

FIT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ATTRIBUTION IN A
PRODUCT-HARM CRISIS:
AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY IN CRISIS COMMUNICATION

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS IN MASS COMMUNICATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2012

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To my beloved family and friends for lighting up my world

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Mary Ann Ferguson, for her endless patience and for reviewing my work in minute detail. Through her profound knowledge of corporate social responsibility and public relations ethics, she could always offer me insightful suggestions, valuable inspiration, and guidance. I am truly grateful for all her help. I also want to thank my committee members Dr. Spiro Kioulos and Dr. Linda Hon, for providing valuable advice and inspirational guidance on my study and for challenging me to improve my work to a higher level.

Secondly, I would like to thank my amazing friends for their support. Without them, I certainly wouldn't be where I am now. Thank you Todd Holmes, for helping me disseminate my questionnaire and giving me valuable suggestions when I was lost. I also want to give special thanks to my dear roommate, Yin-Hsuen Chen, who encouraged me when I was depressed and provided me with delicious food when I was too busy to cook. Thanks to my sweet friends Guangfan Hu and Jing-Yi Huang. I will always remember the days we laughed and cried while writing theses and we encouraged each other. Moreover, I would like to give special thanks to my lovely friends in Taiwan: Pei-Hsuan Tsai, Yi-Hsuein Yang, and Tzu-Chun Lin. Thank you for being there for me when I was homesick and needed friends to talk to. I would not have survived without you guys.

Most of all, I would like to thank my parents for making my dreams come true. They loved me with all their hearts; it was their ever-lasting love and faith gave me the strength to take each necessary step while pursuing my masters. I will always love them

with my whole hearts. In particular, thank you, dad, for giving me much more than I needed. I hope I've made you proud.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Mass Communication

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COMMUNICATION

By

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August 2012

Chair: Mary Ann Ferguson
Major: Mass Communication

There is a growing body of academic research on the importance of integrating corporate social responsibility (CSR) with a company's core business, which is also known as fit of CSR. However, little empirically validated knowledge has been established regarding the causal relationship between fit of CSR and a product-harm crisis, which are two important factors that can affect consumers' corporate evaluations and purchase intentions. The purpose of the study is to understand the interaction between fit of CSR with product-harm crises by using the controllability and locus dimensions of attribution theory as a theoretical framework that will shed light on how consumers' perceptions of a crisis impacts their evaluation of a company as well as their subsequent purchase intention.

Using an experimental design, this study demonstrated that there was no three way interaction among fit of CSR, controllability, and locus. However, there appears to be two way interactions between corporate evaluation for fit of CSR and controllability as well as locus and controllability. The results also demonstrated that under high fit of

CSR, an internal, controllable product-harm crisis may generate lower positive purchase intention than an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis. In addition, the direct impact of the responsibility a company holds for a product-harm crisis was significantly related to corporate evaluation as well as affecting subsequent purchase intention. Finally, the practical implications for both academic and empirical studies were provided along with future research suggestions.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a long history in the business industry. Practicing CSR is considered one of the most effective methods to demonstrate corporate ideology and fuel two-way communication with stakeholders (David, Kline, & Dai, 2005). Conducting CSR is also one of the best ways to build and maintain long-term relationships with stakeholders (Sen, Bhattacharya, and Korschun, 2006). In order to be perceived as socially responsible, a corporation must devote great effort each year to different CSR programs such as cause promotions, cause-related marketing, corporate social marketing, corporate philanthropy and socially responsible business practices (Kotler and Lee 2005).

According to Ledinghan and Bruning (2000), it is the public relations practitioner's domain to maintain relationships between an organization and its target audience. Consequently, building an organization's reputation and maintaining relationships with the key publics can be done through CSR programs initiated and overseen by public relations practitioners. Having a good reputation can make the corporation more favorable and more likely to be viewed as trustworthy (Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen, 2010). Unfortunately, doing good does not necessarily keep the corporation prosperous indefinitely. Unexpected situations, more commonly referred to as crises, might occur and challenge a corporation's reputation and reliability. "A sterling reputation benefits the company with goodwill, but it also means that consumers will have high expectations for the company to act appropriately in a time of crisis to discharge its social responsibility" (Dean, 2004, p.208). Therefore, the best measure of whether a

corporation is responsible for its actions can often be the way it handles the crisis situations.

A crisis is defined by Coombs as “the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (2007, p.2). Since negative consequences generated from the crisis may be permanent and difficult to repair, it is important to understand what solutions could reduce the damaging effects of a crisis. Stakeholders tend to seek blame in unexpected crises. This phenomenon is considered by attribution theory, which is a cognitive perception positing that the responsibility for a crisis will affect stakeholders’ behavior toward the corporation (Coombs & Holladay, 2005).

In the field of crisis communication, many researchers recommend valuable strategies after a crisis that may decrease the probability of a crisis taking place, including the launching of a CSR program. However, little empirically validated knowledge has been established regarding the causal relationship between certain aspects of CSR and product-related crises. As a result, this study focused on the impact of product-related CSR prior to a crisis on a subsequent product-harm crisis. To be more specific, this study tried to sort out consumer attitudes towards a company’s product-related corporate social responsibility, and then observe the impact of a product-harm crisis on consumer perception of the company. Furthermore, this study examined how consumer perception of a company affects product purchase intention, which has a direct impact on corporate financial success.

This research is important to the field of public relations because it uses a theoretical base to examine the practical issue of CSR and crises. Unlike prior studies, this study pointed out an interaction between fit of CSR and a crisis. Other research has already shown that CSR does have an impact on company crises; it may make the crises less traumatic (Argandona, 2009). In the field of public relations “CSR initiatives have been long considered to build up a bank of stakeholder goodwill that companies can draw against in a crisis” (McDonald, 2006, p.1369). Similarly Klein and Dawar (2004) stated that “CSR is like an insurance policy that is there when you need it” (p.215). However, less research has investigated which type of insurance policy is the most effective when it comes to product-harm crisis. Therefore, this study compared the effectiveness of different CSR efforts, in different attributions, for a product-harm crisis.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

CSR

CSR in the Business World

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a long history in the business industry and has continued to show its significance both professionally and academically. To be more specific, the idea that a corporation could show responsibility to society and bring more than profit to the stakeholders did not appear until the 1960s (Carroll & Shabana, 2010).

In 1967, a book written by Clarence C. Walton titled *Corporate Social Responsibilities* addressed the connection between the role of the business firm and the businessperson in modern society. This pioneer thinker defined CSR with a public relations perspective by emphasizing the relationship between the corporation and the stakeholders:

In short, the new concept of social responsibility recognizes the intimacy of the relationships between the corporation and society and realizes that such relationships must be kept in mind by top managers as the corporation and the related groups pursue their respective goals. (Walton, 1967, p. 18)

Walton mentioned the fundamental spirit of corporations' social responsibility in his elaboration with a degree of volunteerism. In other words, coercion is prohibited for the corporation when practicing social responsibility. And the rewards resulting from the process of building relationships with society may not be possible to measure in economic returns (Walton, 1967).

In 1971, Harold Johnson brought a noteworthy concept of CSR in his *Business in Contemporary Society: Framework and Issues*: "A socially responsible firm is one whose managerial staff balances a multiplicity of interests. Instead of striving only for

larger profits for its stockholders, a responsible enterprise also takes into account employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities, and the nation” (p.50). Johnson posited the idea of different interests for several specific groups and gave a hint of taking a stakeholders’ approach. This was very important progress for the field of business and especially for public relations, because no matter what the practice is, defining the target audience is always the first step.

In the same year the Committee for Economic Development (CED), which is composed of business people and educators (Carroll, 1999), introduced another significant CSR concept. The noteworthy change in CSR was stated in *Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations*, published by CED in 1971:

Business is being asked to assume broader responsibilities to society than ever before and to serve a wider range of human values. Business enterprises, in effect, are being asked to contribute more to the quality of American life than just supplying quantities of goods and services. Inasmuch as business exists to serve society, its future will depend on the quality of management’s response to the changing expectations of the public. (p.16)

Carroll pointed out that the CED’s work reflects opinions from practitioners in the field of business about the changing contract between business and society and the newly emerging social responsibility

In addition, Carroll’s (1999) four different categories for CSR are widely used in the field of business and management and have been successfully utilized for research purposes over 25 years (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Carroll (1999) revisited his earlier four-part CSR definition and added a reference to the discretionary component as philanthropic; furthermore, he embraced the concept of “corporate citizenship” by saying:

For CSR to be accepted by the conscientious business person, it should be framed in such a way that the entire range of business responsibilities is embraced. It is suggested here that four kinds of social responsibilities constitute total CSR: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic. Furthermore, these four categories or components of CSR might be depicted as a pyramid. To be sure, all of these kinds of responsibilities have always existed to some extent, but it has only been in recent years that ethical and philanthropic functions have taken a significant place. (p.40)

Carroll explained CSR by using a pyramid graphic. The foundation is the economic category and others built upward through legal, ethical, and philanthropic categories (Carroll, 1999). This CSR pyramid is based on the business model; therefore, the economy serves as the essential base of the whole. Without successful economics business would not exist. At the same time, business is expected to obey the laws because law maintains the basic order of social norms. Moreover, companies should behave ethically. It is their obligation to understand what right and fair means and to minimize harm to stakeholders. Lastly, a company is expected to be a good firm because they have the power to practice social change. They are expected to improve quality of life by contributing financial support and human resources. It is necessary to understand that all four categories should be fulfilled at the same time to serve the best practice of CSR (Carroll, 1991).

Even now, there is still no consensus for the perfect definition for CSR. Knowledge of CSR is a collective observation from the foremost thinkers of different periods. Nevertheless, the concept of CSR is part of business language and practice by the practitioners because it is the fundamental component of other theories and is consistent with what the public expects of the business community (Carroll, 1999).

