

# How does corporate social irresponsibility shape reputation and consumer advocacy? A moderated-mediation approach

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## **Abstract**

This study has a twofold objective: first, to examine how the two components of retailer reputation, sympathy and competence, mediate the relationship between corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) awareness and consumer advocacy; second, to show how three tenets of CSI (harm, blame, and victim complicity) moderate this relationship. The evasion of Sunday trading restrictions by grocery retail chains comprise the research context. To collect data, a large survey (N = 991) among consumers was conducted. The findings help to advance the CSI and retailing literature. Specifically, they show that consumer knowledge of a law evasion by a retailer reduces reputation for sympathy, whereas its effect on reputation for competence can be positive. The negative impact of CSI awareness is strengthened by harm perception and the blame attributed to a retailer. Additionally, reputation for sympathy fully mediates the effect of CSI on consumer advocacy, suggesting that people tend to support a socially irresponsible retailer, provided their sympathy toward it is not damaged.

**Subject Areas:** *Cognition, Retailing*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics