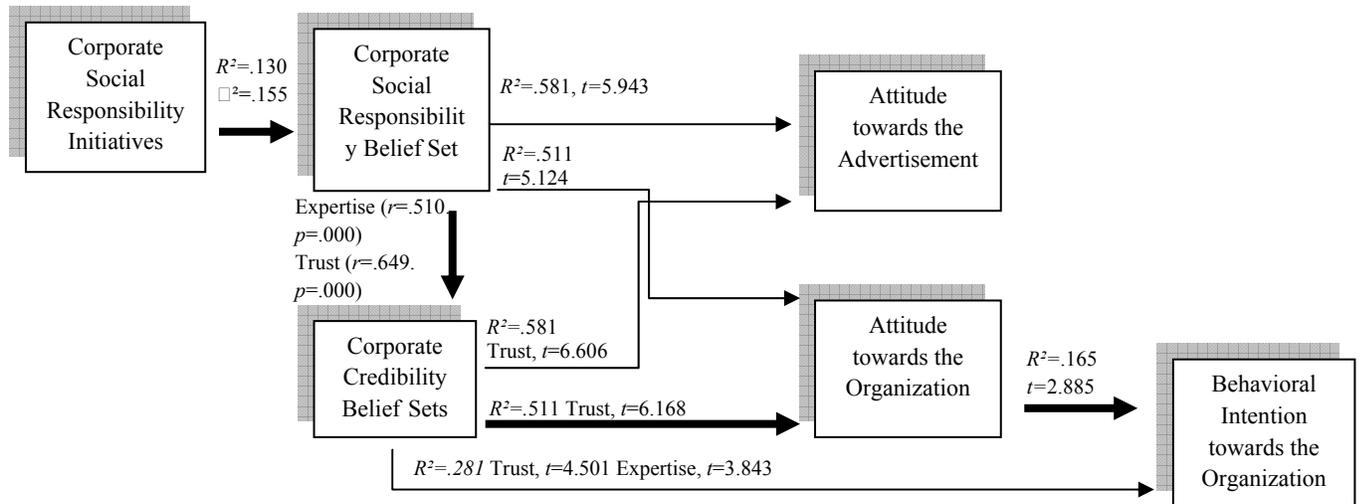
strongest influence on the variable of attitude toward the organization, and attitude towards the organization demonstrated the strongest influence on behavioral intention toward the organization. Both of these relationships are in accordance with the theory of reasoned action. Therefore, the existence of an influence of the corporate credibility/ trust and corporate credibility/expertise belief variables on behavioral intention toward the organization is not inconceivable even though it deviates from the theoretical framework. This finding suggests an extension on the theory of reasoned action, when referring to corporate credibility.

This finding is beneficial to strategic communications theory development as it defies the conventions of a well-accepted and well-tested theory used in communications and other research arenas. Theories are inherently meant to be tested, verified, and disconfirmed. According to Severin and Tankard (2001), “no theory is final or beyond question” (p. 31). The findings of this research extend a well established theory; therefore informing future research and practice.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationships suggested through the research results. The bold arrows indicate the strongest relationships between the variables and the influences they exude. The other arrows demonstrate significant, yet weaker relationships between the variables. A unique contribution of this research study is the corporate social responsibility belief set as a mediator for influence of the corporate social responsibility initiatives on the corporate credibility belief sets. Past research does not demonstrate this link; however, the results of this study clearly demonstrate this relationship between the variables.

Figure 2.

CSR Belief Set Mediator Model



Despite the implications of this research for the field of strategic communications, theory, and practice, this study has several limitations. As with any experimental research, the findings of this study cannot be generalized beyond the respondents who participated. In addition, the experiment was conducted immediately following another research activity using the same participant sample. Participants may have experienced “survey fatigue,” which may have impacted or skewed this study’s results.