There is no doubt that CSR appears to have a positive relationship with corporate financial performance. In other words, the cause a company supports will influence its

sustainability among consumers (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Cochran & Wood, 1984). Corporations are active in CSR not only because it can be a powerful and positive in social change, but primarily due to the multi-faceted business returns that can potentially be gained from CSR endeavors (Du, et al., 2010). A study conducted by Cone (2007) from marketplace polls shows that key stakeholders are more likely to take action to give favor to a corporation that is responsible. Stakeholders will consider switching to another company because of a company's negative corporate responsibility practice, or will even go so far as to boycott its product or services.

The cognitive and affective (e.g., attitude, identification, beliefs) impact which CSR has on stakeholders has strong academic research support (Ellen et al., 2000; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001; Sen et al., 2006). The benefits which industry will gain from practicing CSR can be shown in increased consumer sales, enhanced reputation among the stakeholders, and stronger loyalty and retention among employees (Moir, 2001). Moreover, one of the best advantages CSR brings is that it may also decrease harm and retain stakeholders' loyalty during product-harm crises (Klein & Dawar, 2004)

CSR Business-Oriented

A company's CSR practices are usually combined with its corporate ideology which is not only an essential and enduring facet, but also distinctive by virtue of its idiosyncratic base (Du, et al., 2010). Therefore, the types of social initiatives a company practices are very important because they convey messages about how the company wants to be perceived. In other words, how a corporation presents itself to stakeholders can be seen through its choice of social initiatives. Menon and Kahn (2003) suggested that corporations should chose socially responsible activities wisely, consistent with self-interests and logically related to business. This will enhance the credibility of advertising

among consumers. This also relates to the importance of CSR fit, which is the perceived congruence between a company's core business and its social initiatives (Kim & Ferguson, 2009).

According to Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill (2006), fit was expressed as "a social marketing context as the perceived link between a cause and the firm's product line, brand image, position, and/or target market" (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006, p.47). Consequently, a company is more likely to gain favorable reactions from publics by selecting a good-fit CSR initiative that is aligned with consumer expectations and perceptions of the company (Kim & Ferguson, 2010). Moreover, the linkage between corporate social initiatives and core business values should also have a logical congruency in order to get the best practice out of CSR (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006).

There are three reasons why fit is so important in CSR (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Kim & Ferguson, 2010). First, it affects people's thoughts regarding relationships, such as between a corporation and its social initiatives. Second, fit induces specific types of thoughts. For example, low fit CSR may bring negative thoughts and the low fit relation itself has been taken negatively. Lastly, it influences the evaluation of CSR and company performance.

Consequently, a good fit of CSR can be easily integrated to consumer expectations, association, competencies, and knowledge about the company and its social initiatives (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). Initiatives such as Avon's support of breast cancer research can be easily associated by its brand share and the social issue, which has logical linkage and fit in congruency process. Based on this finding, Du et al. (2010)

suggested that a company should highlight its CSR fit if there is congruence between its company and social initiatives; this will engender favorability among its consumers.

Conversely, when consumers perceive a low fit between CSR initiatives and the corporation's core business or values there is an inconsistency between expectations and action (Du et al., 2010). Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) also pointed out the shortcoming of fit: attitudes towards a company and its CSR initiatives will attenuate when consumers process an incongruity of fit, which includes corporate credibility, corporate position and purchase intention.

Effects of CSR on Company/Product Evaluations

Most of the research studied broadly connects corporate associations and the company itself. In 1997, Brown and Dacin conducted a noteworthy study about the influence of CSR focusing on product evaluations. They found that the effect CSR has on the consumer's company evaluations parallels the positive effects on its product evaluations. The authors argued that a company's CSR record will fill in the blank for its product information, and consumers will evaluate the general context based on a company's overall performance. This indicates that there is a strong relationship among social initiatives, evaluation of the company, and the evaluation of the company's products

More important, Brown and Dacin (1997) suggested the importance and benefits of reputation in the marketplace. First of all, reputation serves as an effective entry to the business world; with a good reputation, business is more likely to be supported. Second, it encourages cooperation among competitors to regulate markets. Moreover, it is taken as a standard to estimate a company's output. Finally, reputation is a basis for repeat business. Based on Brown and Dacin's (1997) study, CSR is one of the major

signals of a good reputation. Furthermore, reputation can lead to an overall estimation of the company products. Therefore, a company's social initiatives have a logical link to product evaluation.

The relationship between a company's CSR and its products was also studied by Klein and Dawar (2004), who experimented with a product-harm crisis. In their study, CSR was a controlled factor with different images: positive, negative, and control (no CSR information). The three causal dimensions of attribution which lead to product-harm crisis blame were detected based on previous CSR conditions. The results from the experiment indicated that manipulating CSR conditions does have a significant influence on consumer's attributions of blame in a product-harm crisis, and the attributions perceived by consumers affect brand evaluations and further purchase intentions.

This study intends to examine the correlation between CSR with a product-harm crisis, but from a different perspective: whether CSR (high-fit or low-fit) will have a different impact on consumer perception of a product-harm crisis under different attribute dimensions.

Crises

Crises and Product-Harm Crisis

During the past two decades, the field of crisis management has grown with great speed (Coombs & Holladay, 2004). The book *Ongoing Crisis Communication: Planning, managing, and responding* suggests that all organizations should learn as much as they can about crisis management in order to be prepared in this keenly competitive marketplace. The process of crisis management is sophisticated and requires the integration of knowledge of media relations, environmental scanning, crisis plan

development, crisis communication, reputation management, and evaluation methods (Coombs, 2007). All of these specializations fall under the umbrella of the public relations profession. Therefore, this is an important issue for public relations practitioners.

Coombs (2007) synthesized a clear definition from various previous perspectives for crisis by saying, “a crisis is the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization’s performance and generate negative outcomes” (pp.2-3). Coombs also pointed out that a crisis may be unpredictable but not unexpected. Therefore, organizations should always prepare themselves in order to deal with a crisis.

A crisis can be a serious threat to an organization, because it has the potential to harm its reputation. Moreover, reputational damage for a company can further lead to financial damage, which may also affect a company’s survival (Coombs, & Holladay, 1996). Finances are the foundation of a corporation, and without a strong financial base, a company loses its competitive ability.

Within all different crises in the corporation, this experiment intends to target product-harm crises. Klein and Dawar (2004) defined product-harm crises as “well publicized instances of defective or dangerous products” (p.205). The authors asserted that product-harm crises have gained visibility more than ever due to the increasing complexity of products, more demanding customers, and our media system, which is always on stand-by to report anything that may harm to our society.

Therefore, companies should take product-harm crises seriously and not underestimate the consequence of improper response. It has been documented that a

product-harm crisis may negatively impact market share, stock prices, and consumer purchase intention. It can also result in product recalls (Laufer, & Coombs, 2006). Moreover, reputation is threatened in a product harm crisis, especially if the crisis involves a product recall. High-profile examples include defective Firestone tires in the U.S. and the contaminated Coca-Cola cans incident in Belgium, which implicated dangers to society and put brand reputation at risk.

One of the main reasons that corporate reputation is so vital to a company is that it does have a financial impact. Laufer and Coombs (2006) explained several factors which can be influenced by a company's reputation, such as "attracting consumers, generating investment interest, attracting top employee talent, motivating workers, increasing job satisfaction, generating more positive media coverage, and garnering positive comments from financial analysts" (p.380).

Consequently, companies should be concerned with minimizing the negative effects of a product-harm crisis. The main objective for crisis management is "to prevent or lessen reputational damage to an organization" (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). This article tries to understand the connection between fit of CSR with product-harm crisis and how consumers' perception of the issue will affect the company's evaluation and subsequent buying intention.

Attribution of Responsibility in Crisis

In a crisis, people tend to seek causal explanations. "Who is to blame?" is often the very first question publics want to know in a crisis. In other words, the public may quickly look to assign responsibility for the crisis. One attempt to explain the way this assessment process works is found in Weiner's (1986) attribution theory. Weiner (1986) argued that stakeholders caught in an unexpected or negative event will seek to blame,

or attribute guilt, to an involved organization. Based on attribution theory's concepts, Laufer and Coombs (2006) matched the theory with product-harm crises and claimed attribution theory provided a strong conceptual foundation for the process of blaming during a product-harm crisis. Other studies have shown that attribution theory correlates with consumer blame seeking for harmful products. In addition, it may predict consumer purchase intentions (Folkes, 1984; Folkes & Kotsos, 1986; Haigh & Dardis, 2008). Therefore, attribution theory is the best theoretical practice in a product-harm crisis.

Functionally, there are three causal dimensions in attribution theory which are well categorized by Weiner (1980, 1985, 2006): stability, controllability, and locus. Stability refers to whether the behavior or event is temporary and varied over time or the event is a stable, permanent situation (McDonald, 2006). In other words, stable means the problem or event occurs often, in a constant pace. In contrast, unstable means the problem or event just happens once. For example, a stable computer problem is due to a bad design and occurs frequently; an unstable computer problem occurs because the user accidentally dropped it.

Controllability, attribution theory's second dimension, refers to whether the event can be managed by an actor (Klein & Dawar, 2004). The definition was slightly modified by Russell (1982) so that both internal and external causes can meet under controllability dimension. For example, a consumer purchases a brightening facial cream but it does not make her skin look brighter after use. There are two potential reasons for this outcome: the consumer has not used the product properly (controllable cause) or the consumer is allergic to the facial cream (uncontrollable cause).

