

Running Head: CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ADVERTISING

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ADVERTISING: UNDERSTANDING  
CSR AND CONSUMER EQUITY THROUGH EYE TRACKING RESEARCH AND  
PURCHASING INTENTIONS

by

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Honors Thesis

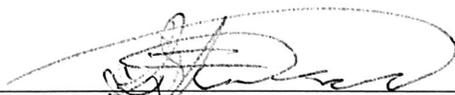
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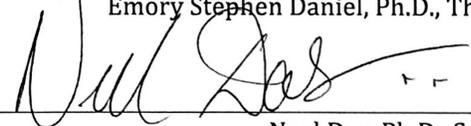
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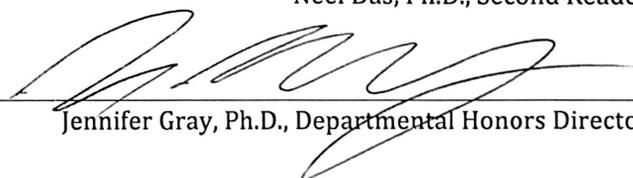
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### **Abstract**

This research study examines the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the millennial perception of advertising through an eye-tracking study of different initiatives in advertisements. Initiatives include short and long term causes, allowing a better understanding of the study of the brand, and what resonates in consumer's minds. By considering the relationship between the CSR type and consumer equity along with purchase behavior, the consumer processing method is understood more thoroughly. The specific areas explored include CSR in advertising, visual communication, psychophysiology, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and eye tracking. Two significant questions were addressed: (1) whether CSR initiatives affect the overall favorability of a brand or message, and (2) if institutional CSR initiatives strike consumers more or less so than promotional efforts. This study suggests that CSR can be a vital aspect of a brand's identity. Results show that a positive affinity for CSR does exist, however, does not explicitly conclude significance to the CSR type. Inferences made suggest that a brand's overall establishment could be more vital to a company's success when promoting CSR. Using CSR as a marketing tool could lead to many future studies, as it becomes a more significant business practice and selling point.

### **Introduction**

In the field of marketing, consumers attribute many factors to their decision to choose a specific brand or purchase a particular product. In some ways, brands make a considerable effort to communicate their story to the consumers, primarily through advertising methods (Robertson, 2015). Often brands choose to express their values and mission in their advertisements to create a relationship with the consumers (Robertson, 2015). Business culture is known as Corporate Social Responsibility, (CSR). When communicating CSR, there is potential that the receiver of the message will be inclined to engage in the desired purchase behavior (Cone Communication). A consumer's motivation to process and understand CSR advertising links with the likelihood that they support the cause (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). Specifically, in consumer markets that have inclinations toward supporting objectives and initiatives, CSR can be a significant contributor to the representation of a brand in the mind of a consumer (Rivera et al., 2016).

In a study completed by Harris Interactive (2018), thirty-seven percent of responding millennials reported that CSR could affect their purchase decisions. Additionally, sixty percent of respondents ages 18-34 in a survey initiated by Accenture indicated that it was very or somewhat important for them that the brand or company supported shared causes, where other age groups answered below 40% (Accenture, 2016). Therefore, this research concludes that millennials, as they grow to be the most significant generation, are an ideal target when pushing CSR initiatives and corporate image advertising (Fry, 2018). Overall, CSR and cause-related messaging could lead to higher levels of positive brand recognition and purchase behaviors in the upcoming years

(Rivera et al., 2016). Therefore, this study plans to develop a further understanding of the contribution of CSR to the purchasing intentions of millennial consumers. By using theoretical constructs such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the goal is to understand the relationship between CSR classifications and purchasing intention.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Carroll (1991) defines CSR as "improving the quality of life or well-being of society," (p. 11) based on the given society's perception of right and wrong. A business or firm's moral values and management of organizational stakeholders manifest through many initiatives where the organization at hand contributes time or funds to charitable causes and non-profits (Lichtenstein et al., 2004). While CSR reflects organizational values, it is a means of leveraging positive brand affinity through communication of said services and initiatives to consumers. A brand's image in the mind of consumers can correlate directly with revenue, therefore the success of a business overall (Voleti, 2009).

