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Dongjun Rew

Michael Minor

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Consumer resilience and consumer attitude towards traumatic events

Dongjun Rew, *The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA**

Michael Minor, *The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore consumer resilience's role and effect on the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer attitude. There is little research on consumer resilience in the marketing disciplines even though the relevance of the construct has increased in other fields of study. To explore the role and effect of resilience, this study developed hypothetical conditions, in which this study assumes that each respondent is exposed to news of a traumatic incident or an experience, such as a terrorist attack or gun violence. Confirmatory factor analysis is conducted to verify each construct's validity, and partial least squares structural equation modelling is performed to verify the model fit. Ordinary least squares (OLS) and path analyses are employed to test each hypothesis in this study. The findings show that CSR has a positive association with consumer attitudes and resilience. More importantly, the findings show that consumer resilience helps consumers improve their attitudes, and consumer attitudes are affected differently by the level of resilience.

Keywords Traumatic events, Consumer resilience, Consumer attitudes, and Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

*Correspondence details and biographies for the authors are located at the end of the article.

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INTRODUCTION

The cities of Munich, Orlando, Boston, Paris, Barcelona, and London share two things in common - they all receive millions of tourists each year and they all have suffered from terrorist attacks. Terrorism has taken the lives of many, including tourists. Orlando, for example, suffered a terrorist attack that left 49 dead and 53 wounded (Ellis, Frantz, Karimi, & McLaughlin, 2016). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, the word "terrorism" has been ranked as one of the most searched words on the Internet, even though international terrorist attacks go back to the early 1960s (Bird, Blomberg, & Hess, 2008). Nonetheless, the September 11 terrorist attacks became a traumatic point of reference for many when comprehending international terror. According to the Global Terrorism Database (GTD, 2018), international terrorist attacks that targeted people randomly have occurred in many areas around the world, including in the cities of Paris, Barcelona, and London (in 2017), Munich (in 2016), and Orlando and Boston (in 2015). A previous study suggested that crime, violence, and terrorist attacks negatively affect consumer decision making and consumption (Ryan, 1993).

In 2015, the Association for Consumer Research held a special session on consumer well-being, in which it highlighted the concept of consumer resilience, which is a crucial factor in improving the level of well-being. The American Psychological Association defines the concept of individual resilience as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, and threats, as well as other significant sources of stress, such as problems related to family and relationships, health, work, and finances. In other words, consumer resilience is the ability of an individual to bounce back from stress and traumatic memory (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Especially in unstable market conditions, consumer resilience may play a relevant role, not only in the formation of consumer attitudes, but also in improving consumer well-being.

In particular, information about terrorism has an enormous influence over the entire economic system, and the spread of such information is further aided by social networking systems (Czinkota, Knight, Liesch, & Steen, 2010). In the services sector, specifically in the tourism and leisure industry, consumers may be sensitive to external shocks, such as unemployment, the cost of fuel, foreign exchange rates, and terrorism (Mitchell & Dacin, 1996). Thus, in uncertain market conditions, the tourism and leisure industry should pay more attention to informational factors, such as terrorism, that could undermine consumer attitudes and decisions. Thus, it is important for consumer research to look for a way of helping to better understand the concept of consumer resilience, its influence on consumer attitudes and decisions, especially in executing successful consumption experiences (Ball & Lambertson, 2015).

However, in the marketing disciplines, there is little research on consumer resilience and its relationship with behavioural constructs such as consumer attitudes or satisfaction. In the same vein, the role of companies has been relevant also, because companies' strategic and social marketing actions may be helpful for consumers who have already experienced traumatic events or information influencing their decisions and attitudes. Despite the relevance of marketing strategy including corporate social responsibility (CSR), there has been little investigation of marketing actions that can help consumers increase the levels of their resilience, influencing consumers to change their mindsets or attitudes.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the effect of CSR on consumer attitudes, and the role of consumer resilience in the relationship between CSR and consumer attitudes, especially in the given setting where consumers have experienced or been exposed to information about traumatic events such as terrorist attacks and gun violence. For the purpose of this study, the following research questions will be addressed:

- Does CSR improve consumer resilience and attitudes when consumers are exposed to information about traumatic events, such as terrorist attacks and shootings?
- How can consumer resilience work in helping consumers to form their attitudes towards companies' marketing actions, especially towards CSR for helping local communities that have suffered from traumatic events?

