Consumer Response to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in China

Thesis
Department of Business Studies
Uppsala University
Spring Semester of 2017
Date of Submission: 2017-08-07

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Abstract

Background: With the development of multinational companies (MNCs), corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a very important component of corporate activities. However, the commitment to CSR in China has been very low. Chinese consumers are becoming less willing to accept different treatment from MNCs, but there has been little study of CSR problems in the Chinese market or the response of Chinese consumer.

Purpose: This study provides preliminary evidence that consumer response about the CSR behavior of multinational corporation are determined by three factors, perceived CSR, trust of CSR, and awareness of CSR, and addresses how these different factors influence Chinese consumer response in terms of Corporate Evaluation and Purchase Intention. Additionally, this work analyzes the relationship between consumer demographics and consumer response to CSR.

Method In order to identify and measure the effects of CSR behavior on consumer response, the first step was to construct a model and use qualitative research to test it. Next, quantitative research with large-scale data was used in a cross-sectional design. An online survey was created for data collection. After data collection, statistical data analysis was performed using the software program SPSS.

Findings The results show that trust of CSR and awareness of CSR has a significant influence on Chinese consumer response. Perceived CSR has a significant influence on Chinese consumer response to corporate evaluation but not on Purchase Intention. In addition, the data did not reveal a relationship between consumer demographics and consumer response to CSR.
Key Words: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), perceived CSR, trust of CSR, awareness of CSR, consumer response, corporate evaluation, purchase intention
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1. Introduction

Studies of Corporate Society Responsibility (CSR) have increased substantially in recent years (Parminder, 2013). Some studies have focused on the CSR activities of companies in developing and/or developed markets. Most CSR activities are related to sustainability, environment, safety, and gender issues.

Safety is a very important characteristic of a corporation’s products. Companies with an excellent record on safety issues enjoy a strong advantage when compared to their competitors (Benoit, 2013). Recently IKEA, a Swedish Multinational Corporation (MNC) well known for designing furniture, has received negative attention in the global news due to product safety concerns, affecting its reputation and legitimacy in the global market. IKEA announced a recall of 29 million chests and dressers in the United States after at least six toddlers were crushed to death in tip-over accidents. However, it refused to recall “life-threatening drawers” in China, and insisted that its products sold in China met local regulations (Mcphate, 2016). This situation led to dissatisfaction among consumers, who complained through social media. IKEA finally recalled 1.7 million chests and dressers in China, only after significant public criticism online and in the government-controlled Chinese media.

The outcry from Chinese consumers about IKEA’s actions in China was largely the result of increased Chinese consumer awareness of IKEA’s CSR activities. IKEA strives to maintain a high level of commitment to CSR in the global market, and the company’s stated mission is to make products with minimum impact on the environment that are manufactured in a socially responsible way (Ikea, 2017). However, in the Chinese market, IKEA’s commitments to CSR have been low, as evidenced by the reluctance to do the same product recall that they did in the United States. There is evidence of similar practices among many foreign MNCs in China. Many MNCs lowered their environmental, labor, and ethical standards for operation in the Chinese market, taking advantage of less stringent regulations. There were little market consequences of this behavior, however, since the CSR awareness of Chinese consumers was previously quite limited. Thus, ethical behavior of many MNCs and their business practices has become the center of debate and controversy in China (Tang and Li, 2009).
Nowadays, China is the largest and the fastest growing emerging economy in the world (Luo and Park, 2001). For this reason, more and more MNCs are interested in entering this new and large market. The recent shifts in the behavior and purchase response of consumers in China and throughout Asia have been noticed by MNCs (Tian et al., 2011). The awareness of consumer CSR is a new and increasing phenomenon in Asia especially in China (Nielsen, 2014).

The IKEA scandal shows that issues of low CSR in China continue to be a serious problem. As one of the most important stakeholders in the economy, consumers use their preferences and attitudes to guide multinational companies to better fulfill their corporate social responsibility. Therefore, to increase market share in China and minimize the negative impacts caused by the scandal, it is expected that IKEA will work to improve its CSR strategy.

1.1 Research Purpose

Currently, consumers are generally aware of a company’s CSR behavior and its impact on environment and the community. Consumers can react to this behavior by either rewarding or punishing firms by either choosing and buying their products or avoiding their products in China (Mohr et al., 2001). To investigate the extent of this consumer reaction, the goal of our research was to explore how consumers respond to CSR in China. Previous studies on consumers and CSR have had a Western context, and few studies have analyzed CSR activities in an emerging economy such as China. Motivated by the IKEA scandal, we argue that Chinese people should pay attention to the CSR of MNCs, but in contrast to CSR strategies of MNCs used in Western countries, CSR in China has tended to be limited to philanthropy and short-term projects.

According to Tian et al. (2011), Chinese consumer purchase response are positively influenced by the good CSR behavior of an MNC. CSR’s impact on consumer’s intention decreased when there was a problem or poor performance of a product (Auger et al., 2008). These studies provided preliminary evidence that the response of consumer to CSR behavior of MNCs are determined by three factors perception, awareness, and trust. Therefore, this study tries to address the mechanisms by which these three factors influence Chinese consumer response.
Overall, this research explores how consumers respond to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in China. The focus is on the consumer response, considered a positive driving force on CSR. The work presented in this thesis could help multinational companies to more fully understand consumer response, guiding efforts to improve corporate trust and brand image in the new market of China.

1.2 Research Question
As described above, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between consumer perception about CSR activities and corporation evaluation and Purchase Intention in China. The thesis seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. *What are the main CSR factors influencing Chinese Consumer’s response?*

2. *How do these factors influence consumer’s response?*

1.3 Contribution
CSR is practiced more widely in Western Countries compared to China. The thesis will help MNCs understand the effects of these factors on the consumer response of Chinese consumers to CSR initiatives. Moreover, it also will provide strategic guidance to MNCs to effectively execute CSR programs in China. Furthermore, the results provide MNCs managers with a strategy to improve their handling of corporation-consumer relationships and CSR-related partnership initiatives in the Chinese market.
2. Literature Review

This chapter describes Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Consumer purchase response, awareness of CSR, trust of CSR, Corporate Evaluation, and Consumer Purchase Intention. It also describes our research model based on perceived CSR Theory. Finally, hypotheses are presented as part of the theoretical foundation for the study.

2.1 CSR Concept and development

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) concept was first defined by Bowen in 1953. It refers as the obligations of business to pursue those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (Bowen, 1953). A corporation can do well by doing good if it will strategically implement CSR (Falck and Heblich, 2007). CSR can result in benefits such as enhanced perception of the corporation, management of risk, increasing the number of loyalty-based consumers based on distinctive ethical values, and implementing policies related to standard and safety policies (Kanji and Chopra, 2010).

From the early stage of the development of the CSR concept, there was significant interest from academics, the media, and investors. According to Friedman (1970), the only responsibility of business is to utilize its resources and abilities to increase profits for shareholders without breaking the law. Baron (2001) pointed out that CSR may be considered a profit-maximizing corporation strategy that can also be looked upon as being socially responsible.

