# The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities on Brand Equity and Consumer Purchasing Intention

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this survey-based study was to identify the impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities on corporate brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions, and to verify causal relationships between the variables.
**Research Question** – The XCIP is the company's longest running program of its kind, taking a global approach to CSR. Xerox uses this initiative to fund employees in their local communities to make a difference in projects of their own choosing.
**Research Method**–The survey period was conducted for about three months from May 3, 2018 to August 7, 2018, and a random sampling method was used. The total number of samples was 420, with 19 samples excluded from final analysis due to untruthful or erroneous responses.
**Result** – In this study, the general characteristics of the survey participants were investigated as follows in analyzing the impact of CSR activities on brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. First, male (51.6 percent) college graduates (42.4 percent) outnumbered female participants (40.2 percent), and participants in their 40s (30.7 percent) and 50s (23.8 percent) ranked highest, followed by general office workers (27.6 percent), business people, people in service positions, and people in sales positions.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility, brand equity, brand assets, consumer purchasing intention

## 1. Introduction

In 2018, Xerox Corporation made the "100 Best Corporate Citizens List" of Corporate Responsibility Magazine for the twelfth consecutive time. This comes as no surprise. The company engages in numerous CSR initiatives, from the Green World Alliance to participation in the Electronic Industry Citizen Coalition. This study highlights another of the company's social responsibility activities—namely, the Xerox Community Involvement Program (XCIP). The XCIP is the company's longest running program of its kind, taking a global approach to CSR. Xerox uses this initiative to fund employees in their local communities to make a difference in projects of their own choosing. Since 2012, Xerox has sponsored over 18,000 projects with more than 400,000 employee participants. Xerox is a global company, but giving their employees control of programs at the ground level makes a lot of sense, and has had enormous practical benefits. Participants are able to identify real needs in their communities by virtue of living in them, thereby pursuing a range of initiatives from the building of shelving units at a Maui food bank to helping with tornado disaster relief in Alabama to sponsoring breast and cervical cancer awareness in small towns across Poland. Moreover, as part of the program, employees are given a paid leave of absence to focus entirely on these social projects under Xerox's Social Service Leave Program. Previous research identifies multiple types of

CSR Polonsky and Jevons (2009). The umbrella category of CSR is divided into economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic activities of social responsibility. In today's corporate landscape, a company's brand generates sales, thus serving as the symbol and primary asset of the company. Companies choose to pursue CSR activities in order to build up their assets, and it appears that it is easier for CSR-centered companies than for companies that do not undertake CSR activities to build brands. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are now being utilized as a brand management strategy for companies contributing to society. With this research, we intend to conduct a study on the impact of company CSR activities on brand assets and consumer purchase intentions. In other words, this study looks at how types of CSR activities affect corporate brand assets, thus revealing how different types of brand assets impact the purchasing intentions of consumers. In addition, we investigate how types of CSR activities play a role in controlling brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. Therefore, our findings establish concepts of CSR activities, types of management, brand assets, and purchase intentions, showing how CSR activities stand to achieve common prosperity and to improve society. The purpose of the study is to provide practical implications from a corporate strategy perspective through mountain construction. The specific objectives of the study are as follows. First, the study prepares a theoretical basis for identifying characteristics of and relationships between each variable considering different types of CSR activities in terms of brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. Second, we seek to determine how different types of CSR activities affect brand assets. Third, we show how the impact of brand assets changes the purchasing intentions of consumers. Finally, we examine how types of CSR activities play a role in controlling brand assets and purchasing intentions, we clarify the validity and causality of the research model, and we provide implications of the study based on the empirical results.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1. Types of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities

### 2.1.1. SWOT Analysis of Internationalization Process of Lenovo

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the social obligations of a business to behave responsibly as a corporate citizen. Through a company's efforts to reconcile its private concerns with the larger concerns of the public, CSR is directly and indirectly tied to business communities. Previous research defines CSR as a company's responsibility for society as a whole, beyond its economic and legal obligations to the corporate society, as well as its social obligations Gonzalez et al. (2018). The work of Polonsky and Jevons (2009) systematically classifies CSR into a four-dimensional model for sustainable management and development based on social contributions of economic, legal, ethical, and charitable activities. The work of Costa and Torrecchia (2018) looks at the relationship between CSR and corporate value, with findings emphasizing that companies' efforts in 2016 to implement CSR led to positive perceptions of social contributions. Another previous study Arevalo and Aravind (2017) finds that CSR benefits (+) had an influence on a company's reputation and repurchase value. Findings confirm that CSR is the only way to get a good response from consumers. Companies are being utilized as an axis of corporate management strategies to enhance corporate image and brand value through various CSR activities.