Through finding answers for the research questions, this study can make theoretical and practical contributions by suggesting that CSR is not only a strategy for promoting consumers' positive recognition of a firm, but also a firm's marketing and philanthropic effort that helps individuals and communities, and that eventually affects the formation of consumer attitudes and a firm's social image. More importantly, this study suggests the theoretical and practical importance of the concept of consumer resilience as a crucial influence on the formation of consumer attitudes when consumers are exposed to information about, or experience a tragic event, but also on maintaining or improving consumer well-being. The remainder of this paper provides a literature review, describes the development of the research hypotheses and framework, describes the results of the analyses, presents the conclusions, and suggests further research agendas based on the study's limitations.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Traumatic events

A traumatic event is defined as a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that affects someone emotionally (Faulkner, 2001; NIMH, 2017). These situations may be natural, or caused by people, i.e., man-made accidents, which can include gun violence, car accidents, terrorism, and crime (Ursano, Fullerton, Weisaeth, & Raphael, 2007). While natural disasters are external variables for which responses can be planned, man-made disasters or anthropogenic hazards are out of control (Ritchie, 2004). The impact of both types of disaster on daily life has been exaggerated (Faulkner, 2001).

Hurricanes Camille (1969), Andrew (1992), Charley (2004), Katrina (2005), Sandy (2012), and Harvey (2016) have been some of the worst in US history. They destroyed the livelihoods of people living in the areas affected. Many cities in the world have also suffered from terrorist attacks, such as Munich, Orlando, Boston, Paris, Barcelona, London, and Las Vegas. These cities which have been subjected to traumatic events share two things in common - they receive millions of tourists each year and they have been targets of terrorist attacks that have taken the lives of many. These traumatic events cannot be systemically controlled even though they can be anticipated and planned for. These external events might influence consumer behaviours including consumption, attitudes, intentions, or decision-making (Ryan, 1993).

Consumer attitudes

In this risky market setting, consumer decision-making has become important because it is a key factor that enables marketers or companies to understand what consumers want. It also helps companies comprehend how they can satisfy consumers and how consumers behave in the market (Schmitt, Brakus, & Zarantonello, 2015; Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). Individuals' lives are structured through their experiences. Those experiences come from a set of interactions with companies, products, and services, or other consumers (Verhoef et al., 2009). In their lives, individuals may encounter both good and bad experiences as a result of interacting with internal and external factors that directly affect their well-being. Thus, to gain a deep understanding of consumers and what they want, it is important to understand how experiences affect attitudes. This is because attitude is based on an aggregation of experiences, which in turn explains consumer life (Gilovich, Kumar, & Jampol, 2015; Schmitt et al., 2015).

Consumer attitude is a consistent construct in decision-making behaviour theories, such as the theory of reasoned action by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), the theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1985, 1991), and the theory of user acceptance by Davis (1989) and Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989). As a construct, attitude is significantly correlated with individual behaviour and is influenced by various internal and external factors, such as personal identity, moral obligation, social regulation and norms, education, income, social class, religion, and past behaviour (Elen, D'Heer, Geuens, & Vermeir, 2013). Accordingly, attitude is a summary assessment of an object (Ajzen, 2001; Malhotra, 2005). In particular, an individual's attitude refers to the subjective values determined by interaction and strong beliefs, which can be associated with an object perceived as having relevant attributes. In other words, an individual's attitude is based on the beliefs that are readily accessible in memory, and that memory is determined by experiences that are related to the object. Thus, an individual's experience influences that individual's attitude.

In summary, attitude plays an important role as an antecedent of behaviour and of a sequence of influences. Prottas (2008) verified that attitude comes from the perceived pattern between words and deeds. Attitude is also considered to be the step preceding an individual's actual behaviour, and is the result of an individual's perceptions. Prottas's study empirically tested individuals' good ethics and good business practices as internal and external factors that influence attitude. Therefore, as a significant construct, consumer attitude is structured by different factors, including internal and external ones, and the constructed attitude influences an individual's intentions and behaviour. This study considers consumer attitude as a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's life.