Pomering (2011) discusses corporate image advertising as a response to consumers about a firm's dedication to the community and framing themselves as an organization of integrity. Overall brand identity can be highly advantageous as it creates a mental picture of what is claimed to be a reality (Pomering, 2011). In turn, it can raise awareness of a brand and increase sales. According to Cone Communication (2013), "54% of Americans bought a product associated with a cause over the last 12 months, increasing 170% since 1993" (p. 17). These purchases can contribute to the overall knowledge of what a firm stands for (Kennedy, 1977). According to Davis (1994), they evaluate the advertiser ethical attributions, where they develop an understanding of the

ethics of the brand itself, followed by the message moral attributions, where they assess the message itself.

The advertising methods a brand implements can incite skepticism among consumers (Obermiller et al., 2005). When a consumer sees a CSR advertisement, they begin the processing and evaluation sequence as they would when processing any form of visual communication. From these assessments, they will likely choose to evaluate the ad alone, or the brand as a whole and develop a perception, whether it is receptive of the message or skeptical of the message (Keller, 1991). There are some arguments that a misfit between the product and the cause is more useful, as a high brand-fit could be perceived as exploitation and therefore inciting skepticism (Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 2000). Pomeroy (2011) refutes this notion by arguing that it is essential to make claims that fit the reality. The brand and the cause should remain congruent with one another to maintain affinity in the consumer market and more feasibly associate the cause with the brand (Keller, 1993). Menon and Kahn (2003) also found that a high fit results in a positive evaluation of their findings. Kanta et al. (2014) reported that high fit persuades consumers to understand a firm's values and integrity as devoted to a relevant cause.

Just as the fit is an essential factor in a firm's cause selection, as is the proximity to the cause (Cone Communication, 2013). Following the 2008 recession, Americans have preferred that firms focus their initiatives close to home, prioritizing the betterment of the local quality of life rather than national or global issues (2013). Time frames for CSR initiative can give different perspectives and perceptions one's views an advertisement or a brand. A campaign can be classified into two types of CSR: long-term (institutionalized) and short-term (promotional) (Pirsch et al., 2007). Institutionalized

CSR engrains a cause into their mission, reflecting the initiative as an identifying factor for the brand. Pirsch's (2007) finding showed Institutionalized CSR programs are capable of increasing customer loyalty, enhancing attitude toward the company, and decreasing consumer skepticism. Promotional CSR programs are argued by Pirsch (2007) to be more effective at generating purchase intent and thus are deemed sale promotions rather than giving the notion that the firm dedicates itself to the betterment of the cause they are supporting and their responsibility to society. The fit is arguably a vital aspect to the success of the campaign.

While the message context and initiative type are necessary to communicate when practicing CSR, there is a contributing visual aspect that acts as an extension of the CSR message itself. According to Garcia and Greenwood (2013), CSR is often communicated by visual images that are action based, allowing the consumer to see real footage of CSR in action. With the rise of social media advertising, CSR communication has become increasingly reliant on visually appealing imagery (Chung & Lee, 2017). In turn, this requires CSR advertisers to be knowledgeable of visual communication practices.

### **Visual Communication**

Visual Communication relies the function of the eyes interacting with the human brain, which interprets information on a sensory level (Lester, 2013). Visual communication can include any visual representation in the form of signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, and advertising, drawing from both sensory and language awareness (Lester, 2013). According to Jamieson (2007), the initial visual experience requires a psychological analysis of the message from the viewer, which analyzes the cultural form placed on the image by the sender. The message

sender sets this form to achieve a desired reaction from the viewer through a combination of biological, psychological and sociocultural influences. When observing an image, a viewer can make a perceptual connection as well as a semiotic connection, which includes the pre-understood knowledge.

Viewing advertisements is commonly understood as a simple passing of information. Scott (1994), however, spearheaded the idea that advertising alone is a sophisticated form of visual rhetoric. From a rhetorical perspective, consumers can subconsciously analyze the information with the relevant appeals (Mcquarrie & Mick, 1996). The consumer's cognitive processes can, in turn, provide the ability to develop an attitude about the product or brand. This cognition raises the importance of style and design, as mass messages are quickly passed over. The aesthetic technique is used to affect the perception of the cognition of visualization, with visual that attributes draw in the viewer and stand against competing messages (Agrawala et al. 2011). The eye of the consumer perceives and processes these designs through biological and psychological assessment, creating a psychophysiological response.