### 2.2. Defining types of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities

Seminal research Polonsky and Jevons (2009) makes distinctions between types of CSR activities from products to various dimensions of consumer social education and cultural arts, including contributions from educational institutions, ecological contributions, and product warranties and/or documentation that products can be easily used by anyone. Moreover, CSR activity awareness should include differing aspects of social sponsorship, including utilities, volunteer work, and charitable donations to various good causes. Dimensions of CSR include cultural and artistic support, physical education promotion, educational and academic support, environmental protection, community development, donations, program support, charity, community service, professional services, and resources.

### 2.3. Concept of brand assets

The work of Wyner (2005) defines brand as a unique name or symbol, which is used by sellers to identify goods or services to consumers, and for differentiation from competitors. The work of Saaksjarvi and Samiee (2011)

defines brand as an additional future fund that can be gained by linkage to a product, pointing out that strong brands possess more brand asset value than weak brands, as in embedded products. Additional previous research Kallapur and Kwan (2004) states that brand assets are the first to be brand assets from a financial perspective and the other two types are customer-based brand assets, primarily for brand assets. However, he said that a clear common concept was not being defined and Boerman et al. (2015) studied brand individuality, brand image and brand awareness in three dimensions.

## 2.4. Definition of brand image

Existing literature Lee et al. (2011) asserts that brand image, long recognized as an important marketing concept, can be defined as the overall impression of goods or services as perceived by consumers. Building on this concept, further definitions of brand image have been proposed that emphasize consumer gender, brand meaning and messages, individuality, or consumer attitudes and feelings. For purposes of analysis herein, however, brand image is defined as a combination of relevant associations and the sum of experiences with the brand that consumers have accumulated over time. The concept of brand image may differ slightly according to scholars, but, consistently, the perception of physical attributes and symbolic meaning of a brand is a consumer dimension. Nearly all the existing research argues that the most desirable outcome of brand image is for consumers to have favorable, strong, and unique associations with the brand.

## 2.5. Definition of brand awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which a brand name is positioned in the memory of consumers in terms of consumer ability to recognize or recall a particular brand. Previous research states that the ability of the consumer to recogitate or recall specific brands in one product category equals the ability of the user to associate with the brand name Guest et al. (2011). In the case of high-participation products, friendliness can influence purchasing decisions, particularly when consumers do not perceive significant differences between brands. The work of Hadar and Sood (2009) demonstrates a strong link between consumer behavior and consumer knowledge in making informed purchase decisions, and other existing research looks at brand awareness Homburg et al. (2010). This proves that brand recognition is an important brand asset.

## 2.6. Definition of perceived quality

The work of Liu et al. (2010) states that the definition of product quality depends largely on two dimensions— namely, objective and subjective. Objective quality refers to actual technical superiority or excellence among products, while subjective quality is a concept that involves people's subjective responses to an object. In addition, the research divides quality into emotional quality and perceived quality. Emotional quality refers to people's overall attitudes and feelings toward a product. Perceived quality operates on a level of reasoning that involves less evidence for consequent overall product evaluation. Perceived quality comprises three major subjective concepts (as opposed to the objective quality of a product). First, only products recognized by consumers in advertising images directly correlate to potential financial performance. Second, perceptions of quality as recognized by consumers are often used as important marketing strategies on the part of companies. Third, quality as recognized by consumers indicates how a brand is perceived via connections with other elements of brand image. This validates that perceived quality is an important brand asset.

## 2.7. Definition of purchasing intention

The work of Lerner et al. (2007) identifies willingness to purchase as an important variant in consumer tendencies toward products or services. The study also points out that the intention to purchase is most closely related to purchasing behavior. The work of Williams and Sprott (2007) defines an understanding of the future behavior of consumers with a set of product-approved product attitudes that represent the possibility of consumer action. The decision to purchase is made by various factors, such as valuation and product benefits. Measures of consumer intentions to purchase are consumer perceptions of a product, experience with shopping, and perceived risks of service and purchase with specific companies Chen et al. (2010). Important variables in measuring performance and

describing purchase decision-making processes are presented in the Exabytes model, in which purchasing decisions are identified with factors of problems and information.