Relationship between consumer resilience and attitude

Consumer resilience may be a key aspect of individual well-being (Scoloveno, 2014). Southwick and Charney (2012) defined consumer resilience as an individual's ability to bounce back from stress and trauma. Reivich and Shatté (2003), however, held a different view of the concept of resilience. They described resilience as a mindset that enables individuals to seek out new experiences and to recognise life as a work in progress. In other words, the concept of resilience includes not only the physical ability of people to deal with and recover from traumatic situations, but also their attitudes towards events that happened in their lives. Accordingly, this study recognises an individual's resilience as the ability to control one's attitude when faced with a traumatic experience or circumstance. According to Reivich and Shatté (2003), there

are different factors measuring the concept of resilience, such as emotion regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching-out. Based on the factors, the overall resilience instrument developed by Reivich and Shatté (2003) indicates an individual's level of resilience. A lower resilience quotient score illustrates a lower level of resilience and vice-versa.

Through the process of adapting to and overcoming outcomes of innumerable choices, consumers maximise and optimise their experiences of consumption and utility. In the process, consumer resilience enables consumers to overcome bad experiences from their past choices and actions, and to change their attitudes towards life from negative to positive (Glandon, 2015). Thus, resilience can help the consumer to determine his or her relationship towards a firm, as well as to overcome negative information about the firm (Eisingerich, Rubera, Seifert, & Bhardwaj, 2011). When consumers are familiar with a specific brand or company and they are exposed to negative information about that brand or company, they can resist such negative information and maintain their preference for, and loyalty to, the brand or company through a higher level of resilience. In other words, a group of people who have a higher level of resilience can easily adapt and overcome a negative experience with a brand or company and show a higher level of loyalty to that brand or company. Therefore, consumer resilience may play a key role in determining consumer attitude towards objects when consumers are exposed to a certain type of information. Therefore, a set of research hypotheses is formulated as follows:

H1a: *Consumer resilience positively affects consumer attitude towards companies, especially hotels supporting a local community which has suffered from traumatic events.*

H1b: *There is a difference in attitude between a group with a higher resilience level and a group with a lower resilience level.*

Relationships among corporate social responsibility, consumer resilience, and attitude

CSR has been highlighted as a marketing and management strategy across industries, especially in uncertain market conditions. Large companies substantially invest more in CSR (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006), because CSR has been recognised not only as an appropriate endeavour but also as a source of competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Managers can distinguish their companies from those of rivals through CSR. Firms can obtain a competitive advantage when employing CSR strategies (Smith, 2003). In other words, CSR is strategically associated with a firm's ability and competitive advantage to help consumers distinguish its brand, product, or service from those of its rivals and consequently, it allows a company to increase financial outcomes.

In today's business environment, CSR plays an increasingly important role, especially in the tourism industry, which is more susceptible to external events including terrorism and gun violence, than other industries are. CSR is prominent in the tourism industry because the industry depends heavily upon environmental, cultural, and social resources (Calveras, 2015). Based on the strategic point of view of CSR, a hotel can differentiate its service and product from those of its rivals in the competitive tourism industry. Furthermore, this strategic action has become increasingly important in the tourism industry because of global risks, such as terrorist attacks and gun violence. For instance, a hotel can take advantage of strategic

CSR by helping a local community suffering the aftereffects of traumatic events. This strategic marketing effort helps consumers recognise how much a hotel is committed to supporting and aiding communities. This marketing action may change consumers' initial negative or neutral image of the company into a positive one. Thus, CSR is an important factor that enables firms to satisfy consumers and provide them with a good experience (Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, & Saaedi, 2015). This strategic action enables a hotel to improve its reputation, especially in the context of environmental concerns. In other words, strategic CSR affects a consumer's attitude towards a hotel's image and reputation. Therefore, this study develops a research hypothesis as follows;

H2: *CSR positively affects consumer attitudes towards companies, especially hotels supporting a local community which has suffered from traumatic events.*