### **Psychophysiology and Eye Tracking**

Psychophysiology is defined as “the scientific study of social, psychological, and behavioral phenomena as related to and revealed through physiological principles and events in functional organisms” (Bernston et al. 2017, p. 4). The measurement of cognition, emotion, and behavior by recording physiological responses to stimuli is allowed because of this. For example, a researcher could measure a subject's perception of an image based on their facial expression and reaction. Researchers can infer pleasantness, arousal, attention, etc. (Lang et al., 1993). Psychophysiology is used to

measure advertising and marketing effectiveness through some bodily responses including but not limited to, facial expression, heart rate, brain waves, and eye movement. For over 40 years, eye movement has been used as an effective means of evaluation (Stuart & Furse, 1982). Specific gaze patterns can link to emotional reaction of an image or message.

A common methodology when aiming to measure gaze is using eye-tracking software. Many factors are determined, including where a subject is looking, duration, and how their gaze moves to different aspects of the image or message (Eye tracking, 2014). By following subject's eye movement, a researcher can determine whether they are reading or scanning content, as well as understand the intensity at which different parts of a message are viewed (Eye Tracking, 2014). Through eye-tracker measurement and data (heat maps), we can determine the length of fixation and understand what in an image is most attractive to the viewer (Soussan et al., 2010). Eye tracking is a diagnostic technique in evaluating the order of exposure to elements within a message as well as how long one dwells on a specific aspect of the message. An understanding of the physical and biological response and how it correlates with cognitive, emotional and behavioral interest adds significant progress to the study of consumer behavior and advertising research (Stuart & Furse, 1982). When researching emotional and behavioral investment, it can be helpful to understand one's attitude and social perceptions, and its contribution to decision making. In order to better understand this, researchers often formulate research and questionnaires surrounding common theories with reliance on their validity. Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) provides a method with which to measure this process.

### **Theory of Planned Behavior**

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) explains the human decision process and how ultimate intention is the antecedent of physical behavior. The theory relies on the combination of the following: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perception of behavioral control. Attitude toward a behavior is the value of the behavior of the subject (Ajzen, 1991). A behavior can be valued positively or negatively evaluated, and links to various outcomes. For instance, a consumer may develop a positive or negative attitude about a brand due to their values. Subjective norms involve the social pressures surrounding the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It is likely that the subject weighs all subjective norms that contribute to the decision to engage in the behavior at hand. In a scenario involving purchase decision, one might rely on social norms to make a decision regarding a brand or individual product. The subject's perceived behavioral control includes their physical ability to perform the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Included is their belief that factors contributing to their ability to perform the behavior, such as power, ability to afford a purchase, and other factors that contribute to control. The attitude toward the behavior, subjective norm, and perception of behavioral control form a behavioral intention where they are, the stronger the purchase intention. Depending on the actual control, consumers are to some degree expected to carry out the behavior at hand given the opportunity to do so (Ajzen, 1991).

The theory relates directly to the field of advertising, as it evaluates a target behavior, which can include an actual purchase or general positive brand affinity. Ajzen's (1991) theory assesses belief strengths with Likert-type scaling, to allow the consumer viewing the advertisement to rank their level of agreeability. Using the Theory of Planned

Behavior as a measure of consumer behavior assists in the development of understanding which advertising qualities prompt the buying decision.

When consumers observe an advertisement, they frequently look at their costs and benefits of using a product and evaluate their "final gain frame" versus their "final loss frame" (Martínezfiestas, 2015). When trying to evoke action upon the consumer beyond just purchasing the product itself, this occurs. Often this could include additional discounts, charitable donations, and many other additional factors that contribute to the final behavior that is purchase intention.

This research serves the purpose of leading to a better understanding of consumer's perception of CSR related advertising messages. By communicating CSR to consumers on a visual level, brands can convey their mission, and in turn, they hope to raise equity and sales. While building brand relationships is a psychological process, it is made more understandable by consumer's reactions on a physiological level. For this reason, eye tracking allows the ability to measure consumer's perceptions in a controlled environment. Previously addressed by Pomering (1996), skepticism was the primary focus, and many approaches were provided. From an institutional versus promotional perspective, Pirsch (2007) concluded that brands with initiatives deduced in their mission should be more effective. These insights along with others have raised new and relevant questions regarding this topic.

H1: Advertisements with CSR will be viewed more favorably than advertisements that do not contain CSR.

H2: Advertisements with Institutionalized CSR will be viewed more favorably than advertisements that use CSR promotionally.

RQ1: How will CSR advertisements influence purchasing intentions?