A major question for business development has been whether corporate decision makers should be concerned with issues other than profitability (Mohr et al., 2001). There is a growing body of research attempting to define the consequences and benefits for a company to be socially responsible. The most widely accepted definition of CSR is Carroll’s four-pyramid model (1979), illustrated in Figure 1.
Carroll’s four-pyramid model includes four different responsibilities, Philanthropic, Ethical, Legal, and Economic (see Figure 1). Economic responsibilities are to produce good quality products and provide excellent service to consumers. The corporation is also expected to follow laws and regulations and assume legal responsibility. Ethical responsibilities include the basic concerns of society and stakeholders like safety and protecting the environment. Philanthropic responsibilities embody corporate actions that can be considered a response to social expectations, where businesses provide human welfare activities and contribute to social programs (Carroll, 1991). Of these, economic and legal responsibilities are the minimal level of CSR that must be carried out by corporations, but ethical responsibilities often play a key role in corporate management. Additionally, Porter and Kramer (2002) propose that philanthropy can often be the most cost-efficient way for a corporation to improve its competitive power. Therefore, our study will focus on discussing CSR practices at the philanthropic and ethical level of responsibilities.

The importance of CSR may be high on business agendas, and almost every big organization communicates their CSR via their homepage in the form of sustainability
reports. However, the role of CSR is increasingly debated especially considering the current economic development (Brown and Fraser, 2006). Questions remain however, how well companies manage to achieve the promised CSR activities (Thoger et al., 2013).

2.2 CSR and stakeholder—consumer

A corporation that is socially responsible should meet the concerns and demands of their stakeholders (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Maignan et al., 1999) who could be affected either directly or indirectly by the activities of the corporation in terms of consumers, merchandisers, shareholders, and regulators (Freeman, 1984). As illustrated in the IKEA example and considering previous studies, we view the consumer as a CSR stakeholder. Next, we will discuss stakeholder theory and how it connects to consumer purchase response.

The discussion and definition of stakeholders began with Freeman (1984). According to Freeman, “a stakeholder is an individual or a group which gets affected or can affect the accomplishments of an organization’s objectives,” (Freeman, 1999, p.233). Freeman’s stakeholder theory points out that a corporation is not only responsible to its stakeholders, but also to all kinds of stakeholders in society. Consumers are given particular attention, since their reactions have an important relationship with corporation’s managerial decision-making (Brown and Dacin, 1997). In other words, stakeholders’ interest in the consumer is a key factor which is taken into consideration when running corporations.

When studying CSR, it is essential to identify responsibilities and the parties who are going to assume those responsibilities (Clarkson, 1995). In stakeholder theory, corporate social responsibility is further clarified, but includes enterprise social responsibility assessment, making measurement possible. As consumers are an important business-related stakeholder group, their preferences and behavior can directly influence the development of an enterprise.

As defined earlier, CSR is a corporate behavior that aims to positively influence consumers as stakeholders. Important stakeholders also impact the corporation’s CSR. For instance, consumers who buy products create pressure leading the corporation to
pay attention to social issues (Gilbert and Rasche, 2007). Thus, stakeholder theory is logically connected with CSR (Friedman, 1970).

2.3 Constructs of Conceptual Model

According to information processing theory (IPT), consumer’s processing of CSR information includes four stages: paying attention to CSR information, judging the sincerity of CSR action, reasoning or associating CSR information with companies and their products, and reacting by making purchasing decisions (Miller, 1994). Previous studies (Tian et al., 2011) have validated the Perceived CSR model as a robust framework to understand CSR activities and consumer response.

![Figure 2. CSR information processing theory model](image)

CSR and consumer relationship studies typically include five important variables: Perceived CSR, Awareness of CSR, Trust of CSR, Corporation Evaluation (CE), and Purchase Intention (PI). Corporation Evaluation (CE) and Purchase Intention (PI) are the most popular dependent variables, and they are generally influenced by consumers perceived level (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). Consumer satisfaction, trust, and commitment influence consumer perception of CSR activities. In this thesis, awareness and trust are important indicators of consumer perception, and serve as the foundation for perceived CSR activities (Lee and Shin, 2010). Trust and Awareness of CSR were also used to illustrate consumer perception by Dutta and Singh (2013), and the results show that consumers are willing to pay more to corporations that are more engaged in CSR activities. Trust is widely used to measure consumer’s perception and scholars have identified trust as one of the most important mediators of the consumer-corporation relationship (Esch et al., 2006). Finally, CE and PI are the most studied dependent variables, and are greatly influenced by consumer trust and awareness (Becker et al., 2006).
In the following sections, we will expand our discussion about the relationship between consumer response and consumer perception of CSR. A specific model and hypotheses are also developed in the following sections.

**2.3.1 Perceived CSR**

Consumer perceived CSR is defined as “the ability of the consumers to differentiate between corporate economic responsibilities on the one hand and corporate legal, ethical, philanthropic responsibilities on the other” (Maignan, 2001, p.65). CSR initiatives affect consumer attitudes and responses (Brown and Dacin, 1997). The positive responses and perception of consumers appear to increase the benefit of adopting CSR initiatives (Lichtenstein, et al., 2004). Therefore, studying consumer perception can improve our understanding of how consumers perceive CSR activities and how that further increases their purchase intention. For consumer perception, the most widely used factors are consumer trust and awareness (Lee and Shin, 2010). Therefore, reasonable hypotheses are:

*H1-a)* A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of corporate evaluation.

*H1-b)* A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of purchase intention.

**2.3.2 Trust of CSR**

Trust is defined as the perception of a service provider’s confidentiality, honesty, integrity, and high ethical standards (Coulter and Coulter, 2002). According to Morgan and Hunt, trust and commitment play a key role in improving stakeholder relationships and in building long-term cooperation. Affect-based trust is one individual’s degree of confidence in a partner on the basis of a feeling or an emotional state (Mcallister, 1995). Affect-based trust is often based on a strong trust relationship between the consumer and a corporation and may be altered by CSR, since CSR often plays on emotional aspects in the consumer’s relationship. Consumers’ trust of CSR is generally defined as consumers’ expectations that the corporation, as a sponsor of a CSR program, is willing to keep promises and to fulfill obligations with honesty, goodwill, and non-opportunistic motives (Blomqvist, 1997). A consumer’s trust or attribution of a firm’s CSR practices is one of the most immediate consequences of a corporation’s social
performance (Pivato et al., 2008), and significantly affects consumer response to CSR (Aqueveque, 2005). Therefore, trust in the CSR of a corporation can enhance the relationship between consumer and corporation, and lead to positive consumer purchase behavior.

Percy and Lane (2009) addressed the idea that if a corporation actively takes part in social activities, consumers will increase their trust of that corporation. The corporation could not focus solely on their own benefits and ignore philanthropic efforts, as these activities may generate negative influence. Trust plays an intermediate role between CSR activities and purchase intention (Zhu et al., 2013). Consumer trust in the credibility of a corporation’s CSR activities can also influence consumer response in determining how to evaluate the corporation, based on the corporation’s image and purchase intention (Mohr and Webb, 2005, Yoon et al., 2006). A higher trust can promote the strong purchase intention of a product (Lee et al., 2012).