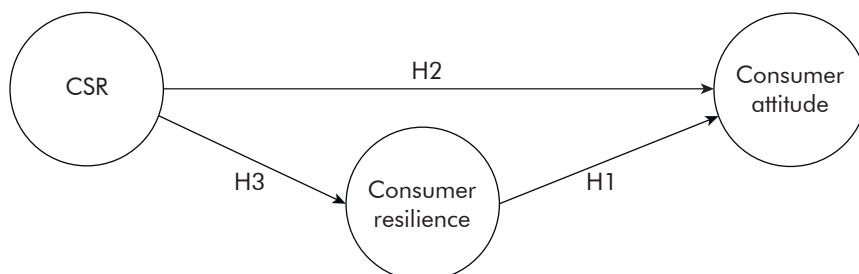
As an important concept in this study, resilience is an individual's or organisation's ability to quickly recover after experiencing tragic events, such as violent threats or serious accidents (Reivich & Shatté, 2003). Resilience, as an inherent ability, helps individuals to return to the original point or normal status which prevailed, before they were subjected to the traumatic event. Based on components including optimism, facing fear, altruism, religion and spirituality, social support, role models, training, brain fitness, cognitive and emotional flexibility, and purpose of life (Southwick & Charney, 2012), resilience can be improved through a consumer's intention or willingness. For instance, Reivich and Shatté (2003) argued that resilience is the capacity to respond in healthy and productive ways when faced with adversity or trauma. This capacity is a given ability in consumers, thus this inherent capacity enables them to find ways to fulfill their needs and wants. Social support is important to develop the capacity. An entire network of family, friends, and community, helps consumers who have experienced a traumatic event to recover from their pain (Southwick & Charney, 2012). Socially responsible marketing action can improve resilience because it helps consumers return rapidly to their normal life after they have been exposed to the traumatic events. We argue that appropriate CSR as a strategic marketing action may enable consumers to recover from a negative experience, therefore, this study proposes a research hypothesis as follows:

H3: *CSR positively affects consumer resilience.*

Theoretical research framework

The research framework in Figure 1 explains the theoretical relationships among CSR, consumer attitudes, and consumer resilience. In this study, the model shows

FIGURE 1 Theoretical framework



the relationship between CSR and consumer attitude and the role of consumer resilience in the relationship between these two constructs. Each relationship in the model is developed based on the existing literature. Each arrow indicates a research hypothesis in the study.

METHOD

Data

To conduct this study, samples were randomly selected in the South Texas area which has suffered from traumatic events such as Hurricane Harvey, which affected Houston and southern areas of Texas, and massive gun violence in the San Antonio area. We gave respondents the specific scenario which affected their particular area. The scenario included the condition or assumption that the respondents are hard workers supporting their families and have not had time for a vacation or rest during the last three years. The scenario also included the condition that the respondents can finally have a vacation with their families. Under these conditions, the respondents were asked to choose their desired vacation place from a list of famous ones, such as Munich, Orlando, Boston, Paris, Barcelona, and London.

To increase the possibility of achieving the purpose of this study, we provided the scenario including the important information that the location they had chosen was threatened by a terrorist attack. They then answered questionnaires with items about CSR, consumer resilience, and consumer attitudes towards the hotel in their chosen place of vacation, which suffered a terrorist attack. The study was made up of 49% males, and 51% females. The ages of those sampled were highly skewed towards the 20-29 age group because sampling was conducted in areas near universities. The median education level was a college degree. A total of 250 surveys were administered. After removing invalid data including missing values, we finally had 194 responses as the valid sample for this study. The descriptive statistics are provided in Table 1.

Measurement

To measure consumer resilience, this study referred to the studies of Reivich and Shatté (2003) and Southwick and Charney (2012). Reivich and Shatté measured resilience according to seven dimensions - emotion regulation, impulse control, optimism, causal analysis, empathy, self-efficacy, and reaching-out - and developed 56 statements. Southwick and Charney estimated the concept according to 10 dimensions, namely, optimism, facing fear as an adaptive response, moral compass - as in doing what is right, religion and spirituality, social support, role models, training