RQ2: What relationships will exist between CSR advertisement and eye tracking?

## **Methods**

### **Sampling**

Participants in this study include millennials (ages 18-38) from mid-sized Southeastern University. As previously mentioned, this demographic was selected due to millennial interest in a brand's CSR initiatives (Accenture, 2016). Participants were contacted after obtaining email addresses through class rosters from a department listserv or via in-person communication. Of the 33 participants, 13 identified as male while the remaining 20 identified as female. The maximum age was 33, and the minimum age was 19, all of which classified as millennials, otherwise known as Generation Y, according to the age definition by the United States Chamber Foundation (2012), which states that all millennials were born between the years of 1980 and 1999 (See Appendix A for demographic information).

### **Procedure**

Before beginning the conditions of the experiment, the IRB approved all elements of the study. The principal investigator requested study enrollment via email communication received by university rosters and in-person recruitment in academic buildings. Following their agreement to participate, they were sent a follow-up email to confirm their sign-up time and seeking their informed consent, which was to be read and

signed before their participation. Over the course of four days, participants arrived at a small laboratory on campus. The experimental environment contained one desktop computer in a small lab space with no windows or external distractions. Other technology included GazePoint eye tracking hardware and software connected to the computer. No other individuals were present except for the principal investigator.

Following their submission of a printed and sign informed consent, participants were asked to take a pretest by providing demographic information including age, gender, and occupation. Preliminary questions were asked regarding their shopping behaviors, including whether they consider company values, price, and advertisements. Then, participants were asked if they were skeptical of advertising, and were provided with a short story of the brand advertised in this study, Toms. This brand was selected for its commonly known mission to give a pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair purchased. Toms is a popular brand with a well-understood story, allowing participants to not only voice their perception of the advertisement itself, but the brand as a whole, in a realistic way. A previously ingrained institutional CSR initiative and gave participants a realistic and relevant cause to look at during this study.

Once this pre-test was submitted, participants were asked to calibrate the GazePoint tracker by following a moving circle on the monitor with both eyes. Each eye was required to recognize seven of nine spots on the screen to pass calibration. If the calibration was successful, the tracking began. If it was unsuccessful, participants repeated calibration until the desired precision was reached. Each participant was asked to view one of three Tom's advertisements (See Appendix B for advertisements), with copy promoting institutional CSR, promotional CSR, or no CSR, which acted as the

control group. All imagery was the same to maintain consistency, but the copy read differently. The institutional advertisement read with copy resembling the "one for one" mission. The promotional advertisement highlighted a separate initiative that promoted the provision of clean water for children in need, as it still somewhat fits the brand, but does not align with the mission of Tom's shoes. The control group viewed an advertisement explaining the variety of Tom's shoes, and how they could find a shoe that fits their personality. Their eye movements were recorded on a gaze plot and timed by the principal investigator for 15 seconds to observation of all aspects of the advertisement while maintaining a realistic time frame for exposure. Participants were asked to complete a post-test, which follows the TPB instrument (Ajzen, 1991). Questions were asked to determine the valence of the advertisement (positive, negative, neutral), whether it would provide a short-term or long-term benefit, and whether the message fit Tom's brand mission, as one of the advertisements promoted CSR that was different from that mission. They were also asked questions to determine their control over their ability to purchase a pair of Tom's shoes, and whether they intend to buy the product after viewing the ad. After completing the post-test and were provided with an opportunity to ask questions; participants then left the lab.

Participant names remained stored in a separate file with assigned participant numbers. In a different file, their corresponding numbers matched with a fake name to maintain confidentiality, and their questionnaire responses were recorded digitally and stored on a password-protected computer. Following data collection and analysis, all paper copies were shredded, and the digital files were erased. Digital eye tracking records were also discarded.

## Results

The eye tracking data and survey responses were analyzed through the calculations of statistical significance and averages by between condition one-way ANOVA and means of both pre and post-test responses. After reviewing the means (See Appendix C to view means), along with standard deviations of all questions relevant to the above-stated hypotheses and research questions, the results are as follows.