Locus, the final dimension of attribution theory, forms “the most basic dimension along which people explain events” (Jeong, 2008, p.4). Locus refers to whether the control over a given crisis exists within the company (internal) or outside the company (external), such as consumers or the environment (Folkes, 1984; Russell, 1982). For instance, in the multiple cases of Firestone tire failure reported in 2000, if consumers believed the failures were due to poor quality production by Firestone, the locus would be internal. However, if consumers thought the incident was caused by harsh driving or poor driving conditions, the event’s responsibility lied outside of the tire manufacturer, which is an external locus.

It is important to understand that although controllability and locus are often confused and used interchangeably, they are two distinct dimensions of causal properties (Weiner, 2006). To be more specific, both internal causes and external causes may be controllable or uncontrollable. Lee (2004) integrated and simplified the concept of controllability and locus (internal and external) into one dimension by including the concept of controllability in locus. Based on Lee’s (2004) observation, a crisis caused within the organization, as internal locus, is often taken as controllable. In contrast, a crisis caused outside of the organization, external locus, is often taken as uncontrollable. Moreover, Rhee and Moon (2010) explained that publics who perceive the company crisis as internal and controllable will attribute more responsibility for the crisis to the company. On the other hand, publics who perceive the company crisis as external and uncontrollable will be less likely to have negative feelings toward the company. According to Laufer and Coombs (2006), it is important for a company to understand how customers attribute the blame for a product-harm crisis, because the

blame of the crisis situation impacts company perception and further purchase intentions.

Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, this study seeks to draw both from fit of CSR and attribution theory literature to create an integrated framework of CSR and corporate crisis management. Towards this objective, ten hypotheses were proposed to investigate which fit of CSR represents the optimum campaign to mitigate negative perceptions following a product-harm crisis.

H1a: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable (see Figure 2-1).

H1b: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a more positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable (see Figure 2-2).

H2a: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable (see Figure 2-1).

H2b: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable (see Figure 2-2).

H3a: Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate negative corporate evaluation versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Figure 2-1).

H3b: Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Figure 2-2).

H4a: Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Figure 2-1).

H4b: Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Figure 2-2).

H5: Responsibility the company holds based on the product-harm news story will be inversely related to corporate evaluation.

H6: Corporate evaluation will influence subsequent purchase intentions

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This experimental study examined corporate evaluation and purchase intention related to different fits of CSR and types of product-harm crises. It also studied consumer perception of the corporation and purchase intention after the crisis. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), the experimental method allows researchers to be confident that the cause actually leads to the effect, and “researchers have control over the environment, the variables, and the subject” (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p.239). Therefore, because the questions are about causal relationships, an experimental method is the best approach for this study.

Corporate evaluation and purchase intention are the two main dependent variables in this study. The stimuli are eight different virtual stories controlled in 2 (high fit of CSR/ low fit of CSR) X 2 (crisis attribution lies internally/ crisis attribution lies externally) X 2 (crisis attribution lies controllable/ crisis attribution lies uncontrollable) conditions.

Stimuli

A fictional corporation, “Deucalion Spring Water Corporation,” was created to serve as the background for the experiment. Its product is a mineral bottle water named “Cristal.” Deucalion Spring Water Corporation harvests its mineral spring water only from a spring source 3,700 ft high that is well known among the public for its smooth and high quality mineral water. In the high fit CSR version, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation devotes its CSR efforts to water resource and environmental protection, which fits perfectly with its business and products (see Appendix A). In the low fit CSR condition, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation concentrates its CSR programs on child

labor issues, which are unrelated to the company's business or products (see Appendix B).

Two sets of corporate background information were provided with four different versions of news articles for Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's product-harm crisis. The four different attributes of product-harm crisis are internal controllable product-harm crisis (see Appendix C), internal uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Appendix D), external controllable product-harm crisis (see Appendix E), and external uncontrollable product-harm crisis (see Appendix F).

Figure 3-1 is the eight different conditions represent the interaction of two different background's information and the four different news articles content.

In Cell 1, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation puts much effort into water resources protection and environmental CSR, which fits well with the corporate products. Subjects then read about a product-harm crisis which was caused by something inside the company, and was controlled by the corporation. Therefore, the responsibility of the crisis undeniably belonged to the Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.

In Cell 2, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation conducts the same water resource and environmental CSR program as in Cell 1. However, the corporation does not have controllability over the product-harm crisis, even though the crisis happened inside the company.

In Cell 3, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation focuses its CSR program on water resources and environmental protection. Here, the fit of CSR for Deucalion Spring Water is the same as Cells 1 and 2, which is relatively high with the company's core

business. Subjects then read a product-harm crisis scenario which was an external and controllable condition.

In Cell 4, Deucalion Spring Water focuses on environmental CSR like Cells 1, 2, and 3. Subjects then read about a product-harm crisis which was an external and uncontrollable.

In contrast to the previous cells, in Cell 5, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation focuses its CSR program on child labor and slave-like work of children, which is irrelevant to the company's core business and products. This was followed by a news story about a product-harm crisis the same as in Cell 1, which was manipulated in an internal controllable situation.

In Cell 6, a low fit CSR program is conducted by Deucalion Spring Water Corporation, which is same as in Cell 5. The CSR initiative is mainly related to preventing abuses in child labor. After reading the background information, subjects were assigned to read about an internal uncontrollable product-harm crisis (which is the same as Cell 2).

In Cell 7, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation puts its CSR efforts in child labor, which is unrelated to its business or products. The subsequent product-harm crisis was manipulated in an external, controllable condition.

In Cell 8, the same as in Cell 7, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation focuses on child labor issues, which are irrelevant to its core business and products. The subsequent news story about the product-harm crisis was the same as in Cell 4, an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

Measurement Design

The follow-up protocol contains three parts, which measured the participants' perceptions of corporate evaluation and their purchase intention. The last part of the protocol is the general questions about the participants and a manipulation check. A complete copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix G with a consent form in Appendix H.

In the first part of the follow-up protocol, participants were asked to evaluate their overall impression of the corporation. Six items were adopted from Lee (2004) including three negative impressions "I don't like Deucalion Spring Water Corporation" (reverse item), "I have a negative impression of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation" (reverse item); and four items from degrees of trust: including "I have confidence in Deucalion Spring Water Corporation," "Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is trustworthy," "Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is reliable," and "I have doubts about the quality of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation" (reverse item). The alpha scores for corporate evaluation items was 0.917, which is higher than 0.8.

The second part of the questionnaire measures product evaluation and purchase intention. Four items were used based on a scale from Lee (2004) to evaluate Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's product, Cristal mineral bottle water, including "I lost my confidence in Cristal mineral bottle water" (reverse item), "Cristal mineral bottle water is still trustworthy," "Cristal mineral bottle water is reliable," and "I have doubts in the quality of Cristal mineral bottle water" (reverse item). The last item was adopted from Kim (2011), which is: "My overall expectation about Cristal mineral bottle water is favorable." In order to balance the items another question, "I don't like Cristal mineral bottle water," was added. The alpha scores for purchase intention items was 0.910,

which is higher than 0.8. All items were measured by a seven-point Likert Scale anchored from 1) “Strongly Disagree” to 7) “Strongly Agree”.

The third and fourth part of the protocol is the manipulation check described below, while the fifth part of the questionnaire gathers participants’ demographic information by asking their age, gender, ethnicity, and UFID.

Manipulation Checks

In order to ensure the experiment is manipulating what is intended, two sets of manipulation checks were presented. The first is the attribution of locus and controllability of the product-harm crisis and the other for the type of CSR fit association. These two sets of check-lists were placed right before the demographic section in the questionnaire. All items were measured by a seven-point Likert Scale anchored from 1) “Strongly Disagree” to 7) “Strongly Agree.”

To measure attribution of locus and controllability, this study referenced two studies, one from Griffin, Babin, and Attaway (1996), the other from Haigh, and Dardis (2008). Participants were asked how they felt about the product-harm crisis with two items pointing the locus towards Deucalion Spring Water Corporation, which included: “Cristal mineral bottle water contamination happened inside the Deucalion Spring Water Corporation” and “Cristal mineral bottle water contamination happened outside the company in a supermarket.” On the other hand, two items were used to measure attribution of controllability of the company, including “Deucalion Spring Water Corporation could have prevented the Cristal mineral bottle water contamination” and “Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is not responsible for distributing contaminated Cristal mineral bottle water.”

Next, participants were asked to distinguish the types of CSR based on the corporation background information. The measurements of CSR fit are referenced from the previous literature (Kim, 2011): “This company has program to help improve the environment” and “This company’s Corporate Social Responsibility program is related to water production safety”. The other set were: “This company has a great concern for children” and “This company is working to reduce abuse of children labor.”

Participants

The respondents in this study were students enrolled in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at University of Florida. Participants were informed about the study before the class started and advised that they would earn extra credits if they completed the questionnaire.

Data Collection

After receiving approval (UFIRB # 2012-U-0292) from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Florida, the researcher conducted a pilot study prior to the main experiment. The main experiment took place in classes with one corporation background information description followed by a product-harm crisis news story. After reading the stimuli, the participants responded to the questionnaire based on their perceptions.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected through the experiment questionnaire (Table 3-1). An Independent-Sample T Test analysis was used to analyze effects of the interaction between different fits of CSR and different attributes of a product-harm crisis on corporate evaluation and

purchase intention. Correlation Coefficient was performed to answer the relationship between responsibility, corporate evaluation, and purchase intention.