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics of sample demographics

| Age | | Gender | | Education | | Ethnicity | |
|---------|-----|--------|----|---------------|-----|------------------|-----|
| 20-29 | 105 | Male | 95 | < High school | 10 | African American | 12 |
| 30-39 | 12 | Female | 99 | College | 169 | Asian | 16 |
| 40-49 | 22 | | | Graduate | 15 | Caucasian | 42 |
| 50-59 | 35 | | | | | Hispanic | 123 |
| Over 60 | 20 | | | | | Other | 1 |
| Total | 194 | | | | | | |

as a form of physical fitness and strengthening, brain fitness, cognitive and emotional flexibility, and the meaning and purpose of life. However, there is a statistical issue in measuring the concept of consumer resilience in that its reliability and validity measurements were low. Thus, this study employed the items developed by Connor and Davidson (2003) to suit the purpose of this study. A total of 10 statements (e.g., “I am able to adapt to change”, “I can deal with whatever comes”, “I try to see the humorous side of problems”) were included in the survey to evaluate the concept of resilience.

To measure CSR, this study adapted the set of questionnaires developed by Jamali and Mirshak (2007). CSR contains four different pillars, namely, economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (social and public) responsibilities (Carroll, 1979; Wood, 1991). Thus, this study modified Jamali and Mirshak’s (2007) questionnaires based on these four dimensions, such as ‘The company is committed to well-defined ethics principles’, ‘The company ensures that their employees act in a legal manner’, ‘The company plans for their long-term success as well as society’, and ‘The company plays a role in our society that goes beyond the mere generation of profits’.

To measure consumer attitude, this study defined the concept of attitude as a comprehensive summary and assessment of an object, including a product, service, and brand (Ajzen, 2001; Malhotra, 2005). Therefore, we measured the construct with six items, developed by Richins (1983): ‘Many businesses of this hotel try to take advantage of customers’, ‘Most of the hotel’s products/services are not as durable as they should be’, ‘In general, I am satisfied with most of the products/services of this hotel’, ‘What products/services claim to do and what they actually do are two different things’, ‘The business of the hotel has helped raise the standard of living in our community’.

TABLE 2 Measurement values and factor loading

| | Cronbach's α | AVE | CR | KMO | ATT | CSR | CRL |
|-------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ATT1 | | | | | .700 | | |
| ATT2 | | | | | .656 | | |
| ATT3 | .731 | 0.513 | 0.825 | 0.754 | .738 | | |
| ATT4 | | | | | .720 | | |
| ATT5 | | | | | .762 | | |
| CSR1 | | | | | | .761 | |
| CSR2 | .811 | 0.582 | 0.848 | 0.847 | | .768 | |
| CSR3 | | | | | | .724 | |
| CSR4 | | | | | | .798 | |
| CRL1 | | | | | | | .863 |
| CRL2 | | | | | | | .859 |
| CRL3 | | | | | | | .877 |
| CRL4 | | | | | | | .775 |
| CRL5 | .878 | 0.692 | 0.957 | 0.888 | | | .868 |
| CRL6 | | | | | | | .864 |
| CRL7 | | | | | | | .767 |
| CRL8 | | | | | | | .866 |
| CRL9 | | | | | | | .858 |
| CRL10 | | | | | | | .702 |

Note: ATT = consumer attitude, CSR = corporate social responsibility, CRL = consumer resilience, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted, and KMO = Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test

To verify each construct in this study, we employed confirmatory factor analysis. The summary of each construct's reliability and validity is provided in Table 2. Each construct fulfilled the reliability standard of each instrument measured by composite reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), while the Cronbach's alpha of the attitude construct was relatively lower than those of other constructs. The other indicators of validity and reliability are statistically significant, as shown in Table 2.

RESULTS

Model fit test

To test the model fit, we employed partial linear squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) by Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011). This is because of the sample size for this study. PLS-SEM is better for a study having a relatively small sample size ($n < 300$) than covariance-based structural equation modelling (CB-SEM, Hair, Hult et al., 2015; Hair, Ringle et al., 2011). Overall, the model fit in this study is statistically sufficient and significant, that is, there is a good model fit. According to Hu and Bentler (1998), the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) measuring the mean absolute value of the covariance residuals must be less than 0.10 or 0.08 for the model to have a good fit ($SRMR = 0.046$). The SRMR of this research model is statistically significant. Through a test, this study has confirmed the independence of each variable in the model, indicating that each variable works independently in estimating a dependent variable (Aibinu & Al-Lawati, 2010). RMS_theta is the root mean squared residual covariance matrix of the outer model residuals. It evaluates the degree to which the outer model residuals correlate, and thus its value should be between 0 and 1 to indicate good model fit. Based on this indicator, the model fit (0.047) is appropriate in this study. Thus, an RMS_theta below 0.12 can be considered as an indication of good model fit (Henseler et al., 2013). Normed fit index (NFI), developed by Bentler and Bonett (1980), is calculated as 1 minus the value of the proposed model divided by the value of the null model. The NFI of this study fulfills the criteria that the NFI should be between 0 and 1; the closer the NFI is to 1, the better the model fit.

Hypotheses tests

This study tested each hypothesis using ordinary least squares (OLS) as a simple regression analysis. As expected, all relationships were found to be significant. H1a suggested that consumer resilience promotes the formation of a positive consumer attitude, based on the positive relationship between resilience and attitude. Based on the statistical test, a positive relationship was also found between consumer resilience and attitude, and, as expected, resilience promotes the formation of positive attitudes. H1b proposed that there is a difference in attitude between high and low resilience groups. As shown in Table 3, we verified a significant difference in attitude between groups, which indicated that the higher resilience group has a more positive attitude under the specific conditions in this study's scenarios. Therefore, both H1a and H1b were supported.

H2 proposed that consumers form a positive attitude through CSR, a form of strategic marketing communication. The results of the statistical method, shown in

TABLE 3 Regression results for resilience in CSR and consumer attitude

| Groups | Model | Coef.(b) | Std.Err | t-value | p-value | Findings |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Low-Resilience | CSR-ATT | 0.488 | 0.095 | 5.101 | 0.000* | Not mediated |
| | CSR-CRL | 0.028 | 0.081 | 1.852 | 0.0700 | |
| | CRL-ATT | 0.115 | 0.163 | 2.071 | 0.048* | |
| | Intercept | 2.501 | 0.573 | 4.364 | 0.0000 | |
| | CSR | 0.493 | 0.096 | 5.143 | 0.000* | |
| | CRL | 0.146 | 0.141 | 1.036 | 0.3040 | |
| High-Resilience | CSR-ATT | 0.353 | 0.092 | 2.320 | 0.034* | Fully mediated |
| | CSR-CRL | 0.127 | 0.053 | 2.879 | 0.019* | |
| | CRL-ATT | 0.336 | 0.185 | 2.113 | 0.043* | |
| | Intercept | 1.886 | 0.794 | 2.374 | 0.0200 | |
| | CSR | 0.186 | 0.181 | 1.028 | 0.3070 | |
| | CRL | 0.330 | 0.095 | 3.462 | 0.001* | |

Note: *p** significant at < 0.05

Table 4, indeed support the hypothesis that CSR helps consumers form a positive attitude when they are exposed to news about a traumatic incident, for example, gun violence or a terrorist attack in the place where they want to take a vacation with their families. Meanwhile, H3 proposed that CSR improves the level of consumer resilience. The results, shown in Table 4, did not support this hypothesis that CSR has a positive impact on consumer resilience, therefore, only H1 and H2 were supported. The results of all statistical indicators are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4 Summary of findings

| Model | S.E. | Corr.Coe. | t-value | p-value | Supported (Y/N) |
|---------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------------|
| H1: CRL à ATT | 0.057 | 0.115 | 2.001 | 0.042* | Y |
| H2: CSR à ATT | 0.048 | 0.369 | 7.603 | 0.000* | Y |
| H3: CSR à CRL | 0.068 | 0.098 | 1.487 | 0.1390 | N |

Note: *p** significant at < 0.05, S.E. = standard error, and Corr.Coe. = correlation coefficient

TABLE 5 The results of the test for the mediating effect of consumer resilience

| | Std.Coe. | S.E. | t | Sig. | Finding |
|-------------|----------|-------|-------|--------|---------------------|
| H1: CRLàATT | 0.057 | 0.115 | 2.001 | 0.042* | No mediating effect |
| H2: CSRàATT | 0.048 | 0.369 | 7.603 | 0.000* | |
| H3: CSRàCRL | 0.068 | 0.098 | 1.487 | 0.1390 | |
| Intercept | 1.845 | 0.261 | 7.057 | 0.0000 | |
| CRL | .080 | .051 | 1.474 | 0.1420 | |
| CSR | .362 | .049 | 7.433 | 0.000* | |

Note: *p** significant at < 0.05

Mediating Effect of Consumer Resilience

To answer the second research question - finding the role of consumer resilience in the relationship between CSR and consumer attitude - this study employed two methods. The first, Baron and Kenny's (1986) method, tests the mediating effect of a variable on a relationship between two other variables. This method assumes that each relationship described in H1, H2, and H3 is statistically significant. However, according to the results shown in Tables 4 and Table 5, this study did not meet these assumptions. Thus, we did not find a mediating effect of consumer resilience on the relationship between CSR and consumer attitude because the coefficient of resilience was not significant when we conducted multiple regression to determine the mediating effect.

Additional analysis of the mediating effect of resilience

To verify the effect of consumer resilience on attitudes in the different groups (H1b), and to establish the role of consumer resilience as a mediator in the relationship between CSR and consumer attitudes, this study employed path analysis, which is a way to provide estimates of the magnitude and significance of hypothesised connections between sets of variables (Hair et al., 2015). Multiple regression analysis has been used to verify path coefficients, which indicates the magnitude of connections between variables, between two groups. We used the average score of resilience of all participants to divide them into two groups (mean = 3.94). As shown in Table 3, it was verified that the higher resilience group is more likely to have a mediating effect of resilience on the relationship between CSR and consumer attitude than the lower resilience group. Thus, this study confirmed that there is a difference of resilience between the two groups and found the level of resilience that mediates the relationship between CSR and consumer attitudes, because both path coefficients of CSR and consumer resilience are statistically significant, as shown in Table 3.

CONCLUSIONS

Consumer daily life is a continuous process of decision making. In uncertain market conditions, the decision-making process is most likely important for consumers and the quality of their lives. In this vein, it is important for consumer research to understand how consumers have been behaving to improve the quality of their lives. Thus, this study aimed to find the role of companies in the process of improving the quality of consumers' lives. This study concentrated on the impact of marketing action, CSR, on forming consumer attitudes in uncertain market conditions. To understand in depth how to influence consumer attitudes, this study focused on one aspect of a consumer's inherent abilities, known as consumer resilience, that helps consumers to return quickly to their original or normal lives before they suffered from a traumatic experience. Based on the findings, this study has several important contributions for both consumer research and marketing practitioners.

First of all, the results of this study have several theoretical contributions. This study investigated consumer resilience and CSR as antecedents to the formation of consumer attitudes, and through a survey that involved experimental conditions, this study verified that each of the constructs, that is, resilience and CSR, has a valid and significant impact on consumer attitudes towards a company conducting CSR for a

local community which has suffered from a traumatic disaster. As expected, CSR has a positive impact on consumer attitudes, which indicates that CSR plays an important role as an antecedent when a consumer is exposed to news of a traumatic event and forms an attitude towards a company having CSR as a marketing strategy. Thus, CSR is an important marketing strategy to change attitudes from negative to positive, and to improve consumer attitudes, especially at the moment when consumers decide their attitudes in the given scenario that they are exposed to traumatic information about the destination for their family vacation.

Second, this study focused on the role and effect of consumer resilience on the relationship between CSR and consumer attitudes. Although the constructs of validity and reliability were not measured as highly as we expected, the statistical indicators were within the statistically significant range. This is because we explored the idea that the construct of consumer resilience plays an important role as a positive antecedent to the formation of consumer attitudes. More importantly, studies of Reivich and Shatté (2003) and Southwick and Charney (2012) have theoretically suggested that an individual having a higher level of resilience is more adaptable and flexible in traumatic circumstances. This study empirically found that in the given scenario, consumers form their attitudes depending on the level of their resilience; the group with a high level of resilience showed that resilience mediates when a group of people form their attitudes towards a company conducting CSR to help a local community which has suffered from traumatic events and vice versa. Thus, we can argue that consumer resilience is a theoretically relevant factor that affects consumer attitudes.