When looking at H1, the notion that advertisements with CSR will be viewed more favorably than advertisements that do not contain CSR, post-test questions 1 and 2 were observed. The null hypothesis was confirmed, and there is no statistical significance. Question 1 is in regards to whether purchasing products with Toms values would be positive or negative. The one-way ANOVA reported no significance  $F(2,33) = 1.15$   $p = .329$ . Advertisement 1 (institutionalized) reported an average of  $M = 5.82$ ,  $SD = .87$ . Advertisement 2 (promotional) reported an average of  $M = 6.09$ ,  $SD = .7$ . Advertisement 3 (non-CSR) reported an average of  $M = 6.55$ ,  $SD = .93$ . Question 2, asking whether the advertising message was positive or negative, gave a one-way ANOVA of  $F(2,33) = .27$   $p = .764$ . Advertisement 1 reported an average of  $M = 6.55$ ,  $SD = .52$ . Advertisement 2 reported an average of  $M = 6.27$ ,  $SD = 1.1$ . Advertisement 3 reported an average of  $M = 6.39$ ,  $SD = .92$ .

Hypothesis 2 suggested that advertisements with Institutionalized CSR would be viewed more favorably than advertisements that use CSR promotionally; post-test questions 3 and 4 were observed. The null hypothesis was confirmed, and there is no statistical significance. Question 3 asks whether the message in the ad would be more beneficial long-term. The one-way ANOVA reported no significance  $F(2,33) = 2.03$

$p=.15$ . Advertisement 1 reported an average of  $M=6.36$ ,  $SD=.93$ . Advertisement 2 reported an average of  $M=5.73$ ,  $SD=1.35$ . Advertisement 3 reported an average of  $M=5.27$ ,  $SD=1.49$ . Question four asks the same with regards to short-term benefit. The ANOVA showed no significance  $F(2,33)=1.96$   $p=.159$ . Advertisement 1 reported an average of  $M=5.73$ ,  $SD=1$ . Advertisement 2 reported an average of  $M=5.45$ ,  $SD=1.29$ . Advertisement 3 reported an average of  $M=4.72$ ,  $SD=1.27$ .

RQ1 states, “How will CSR advertisements influence purchasing intentions?” For this question, post-test 10 was analyzed. This question asked participants whether they intend to purchase Toms or a product with values matching the values of Toms. The ANOVA reported no significance  $F(2,33)=1.49$   $p=.86$ . Advertisement 1 reported an average of  $M=4.73$ ,  $SD=1.1$ . Advertisement 2 reported an average of  $M=4.36$ ,  $SD=1.12$ . Advertisement 3 reported an average of  $M=4.47$ ,  $SD=1.5$ . RQ2 asks about the relationship between CSR advertisement and eye tracking. The eye tracker did not report any statistically significant quantitative data. As a result, this study cannot make any conclusions based on the relationship between eye-tracking technology and CSR related advertising. Therefore, RQ2 was discarded from the analysis and the discussion.

Question 11 asked whether they have purchased Toms or a product with values matching the values of Toms in the past. This question reported partial significance, between advertisements 2 and 3 with the ANOVA showing  $F(2,33) = 27.46$   $p=.053$ . Advertisement 1 reported an average of  $M=3.45$ ,  $SD=2.25$ . Advertisement 2 reported an average of  $M=5.18$ ,  $SD=1.83$ . Advertisement 3 reported an average of  $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=2.07$ . The adjusted  $r^2$  is  $.123$ . The Bonferroni post-hoc test to measure between

variables and discovered that conditions 2 and 3 prompted a partial significance of  $p=0.060$ .

### **Discussion**

Overall, this study reported little significance regarding CSR and advertising efforts. This result differs from the claims reported in other CSR studies, including Pomeroy (2011), and Pirsch's (2007) theory of CSR being institutional and promotional. The consumption of an advertisement did not significantly increase affinity for a brand that currently practices CSR.

H1 was nullified, as the post-test questions regarding this notion provided no statistical significance. The potential for the sample's apathy in the favorability of CSR advertising across all conditions, as the non-CSR promotion provided a remarkably similar mean across all participant responses. The participants in the study may be as apt toward consuming a standard advertisement in comparison to the CSR devoted ad when consumers are familiar with the brand and its mission. Fry (2018) contradicted this when confirming that the millennial generation could be more apt to support brands that support worthy causes. While this study does not disprove this notion, it can contribute to further research with the potential the relationship between the branding and advertising. As mentioned by Keller (1991), it is possible that the consumer develops opinions regarding the brand, the advertisement itself, or both simultaneously. The Toms brand values, on the Likert-type scale, shifted positively within the participant's responses, all scored favorably regardless of the condition. This could suggest that knowing the brand's mission affects consumer equity more so than the advertisement itself. Brand understanding and connection to their story, as mentioned above by Robertson (2015), is

highly relevant to this generation and may be held in higher regard than the advertisement itself. This relates back to the fit of the initiative, and whether or not this contributes to the overall perception of the brand and whether their practicing of CSR allows for a more positive brand attitude (Pomering 2011).