Table 3-1. The Explanation of Statistical Tests for Each Hypothesis

Hypotheses	Descriptive and/or Statistical Tests
H1a A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H1b A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a more positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H2a A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H2b A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H3a Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H4a Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Independent-Samples T-Test
H5 Responsibility the company holds based on the product-harm news story will be inversely related to corporate evaluation.	Correlation Coefficient
H6 Corporate evaluation will influence subsequent purchase intentions.	Correlation Coefficient

Group 1. High fit CSR/ Internal, controllable product-harm crisis	Group 5. Low fit CSR/ Internal, controllable product-harm crisis
Group 2. High fit CSR/ Internal, uncontrollable product-harm crisis	Group 6. Low fit CSR/ Internal, uncontrollable product-harm crisis
Group 3. High fit CSR/ External, controllable product-harm crisis	Group 7. Low fit CSR/ External, controllable product-harm crisis
Group 4. High fit CSR/ External, uncontrollable product-harm crisis	Group 8. Low fit CSR/ External, uncontrollable product-harm crisis

Figure 3-1. Cells for each condition

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of the study obtained using SPSS, a statistical analysis program. It first describes the demographics and education levels and then reports the manipulation checks. Next, the hypotheses proposed in chapter 2 will be addressed.

Participants

A total of 174 college students participated in this experimental study (see Table 4-1): 25.9% (45) were male and 74.1% (129) were female. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 42 with a mean of 22 years old ($M = 22.22$, $SD = 3.45$). As for ethnicity, the majority of participants, 47.7% (83), were White/ Caucasian; 24.1% (42) reported as Asian; 18.4% (32) were Hispanic/ Latino; 6.9% (12) were Black/ African American; 0.6% (1) were American Indian/ Native American; and 2.3% (4) defined themselves as other. According to University of Florida (UF) Office of Institutional Planning and Research (2011), of the current enrolled (49589) students, 46% (22935) are male and 54 % (26654) are female. Moreover, out of the total 32,598 undergraduate students, the racial categories students were: 58% (19196) White/ Caucasian; 17% (5658) Hispanic/ Latino; 8% (2830) Black/African American; 8% (2646) Asian; and 0.3% (107) of American Indian/Native American.

Among all the participants (Table 4-1), 27% (47) of the students are in graduate programs; 36.2% (63) reported as juniors; 17.8% (31) reported as seniors; and freshmen and sophomores had the same percentage of participants, 9.2% (16) each. Compared to UF enrolled students, 24% (12191) are in graduate programs; 8% (3964)

are freshman; 13% (6516) are sophomores; 19% (9520) are juniors; and 24% (12064) are seniors (University of Florida Fact Book, 2011).

Participants were randomly assigned to eight different conditions. (See Table 4-2) Of the participants, 12.6% (22) were in the high fit CSR program along with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 1); 13.2% (23) were in the high fit CSR program along with an internal, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 2); 13.2% (21) were in the high fit CSR program and an external, controllable product-harm crisis (group 3); 12.6% (22) were in the high fit CSR program and an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4). In the other four conditions, 12.6% (22) of participants were assigned in the low fit CSR program along with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 5); 12.1% (21) were in the low fit CSR program along with an internal, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 6); 12.1% (21) were in the low fit CSR program with an external, controllable product-harm crisis (group 7); and 12.6% (22) were in the low fit CSR program with an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 8).

Manipulation Checks

To test the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation, a manipulation check regarding the perceived fit of CSR and attributions of the product-harm crisis was performed. Participants who were exposed to a high fit CSR program in company background information evaluated environmental CSR programs (high fit CSR) significantly higher ($N = 88$, $M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.20$) than participants who were exposed to a low fit CSR program ($N = 86$, $M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.37$) in company background information ($t = -6.248$, $df = 172$, $P < 0.001$) (Table 4-3). On the other hand, participants who were assigned to a high fit CSR program condition evaluated child labor CSR

programs (low fit CSR) lower ($N = 88$, $M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.23$) than participants who were assigned in a low fit CSR program ($N = 86$, $M = 5.41$, $SD = 1.33$) background information ($t = 11.375$, $df = 172$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 4-4).

The manipulation check of locus also worked successfully (see Table 4-5). Participants who were exposed to an internal product-harm crisis condition had a higher ($N = 88$, $M = 5.43$, $SD = 1.25$) evaluation for a “crisis [that] happened inside the corporation” than participants who were exposed to an external product-harm crisis condition ($N = 86$, $M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.41$) ($t = 10.11$, $df = 172$, $p < 0.001$).

Lastly, there was a near significant difference in the evaluation of controllability for the product-harm crisis (see Table 4-6). Participants in the controllable group showed a mean score of 4.85 ($N = 86$, $M = 4.85$, $SD = 1.33$) on the manipulation check questions for a product-harm crisis, higher than the mean score on the uncontrollable group ($N = 88$, $M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.32$) in a product-harm crisis ($t = 1.92$, $df = 172$, $p < 0.056$). Instead of combining attributes of locus with controllability (e.g., internal situation is combined with controllable, and external situation is combined uncontrollable), this study separated the two attributes as individual factors in order to design an integrated experiment. Therefore, controllability was taken as an independent variable coordinated with locus to manipulate four different product-harm crisis conditions. Results showed that the manipulation check for controllability was near significant.

Interaction Effects of CSR Fit and Attributions of Product-Harm Crisis on Corporate Evaluation and Purchase Intention

Prior to testing the hypotheses below, this study examined the main effects and the interaction of CSR fit, controllability, and locus on corporate evaluation and on purchase intention. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to test the effect

between conditions. Results showed that the two-way interaction (Figure 4-1) between fit of CSR and attribute of controllability on corporate evaluation was not significant but has the second smallest probability value that is close to 0.1 ($F(1, 166) = 2.319, p < 0.13$), while the test of Power was 0.32 (Table 4-7). Therefore, a further examination was conducted by a Simple Means test to investigate the interaction. As shown in Table 4-8, the test had no significance ($t = -1.36, df = 84, P < 0.17$). In low fit of CSR programs, controllable product-harm crisis generated a mean of 3.9 ($N = 43, SD = 1.28$) compared to uncontrollable product-harm crisis, where the mean is 4.23 ($N = 43, SD = 0.95$). On the other hand (Table 4-9), under high fit CSR, controllable product-harm crisis condition evaluated corporate evaluation with a mean of 4.06 ($N = 43, SD = 1.32$), while uncontrollable product-harm crisis with a mean of 3.86 ($N = 45, SD = 1.05$) ($t = 0.78, df = 86, P < 0.43$). Therefore, this difference of means test was not significant.

The interaction (Figure 4-2) between locus and controllability was the smallest probability value for corporate evaluation and was close to 0.1 ($F(1, 166) = 2.53, p < 0.11$); the test of Power was 0.35 (Table 4-7). A further investigation was performed by a Simple Means test to examine the interaction. As showed in Table 4-10, in the case of internal product-harm crisis, controllable condition generated a mean score of 3.75 ($N = 44, SD = 1.25$) while the uncontrollable condition had a mean score of 4.08 ($N = 44, SD = 1.01$), and the results were not statistically significant ($t = -1.35, df = 86, P < 0.18$). Likewise, Table 4-11 demonstrated no significant ($t = 0.84, df = 84, P < 0.40$) effects for this comparison of external product-harm crisis and controllability. Results showed that the case of external product-harm crisis, controllable condition had a mean of 4.21 ($N =$

42, SD = 1.31) while uncontrollable condition acquired a mean of 4.0 (N = 44, SD = 1.03).

The interaction between CSR fit, controllability and locus on purchase intention was tested by an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results showed that the smallest probability value was the independent variable main effect of locus. The score was not significant on purchase intention ($F(1,166) = 2.529, p < 0.11$), and the Power was 0.35 (Table 4-12). There were no statistically significant interactions between CSR fit, controllability, and locus on purchase intention.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Two hypotheses, H1a and H1b, were tested to determine whether fit of CSR influenced corporate evaluation and purchase intention when the product-harm crisis news story was controlled as an external and uncontrollable situation.

H1a: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.

An Independent-Samples T Test was used to examine this hypothesis, comparing the mean of corporate evaluation in two groups; a high fit CSR with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4) and a low fit CSR with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 8). Results showed (Table 4-13) no significant difference between two CSR levels of fit when a product-harm crisis is presented in an external, uncontrollable situation. The high fit CSR background participants (group 4) evaluated corporate evaluation with a mean of 3.98 (N = 22, SD = 1.07), and the low fit CSR situation with a mean of 4.02 (N = 22, SD = 1.01) ($t = -0.12, df = 42, p < 0.905$), therefore, hypothesis 1a was not supported.

H1b: A company that has a high fit CSR program is likely to generate a more positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was also used to examine this hypothesis, comparing the mean of purchase intention in two groups, a high fit CSR with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4) and a low fit CSR with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 8). As shown in Table 4-14, the results showed no significant difference ($t = 0.34$, $df = 42$, $P < 0.73$). The high fit CSR condition with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4) had a mean of 3.96 ($N = 22$, $SD = 0.95$), compared to a low fit CSR with an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 8), where the mean was 3.87 ($N = 22$, $SD = 0.94$). Purchase intention was not affected by fit of CSR when the product-harm crisis was perceived as external and uncontrollable. Therefore, hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Hypothesis 2

Two hypotheses were tested to determine whether fit of CSR has different effects on corporate evaluation and purchase intention when the product-harm crisis was an internal and controllable situation.

H2a: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was performed to compare the means between two different fit of CSR programs on corporate evaluation when they both were in a manipulated internal and controllable product-harm crisis condition. Based on the results, a high fit CSR program with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 1) had a mean score of 3.82 ($N = 22$, $SD = 1.16$), while a low fit CSR program with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 5) had a mean score of 3.68 ($N = 22$,

SD = 1.36). Table 4-13 shows no significant results ($t = 0.357$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.723$) for hypothesis 2a, indicating that different fits of CSR does not have different impacts on corporate evaluation when a company's product-harm crisis is perceived as internal and controllable. Consequently, hypothesis 2a was not supported.