## 3. Research Method

### 3.1. Survey method

The proportion of overseas assets in total assets, the number of overseas subsidiaries, the number of globalized countries and regions, and the proportion of overseas employees in the total staff also become the common sense to measure the level of enterprise globalization in some studies.  In this paper, FSTS (Overseas Sales/Total Sales) is used as a variable to evaluate the diversification level of enterprises.

### 3.1.1. Collecting samples and data

Samples of public data were studied in order to evaluate the impact of CSR activities on brand assets and purchase intentions in consumers. The survey period was conducted for about three months from May 3, 2018 to August 7, 2018, and a random sampling method was used. The total number of samples was 420, with 19 samples excluded from final analysis due to untruthful or erroneous responses. Statistical software SAS 9.4 was used to perform frequency analysis for demographic analysis of the sample. Reliability analysis was used to verify the reliability of the measurement variables.

### 3.1.2. Operational definition and composition of questionnaires

The questionnaire for this study consisted of four sections based on prior research. The first section handled the category of brand assets, including items about preferred brands, brand character, and social environments that distinguish certain brands from other brands. Questions involved participants' perceptions of goodwill, honesty, responsibility, quality, performance, trust, and donation-based CSR. For purposes of evaluating purchase intentions, there were four questions involving continuous use, priority choice, visit, and willingness to purchase. Finally, participants were asked to respond to six demographic questions. The questionnaire was then modified and supplemented based on prior studies to determine scores on a 5-point scale (with responses including 1 = no, 3 = beam barrel, 5 = very much so).

### 3.2. Setting up the hypotheses

In this study, we divided the impact of CSR activities on brand assets and consumer purchase intentions into hypotheses based on prior studies, establishing brand recognition, brand image, and perceived quality as independent variables in the category of brand assets.

### 3.2.1. Temporary installation

### 3.2.1.1 Relationship between brand assets and purchasing intentions

According to the work of Lee et al. (2011), "the higher the brand image, the higher the brand association and loyalty, the better the brand asset, the more the brand can be purchased." That study of consumers' purchasing experience analyzes the relationship between brand assets and purchase intentions, finding that brand recognition significantly affects consumer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Further research confirms that Chinese brand assets not only directly affect the purchasing intentions of Chinese consumers for Chinese products, but also indirectly affect China via its national image Schroeder and Janet (2014). Therefore, the current study intends to verify the impact of brand assets on positive consumer purchasing behavior in dimensions of brand recognition, brand image, and perceived quality. Various dimensions of brand assets have positive effects on consumer purchasing intentions, with hypotheses established as follows.

**Hypothesis 1:** Brand assets will have a positive influence on purchasing intention.
**Hypothesis 1-1**: Brand awareness will have a positive impact on purchasing intention (+).
**Hypothesis 1-2:** Brand image will have a positive effect on purchasing intention.
**Hypothesis 1-3**: Perceived quality of a brand will affect purchasing intention (+).

## 3.2.1.2 Relationships among CSR, brand assets, and purchasing intentions

In a previous study, CSR activities on the part of companies were shown to have a direct positive impact on brand assets Schreck et al. (2013). Advances in technology have made it difficult for companies to gain a competitive advantage due to product quality and price alone, and, regardless, customers do not judge companies by these factors. In fact, customers do not tend to have exact information or knowledge of product quality during the buying process. Customers depend more on reputation, trust, and the image of brands or companies as providers of the products they seek. For this reason, many factors influence the CSR activities of companies. Existing research finds that positive corporate images, particularly those that give customers confidence in companies due to CSR activities, have both direct and indirect effects on consumer purchasing intentions. In the study, there is a study in which the CSR activities affect customers' goodwill and willingness to purchase. I told consumers about the positive image of the product, the favorable attitude to the product, and the intent to purchase the product. It is analyzed that it supports preceding research that is linked to buying intentions. Another study finds that fashion-industry CSR activities were not able to have a positive impact on consumer purchasing intentions through the medium of ethical consumerism alone Perry and Towers (2013). Although adjustment effects were not significant as a result of the verification of the controlling effects of purchasing experience, differences in the paths between the two groups were confirmed. For consumers with higher levels of purchasing experience, the direct effects of CSR activities were not significant at each level. For consumers without purchasing experience, on the other hand, the research suggests that legal liability has a direct influence on purchasing intention. Therefore, based on prior studies, this study also intends to verify that CSR type and brand assets have positive effects on consumer purchasing intentions. The following hypotheses are established.

**Hypothesis 2**: Type of CSR activity will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand assets.
**Hypothesis 2-1**: Service-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand recognition.
**Hypothesis 2-2:** Service-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on consumers' perceived quality of the brand.
**Hypothesis 2-3**: Service-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand image.
**Hypothesis 2-4:** Donation-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand awareness.
**Hypothesis 2-5**: Donation-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on consumers' perceived quality of the brand.
**Hypothesis 2-6**: Donation-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand image.

## 4. Study Results

## 4.1. Demographic analysis

In this study, the general characteristics of the survey participants were investigated as follows in analyzing the impact of CSR activities on brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. First, male (51.6 percent) college graduates (42.4 percent) outnumbered female participants (40.2 percent), and participants in their 40s (30.7 percent) and 50s (23.8 percent) ranked highest, followed by general office workers (27.6 percent), business people, people in service positions, and people in sales positions. Seoul (32.1 percent) ranked highest in the number of participants by region.

## 4.2. Factor analysis

This study conducted factor analysis to confirm the validity of the survey in analyzing the impact of CSR activity types on brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. Factor analysis is used to analyze the correlation between variables and to identify the correlation and structure of the questions and variables based on the results. A square rotation was conducted to determine the method of factor analysis as follows.

**Table 1:** Factor Analysis

| Input data type | Raw Data |
|---|---|
| Number of records read | 40 |
| Number of records used | 40 |
| N for significance tests | 40 |

| Means and standard deviations from 40 observations | | |
|---|---|---|
| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. |
| X1 | 3.80 | 1.44 |
| X2 | 2.88 | 1.44 |
| X3 | 3.83 | 1.78 |
| X4 | 2.88 | 1.36 |
| X5 | 4.03 | 1.59 |

**Table 2:** Correlation Analysis

| Correlations | | X1 | | X2 | | X3 | | X4 | | X5 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X1 | Brand asset | 100 | * | -41 | * | 83 | * | -35 | | -49 | * |
| X2 | Perceived quality of brand | -41 | * | 100 | * | -40 | | 88 | * | 6 | |
| X3 | Brand image | 83 | * | -40 | | 100 | * | -41 | * | -44 | * |
| X4 | Brand awareness | -35 | | 88 | * | -41 | * | 100 | * | -5 | |
| X5 | Purchasing intention | -49 | * | 6 | | -44 | * | -5 | | 100 | * |
| Printed values are multiplied by 100 and rounded to the nearest integer. Values greater than 0.4 are denoted by *. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Eigenvalues of the correlation matrix: total= 5; average = 1 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Eigenvalue | Difference | Proportion | Cumulative |
| 1 | 2.77 | 1.34 | 0.56 | 0.56 |
| 2 | 1.43 | 0.92 | 0.29 | 0.84 |
| 3 | 0.51 | 0.33 | 0.10 | 0.94 |
| 4 | 0.18 | 0.08 | 0.04 | 0.98 |
| 5 | 0.10 | | 0.02 | 1.00 |

**Table 3:** Factor Patterns

| Factor Patterns | | Factor 1 | | Factor 2 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X1 | Brand asset | 77 | * | 56 | * |
| X2 | Perceived quality of brand | 74 | * | 63 | * |
| X3 | Brand image | -85 | * | 36 | |
| X4 | Brand awareness | -85 | * | 31 | |
| X5 | Purchasing intention | 45 | * | -71 | * |
| Printed values are multiplied by 100 and rounded to the nearest integer. Values greater than 0.4 are denoted by *. | | | | | |

| Variance explained by each factor | |
|---|---|
| Factor1 | Factor2 |
| 2.77 | 1.43 |

| Final communality estimates: total = 4.207587 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| X1 | X2 | X3 | X4 | X5 |

## 4.3. Demographic analysis

**Table 4:** Analysis of Variance

| Analysis of Variance | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Source | DF | Sum of squares | Mean square | F value | Pr > F |
| Model | 1 | 90.00 | 90.00 | 15.00 | 0.0047 |
| Error | 8 | 48.00 | 6.00 | | |
| Corrected total | 9 | 138.00 | | | |

| Root MSE | 2.45 | R-square | 0.65 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dependent mean | 7.00 | Adj. R-Sq. | 0.61 |
| Coeff. Var. | 34.99 | | |

| Parameter Estimates | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable | Label | DF | Parameter estimate | Standard error | t value | Pr > \|t\| |
| Intercept | Intercept | 1 | 0 | 1.97 | 0.00 | 1.0000 |
| X | Group mean | 1 | 1.00 | 0.26 | 3.87 | 0.0047 |

**H3-1:** Donation-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions according to brand recognition.

**H3-2:** Donation-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions according to brand image.

**H4-1**: Service-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand recognition.

**H4-2**: Service-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on consumers' perceived quality of the brand.

**H4-3**: Service-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions depending on brand image.


## 5. Results of Research Hypothesis Testing

This study's hypotheses were intended to facilitate understanding of how a company's CSR activities impact its relationship with brand assets and consumer purchasing intentions. The results of hypotheses testing are as follows.

H1-1: Brand awareness will have a positive impact on purchasing intention.     Adoption
H1-2: Brand image will have a positive effect on purchasing intention (+).     Adoption
H1-3: Perceived quality of a brand will affect purchasing intention (+).     Adoption

H2-1: Contribution-based CSR activities will have a cause-and-effect relationship with consumer purchasing intentions according to brand recognition.     Adoption
H2-2: Donation-based CSR activities will have a controlling effect on consumer purchasing intentions according to consumers' perceived quality of the brand.     Adoption
H2-3: Donation-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions according to brand image.     Adoption
H2-4: Service-based CSR activities will be controlled by the causal relationship in purchasing intentions according to brand recognition.     Adoption
H2-5: Service-based CSR activities will have an adjusting effect on the causal relationship in purchasing intentions according to consumers' perceived quality of the brand.     Adoption
H2-6: Service-based CSR activities will regulate the causal relationship in consumer purchasing intentions according to brand image.     Rejection


## 6. Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

### 6.1. Conclusion

We have conducted a study on the impact of companies' CSR activities on brand assets and purchasing intentions on the part of consumers. In other words, we sought to understand the impact of brand assets on the purchasing intentions of consumers, and in doing so, have verified the impact of different types of CSR activities on brand assets and purchasing intention. First, the development of corporate brand assets is found to have a positive impact on consumer purchasing intentions. Second, the benefits CSR activities are shown to be based on brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand image. It appears that CSR activities have no control over brand image. Overall, a company's brand assets can be improved by making them more accessible to consumer perception—a strategy that includes a company's CSR activities Wyner (2005). Evaluation of CSR activities also suggests the satisfactory quality of products and services, surveyed in order to determine these factors' levels of influence on the buying behavior of consumers Hadar and Sood (2009). However, while the strengthening of local communities, charities, and operating expenses due to CSR activities have been found to positively influence consumers' willingness to purchase, the provision of professional services, community counseling, and environmental protection have been shown not to have significant effects on consumers. This suggests that companies should limit their strategic approaches to CSR activities and approach the proposition with caution. Nevertheless, companies can access the support of many preceding studies wherein continuous CSR activities are shown to lead to the establishment of corporate brand assets with positive impacts on consumer behavior.

## 6.2. Implications of this research

The focus of this study on different types of CSR activities (not covered much in previous research) has significant implications for research on brand assets and purchasing intention. Based on findings herein, the following suggestions for branding strategies in implementing and implementing CSR activities are made. First, a company's CSR activities require authenticity. Just because companies are pursuing CSR activities, there is no guarantee of improvement to their brand assets. If a company's CSR activities are transparently inauthentic, then consumers will ignore the company's products and services in favor of other options. Second, CSR activities should be strategically approached. Herein, CSR activities were shown to be more synergistic when based on effective enterprise-wide strategies. Third, companies need CSR experts and brand experts in promoting CSR activities. Corporate brand building is not accomplished in a short period of time, and by definition, requires long-term perspective and investment. Reflection on the real meaning and necessity of CSR should be at the center of strategies for brand building.

## 6.3. Limitations and directions for future research

Some limitations of this study and proposed directions for future research are as follows. First, it is too restrictive to identify brand assets and purchasing intentions by types of CSR activities based only on charitable donations or services. Further research should expand the model to marketing communication, organizational culture, and human resources. Second, although companies are correct in their CSR activities, in this study, they should be categorized by the previous study, without any division of industry or categories. Finally, this study confirms associations among main variables, but it is necessary to investigate various sub-variables that affect companies' CSR activities based on existing research.

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