The emphasis consumers give to the transparency of CSR activities may also be important, and models suggest that trust of CSR will have a positive relationship with Purchase Intention (PI) and Corporate Evaluation (CE). Therefore, it may be said that:

H2-a) A higher level of consumer trust of CSR leads to a higher level of corporate evaluation.

H2-b) A higher level of consumer trust of CSR leads to a higher level of purchase intention.

H3 A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of consumer trust of CSR.

2.3.3 Awareness of CSR

Consumer awareness of CSR describes whether consumers are aware of CSR activities (Pomering and Dolniar, 2009). Consumer awareness of CSR activities is defined as the understanding of a corporation’s CSR activities by consumers, which includes consumers’ ability to determine if a corporation is conducting CSR initiatives (Öberseder et al., 2013). Consumers will make purchase decisions based on their rational analysis about the corporation and product (Hill et al., 1997). If consumers have a positive perception of CSR activities, their evaluation of the image of the corporation
will improve. However, evidence shows that consumers generally have a low level of awareness about CSR initiatives (Pomering and Dolnicar 2009). It is relatively hard to achieve an effect from CSR awareness on evaluation and purchase intention if it is often not recognized. Consumer recognition of CSR activities will at least partly depend on the intensity of CSR information the consumer receives.

In our conceptual model, consumer awareness of CSR is an exogenous construct susceptible to the political traditions, cultural, and economic development in a certain society, and likely varies from country to country (Singh et al., 2008). In China, the CSR concept is still in the early stage (Gao, 2008), and many consumers are not aware of CSR, especially at the ethical and philanthropic level (Bala and Yeung, 2009). The lack of awareness may limit consumer sensitivity to CSR and explain why CSR might not be considered when appraising a corporation and its products (Maignan, 2001). In contrast, the higher the awareness of CSR, the better consumers understand CSR activities (Lee and Shin, 2010).

Thus, consumers with a higher level of awareness or concern of CSR are more likely to show positive attitudes to the sponsoring firm and its products, and a higher level of purchase intention (Lee and Shin, 2010). Therefore, it may be said that:

\( H4-a \) A higher level of consumer awareness of CSR leads to a higher corporate evaluation.

\( H4-b \) A higher level of consumer awareness of CSR leads to a higher purchase intention.

2.3.4 Consumer response to CSR

The analysis of consumer response to corporation CSR initiatives has produced conflicting results. Some reports show a positive correlation, but find no relationship. To determine the relationship of CSR behavior of firm with consumers, we will review previous literature on consumer response to CSR.

Past studies of consumer response and CSR focus on perceived reaction and behavior response (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Perceived reaction is the internal response of consumers, and is mainly concerned about how CSR behavior affects consumer
perception of the state and attitude of a corporation, also described as consumer’s corporate evaluation. The earliest perception studies are from Brown and Dacin (1997), who point out that perception will influence the evaluation of corporation and product quality from the view of the consumer.

Behavioral responses are external responses of consumers, and mainly include the impact of CSR actions on consumer buying behavior, such as consumer purchasing intention, buying loyalty, and the level of premium consumers are willing to pay.

Consumers may have a higher potential to accept service and purchase products from a socially responsible firm (Daub and Ergenzinger, 2005). Again, findings in the extant literature are mixed. To explore the relation between CSR behavior of firm and consumers, we focus on consumer purchase intention and corporate evaluation.

**Concept of Consumer’s Purchase intention**

According to Espejel et al. (2008), purchase intention is the result of consumers’ attitudes or beliefs, and a prediction of subsequent behavior regarding a future purchase. The positive attitudes of consumers towards a corporation’s reputation, image, and product evaluation can be influenced by CSR activities (Brown and Dacin, 1997). Many studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between a business’s CSR program and consumer’s attitudes towards that organization and its products (Brown and Dacin, 1997). Research also shows that CSR will directly affect consumer’s intentions to purchase products (Sen and Bhattacharyya, 2001).

Ethical consumers may like to support corporate CSR activities. These consumers have a greater willingness to pay for the “luxury” of social consciousness (Auger et al., 2010).

**Consumer Corporate Evaluation**

A growing body of academic research shows that CSR has positive influence on consumer’s corporate evaluation (Ellen et al., 2006). Consumers will have improved evaluation of a company and its products when corporate social responsibility is high (Brown and Dacin, 1997). Corporate charitable contributions will lead to higher corporate evaluations (Weiss et al., 1999). Mohr and Webb (2005) similarly found a
positive relationship between a corporation’s CSR actions and consumer attitudes toward the corporation.

### 2.3.5 Consumer Demographics

According to studies of the demographic characteristics of consumer groups with different responses to corporate social responsibility, women, and people with higher-education and higher-income are more supportive of corporate CSR practices (Youn and Kim, 2008). Older consumers have a stronger sense of moral responsibility in their purchase behavior (Carrigan et al., 2004). That means consumer demographic variables (gender, age, income, and education) affect consumer CSR response. Consumers with different demographic variables have different responses to CSR behavior of multinational companies. Demographic factors are the fundamental pillar of marketing segmentation, making their study essentially important to better understand consumer response (Perez et al., 2013). However, in China, little is known about the relationship between consumer demographic characteristics and consumer CSR response. This study tries to investigate that relationship. We propose the following hypotheses:

*H5: Consumer demographic variables (gender, age, income, educational level) affect consumer corporate evaluation.*

*H6: Consumer demographic variables (gender, age, income, educational level) affect consumer purchase intention.*

### 2.4 Hypotheses and Research model

#### 2.4.1 Hypotheses Summary

Based on the above discussion, we propose hypotheses and a research model that consists of three dimensions: Perceived CSR, Trust of CSR, and Awareness of CSR. This research model helps us predict Chinese consumers’ Purchase Intention and Corporate Evaluation.
Table 1   Summary of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Contents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1a</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of corporate evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1b</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of purchase intention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2a</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer trust of CSR leads to a higher level of corporate evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2b</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer trust of CSR leads to a higher level of purchase intention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to a higher level of consumer trust of CSR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4a</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer awareness of CSR leads to a higher corporate evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4b</td>
<td>A higher level of consumer awareness of CSR leads to a higher purchase intention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Consumer demographic variables (gender, age, income, educational level) affect consumer corporate evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Consumer demographic variables (gender, age, income, educational level) affect consumer purchase intention.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2.4.2 Research Model

Figure 3 Research Model based on Tian, Z., Wang, R., and Yang, W., (2011).
3. Methodology

Chapter 3 describes the two-stage process of this study, including qualitative research and quantitative research. The qualitative research includes focus group interviews, sampling, and data collection. In the quantitative part of this analysis, we introduce research objects and then present the sampling and data collection procedure. Next, we show five constructs of the questionnaire and explain the measurement items of each factor. Finally, we will describe the method we adapt to analyze our empirical findings.

3.1 Research Design

In order to develop and test the hypotheses and further explore the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variables, a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative research was applied for our study.