H2b: A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was used to compare means for purchase intention between different fits of CSR programs when subjects encountered an internal and controllable product-harm crisis. Statistics indicated that a high fit CSR program (group 1) had a mean of 3.31 ($N = 22$, $SD = 1.38$) for purchase intention while a low fit CSR program (group 5) had a mean of 3.73 ($N = 22$, $SD = 1.32$). Based on the results (Table 4-14), there was no significant ($t = -1.02$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.31$) difference for different fits of CSR programs with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis for purchase intention.

Hypothesis 3

Two hypotheses tested the interaction between different attributes of product-harm crises under a controlled low fit CSR program, and the effects it had on corporate evaluation and purchase intention.

H3a: Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

This hypothesis requires usage of a Independent-Samples T-Test to examine the means of corporate evaluation between an internal and controllable product-harm crisis under a low fit CSR program (group 5) and an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis under a low fit CSR program (group 8). Results showed (Table 4-13) that a

product-harm crisis under a low fit CSR program would have little difference in corporate evaluations. The product-harm crisis which was controlled as internal and controllable (group 5) had a mean of 3.68 (N = 22, SD = 1.36) while product-harm crisis which controlled as external and uncontrollable (group 8) has a mean of 4.02(N = 22, SD = 1.01). As described in Table 4-13, there was no significant ($t = -0.919$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.363$) difference between these two groups, therefore, hypothesis 3a was not supported.

H3b: Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was performed to compare means of purchase intention between an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 5) and an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 8) when they both shared a low fit of CSR background. As shown in Table 4-14, the mean score of purchase intention for internal, controllable product-harm crisis under fit of CSR program (group 5) was 3.73(N = 22, SD = 1.32) while the mean score of an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis under a low fit CSR program (group 8) was 3.87 (N = 22, SD=0.94). The difference between the two mean scores was not significant ($t = -0.39$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.695$), therefore, the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis 4

Two hypotheses were listed to examine the impact which manipulated attributions in a product-harm crisis had for a high fit CSR program on corporate evaluation and purchase intention.

H4a: Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

This hypothesis compared two mean scores by using an Independent-Samples T-Test. Based on the results (Table 4-13), an internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 1) led to a mean score of 3.82 (N = 22, SD = 1.16) in corporate evaluation when it is under a high fit CSR program, and an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4) gained a mean score of 3.98 (N = 22, SD = 1.07) under a high fit CSR program. The difference was not statistically significant ($t = -0.47$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.639$) between the two groups, therefore hypothesis 4a was not supported. In other words, corporate evaluation shows no difference when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable versus external, uncontrollable, under a high fit of CSR program.

H4b: Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

An Independent-Samples T-Test was performed to test whether different attributions of a product-harm crisis under a high fit of CSR program will have effect on purchase intention. Analysis revealed that, conditions manipulated as internal, controllable product-harm crisis (group 1) received a 3.31 mean scores (N = 22, SD = 1.381) of purchase intention under a high fit of CSR program, which is lower than a mean scores of 3.96 (N = 22, M = 3.96, SD = 0.95) for external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (group 4) (Table 4-14). Based on the results, probability values for the two mean scores differences were 0.076 ($t = -1.81$, $df = 42$, $p < 0.076$), so hypothesis 4b was close to being supported. The results indicated that, under high fit of CSR program, a company is more likely to gain lower purchase intention with an internal, controllable product-harm crisis than an external uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 tested the relationship between the company's responsibility on the product-harm crisis and corporate evaluation conducted by publics after perceiving the crisis.

H5: Responsibility the company holds based on the product-harm news story will be inversely related to corporate evaluation.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was conducted to measure the relationship between responsibility and corporate evaluation, which are statistically significant associated ($r = -0.157$, $p < 0.019$) (Table 4-15). In other words, the less responsibility a company has for a product-harm crisis, the more likely it is to acquire a more positive corporate evaluation.

Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 examined the relationship between corporate evaluation and the purchase intention.

H6: Corporate evaluation will influence subsequent purchase intentions.

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients, a statistical method to observe the relationship between two variables, was used. Results (Table 4-16) revealed a highly significant correlation ($r = 0.76$, $p < 0.001$) between corporate evaluation and purchase intention, and also indicated that publics who felt more favorable on corporate evaluation were more likely to have greater purchase intentions for company's products.

In sum, only hypotheses 5 and 6 were statistically significant. The results posited that responsibility of the product harm crisis will influence consumer's corporate evaluation, which further has an impact on product purchase intention.

Table 4-1. Demographics, education level and condition assigned

Variable	Number or Mean	Percentage/SD
Gender		
Male	45	25.9%
Female	129	74.1%
Ethnicity		
White/ Caucasian	83	47.7%
Asian	42	24.1%
Hispanic/ Latino	32	18.4%
Black/ African American	12	6.9%
American Indian/ Native American	1	0.6%
Other	4	2.3%
Age	Mean = 22.22	SD = 3.45
Level of Education		
Freshman	16	9.2%
Sophomore	16	9.2%
Junior	63	36.2%
Senior or post-baccalaureate	31	17.8%
Graduate	47	27.0%
Other	1	0.6%

Table 4-2. Participants in each cell/ group

Variable	Number	Percentage
Cells/ Groups		
(Group 1) High fit CSR/ Internal & Controllable product-harm crisis	22	12.6%
(Group 2) High fit CSR/ Internal & Uncontrollable product-harm crisis	23	13.2%
(Group 3) High fit CSR/ External & Controllable product-harm crisis	21	12.1%
(Group 4) High fit CSR/ External & Uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	12.6%
(Group 5) Low fit CSR/ Internal & Controllable product-harm crisis	22	12.6%
(Group 6) Low fit CSR/ Internal & Uncontrollable product-harm crisis	21	12.1%
(Group 7) Low fit CSR/ External & Controllable product-harm crisis	21	12.1%
(Group 8) Low fit CSR/ External & Uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	12.6%

Table 4-3. Manipulation check for environment CSR programs

Fit of CSR	N	M	SD
High fit CSR programs	88	4.86	1.2
Low fit CSR programs	86	3.64	1.37

Note. $t = -6.248$, $df = 172$, $Sig = 0.001 < 0.05$

Table 4-4. Manipulation check for child labor CSR programs

Fit of CSR	N	M	SD
High fit CSR programs	88	3.19	1.23
Low fit CSR programs	86	5.41	1.33

Note. $t = 11.37$, $df = 172$, $Sig.= 0.001 < 0.05$

Table 4-5. Manipulation check for product-harm crisis happened location

Locus	N	M	SD
Internal product-harm crisis	88	5.43	1.25
External product-harm crisis	86	3.38	1.41

Note. $t = 10.11$, $df = 172$, $Sig.= 0.001 < 0.05$

Table 4-6. Manipulation check for controllability of the product-harm crisis

Controllability	N	M	SD
The product-harm crisis is controllable	86	4.85	1.33
The product-harm crisis is uncontrollable	88	4.46	1.32

Note. $t = 1.926$, $df = 172$, $Sig. = 0.056 > 0.05$

Table 4-7. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Corporate Evaluation

Dependent Variable: Corporate Evaluation Source	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Observed Power ^b
Corrected Model	7	1.579	1.175	0.320	0.495
Intercept	1	2810.267	2901.425	0.000	1.000
Fit	1	0.510	0.380	0.539	0.094
Locus	1	1.418	1.055	0.306	0.175
Controllability	1	0.186	0.138	0.710	0.066
Fit * Locus	1	1.420	1.057	0.305	0.176
Fit * Controllability	1	3.116	2.319	0.130	0.328
Locus * Controllability	1	3.407	2.535	0.113	0.353
Fit * Locus * Controllability	1	1.080	0.804	0.371	0.145
Error	166	1.344			
Total	174				
Corrected Total	173				

a. R Squared = .047 (Adjusted R Squared = .007)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 4-8. Mean of low fit CSR and controllability on corporate evaluation

Independent variables	N	M	SD
Low fit CSR and controllable product-harm crisis	43	3.9	1.28
Low fit CSR and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	43	4.23	0.95

Note. $t = -1.369$, $df = 84$, $Sig. = 0.175 > 0.05$

Table 4-9. Mean of high fit CSR and controllability on corporate evaluation

High fit CSR and controllable product-harm crisis	43	4.062	1.327
High fit CSR and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	45	3.862	1.058

Note. $t = 0.781$, $df = 86$, $Sig. = 0.437 > 0.05$

Table 4-10. Mean of internal and controllability on corporate evaluation

Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	44	3.757	1.254
Internal and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	44	4.086	1.017

Note. $t = -1.352$, $df = 86$, $Sig. = 0.180 > 0.05$

Table 4-11. Mean of external and controllability on corporate evaluation

External and controllable product-harm crisis	42	4.218	1.318
External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	44	4.003	1.032

Note. $t = 0.842$, $df = 84$, $Sig. = 0.402 > 0.05$

Table 4-12. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Source	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Observed Power ^b
Corrected Model	7	1.429	1.042	0.403	0.441
Intercept	1	2503.863	1826.363	0.000	1.000
Fit	1	2.365	1.725	0.191	0.257
Locus	1	3.467	2.529	0.114	0.353
Controllability	1	0.540	0.394	0.531	0.096
Fit * Locus	1	2.396	1.748	0.188	0.260
Fit * Controllability	1	0.022	0.016	0.899	0.052
Locus * Controllability	1	0.895	0.653	0.420	0.127
Fit * Locus * Controllability	1	0.239	0.174	0.677	0.070
Error	166	1.371			
Total	174				
Corrected Total	173				

a. R Squared = .042 (Adjusted R Squared = .002)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Table 4-13. Corporate evaluation for each cell and hypothesis