In conclusion, the next chapter will delve further into the implications of this research on the field of strategic communication, theory development, and practice. Directions for future research will also be discussed.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the current body of knowledge about the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on receiver variables as well as further current theory-driven strategic communications research by using an experimental design to test corporate social responsibility initiative influence on beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intentions. This study uniquely focused on developing a better understanding of how CSR initiatives influence corporate credibility and corporate social responsibility belief sets. In addition, this study extends the research of Werder (2008) that examined the effects of CSR initiatives identified by Kotler and Lee (2005) on beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intentions using Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975, 2005) theory of reasoned action. This study also extends the research of Lafferty, Goldsmith and Newell's (2002) Dual Credibility Model and creates further understanding of the influence and role of corporate credibility as a belief set and mediator between corporate social responsibility initiatives and receiver variables of attitude and behavioral intention.

This research contributes to theory development and offers insight into strategic communications management practice and pedagogy. Findings of the study will be valuable not only to strategic communication practitioners but also educators, marketing professionals, and organizations. Overall, this study makes a significant contribution to strategic communications through the use of interdisciplinary scholarly research. This study contributes to the further understanding of the influence of corporate social responsibility initiatives on consumer receiver variables of beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intention.

This study influences strategic communications practice through the identification of the most successful corporate social responsibility initiatives. This knowledge will benefit practice. With this knowledge, organizations will be able to carefully plan corporate social responsibility strategies that will help them reach their goals including, but not limited to, improved relationships with key publics, increased financial earnings and brand awareness.

Based on the findings, organizations should utilize the cause related marketing corporate social responsibility initiatives. By enacting cause related marketing, the organization will be engaging in practices that will improve profits as well as relationships with key publics such as investors, consumers, employees, and the community. Cause related marketing should improve a company's financial bottom line. Based on the findings of this study, the organizations should be able to show a link between the cause related marketing initiative and the financial bottom line. Other benefits that organizations will see from enacting cause related marketing include decreased operating costs, increased brand awareness, partnership building, enhanced employee well being and satisfaction, as well as establishing solid brand positioning (Kotler & Lee, 2005).

This research will impact strategic communications pedagogy through the dissemination of the relationships discovered in this study. Over time, case studies will demonstrate the use of successful corporate social responsibility initiatives. The results of this study will influence how educators teach strategic communications students about corporate social responsibility strategies. With minimal research on this topic within the strategic communications context, this study will also serve as a building block for

further strategic communications theory-driven research in the area of corporate social responsibility.

This study will impact the current practice of communications and marketing professionals. This study imparts a further understanding and knowledge of strategic corporate social responsibility initiative use. This will benefit practitioners through the support of and deviation from previous information about strategic corporate social responsibility initiative use effectiveness.

Educators may embrace the extension of knowledge as there is currently very little research in this area within an evidence-based and theory-driven strategic communications context and thus actively seek to impart this information to their students. Organizations and corporations will also benefit from the practical knowledge gained through this research. The knowledge of the most successful strategic corporate social responsibility initiatives will help organizations reach goals impacted through the benefits of corporate social responsibility.

Future research should focus on creating a better understanding of the specific differences in the corporate social responsibility initiatives' ability to influence beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. Specifically, reasons for corporate cause related marketing consistently demonstrating the strongest positive influence on receiver belief sets should be investigated. In addition, the results of this study suggest links between variables that diverge from strategic communications' current theoretical understanding. Thus, these relationships should be examined. Specifically, the relationships between corporate credibility belief sets and behavioral intention require further study.

This study contributes to strategic communications' understanding of corporate social responsibility, corporate credibility, and their influence on potential consumers. There are a myriad of opportunities to extend the research and understanding created through this study. The results of this research begin to develop an understanding of these concepts, yet further research efforts bringing corporate social responsibility and corporate credibility under the umbrella of strategic communications management are necessary.

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Appendix A
Treatments

CAUSE PROMOTION



Chipotle Promotes Earth Day Network Causes

For the past four years, Chipotle has supported and worked together with the Earth Day Network (EDN), an organization that was founded by Earth Day organizers to encourage environmental citizenship year-round. Since 2005, Chipotle collaboration has included featuring environmental messages on Chipotle to-go cups during the month of April. The messages encourage environmental protection and suggest simple choices we can make that create a more sustainable world. The Chipotle Foundation also provided financial support to EDN.

Chipotle promotes Earth Day activities with in-store messages and volunteer opportunities to educate partners (employees) and customers about the impacts their actions have on the environment.



Chipotle provides funds, in-kind contributions and other corporate resources to increase awareness of Earth Day causes.

This steers environmental awareness around the world. Through EDN, activists connect, interact, and impact their communities, and create positive change in local, national, and global policies.

Additionally, in recognition of Earth Day, Chipotle provides financial support to 42 environmental organizations across North America. Approximately 12,000 partners and customers, including nearly 900 partners in Japan, are involved in Earth Day volunteer projects.

Visit Earth Day Network, www.earthday.net to find out how you can volunteer on Earth Day. Then, for more information about how Chipotle contributes and promotes Earth Day Network, go to www.chipotle/csr.com

CORPORATE SOCIAL MARKETING



Chipotle's Corporate Social Marketing Campaign Motivates Consumer Behavior Change

Chipotle is dedicated to reducing and eliminating trans-fat from the Americans' diets and in 2001 joined the national "Freedom from Trans-fat" campaign alongside other restaurants and retail food providers. Our foods at Chipotle contain zero trans fats. It is universally accepted that this kind of artificially created trans fat is the worst kind of fat, far worse than saturated fat. Dietary Guidelines issued by the U.S. Government state that we should keep trans fat consumption "as low as possible." Back in 2000, we decided to take the trans fats out of all of our food.

Chipotle goal is to encourage other individuals in the USA to not only join in the cause of ensuring the health of the country through the elimination of trans-fat from our diets, but also to commit to change personal eating behaviors to reflect the



dedication to this cause. What we're asking is to have more Americans reduce and eliminate trans-fat consumption.

Chipotle's social marketing campaign improves public health and community well-being.

The time to start eating healthier couldn't be better. January is "Freedom from Trans-fat" month. We are extremely proud of what we have done and you can be too. We are doing the right thing for our customers' health by leading the way on this. Join Chipotle's in an effort to improve Americans' healthy eating habits, starting with your own.

For more information about Chipotle's dedication to eliminating trans-fat go to www.chipotle/csr.com

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY



Chipotle's Corporate Philanthropy Lends a Helping Hand

Over the years, Chipotle has created and maintained a deep connection with the people and families who care for and nurture the dairy cows that produce up to eight gallons of milk a day. This natural way has worked well for man and cow for eons. So, why mess with it? Unfortunately, someone has.

Agricultural chemical companies have formulated a synthetic hormone that is injected into a cow to artificially increase milk production. Recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH) is used in the United States, but banned elsewhere. Those synthetic growth hormones end up in the milk we drink.

That is why Chipotle has donated over \$1 million dollars to the "Got Better Milk" campaign, a collection of small dairy farmers against the use of



Through philanthropy Chipotle provides a direct contribution to the cause in the form of cash grants, donations and services.

Recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH). Last October, when we learned of the campaign, our decision to provide assistance through our Chipotle Support Center in San Francisco, CA came without hesitation. After visiting with the farmers and experiencing their plight first-hand, Chipotle began a philanthropic effort to financial and otherwise help support small dairy farms that uphold health and quality standards by refusing to use rBGH on their cows.

We think some things should be sacred. Like sour cream. The sour cream at all of our restaurants is free of the synthetic growth Hormone, rBGH. We're not scientists, but ingesting hormones with our crispy tacos just doesn't seem like a good idea.

For more information about Chipotle's corporate philanthropy and support of small dairy farmers go to www.chipotle/csr.com

CORPORATE VOLUNTEERING



Chipotle Encourages Employee Volunteering

Building community: Chipotle is proud that so many partners at all levels of the community actively support neighborhood organizations that are important to them through volunteering or charitable giving. No matter the cause, Chipotle partners are making a difference in their community.