H2 focused on the long-term and short-term initiatives, or institutional and promotional, and the null hypothesis was confirmed. The data showed averages that showed an affinity to agreeability rather than disagreeability. The first condition that showed institutionalized CSR initiative had a slightly higher response rate, however, did not show significance. The first and second conditions reported slightly higher when short-term effectiveness was questioned. This could lead to a further understanding of the overall brand and the importance of explicitly stating the initiative. It can again be drawn that overall, the millennial generation does care for the idea of CSR. However, branding approaches could hold more stake in their minds than one advertisement. In an article written in [business.com](http://business.com), the importance of stake in a brand is highlighted as something that goes beyond products and services but relies upon the brand identity itself and the strategy and approach they choose to take (Kamran, 2017).

When observing purchase intention in RQ1, all three conditions reported nearly equal averages. Their responses provided insight and questions to whether purchase intention is directly reflected by one's understanding and loyalty to the brand itself. In the Theory of Planned Behavior, one's attitude about the brand is equally as important as their actions. Some factors contribute to the purchase decision, but brand affinity is not always a predictor. Through this study, it is possible that consumers, while they have a positive outlook on a brand, may not directly correlate with purchase intention. This

could be due to their perceived behavioral control over purchasing the product, or other subjective norms including but not limited to social pressure or predisposed notions about the topic at hand (Ajzen, 2011).

The partial significance found in question 11 provided understanding regarding one's general loyalty to CSR values and initiatives. The second condition contained a significantly higher average response than the other conditions. This may suggest that the participants are more likely to purchase promotional CSR related products in the future because they bought them before the study. Similarly, the advertising message was no more favorable when it was CSR related. While research shows that millennial-aged consumers have a tremendous attraction to brands that partner with charities and donate to worthy causes, this research raised a number of limitations along with its insights.

### **Limitations**

Though this research had some positive aims, the overall research had some design weaknesses and unavoidable implications. While it was carefully prepared, the research was conducted over a short period, leading to a small sample size of 33 individuals, all attending the same mid-sized Southeastern University. With this, the data collected may be geographically skewed as well as less effective due to the sample size. The sample, after reviewing eye-tracking heat maps, seemed interested in the visual aspect of the advertisements shown, therefore preventing them from focusing on the copy. Though they were asked to focus on all aspects of the imagery and copy, it is probable that the consistent imagery across conditions prevented participants from being able to experience a realistic CSR advertisement. In turn, they may not have read the copy in full or could have omitted attention to the provided reading materials regarding

the brand itself. Toms is a well-known brand and this is a large contributor the justification of the brand's selection. Additionally Toms represented a strong institutional CSR effort, while also having the potential to support a promotional initiative.

Consequently, this could have affected the participant's responses; any cause them to neglect the reading materials or the copy that accompanied the image. Additionally, institutional and promotional initiatives on participants already held perceptions and understanding of what they felt the Toms brand represented. The promotional initiative may have provided recognition for a brand with an already understood institutional value set. The visual appeal of the advertisements matched one another across conditions to maintain continuity and remove was not able to fit the standard visual style of CSR advertising. A significant portion of CSR advertisements contain charitable works in action, showing a photo or video of real social service. The imagery used could have caused a distraction or lack of realism to the participants, therefore preventing them from receiving a full understanding of CSR advertising and the desired emotional appeal that typically complements this advertising method (Chung & Lee, 2017).

There are some additional limitations, including the notion that the pre and post-tests were written and conducted by the primary investigator, allowing the possibility for subjectivity, and may have been more effective were it written by an external entity. This study took place in a very controlled environment, allowing again for lack of practicality in the experience of the participants. They were asked to view the message in a timed setting, while being recorded on the eye-tracker, therefore could have felt pressure to respond differently. Using a live brand, Toms, allowed for the real-time understanding of

purchase behavior, as it is a product that many are familiar with. This allowed a more realistic experience when exposed to the conditions. Overall, these limitations have struck some curiosities regarding the potential for future research.