3.2 Research Context

The research analyzed consumer response to the CSR behavior of MNCs by interviewing Chinese consumers and collecting data from Chinese consumers. The interview guides and questionnaire design were based on consumer purchasing behavior from the retail industry of furniture in Shanghai. There are two reasons why we selected Shanghai. First, it is the economic center of China and has many consumers with different levels of education, cultures, and careers. At the same time, the people who live in Shanghai may have more open opinions and are more willing to share information compared to people in other cities. Thus, it is easier to get data in Shanghai. Second, we have direct work experience in Shanghai in the retail industry. As a result, we have many colleagues and friends, relatives, teachers, and classmates in Shanghai. We used the face-to-face or telephone interview and a survey questionnaire to obtain thoughts and understand if our findings from the small group would be supported in a larger group.

3.3 Step 1: Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an important way to obtain information from a target group. We designed targeted questions according to the research objectives and communicated the questions with the interviewees. Respondents answered the interviewer about their subjective view of the situation. If we want to understand consumer attitudes, behavior, and motivations in depth, qualitative research is a good way to get this information,
although it is not easily quantified (Barnham, 2015). Qualitative research can access ‘deeper’ levels of information through such interrogative strategies (Barnham, 2015).

### 3.3.1 Sampling
In order to get more detailed information and identify the contributing factors, we interviewed eight persons face-to-face in order to collect qualitative data. We did not know beforehand whether these people were knowledgeable or not about corporate social responsibility (CSR).

First, we introduced the aim of the research and then asked the questions one by one. We encouraged them to answer all questions in detail. Each interview or online discussion lasted one to one and a half hours. In answering the 10 questions, all interviewees talked about their ideas and thoughts about the CSR of multinational corporations. After we finished the interview, we summarized their comments, and then asked the interviewees to review our summary to check the accuracy of our written comments.

Based on the results of the qualitative research and our theory, we then designed a quantitative study to test our hypotheses.

### 3.4 Step 2: Quantitative Research
We operationalized our CSR model using a questionnaire that provided the foundation for our quantitative analysis (Denscombe, 2007). This allowed us to reach a much larger sample size.

### 3.4.1 Sampling
Considering the efficiency and feasibility of data collection, an online questionnaire was adopted in our study. This approach makes sure that a single IP address can only access one questionnaire at one time and answers are recorded automatically (Denscombe, 2007). Therefore, this study sent out questionnaires on the Wenjuan Xing website, the most effective way to collect data from Chinese consumers. The data was then analyzed.
To improve the representation of the data given cost and time limits, we applied a snowball sampling strategy to select respondents (Denscombe, 2007). Initially, the researcher can involve a small group who understands the research problem. After that, this small sample of respondents was sent hyperlinks to the questionnaire to allow them to invite new people to participate in the research. In this way, the small sample became larger, like a rolling snowball (Denscombe, 2007). The online survey was administered for one week from May 8th to May 15th.

The population of this study consisted of consumers purchasing furniture products in China. Generally, people are aware of the IKEA brand and Corporate Social Responsibility.

3.4.2 Measurements
All questions for the questionnaire used the seven Likert scales, where 1="strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree" (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The construct definitions for the adapted model are presented in Table 2.
Table 2: The adapted research model and relevant studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Theoretical Definition</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived CSR</td>
<td>The ability of the consumers to differentiate between corporate economic responsibilities on the one hand and corporate legal, ethical, philanthropic responsibilities on the other hand.</td>
<td>Maignan et al., (2001)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of CSR</td>
<td>Consumer awareness of CSR activities is defined as the understanding or cognition of a company’s CSR activities by consumers.</td>
<td>Oberseder et al., (2013)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust of CSR</td>
<td>Trust is defined as the perception of a service provider’s honesty, integrity, and high ethical standards.</td>
<td>Newell and Goldsmith (2001); Erdem and Swait (2004)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>The purchase intention is a prediction of consumer attitude or behavior towards a future purchasing decision.</td>
<td>Espejel et al., (2008)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For accuracy, the selected items should represent the concept about which generalizations are to be made (Wang et al., 2003). In constructing the adapted research model, measurement items were selected from established questionnaires from previous studies to maintain the validity of the questionnaire.

Perceived CSR is mainly to examine whether consumers feel that the corporation is conducting CSR. Perception is measured as a three-item construct, as taken from Marin and Ruiz (2006) and Sen and Bhattacharya (2001).
CSR Awareness is mainly to test whether consumers realize that a corporation is conducting CSR practice. Here, awareness is measured as a four-item construct, based on Poemring and Dolniar (2009), Salmones et al., (2005), and Perez and Rodriguez del Bosque (2013).

CSR Trust is evaluated as the degree to which consumers believe these CSR activities. A four-item construct to measure trust was used based on previous research by Newell and Goldsmith (2001) and Erdem and Swait (2004).

Corporate evaluation is evaluated as the degree to which consumers consider corporate reputation. A two-item construct was used based on previous research by Ellen et al., (2006) and Mohr and Webb, (2005).

Purchase intention is evaluated by determining if a consumer would like to purchase from IKEA Corporation. The use of purchase intention is reflected in a three-item construct, and builds on the study of Espejel et al. (2008) and Poemring and Dolniar (2009).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Measure items</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived CSR</td>
<td>PCSR 1</td>
<td>I feel that IKEA is a socially responsible corporation.</td>
<td>Marin and Ruiz (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCSR 2</td>
<td>I feel that IKEA abides by good moral principle in conducting business.</td>
<td>Sen and Bhattacharya (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCSR 3</td>
<td>I feel IKEA is an ethical business when I shop there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of CSR</td>
<td>AW1</td>
<td>I care about environmental protection in daily consumption.</td>
<td>Poemring and Dolniar (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW2</td>
<td>I think that corporations such as IKEA play responsible roles in society.</td>
<td>Salmones et al. (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW3</td>
<td>I pay attention to some social issues involving firm’s charitable donations.</td>
<td>Perez and Rodriguez del Bosque (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW4</td>
<td>I think IKEA is sincerely contributing to society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust of CSR</td>
<td>TR1</td>
<td>I believe that IKEA has the ability to deliver what it promises.</td>
<td>Newell and Goldsmith (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR2</td>
<td>I believe IKEA is selling green products.</td>
<td>Erdem and Swait (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR3</td>
<td>I believe that IKEA is a brand with a good reputation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR4</td>
<td>I believe IKEA’s socially responsible practices make substantial contributions to society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Evaluation</td>
<td>CE1</td>
<td>I have a more positive evaluation of IKEA because of its high level of corporate responsibility.</td>
<td>Ellen et al., (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CE2</td>
<td>I think that IKEA is a trustworthy corporation.</td>
<td>Mohr and Webb (2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.5 Choice of Statistical Tests

To analyze the collected data, SPSS statistical software was used as follows:

1) Cleaned the data and ran descriptive statistics.
2) In order to test the reliability of each factor, we used Chronbach’s alpha test.
3) In order to test the construct validity of each item, we used Factor Analysis.
4) We tested our hypotheses with three regression models.
4. Results and Analysis

First, we will show the results of the qualitative research. Next, we will show the results of quantitative research covering sample profile, reliability analysis, factor analysis, linear regression, and hypothesis testing.

4.1 Result of Qualitative research

Through the interview process, we obtained a deeper understanding of the constructs of our research model and found some common features regarding Chinese consumer response to CSR.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Codified Name</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>Phd.</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>M2</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M3</td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>M4</td>
<td>Phd.</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M5</td>
<td>Phd.</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>2017/5/9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1 Perceived CSR

First, the perception of IKEA’s CSR was evaluated. The eight Chinese respondents were aware of the corporation’s CSR record. Four respondents were greatly aware of IKEA’s ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. For instance, they were aware that IKEA was concerned about sourcing wood and paper materials in an environmentally friendly way. IKEA uses wood that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC-Certified). IKEA also donates money to support education efforts for children across the world. These efforts contribute to a good corporation evaluation, but the respondents said knowing about these efforts did not affect purchasing decisions.

4.1.2 Awareness of CSR

All Chinese respondents showed strong awareness of CSR in daily consumption. First of all, the respondents said that they would like to purchase green products. One respondent said, “When I purchased the product I was particularly concerned, checking
the composition of the goods, trying to avoid the purchase of environmentally harmful materials.” Second, eight respondents expressed that they preferred paper bags instead of plastic bags. *When I shopping and I found the paper package showing the recycling mark. Then, I was glad to purchase it since I could see the corporation made a good contribution to society.*

4.1.3 Trust of CSR
For all the respondents, quality and after sales service are considered as two important factors to increase the trust in a corporation. When consumers perceived good quality and excellent service from a corporation, they were more willing to trust this corporation and made decision to buy the products. One respondent said, “When I went shopping and I would like to change cabinet for the kitchen, I found that IKEA could provide twenty years of warranty. I immediately trust this corporation much. I did not hesitate to choose it.”

4.1.4 Corporate Evaluations
Respondents’ corporate evaluation was affected by the perceived CSR, trust of CSR, and awareness of CSR. The eight respondents agreed a socially responsible corporation would be valued, leading to more positive responses.

4.1.5 Purchase Intention
For purchase intention, there were differences in the opinions of the eight respondents. They all agreed that they would buy the same quality product. However, they made different choices as to whether they were willing to pay a higher price to buy products from a socially responsible corporation. Four respondents said they were willing to spend more money to buy it, and four said they would not pay more. This choice depended on how much higher the price would be, and only a small price difference of 10% was considered acceptable.

4.2 Consumer Characteristics
Table 4 presents the description of consumers’ characteristics and the following part analyzes each demographic variable.
4.2.1 Age
As shown in the table, our largest group of respondents were from 31 to 40 years of age. This may mean people of this age group are more interested in this topic and are therefore more willing to answer. Only one person older than 60 completed the questionnaire, and there were no respondent 51-60 years of age. There is an unbalanced distribution among different age groups. Because our survey focuses on IKEA, a furniture corporation targeting young families, we believe that the data are still valid.

4.2.2 Gender
In the 195 samples, there were 74 males, accounting for 37.95% of all respondents, and 121 females, which accounts for 62.05%.

4.2.3 Income (Yuan/Month)
According to the results, 33.33% respondents have 10000-20000 RMB salary. People of middle class or above cared more about the CSR and have more purchase intention on buying products from corporations with higher CSR in China. Respondents with salaries lower than 3000 were considered students. These students may care about CSR issues, but they cannot do much about it.

4.2.4 Education
For education level, most respondents have a master degree (46.15%) and 37.95% respondents have a bachelor degree. Twenty-three respondents (11.79%) have junior college education. 7 respondents have PhD or higher degree, 3.59%. This indicates that most highly educated people care about the CSR of corporations and have higher purchase intention on products from corporations with higher CSR in China.
## Table 5 Demographics details of the questionnaire (n=195)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td></td>
<td>93</td>
<td>47.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;60</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>121</td>
<td>62.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Yuan/ Month)</td>
<td>&lt;3000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3000-5000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5000-8000</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8000-10000</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10000-20000</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20000-50000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;50000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior college</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHD and above</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Reliability Analysis

In order to examine the reliability of all scales in this study, we used SPSS Statistics 24 software to do the Reliability Test. “Cronbach’s Alpha is the most commonly used statistic to measure internal consistency reliability of a scale” (Pallant, 2016, p.101). “The value is between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating no internal consistency and 1 perfect internal consistency reliability” (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.164). “The value above 0.7 means acceptable, while the value above 0.8 means preferable” (Pallant, 2016, p.104).
“It the value is less than 0.7, perhaps you may need to remove items with low item-total correlations” (Pallant, 2016, p.104).

Corrected Item-Total Correlation values “give you an indication of the degree to which each item correlates with the total score” (Pallant, 2016, p.104). “Lower value which is less than 0.3 means that the item is something different from the scale as a whole” (Pallant, 2016, p.104). Table 6 shows the reliability test results of this study.

All corrected item-total correlation values are positive and greater than 0.3. All the items correlate well with the total score. All the values of Cronbach’s alpha are above 0.8, except AW 2 (0.793), AW 4 (0.757), CE 2 (0.797), and PI 2 (0.795). Thus, almost all items indicate good internal consistency reliability in this sample and efficient internal reliability of all measurement items.

4.4 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is considered as a “data reduction” technique that “takes a large set of variables and to find a way to reduce or summarize the data by using a smaller set of factors or components” (Pallant, 2016, p.182).

According to the established construct validity, the principle components analysis is done with varimax rotation. After inputting all variables, the KMO of sphericity is 0.925, indicating excellent data for the analysis. The factor loadings combined with the reliability analysis provide good evidence for the construct validity of the scales. For the purposes of testing the hypotheses, we can now consider the indicators of each factor.
Table 6 The Results of the Reliability Test & Factor Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>Factor Loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived CSR</td>
<td>PCSR 1</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCSR 2</td>
<td>0.845</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PCSR 3</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW 1</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of CSR</td>
<td>AW 2</td>
<td>0.793</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW 3</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td>0.849</td>
<td>0.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AW 4</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 1</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust of CSR</td>
<td>TR 2</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 3</td>
<td>0.867</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TR 4</td>
<td>0.880</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Evaluation</td>
<td>CE 1</td>
<td>0.894</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CE 2</td>
<td>0.797</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CE 3</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI 1</td>
<td>0.825</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase Intention</td>
<td>PI 2</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI 3</td>
<td>0.819</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PI 4</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Hypotheses Testing

As presented in Chapter 2, our study has six hypotheses. We will use linear regression to examine these hypothesized relationships, as shown in Table 1 and Figure 3. Regression analysis is “a statistical method for studying or evaluating the relationship between one or more independent variables and a single dependent variable” (Pallant, 2016, p.149). We can get the standardized path coefficient, t-value and significance level of each hypothesis. “The higher standard coefficient the independent variable has, the bigger effect on the dependent variable has” (Pallant, 2016, p.149). “The p-value is
lower than 0.05 at 95% confidential interval, which means that the independent variable has a statistically significant effect on dependent variable” (Studenmund, 2006, p.129), while t-value which is higher 1.96 at 95% confidential interval and a sample over 100 shows that the independent variable has a statistically significant effect on dependent (Pallant, 2016).

4.5.1 Linear Regression

Simple regression is used to examine the relationship between on dependent variable and one independent variable. From the model and hypotheses of theoretical part, all hypotheses except the third one (H3) are all proposed to test multiple relationships. Therefore, we will use linear simple regression to test the relationship between perceived CSR and the trust of CSR. The Figure 4 shows the result of linear simple regression of Hypotheses 3: A higher level of consumer perceived CSR leads to higher level of consumer trust.

![Linear Simple Regression Analysis](image)

In the data shown in the above figure, the dependent variable is Trust of CSR and the independent variable is Perceived CSR. We can see from the table that Beta is 0.750,
t-value | is 15.761, and the p-value is 0.000<0.05. In this study, the R Square value is 0.563, which means that our model explains 56.3% of the variance, and the F stats/sig is 248.397 and 0.000. Therefore, Perceived CSR is positively and significantly related to Trust of CSR, and H3 is supported.

4.5.2 Linear Multiple Regression

Multiple Regression is “used to explore the relationship between one dependent variable and a set of independent variables” (Pallant, 2016, p.149). It indicates “how well a set of variables is able to predict a particular outcome” (Pallant, 2016, p.150). Next, linear multiple regression was used for the two models to test the relationship between the three factors (Perceived CSR, Trust of CSR, and Awareness of CSR) and Consumer Response (Corporation Evaluation and Purchase Intention). The standardized coefficient, t-value, and p-value from regression will help us to analyze and predict the hypotheses. The three factors are independent variables and Corporation Evaluation and Purchase Intention are the dependent variables.

Control Variables

The consumer demographic variables are control variables used so that the beta estimates for the CSR factors are unbiased. First, we check to see if they are significant. If not, we can remove them from further analyses.

![Coefficients](image)

Figure 5 The Result of H5

From the above figure of coefficients, we can see that none of the control variables are significant, so they will be left out of any further analysis of Corporate Evaluation.
From the data shown in the above figure, we can see that the only significant control variable is age (sig. = .038), indicating we should keep it for further analysis of Purchase Intention. However, when we ran the model with the main factors and only age (not shown), the age became insignificant, and we removed it from any further analyses.

In conclusion, none of the control variables were significant, so they were all removed.

**Corporate Evaluation**

In this study, the R Square value is 0.854, which means that our model explains 85.4% of the variance in Corporation Evaluation, and the F stats/sig is 371.006 / 0.000. The R Square is good for the model.
of CSR, Awareness of CSR, and Corporate Evaluation. A higher level of Perceived CSR (Beta=0.251, \( |t-value| = 5.017 > 1.96; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05 \)) and Trust of CSR (Beta =0.112, \( |t-value| = 2.336 > 1.96; p-value = 0.021 < 0.05 \)) and Awareness of CSR (Beta =0.613, \( |t-value| = 11.155 > 1.96; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05 \)) leads to a higher level of corporate evaluation, supporting H1a and H2a and H4a.

As shown in Figure 9, the R Square value is 0.433, which means that our model explains 43.3% of the variance in Purchase Intention, and the F stats/sig is 48.597 / 0.000. The previous R Square value was not as good for the model.

Hypothesis 1b and 2b test the relationship between Perceived CSR, Trust of CSR, Awareness of CSR, and Purchase Intention. A higher level of Trust of CSR (Beta =0.470, \( |t-value| = 4.982 > 1.96; p-value = 0.000 < 0.05 \)) and Awareness of CSR (Beta =0.252, \( |t-value| = 2.334 > 1.96; p-value = 0.021 < 0.05 \)) leads to a higher level of corporate
evaluation, supporting H2b and H4b. According to the data presented in Figure 8, Perceived CSR (Beta=-0.038, |t-value|=0.387<1.96; p-value=0.699>0.05) was not significant, and the analysis cannot support H1b.

Table 7 H1b & H2b &H4b results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>2.356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived CSR</td>
<td>-0.035</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust of CSR</td>
<td>.431</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of CSR</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

4.6 Summary of Results

To summarize the results mentioned above, we can consider that our 195 questionnaires are valid data. The summary of multiple regression for our hypotheses test is shown in Table 8 and Figure 10.

Table 8 The result summary of hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Test Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1-a</td>
<td>Perceived CSR → Corporate Evaluation (CE)</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H1-b</td>
<td>Perceived CSR → Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>Not Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2-a</td>
<td>Trust of CSR → Corporate Evaluation (CE)</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2-b</td>
<td>Trust of CSR → Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>Perceived CSR → Trust of CSR</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4-a</td>
<td>Awareness of CSR → Corporate Evaluation (CE)</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4-b</td>
<td>Awareness of CSR → Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>Consumer Demographic → Corporate Evaluation (CE)</td>
<td>Not Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H6</td>
<td>Consumer Demographic → Purchase Intention (PI)</td>
<td>Not Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10 The summary of the results
5. Discussion

In this section, we discuss the main CSR factors influencing Chinese consumer response based on the CSR model of Chapter 2. Based on literature review and individual interview research, we proposed 6 hypotheses before collecting data through online questionnaires. We tested the proposed model with SPSS. The findings strongly indicated that Trust of CSR and Awareness of CSR have strong positive effects on Corporate Evaluation and Purchase Intention. Perceived CSR affected Corporate Evaluation, but was not a driving factor of Purchase Intention. In addition, consumer demographics did not appear to affect consumer response.

5.1 Perceived CSR and Consumer Response

According to the literature review and the results elaborated in the previous chapter, Consumer-Perceived CSR had a positive and significant effect on consumer Corporate Evaluation. The data from the 195 surveys supported the idea that CSR actions increase the positive evaluation of. Brown and Dacin (1997) also reported a direct and explicit effect of a corporation’s CSR activities on consumer’s evaluations of the corporation and its products. Significant CSR efforts result in a positive attitude towards a company (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). The perceived CSR helps consumers learn more about a corporation and the valuable results of the corporation’s efforts to improve society.

Furthermore, all respondents expressed a desire for more accessible information about the social responsibility records of corporations. For example, many respondents reported that it was hard to find information about company CSR activities. If consumers could more easily learn details about the company’s CSR efforts, they would likely develop a more positive view of the company.

In addition, the results of our research contradict previous research showing a positive relationship between Perceived CSR and Purchase Intention (Ellen et al., 2006). This is a little different from our initial hypothesis. Regarding consumers’ Perceived CSR, it is not a direct relationship that contributes to Purchase Intention. One respondent stated that “even though I perceived the fact that it was an ethical company which was conducting CSR practices, it was not enough to influence my purchase intention. I needed to also think of more key factors such price and function and trust for product.”
Therefore, corporations need to know CSR is important but not sufficient to influence consumer purchase intention.

5.2 Trust of CSR and Consumer Response

According to the regression analysis, consumers’ Trust of CSR has a positive effect on consumer response, supporting our hypotheses. Tian et al., (2011) claimed that companies conducting CSR activities would benefit from making consumers aware of their CSR commitment. For instance, when consumers find that a company has a commitment to deliver what has been promised and a commitment to CSR, then the consumers will have a high evaluation of the company. The findings of this study are also consistent with the findings of previous studies e.g. Kenning (2008), that general trust has positive effects on buying behavior and corporate evaluation. Underlying causes, such as increased loyalty and increased reputation are also related to trust, and have been described previously.