Cells/Groups	N	M	SD
(Group 4) High fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.98	1.07
(Group 8) Low fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	4.02	1.07
Note. $t = -0.12$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.905 > 0.05$			
(Group 1) High fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.82	1.16
(Group 5) Low fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.68	1.36
Note. $t = 0.357$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.723 > 0.05$			
(Group 5) Low fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.68	1.36
(Group 8) Low fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	4.02	1.01
Note. $t = -0.919$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.363 > 0.05$			
(Group 1) High fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.82	1.16
(Group 4) High fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.98	1.07
Note. $t = -0.47$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.639 > 0.05$			

Table 4-14. Purchase intention for each cell and hypothesis

Cells/ Groups	N	M	SD
(Group 4) High fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.96	0.95
(Group 8) Low fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.87	0.94
Note. $t = 0.34$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.733 > 0.05$			
(Group 1) High fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.31	1.38
(Group 5) Low fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.73	1.32
Note. $t = -1.02$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.313 > 0.05$			
(Group 5) Low fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.73	1.32
(Group 8) Low fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.87	0.94
Note. $t = -0.39$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.695 > 0.05$			
(Group 1) High fit CSR/ Internal and controllable product-harm crisis	22	3.31	1.38
(Group 4) High fit CSR/ External and uncontrollable product-harm crisis	22	3.96	0.95
Note. $t = -1.81$, $df = 42$, $Sig. = 0.076 > 0.05$			

Table 4-15. Correlation Coefficient of responsibility on product-harm Crisis and Corporate Evaluation

	Corporate Evaluation	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (1-tailed)
Corporate responsibility on Product-harm crisis	-0.157	0.019

Table 4-16. Correlation Coefficient of corporate evaluation and purchase intention

	Corporate Evaluation	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (1-tailed)
Purchase Intention	0.76	0.00 < 0.01

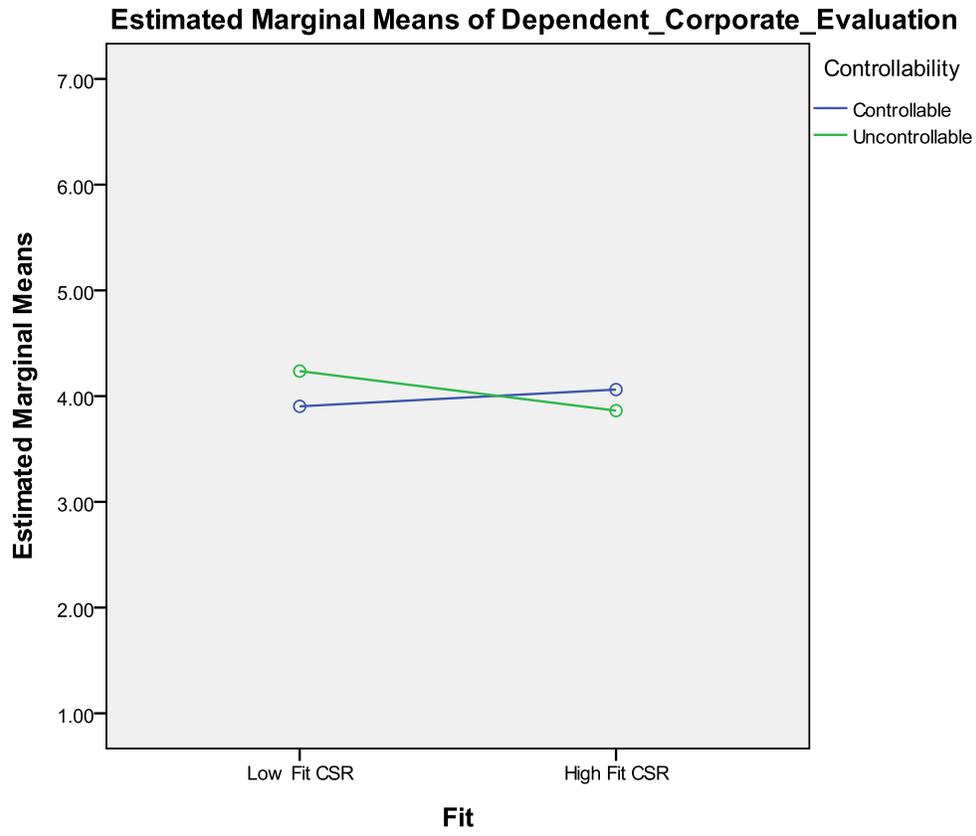


Figure 4-1. Interaction between fit of CSR and controllability on corporate evaluation

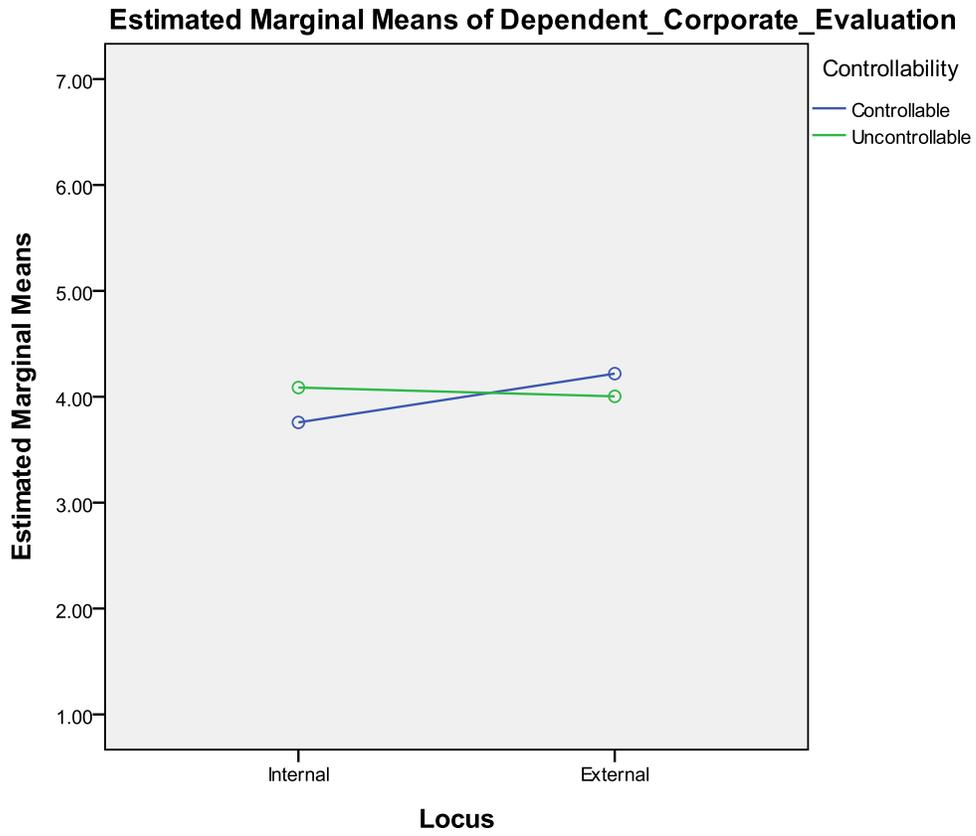


Figure 4-2. Interaction between locus and controllability on corporate evaluation.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of three sections: discussion and overview of hypotheses; conclusion and implication; and limitations and future research. In the first section, previous studies related to the hypotheses will be provided, followed by a detailed overview of the experiment in this study. Next, a theoretical and practical discussion of the field of public relations is considered. Finally, this chapter concludes with limitations and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Hypotheses Overview

Scholars have indicated that types of CSR programs have certain relationships with publics' response to the corporations and its products. According to Becker-Olsen et al. (2006), companies which conducted high fit CSR programs were more likely to generate favorable public responses because if the programs match the company's business, such causes were taken as appropriate. In contrast, companies which conducted low fit CSR programs gained less favorable public perception because of incongruity between the low fit causes and the company's business (Kim, 2011; Sen & Bhattacharys, 2001). Kim (2011) further argued the reason CSR programs would be influential on company/ product evaluation is due to publics' existing knowledge about a company, which enhances their evaluation to the company and its products.

Products, the biggest assets of a corporation, are the most influential factor for public perception of a company. Consequently, this study examined the impact of a CSR fit over a product-harm crisis on corporate evaluation and purchase intention. Klein and Dawar (2004) pointed out the harmful consequence a product-harm crisis may cause by saying "product-harm crisis can imperil long-standing favorable customer

impression about the brand (p.205).” In addition, they pointed out that attribution theory is the helpful in examining the crisis because attribution forms the basis of consumers’ corporate evaluation and purchase intention (Klein & Dawer, 2004).

This study was conducted through an experiment by controlling three different independent variables: (1) fit of CSR (high fit CSR and low fit CSR); (2) attribution of locus for a product-harm crisis (product-harm crisis which happened inside the corporation or outside of corporation); and (3) attribution of controllability for a product-harm crisis (product-harm crisis which can be controlled by corporation or cannot be controlled by corporation). The manipulated condition led to eight different situations, which permitted investigation of two types of CSR fit programs and their influence on different conditions of product-harm crisis. See Table 5-1 for the results of each hypothesis.

Unexpectedly, Hypothesis 1a and 2a showed no difference in corporate evaluation. Companies that support low fit CSR programs gain similar corporate evaluation to companies that conduct high fit CSR programs in both an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis and internal, controllable product-harm crisis situations.

On the other hand, similar outcomes were found with hypothesis 1b and 2b. Purchase intention was not affected by different fits of CSR programs and either external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis or internal, controllable product-harm crisis. To be more specific, companies that conduct high fit CSR programs generate similar purchase intention as those that conduct low fit CSR after encountering an internal, controllable product-harm crisis or an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.