Managerial application

Nowadays, CSR has been recognised as an important business strategy, especially in a market in which there is a high expectation of a company to participate in social actions. The results of this study showed how CSR plays an important role in the process of changing and deciding consumer attitudes, especially in the tourism industry. As services are characterised as intangible and dependent on a mutually beneficial interaction between customers and providers (Lovell & Young, 1979; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985, 1988; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), companies in the services sector must consider how efficiently and effectively they interact with their customers. Through consistent marketing communications, companies can increase the level of interaction, and consequently increase customer loyalty or reliability (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). Customers are a relevant motivation for service companies to improve their value and performance. Thus, CSR must be considered not only as a business strategy that helps companies improve their firm performance but also as an obligation to customers and society.

The findings of this study can also help managers determine how companies can improve consumer attitude and resilience. Consumer attitude is an important concept for managers because it is a barometer for whether consumers will buy a product or service, and for whether they will engage in additional behaviours including word of mouth, loyalty, and satisfaction. Choi and Choi (2014) argued that customer experience based on affection has a positive impact on both customer loyalty and positive word of mouth. In other words, consumer attitudes, which are based on experience and information, play an important role as a crucial indicator of consumers' decision-making processes, such as whether or not they purchase or share a product or service based on what they have experienced with that product

or service. Therefore, managers in the services sector, especially in the tourism industry, must consider how to help improve consumers' attitudes, including how to effectively provide information about firms' products or services, and how to ensure consumers' positive experiences with the products and services, through marketing communication channels.

Moreover, given a market environment threatened by traumatic events, such as terrorist attacks, gun violence, and natural disasters, managers must be mindful of consumer attributes, including consumer resilience, to effectively and consistently improve consumer attitudes, which in turn play a role in their decision making about where they want to go for vacation. This is because consumer attitudes are based on external and internal stimuli and experiences (Ajzen, 2001; Malhotra, 2005). Hence, it is important to consistently provide information about companies/services/products/brands through marketing communication channels, because the information helps consumers form their attitudes and decide their behaviours even if they are affected by a traumatic event, as shown in the results of this study. The study accordingly suggests that managers can not only enhance the level of consumer resilience by including a special programme for consumers as part of their firms' social responsibility efforts, but also ensure a good consumer experience in the vacation destination or facility they manage, by developing a special programme, such as informational travel courses, for visiting groups and individuals.

Limitation and future research agendas

This study has some limitations. First, the we conducted to determine the impacts of CSR and consumer resilience on the formation of consumer attitudes was cross-sectional. Thus, longitudinal studies would make a valuable contribution to the literature by determining how each construct changes. This is because consumer attitudes and resilience are not fixed, but rather fluctuate according to time and environment. Second, we only tested consumer resilience's role in and effect on the relationship between CSR and consumer attitude. Adding other variables, such as familiarity with product, service, or brand, can also make significant contributions to consumer research by finding how the variables work in the process of forming consumer attitudes, intention, and behaviour. Lastly, this study had a sufficiently large sample, but most of the participants were young adults aged 20 to 29. Including more respondents from a wider range of age groups would help researchers investigate meaningful differences among age groups.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Dongjun Rew is a PhD candidate of marketing at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He received his MS in Statistics and BS in Economics at Washington State University in Pullman, WA. He also earned his BBA and MBA at Dankook University in Seoul, South Korea. His research interests are consumer behaviour and consumer neuroscience. His doctoral dissertation is about mapping the consumer decision-making process based on rival consumer decision making theories by analysing fMRI data.

Corresponding author: Dongjun Rew, Department of Marketing, Robert C Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, Texas 78539, USA.

E dongjun.rew01@utrgv.edu

Michael S. Minor is Professor of Marketing at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. He has served as the Department Chair of Marketing. He received his PhD in Political Science at Vanderbilt University and his bachelor's degree in History and Political Science at the University of North Carolina. He has published many articles in the *Journal of Services Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*, *European Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising*, and *Journal of Business Research*. His current research interests are consumer behaviour and consumer neuroscience.

Dr Michael S. Minor, Department of Marketing, Robert C Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, 1201 West University Drive, Edinburg, Texas 78539, USA.

E michael.minor@utrgv.edu