Based on the results of our research, Trust of CSR is related to product quality, the primary standard considered by consumers. One interviewee said: *I trust IKEA since it could provide green furniture products in China. The material information was credible and real in the product catalogue. I learned that they had strict quality control systems. It increased the sense of security for me. It was my first brand choice for purchasing furniture.* Therefore, product quality plays a crucial role for consumers to evaluate a company, leading to positive Purchase Intention. A corporation also develops CSR programs to benefit environmental sustainability. For instance, more and more companies recycle products for second use. This not only protects the environment, but it also enhances the corporation's reputation. In this way, consumers have a positive response towards Corporate Evaluation and Purchase Intention.

Although trust plays a key role when judging a corporation, trust is vulnerable to a variety of destructive threats, including negative media exposure. As described earlier, the IKEA scandal negatively affecting the trust of this company China. Overall, trust must be carefully managed by the corporation.

5.3 Awareness of CSR and Consumer Response

Our results show that Awareness of CSR plays a significant and important role in the
evaluation of a company and consumer purchase intention. A low awareness of CSR activities among consumers will lead to a low effect of CSR initiatives, directly influencing Purchase Intention and Corporate Evaluation. This has prompted several researchers (for example, Maignan, 2001; Mohr et al., 2001) to call for the careful evaluation of CSR awareness among consumers. Our findings verify our hypotheses that CSR activities can lead to positive effect on consumer response.

The qualitative research of our study provided insights into the CSR awareness of eight consumers. These interviewees were well aware of IKEA’s efforts to show responsibility towards society and the environment. Most interviewees cared about ethical issues, and they were concerned about whether a corporation was conducting CSR activities and related these efforts to the corporation’s ethical conduct. This implies that consumers seek “good” CSR activities, and they intend to buy products from “good” and “ethical” companies.

Corporations should advertise and promote their ethical and moral activities. Furthermore, they can invite consumers to join their efforts. There was a very famous public welfare advertisement from Taobao corporation. When consumers purchased children’s furniture online, Taobao would donate 5% of the product price to support children from poor areas such as Guangxi Province and Yunnan Province of China. This was a good way to improve consumer awareness of CSR efforts by this company. It communicated that Taobao’s CSR program helps society. In response, sales were greatly increased online. Meanwhile, Taobao also received good comments from many consumers online. More consumers were aware of the program, showing a positive effect on corporate evaluation and purchase intention.

5.4 Consumer Demographics and Consumer Response

None of the demographic control variables were significant, so H5 and H6 are not supported and they were removed from further analysis.
6. Conclusion

This chapter is a summary of the study and the results. Based on the theoretical review and the results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis, we organized this chapter into 4 parts: summary, managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

6.1 Summary

In recent years, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been discussed from the academic and practical perspective (Lee et al., 2012) in marketing strategy and corporate strategy (Thompson et al., 2013). This research explores factors that influence Chinese consumer response in terms of CSR. Although many corporations engage in CSR activities, they should think carefully about the way they do pursue these activities and how well they communicate these efforts to consumers.

We used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. First, we conducted individual interviews of 8 people as a pilot test to verify the first version of the proposed research model. To better explain our model and get more detailed results, we used an online questionnaire. Through a total number of 195 surveys collected within one and a half weeks, we analyzed the relationship between consumer response (Corporate Evaluation and Purchase Intention) and Perceived CSR, Trust of CSR, and Awareness of CSR. The results showed that Trust of CSR and Awareness of CSR are significant independent influencing factors. Perceived CSR significantly influenced Corporate Evaluation, but showed no significant relationship with Purchase Intention. Finally, the results of this study indicated that the relationship between consumer demographics and CSR response was not significant.

The results of the study showed that Chinese consumers are concerned about the consequences and the sustainability of CSR. CSR strategy, as a relatively new marketing function in China, should be used and communicated by carefully considering consumer characteristics.

6.2 Managerial Implications

According to our analysis and results, this report supported the previous finding that
CSR activities are still in the early stage in China (Gao, 2008). Our results indicate that Trust of CSR has a significant influence on Chinese consumer response. So, we suggest that managers build CSR strategy by building trust with consumers and making a contribution to society.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an important dimension. Ethical business decisions such as protecting and improving human rights, striving for sustainable production, and participating in charitable activities are important corporate activities. Managers should develop marketing strategies to educate consumers about a corporation’s CSR efforts. Our results show that Perceived CSR has no significant influence on Purchasing Intention. To increase the Perceived CSR, corporations should promote CSR activities and green products through Weibo and other social media to reach consumers. Corporations could gather consumer fans to formulate word-of-mouth effects in order to stimulate potential Purchasing Intention and to increase market sales.

Corporations should inform consumers of their CSR activities and meet consumer expectations. In general, the Awareness of the CSR of Chinese consumers is now growing, and the overall level of CSR awareness of the interviewees was quite high. Therefore, corporations should pay attention to CSR efforts and the expectations of consumers. Dishonest pricing, false advertising, failure to recall bad-quality products, and so on can be big risks for corporations. IKEA is a good example. Companies need to be proactive with their CSR to avoid a negative reputation.

Finally, we recommend that corporations should combine good quality and service of selling when conducting CSR activities. Our results show that quality of product is a key factor and has a big effect on Purchase Intention and Corporate Evaluation.

6.3 Limitations
This study discovered main CSR factors influencing Chinese consumer response. However, there are some limitations of this work, summarized as below.

First of all, we built a CSR model to identify the main CSR factors. From the results of our study, some positive relationships were supported between trust, awareness of CSR,
and consumer response. This study focused more on the identification of the main factors and their relationships, and future studies are required to determine the underlying basis of these relationships.

Second, the snowball sampling method allowed us to obtain a fairly large sample. However, this method could be biased, because there is no randomness and insufficient control over who responded. The qualitative research approach provided more detailed ideas of different people, but the limit of this method is that respondents may be influenced by the researchers. The characteristics of these eight respondents may have some similarities with those of the authors. Although we tried to find respondents of different ages and different educational backgrounds, this limitation remains. In addition, we collected data from furniture industry consumers, which can also be considered as a limitation of this study. In future research, more industries should be included.

6.4. Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined the relationships between Perceived CSR, Trust of CSR, and Awareness of CSR, as well as the effects of consumer demographics and consumer response. For future research, there are two suggestions to expand on this work and to address previous limitations.

First, there are also other potential factors, such as product catalogues and brand preferences that may be factors influencing consumer response to CSR. Consumer response to CSR will be inevitably influenced by the brand preference of a specific firm. Therefore, how CSR activities impact consumers in different stages of consumer brand recognition needs to be studied.