### **Future Directions**

While there are some unavoidable limitations, some are controllable, and when adjusted could be highly useful in the future. When further pursuing this topic, some approaches could benefit the nature of the research and yield more significant results for proving hypotheses as well as answering valuable research questions. If this study were to be re-designed, expansion of sampling pool and size would add certain credibility to its effectiveness. This could allow for a more regular distribution of scores and possibly a better understanding of the effects of CSR on advertising and purchase behavior. Looking at the relationship between brand image, rather than one particular advertisement could further explain the results and limitations of this study. The visual approach to the advertisements along with the copy could be provided more realistically; and rather than conserving consistency, reveal the participant's actual perceptions about CSR advertising. This may add to limitations in some ways, but also potentially expand the reach of the study. For example, the advertisement would reveal real photos of real people experiencing happiness and copy explaining this. This could provide direction and understanding for the participant, and potentially increase their compliance when completing the post-test, as well as offer a more complex and realistic viewing experience of the advertisement.

The study's effectiveness could expand, and in turn, give further understanding to the topic. CSR provides an understanding of a brand's value set on a deeper level and can

increase consumer affinity if marketed correctly. Based on this research, it can be determined that advertising alone cannot reflect one's ability to become brand loyal. The foundation of a brand's identity to millennial consumers can be built upon CSR.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the insignificant results of this study, this research has developed a fuller understanding of CSR advertising, and the importance of the usage and design of these initiatives. Following the review of previous research regarding CSR, visual communication, and psychophysiology, it is certain that there are many findings and speculations regarding this topic, and as CSR grows as a marketing objective, research of this topic will continue to flow. Upon completion of this study, the notion that the relevance of CSR in the millennial mind is strong if properly executed. Further research in the development of a CSR centered branding strategy or campaign could lead to a future of advertising with CSR and company values at the forefront of business practices.

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Appendix A

Demographic Information for Study Participants

Chart A1: Gender Breakdown

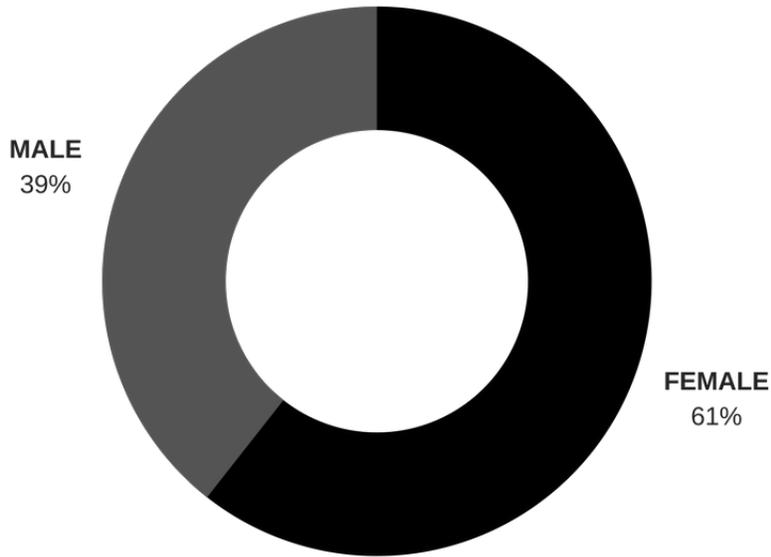
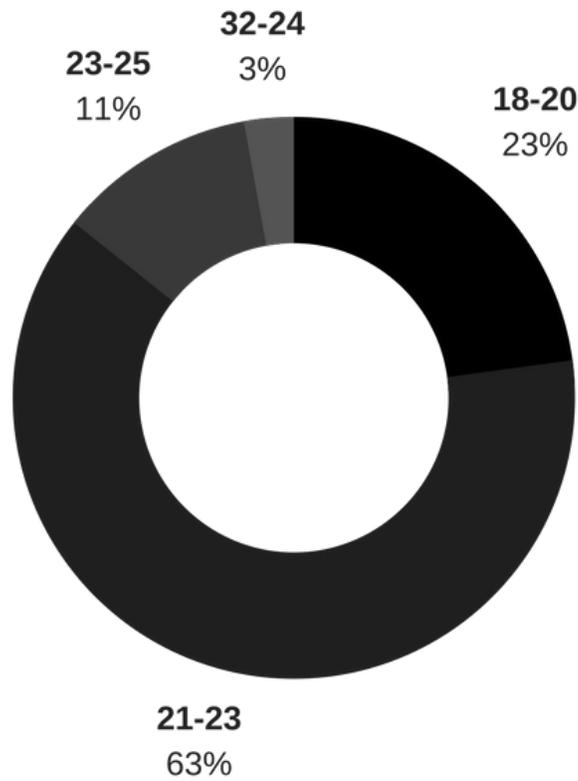