The findings from this experiment were unable to support previous studies. First, in the aspect of CSR, Kim (2011) argued that CSR programs have significant direct influences on products. In other words, consumers expect companies to make good products when they perceive CSR programs. Combining Kim's (2011) results with fit of CSR, companies that conduct high fit CSR programs should gain higher expectation of products from consumers due to companies' great concern about their business and product-related causes. On the contrary, companies that conduct low fit CSR programs should gain lower expectation of products compared with high fit CSR programs.

Secondly, Jorgensen (1994, 1996) and Lee's (2004) crisis communication studies posited that internal, controllable crises resulted in worse consumer reactions than external, uncontrollable crises. Therefore, based on congruency, a high fit CSR program should generate more positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program alongside an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis, because greater expectation of the company may lead to greater disappointment when expectations are not met. However, this study did not find any three-way interaction between fit of CSR, locus, and controllability on corporate evaluation and purchase intention.

Besides examining the interaction between fit of CSR and attributes of a product-harm crisis, another focus of this study was to replicate previous research for product-harm crisis, but under certain CSR fits background.

Based on an Independent Samples T-Test, hypotheses 3a and 4a revealed that an internal, controllable product-harm crisis results in no difference in corporate evaluation compared to an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis under high fit CSR background and low fit CSR background.

Similar effects were found for Hypothesis 3b, and the results were not significant. An Independent-Samples T-Test showed that despite low fit of CSR backgrounds, an internal, controllable product-harm crisis received indifferent purchase intention with an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis. However, hypothesis 4b showed close to support in purchase intention under high fit CSR background. A company's product-harm crisis perceived as internal and controllable will gain less favorable purchase intention than external and uncontrollable. This is congruent with previous arguments that the more a company is responsible for a product-harm crisis, the less favorable response it will gain from consumers. In other words, the more internal and controllable a crisis was, the more responsible the company was considered to be, which led to negative consumer behaviors towards the company (Jorgensen, 1996).

Finally, beyond corporate evaluation and purchase intention, this study extended Lee's (2004) research by demonstrating high correlation between responsibility the company holds for the product-harm crisis and consumer corporate evaluation. Results indicated that more company responsibility led to less positive corporate evaluation (H5). Moreover, hypothesis 6 showed direct influence between corporate evaluation and purchase intention. In other words, high corporate evaluation will lead to greater purchase intention.

Implications

CSR fit has recently increased in popularity in the business world. More and more practitioners believe that a good CSR fit, which meets consumers' prior expectations between the company and its initiatives, will reinforce the business market position (Becker-Olsen, et. al., 2006). Crisis management is another important issue for public relations management to decrease the negative impact it may brought to the company.

As a result, this study takes different fit of CSR as background information to see how it interacts with different types of product-harm crises, which is an inevitable problem for any corporation.

The findings of this study provide public relations practitioners with several possible considerations when facing a product-harm crisis under certain CSR programs. One of the most important objectives for this study was to prevent or lessen negative reaction to an organization after a product-harm crisis. Therefore, when developing CSR programs, practitioners should first analyze the types of product-harm crisis they may encounter, because there might be a backlash effect while employing certain CSR fit programs. In addition, this study provides predictable consequences in corporate evaluation and purchase intention, which allows public relations managers to develop a well-planned crisis communication strategy after the product-harm crisis.

This study also suggests some additional insights for theoretical implications. First of all, the two main factors which can greatly impact corporate evaluation and purchase intention were integrated in the study. The integration can serve as a feasible stepping stone to investigate a congruent interaction between fit of CSR and product-harm crisis, which were conducted separately by previous research.

Second, based on this study, different fits of CSR programs do not have an impact on corporate evaluation and purchase intention while interacting with product-harm crisis. For instance, a company which has a high fit CSR program showed no difference in corporate evaluation with a low fit CSR program after encountering an internal, controllable product-harm crisis and an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (H1a & H2a). Similarly, different fits of CSR programs did not have an impact on

purchase intention after encountering an internal, controllable product-harm crisis and external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis (H1b & H2b).

Third, the findings of the current study come close to supporting the values of attribution theory and previous academic research for crisis communication (Weiner, 1986; Klein & Dawar, 2004; Lee, 2004) in purchase intention under high fit conditions. Weiner's (1986) causal dimensions depicted how the individual was influenced by organization's behaviors in a negative event. Moreover, Lee (2004) posited that an internal, controllable crisis may lead to higher responsibility and negative response of the corporation. Conversely, an external, uncontrollable crisis is more likely to gather less negative impressions of the company. This study showed the value and predictable consequence an internal, controllable product-harm crisis may cause for purchase intention compared with external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis under high fit CSR.

Lastly, this study confirmed the direct impact corporate evaluation has on purchase intention. The results yielded meaningful conclusions for public relations management literature gaining a positive perception of the company will lead to greater purchase intention. This can help consolidate public relations' position in both academic and practical field. Especially for theoretical implication, the findings support previous studies that a product-harm crisis can be a threat to an organization when consumers are evaluating a corporation. The reputational damage for a company can further lead to financial damage, which may also affect a company's survival (Coombs, & Holladay, 1996). Since finances are the foundation of a corporation, without a strong financial base, a company loses its competitive ability.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this study failed to find relevant and valuable insights to understand the interaction different fits of CSR programs have on corporate evaluation and purchase intention in different attributes of product-harm crisis, it is still important to recognize the limitations and future research directions of this study. First of all, this study suffers from the weakness of thesis experimental design by using college students as participants rather than consumers who are involved in a product-harm crisis, so it is difficult to generalize to larger publics. In addition, due to time restrictions, a limited number of participants were involved in this study. Therefore, future researchers might consider a larger sample population as study pool.

Second, it is possible that the experimental method of this study oversimplified the content of corporate CSR information and the nature of a product-harm crisis. In reality, CSR strategy is a sophisticated and long-term activity which is difficult to describe in detail in such a short paragraph. Moreover, in many situations, product-harm crisis is more complex and cannot be simply placed in one category. Thus, future research should conduct fit of CSR in a long-term situation, and interact with crisis situations in which the information is sufficient and ambiguous.

Another limitation related to this experimental design is the attitude of student participants. Since this study relied on student responses to the questionnaire, it is important to put students into a relevant situation to distinguish fit of CSR and the influence they felt for corporate evaluation and purchase intention after reading the product-harm crisis news story. Some of the students who participated in this study did not immerse themselves into the virtual scenario. Therefore, some of the responses were often on the midpoint of the 7-point Likert scales. For future research, studies

should manipulate conditions which can be easily experienced by participants.

Furthermore, a well developed control system should be adopted to rule out invalid questionnaires after reaching adequate participants.

Next, since this study employed an experiment to conduct the research, there is still a gap between reality and virtual settings. In an experimental setting, any other factors which may affect the study should be ruled out and each condition should be manipulated precisely. However, in the real world, a variety of other factors may influence perceptions of a company's evaluation and purchase intention. Therefore, there are certain difficulties to utilize this finding to ongoing business world.

In addition, in order to ensure the integrity of this study, a rigorous 2 (high fit CSR vs. low fit CSR) by 2 (internal vs. external) by 2 (controllable vs. uncontrollable) experiment was designed. A controllable product-harm crisis is unlikely to be the same when happened internally and externally. To be more specific, an internal, controllable product-harm crisis has a different catalyst than an external, controllable product-harm crisis. Consequently, it is unlikely that there will be two exact controllable incidents in two opposite surroundings. This may be one of the restrictions that narrow the gap between theoretical and empirical operation. For future research, this study provides a different approach for experimental design and can be a reference along with previous research which takes internal crisis as controllable and external crisis as uncontrollable.

Next, one of the most important limitations of this study is that the Power value conducted by ANOVA for the effect CSR fit, controllability and locus have on corporate evaluation and purchase intention was relatively low. For corporate evaluation, the highest power was the interaction between locus and controllability (Observed power =

0.353) and the lowest power was controllability (Observed power = 0.066). For purchase intention, the highest power was locus (Observed power = 0.352) and the lowest power was the interaction between CSR fit and controllability (Observed power = 0.052). Because of such low power, the interaction between CSR fit, controllability and locus were unable to interact statistically significantly.

Lastly, the findings of this study are considerably limited to a single company, which is the fictional Deucalion Spring Water Corporation. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to all industries. For future research, different industries may have different expectations for fit of CSR and a different impact for a product-harm crisis. It is important to understand the trends in each industry and the different corporate evaluation standards it may hold to influence purchase intention.

Table 5-1. Results for Each Hypothesis

Hypotheses		Results
H1a	A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.	Not supported
H1b	A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a more positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as external, uncontrollable.	Not supported
H2a	A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.	Not supported
H2b	A company that has a high fit CSR program is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention than a low fit CSR program when the product-harm crisis is perceived as internal, controllable.	Not supported
H3a	Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Not supported
H3b	Under low fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is internal and controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external and uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Not supported
H4a	Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive corporate evaluation versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Not supported
H4b	Under high fit of CSR program, a company's product-harm crisis which is perceived as internal, controllable is more likely to generate a less positive purchase intention versus an external, uncontrollable product-harm crisis.	Close to supported
H5	Responsibility the company holds based on the product-harm news story will be inversely related to corporate evaluation.	Supported
H6	Corporate evaluation will influence subsequent purchase intentions.	Supported

APPENDIX A
HIGH FIT CSR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Deucalion Spring Water Background

Corporate background information: Deucalion Spring Water was founded in France in 1839, and has become a well established name throughout the world. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's most famous mineral bottle water, Cristal, is harvested from a spring which is more than 3,700 feet high, and is located in one of France's national natural protected areas. With its high quality source and production, Deucalion Spring Waters are distributed in over 20 countries in all five continents. In 1866, the extraordinary qualities of the drinking water were touted as "cures" to promote health and youthfulness. The French Academy of Medicine recognized the benefits of Deucalion natural spring waters in 1879. Because its smooth taste and restorative qualities complement healthy French diets, Cristal mineral bottle water is served as the primary drinking water in 80% of the Michelin restaurants in the world.

Company corporate social responsibility program: Deucalion Spring Water has always been known for its corporate social responsibility efforts in water resource preservation and water environment protection. In 2003, Deucalion Spring Water established Water Protection Institutions in Cambodia and Brazil. In Cambodia, the company includes local people in projects designed to protect and restore wetland resources near their main source of water, the Tonle Sap Lake. In Brazil, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation focuses on the rainforest, watershed system, and protecting local animal biodiversity. Both of the institutions share experience and knowledge with the core participants and Deucalion's research team. Deucalion Spring Water

Corporation's ultimate goal is to make sure there is enough clean water for everyone, everyday.

APPENDIX B
LOW FIT CSR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Deucalion Spring Water Background

Corporate background information: Deucalion Spring Water was founded in France in 1839, and has become a well established name throughout the world. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's most famous mineral bottle water, Cristal, is harvested from a spring which is more than 3,700 feet high, and is located in one of France's national natural protected areas. With its high quality source and production, Deucalion Spring Waters are distributed in over 20 countries in all five continents. In 1866, the extraordinary qualities of the drinking water were touted as "cures" to promote health and youthfulness. The French Academy of Medicine recognized the benefits of Deucalion natural spring waters in 1879. Because its smooth taste and restorative qualities complement healthy French diets, Cristal mineral bottle water is served as the primary drinking water in 80% of the Michelin restaurants in the world.

Company corporate social responsibility program: Deucalion Spring Water cares about human rights. It particularly focuses on child labor and slave-like work of children. One of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's largest corporate social responsibility programs is to prevent abuse of child labor. Since 1990, Deucalion Spring Water Corporation has assisted a UK nonprofit organization to raise awareness about child labor situations and to ensure that this goes hand-in-hand with concrete protections for child workers. In 2002, Deucalion Spring Water successfully convinced a local government in Uganda to develop anti-child labor efforts by ensuring common standards for international corporations to prevent abuse of children. Deucalion

continues to monitor organizations in Uganda as part of its corporate social responsibility program.

APPENDIX C
INTERNAL AND CONTROLLABLE PRODUCT-HARM CRISIS

DEUCALION MINERAL WATER POISONING IN GAINESVILLE CAUSED 5 ILL

Angel Jang

Tuesday, March, 20, 2012

The New York Times

Gainesville, Florida – University of Florida’s Shands Hospital, has treated more than five students and local residents following the spring break in Gainesville this week. Three students were having symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea. Others suffered nausea and abdominal pain. The FDA received several phone calls starting on March 6. All callers had consumed Cristal mineral bottle water and described experiencing a “weird taste” while drinking it and symptoms of illness after drinking it.

After one week of investigation, the sample testing results of Cristal mineral bottle water shows that there were dissolvable unknown poisons contained in the water which needed further examination. “The water was poisoned during the production of Cristal mineral bottle water, and had slipped through the water quality test. It must have been done by someone who is familiar with company’s inside operations” said a spokesperson of the FDA.

Deucalion Spring Water Corporation responded early today and stated that they had previously received an anonymous e-mail which may had been written by an employee, who was scheduled to be laid off the following week. Although Deucalion Spring Water Corporation was aware of the e-mail, the company did not take any additional steps to protect their product.

The symptoms caused by this incident may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Severe conditions may include dehydration and shock. As the number of cases grows, the Office of Food Safety prompts consumers to avoid drinking Cristal mineral bottle water.

APPENDIX D
INTERNAL AND UNCONTROLLABLE PRODUCT-HARM CRISIS

DEUCALION MINERAL WATER POISONING IN GAINESVILLE CAUSED 5 ILL

Angel Jang

Tuesday, March, 20, 2012

The New York Times

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The initial investigation found that the suspect appeared to be one of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation’s disgruntled former employees, who were recently laid off by the company. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation had made a statement earlier this morning stating, “even until the last day of work, the criminal suspect showed no abnormal behavior or no sign that he would commit such a terrible crime.”

The symptoms caused by this incident may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Severe conditions may include dehydration and shock. As the number of cases grows, the Office of Food Safety prompts consumers to avoid drinking Cristal mineral bottle water.

APPENDIX E
EXTERNAL AND CONTROLLABLE PRODUCT-HARM CRISIS

DEUCALION MINERAL WATER POISONING IN GAINESVILLE CAUSED 5 ILL

Angel Jang

Tuesday, March, 20, 2012

The New York Times

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“Exactly what caused the water poisoning remains unclear”, said an FDA spokesperson on Monday morning, “however a criminal suspect was sighted by a supermarket manager injecting a clear liquid into the Cristal mineral bottled water.

Deucalion Spring Water Corporation responded early today and stated that they had previously received an anonymous e-mail which may had been written by an employee, who was scheduled to be laid off the following week. Although Deucalion Spring Water Corporation was aware of the e-mail, the company did not take any additional steps to protect their product.

The symptoms caused by this incident may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Severe conditions may include dehydration and shock. As the number of cases grows, the Office of Food Safety prompts consumers to avoid drinking Cristal mineral bottle water.

APPENDIX F
EXTERNAL AND UNCONTROLLABLE PRODUCT-HARM CRISIS

DEUCALION MINERAL WATER POISONING IN GAINESVILLE CAUSED 5 ILL

Angel Jang

Tuesday, March, 20, 2012

The New York Times

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“Exactly what caused the water poisoning remains unclear”, said an FDA spokesperson on Monday morning, “however a criminal suspect was sighted by a supermarket manager injecting a clear liquid into the Cristal mineral bottled water.

The initial investigation found that the suspect appeared to be one of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation’s disgruntled former employees, who were recently laid off by the company. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation had made a statement earlier this morning stating, “even until the last day of work, the criminal suspect showed no abnormal behavior or no sign that he would commit such a terrible crime.”

The symptoms caused by this incident may include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Severe conditions may include dehydration and shock. As the number of cases grows, the Office of Food Safety prompts consumers to avoid drinking Cristal mineral bottle water.

APPENDIX G
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions in this survey. Please circle the number that you believe best indicates your agreement with each item and your perception about Deucalion Spring Water Corporation and Deucalion mineral bottle water. When answering each question, think about your relationship with Deucalion Spring Water Corporation as a customer (previous or potential). If you strongly disagree with the provided statement, please circle “1” in the box. If you strongly agree with the provided statement, please circle “7” in the box.

Section 1.

Please evaluate your overall impression of the Deucalion Spring Water Corporation based on the corporation background and the news article you have read. (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q1. I don't like Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. I have a negative impression of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. I have confidence in Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q4. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. I doubt the quality of Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 2.

Please circle out the number you feel about Cristal mineral bottle waters after reading the background information and the news article. (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q1. I lost my confidence in Cristal mineral bottle water.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q2. Cristal mineral bottle water is trustworthy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q3. Cristal mineral bottle water is reliable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q4. I doubt the quality of Cristal mineral bottle water.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q5. I don't like Cristal mineral bottle water.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Q6. My overall evaluation about Cristal mineral bottle water is favorable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section3.

Please circle the number to best reflect your evaluation of the incident with the spring water based on the news article you have read. (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree	-----	Strongly Agree
Q1. Cristal mineral bottle water contamination happened inside the Deucalion Spring Water Corporation.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
Q2. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation could have prevented the Cristal mineral bottle water contamination.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
Q3. Deucalion Spring Water Corporation is not responsible for distributing contaminated Cristal mineral bottle water.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
Q4. Cristal mineral bottle water contamination happened outside the company in a supermarket.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7

Section 4.

Please evaluate the following based on Deucalion Spring Water Corporation's background information and the news story you read. (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree	-----	Strongly Agree
Q1. This company has program to help improve the environment.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
Q2. This company's Corporate Social Responsibility program is related to water production safety.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7
Q3. This company has a great concern for children.	1	2	3 4 5 6 7

Q4. This company is working to reduce abuse of children labor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Section 5. Demographics

Q1: Gender Male Female

Q2: Age _____

Q3: What is your current level of education?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior or post-baccalaureate
- Graduate Student
- Other: _____ (please specify)

Q4: Would you describe yourself as:

- American Indian/ Native American
- Asian
- Black/ African American
- Hispanic/ Latino
- White/ Caucasian
- Pacific Islander
- Other

Q5: What is your UFID _____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX H INFORMED CONSENT

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of different corporate social responsibility programs on consumer's corporate evaluation and purchase intention after a product-harm crisis.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

Upon reading the description about the study and agreeing to participate, you will need to read a background description and a news article. Then you will be asked to complete a questionnaire about a company.

Time required:

15 minutes

Risks and Benefits:

There are no anticipated physical, psychological, or economic risks involved with this study. There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. However, your participation in the study will increase knowledge about corporate social responsibility.

Compensation:

There is no financial compensation for participating in this research.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. The list connecting your name and UFID to this number will be kept in a locked file. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Angel Jang, Graduate Student, Department of Public Relations, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida.

Dr. Mary Ann T. Ferguson, Professor, Department of Public Relations, College of Journalism and Communications, University of Florida.

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Angel Jang pursued her Master of Arts in Mass Communication from the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida from 2010 to 2012. She specializes in public relations, and her research interests focus on corporate social responsibility, corporate philanthropy and crisis communication. Before attending the University of Florida, she received her Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication in Shih Hsin University, Taiwan.