Secondly, researchers need to expand CSR research to include studies in other countries and cultures. CSR may be context-specific, and conclusions based on Western research may not be true in other cultures.
Reference


Mcallister, D.J. (1995). Affect and cognition based trust as foundations for interpersonal


Zhu, Y., Sun, L. and Leung, A. (2013). Corporate social responsibility, firm reputation,
Appendix 1   Interview (English)

Interview Guide

1. Stories and Experience Share
Q1: Can you list some import MNCS corporation name you think of good reputation? Do you go shopping to IKEA? How often? What does IKEA attract you?
Q2: Did you hear about the drawer scandal of IKEA? Does it change your idea on this company? If yes, Please specific it.

2. Perceived CSR
Q3: Do you agree that IKEA has good Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) record? If yes, Please specific it.
Q4: How would you define corporate social responsibly (CSR) in your opinion? Do you agree corporate social responsibility express a situation in which firms not only strive for economic profits? If Yes, Please specific it.

3. Awareness of CSR
Q5: Do you care about environmental protection in the daily consumption? If yes, Please specific it.
Q6: Do you usually pay attention to corporation’s some social issues involving firm’s charitable donations? If yes, Please specific it.

4. Trust of CSR
Q7: Look back to your shopping experience, what are the factors that you will take into consideration in order to judge if the corporation is trustworthy?

5. Corporate Evaluation
Q8: What kind of factors which are impact the evaluation of corporation from your view? Do you think the involvement in social responsible activity would be are positively impact the evaluation of corporation? If yes, Please specific it.

6. Purchase Intention
Q9: Will you prefer to buy from the firm that has a socially responsible reputation if the price and quality of two products are the same? If yes, Please specific it.
Q10: Will you pay more to buy the products from a socially responsible corporation?
If yes, please specify it.

(We want you to help us evaluate this research. We want to know how to improve our research.)
Appendix 2  Interview (Chinese)

Interview Guide

大家好，我们正在进行关于中国消费者对于企业社会责任的反应的课题研究。非常诚挚的感谢您作为我们的调查对象。

1. 介绍故事与经验的分享

Q1: 请介绍一下在你心目中声誉比较好的家居行业跨国企业的名字。你喜欢去宜家购物吗，频率多少？宜家吸引你的地方有哪些？
Q2: 你听说过 IKEA 的抽屉案件丑闻吗？负面消息是否会影响你对 IKEA 的看法的改变？如果有改变，请具体描述。

2. 企业社会责任的感知

Q3: 宜家（IKEA）的企业具备良好的公司社会责任记录，你是否同意？
Q4: 请用你自己的观点定义企业社会责任。你是否同意企业的社会责任传递的不仅仅只是企业单纯的追求经济利润？如果同意此观点，请具体描述。

3. 企业社会责任的意识

Q5: 每天的日常消费生活中，你是否关心环境保护这个问题？如果同意，请具体描述
Q6: 你经常关注公司涉及到慈善活动吗？如果关注，请具体描述

4. 企业社会责任的信任度

Q7: 回顾你的购物经验，哪种因素会被考虑去评估公司是否具备诚信？（比方说三聚氰胺的事情，哪怕那个公司哪天东山再起了，你还会买吗？）

5. 公司评价

Q8: 哪种因素会影响你对公司的整体评估？你认为社会活动是否对公司评估有正面的影响？如果同意，请具体描述。

6. 消费者购买意愿

Q9: 在同等质量和价格的产品选择中，你更愿意去买有好的社会责任感和美誉的
产品吗？如果是，请具体描述。

Q10: 你是否愿意花更多的钱去购买具备社会责任感公司的产品？如果愿意，请具体描述。
Appendix 3 Questionnaire (English)

Questionnaire for Chinese consumer response to CSR in China.

Hello everyone,

This questionnaire is designed to research Chinese consumer response regard to CSR behavior corporation in the Chinese market.

Thank you for your cooperation!

Part 1 Personal Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>☐ Male</th>
<th>☐ Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your age?</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your education?</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency on shopping furniture in the past 6 months?</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your monthly income (before tax)?</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 2 In this part, we would like to know how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each question, there are seven options from 1 to 7.

Please choose one option when you answer these questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about your responses to corporate social responsibility (CSR)</th>
<th>Strong disagree ——— Strong agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that IKEA is a socially responsible company.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that IKEA abides by good moral principle in conducting business.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel IKEA is an ethical business when I shop there.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about environmental protection in the daily consumption.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that corporations such as IKEA play responsible roles in society.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I pay attention to some social issues involving firm’s charitable donations.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think IKEA is sincerely contributing to society.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that IKEA has the ability to deliver what it promises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe IKEA is selling green products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that IKEA is a brand with good reputation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe IKEA socially responsible practices make substantial contributions to society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a more positive evaluation of IKEA because of its high level of corporate responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that IKEA is a trustworthy corporation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think IKEA is a successful corporation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will purchase a product because the company pays attention to charity activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would pay more to buy products from a socially responsible company.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the price and quality of two products are the same, I would buy from the firm that has a socially responsible reputation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will return to again purchase a product if the company has strong society responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3   Questionnaire (Chinese)

*Questionnaire for Chinese consumer response to CSR in China.*

大家好，我们想请大家帮忙做一下我们硕士毕业论文的调查问卷。这份调查问卷是关于中国消费者对跨国公司企业社会责任行为的反应。第一部分包括您的个人背景问题；第二部分是关于中国消费者对跨国公司企业社会责任行为的反应的问题。

谢谢您的参与！

第一部分 个人背景

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>您的性别</th>
<th>□ 男   □ 女</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>您的年龄</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>您的教育程度</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>您购买家具的频率（近六个月）</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>您的税前月收入</td>
<td>__________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

第二部分 在这个部分，我们想知道您对一下陈述的赞同和不赞同程度。每个问题有 7 个选项（从 1 到 7,1 代表不赞同，7 代表非常赞同），请您在回答问题时选择一个选项。

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>中国消费者对跨国公司企业社会责任行为反应问题</th>
<th>非常不赞同</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>非常赞同</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>我感觉宜家（IKEA）是一个具备良好的企业社会责任感的公司。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我感觉宜家（IKEA）遵循着商业道德规则。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>当我在宜家（IKEA）购物的时候，我能感受到它的商业道德声誉。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>在日常消费中，我关注环境保护问题。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>我能看到宜家（IKEA）负有社会责任感，并超越了他们的经济利益。</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
我会关注涉及到企业慈善捐款的社会问题。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我认为宜家（IKEA）正在真诚地致力于为社会做出贡献。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我相信宜家（IKEA）有能力履行承诺。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我相信宜家销售的是绿色环保产品。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我相信宜家（IKEA）是一个具备美誉的品牌。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我相信宜家（IKEA）的社会责任的实践，对社会做出重大的贡献。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我对宜家（IKEA）有较高的企业社会责任感做出积极的评价。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我认为宜家（IKEA）是值得信赖的公司。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我认为宜家（IKEA）是一个成功企业。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我相信我将购买关注慈善事业公司的产品。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
对于来自于企业社会责任感很强的公司的产品，我愿意支付更多的钱去购买。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
对于同样的价格和质量相同的产品，我更愿意购买具备企业社会责任感美誉的产品。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  
我愿意再次购买具备良好企业社会责任感公司的产品。  ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐  