

Is Corporate Social Responsibility Good For You?

- Through a reputation for CSR, firms signal a stakeholder orientation. Consumers use this CSR information to make inferences about health attributes of products.
- Across four experiments, we find that consumers infer higher nutrition content from firms with strong CSR reputations. These effects are mitigated by the perceived motive behind the CSR. The results are generalizable across multiple product categories and general population samples.
- Although consumers are often motivated to make healthy choices, the use of corporate CSR information to infer health attributes may lead some consumers to unknowingly make unhealthy choices.

Results from Study 1 demonstrate that consumers, erroneously, overestimate health properties of products marketed by firms with strong reputations for CSR.

	Calories	Fat	Transfat	Sodium	Taste
High CSR	177	5.4	3.7	65	5.1
Low CSR	228	8.3	2.0	75	5.9

The four studies in the series began in the Summer of 2012 and were completed through the Fall. A special session around the topic was delivered at the 2012 Association of Consumer Research conference in Vancouver. The findings and study design were very well received. The manuscript is currently under review at the *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*.

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