Make Your Mark: Chipotle believes that volunteerism is vital to a healthy community. With that in mind, we created Make Your Mark, a program that matches our partners' and customers' volunteer hours with case contributions to designated non-profit organizations- \$10 for every hour, up to \$1,000.

Caring Unites Partners Fund: The spirit of helping others can be seen everyday at Chipotle through the Caring Unities Partners Fund, a program developed to supporting fellow partners in need. Funded by partners through voluntary payroll



deductions and fundraisers, the CUP fund provides financial relief to partners facing extreme emergency situations.

Chipotle supports and encourages employees to volunteer their time to support local community organizations and causes.

Executive Community Leadership Program: Chipotle believes our senior executives can set great examples for other partners while lending their management expertise to non-profit organizations by becoming board members. Our Executive Community Leadership Program facilitates and supports Chipotle executives' service on non-profit boards such as Tampa Parks Association, Conservation International and The Small Farmers Growth Association.

Choose to Give: We believe charitable giving is a personal decision. Respecting this, Chipotle designed Choose to Give, a flexible workplace giving program that matches each partner's charitable contributions, up to \$1,000 annually.

For more information about Chipotle volunteer programs go to www.chipotle/csr.com

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES



Chipotle Values Socially Responsible Business Practices

Chipotle believes that we can always do better in terms of the food we buy; better in every sense of the word—better tasting, coming from better sources, better for the environment, better for the animals, and better for the farmers who raise the animals and grow the produce. Our philosophy is our way of doing business. The reasons is as simple as better-tasting burritos, and no less ambitious than revolutionizing the way America grows, gathers, serves and eats its food. We call it Food With Integrity.

It is fundamental to everything we do in our restaurants and behind the scenes and it cannot be separated from our product. Chipotle “Food With Integrity” isn’t a marketing slogan. And it’s not a corporate initiative that will ever be finished or set



Chipotle Food With Integrity isn't a marketing slogan, it's the fundamental way we do business. It's not a corporate initiative that will ever be finished or set aside to make room for other priorities.

aside to make room for other priorities. And, since embracing this philosophy, it's had tremendous impact on how we run our restaurants and our business. It's even influenced the way we view other aspects of our business, from the materials and systems we use to design and build our restaurants, to our staffing and training programs. We like the food we serve today. And, because of our Food With Integrity philosophy, we're confident that we'll like it even more down the road. This means new and higher expectations from all of us about what we consume every day as Food With Integrity is a constant process of searching and improving. And you're part of making it happen, every time you come in. For more information about Chipotle “Food With Integrity” philosophy go to www.chipotle/csr.com

MESSAGE CONTROL



Chipotle Introduces New Breakfast Burrito

The alarm goes off, you hit snooze. The alarm goes off again, you hit snooze again. So, you're not a morning person. If you are longing for a Saturday morning, sit-down-style breakfast, that you can eat on the go, it is time that you tried Chipotle's new breakfast burrito.

The new Chipotle breakfast burrito is everything good about a weekend breakfast, ready to go. Freshly prepared by hand, the breakfast burrito is a complete breakfast, wrapped up in a warm and easy-to-eat tortilla.

Your choice of breakfast sausage, bacon or a traditional Chipotle meat, scrambled eggs, cheese, fajita vegetables,

Chipotle.



beans and salsa makes this breakfast a complete meal to start your day right.

We make it right in front of you. You choose exactly what you want. This may mean a little more salsa, a little less cheese, whatever you'd like. Breakfast at Chipotle is no different. You can build your version of the perfect burrito for breakfast as well as for lunch and dinner. Morning never tasted so good.

A satisfying breakfast makes all the difference and it is a lot easier to handle inside a tortilla. Chipotle breakfast burrito's are one more reason to get up in the morning. All you have to do is hold on and enjoy.

For more information about Chipotle, go to www.chipotle.com

**The new
Chipotle breakfast
burrito is
everything good
about a weekend
Breakfast—
ready to go.**

Appendix B
Questionnaire

This questionnaire investigates corporate communication and how it affects you. Please answer the following questions about your attitudes toward corporate social responsibility and Chipotle restaurant. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond as honestly as possible. Your responses will remain anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort.

Please use the scale below to rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Chipotle. Place an “X” in the appropriate blank on the scale.

1. I am familiar with Chipotle.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
2. The quality of food at Chipotle is good compared to similar restaurants.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
3. I eat at Chipotle frequently.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
4. I like Chipotle.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
5. Chipotle is:

Good	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Bad
Irresponsible	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Responsible
Ethical	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Unethical
Untruthful	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Truthful

Please use the scale below to rate your level of agreement with the following statements about corporate social responsibility. Place an “X” in the appropriate blank on the scale.

6. A corporation’s social responsibility is important.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
7. I like corporations that are socially responsible.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
8. I prefer to purchase products from corporations that are socially responsible.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
9. I often purchase products from corporations that are socially responsible.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
10. Corporate social responsibility is:

Important	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Unimportant
Unfavorable	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Favorable
Good	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Bad
Unnecessary	_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____	Necessary

**Please spend a few minutes reviewing the attached article.
After reviewing the article, answer the following questions
to the best of your ability.**

Please use the scale below to rate your level of agreement with the following statements about Chipotle. Place an "X" in the appropriate section on the scale.

- 11. I believe that Chipotle engages in ethical business practices.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 12. I believe that Chipotle is a socially responsible organization.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 13. I believe that Chipotle positively contributes to the community.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 14. I believe that Chipotle is a bad corporate citizen.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 15. I believe that communities are negatively impacted by Chipotle.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 16. Chipotle has a great amount of experience.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 17. Chipotle is an expert in the food industry.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 18. Chipotle is skilled at what it does.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 19. Chipotle does *not* have much knowledge of the food industry.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 20. I trust Chipotle.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 21. Chipotle makes truthful claims.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 22. Chipotle is an honest organization.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 23. I do *not* believe what Chipotle tells me.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 24. Chipotle misleads consumers about its products.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 25. This advertisement is effective in promoting Chipotle as a socially responsible organization.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree
- 26. I like Chipotle.
Strongly Disagree _____:_____:_____:_____:_____:_____ Strongly Agree

27. This advertisement made me feel that corporate social responsibility:
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Involves me | _____ | Doesn't involve me |
| Is irrelevant to me | _____ | Is relevant to me |
| Concerns me | _____ | Doesn't concern me |
| Personally affects me | _____ | Doesn't personally affect me |
28. My attitude toward the Chipotle **advertisement** is:
- | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------------|
| Positive | _____ | Negative |
| Bad | _____ | Good |
| Favorable | _____ | Unfavorable |
| Disapproving | _____ | Approving |
29. I consider **messages** from Chipotle to be:
- | | | |
|----------------|-------|-----------------|
| Biased | _____ | Unbiased |
| Not Credible | _____ | Credible |
| Trustworthy | _____ | Not Trustworthy |
| Not Convincing | _____ | Convincing |
30. My attitude toward Chipotle **as an organization** is:
- | | | |
|--------------|-------|-------------|
| Positive | _____ | Negative |
| Bad | _____ | Good |
| Favorable | _____ | Unfavorable |
| Disapproving | _____ | Approving |
31. Most people who are important to me think _____ eat at Chipotle.
I should _____ I should not.
32. Most people who are important to me think _____ value corporate social responsibility.
I should _____ I should not
33. Most people who are important to me think _____ purchase products from a socially responsible organization.
I should _____ I should not
34. I intend to purchase a meal or other product from Chipotle during the next month.
Likely _____ Unlikely
35. I plan to eat Chipotle food during the next month.
Never _____ Frequently
36. During the next month, I will purchase products from Chipotle: (check only one)
- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| _____ Never | _____ 7-8 times |
| _____ 1-2 times | _____ 9-10 times |
| _____ 3-4 times | _____ More than 10 times |
| _____ 5-6 times | |

Demographics

Please check or fill in the appropriate answers.

37. Sex Male
 Female
38. Age _____
39. Major _____
40. Year Freshman
 Sophomore
 Junior
 Senior