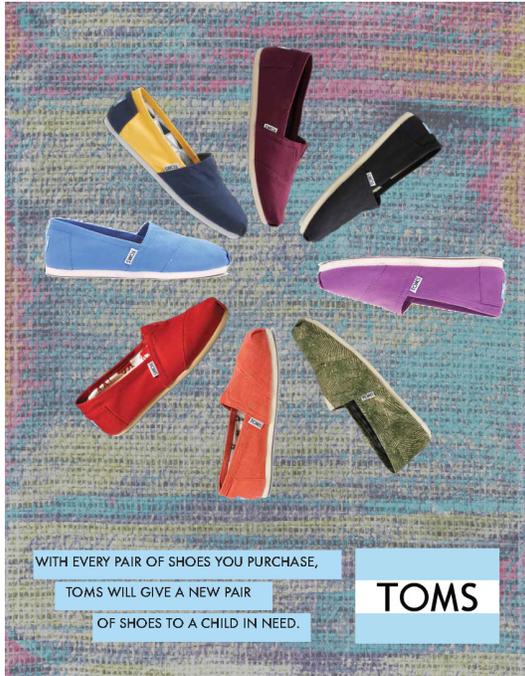
Chart A2: Age Breakdown



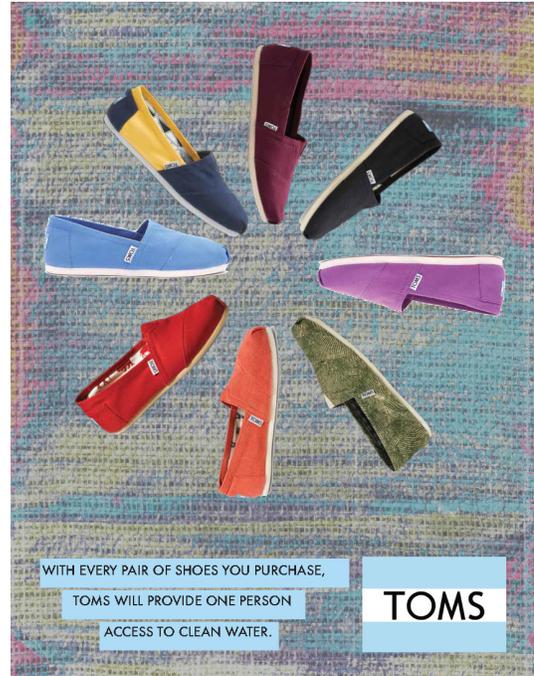
Appendix B

CSR Advertisements for Study

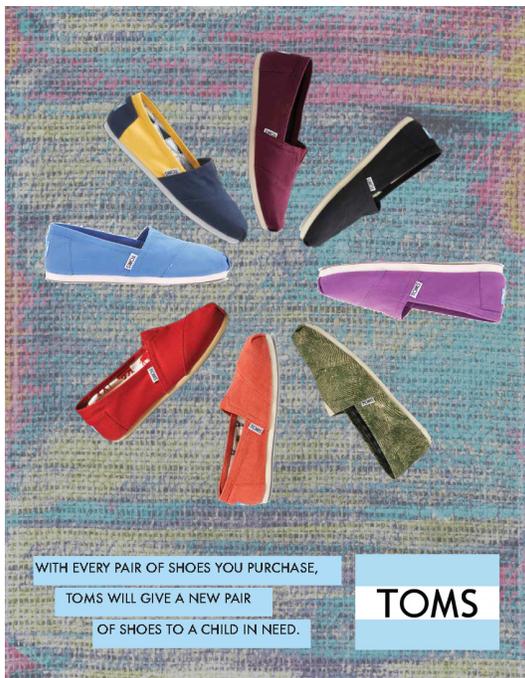
Advertisement B1: Institutional CSR



Advertisement B2: Promotional CSR



Advertisement B3: Non-CSR



Appendix C

Result of Means for Post-Test Questions 1-11

Chart C1

