

Moral Compass of Brands: How Sustainability Influences Consumer Emotions

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Abstract:

The study examines how moral emotions are influenced by sustainable and inappropriate corporate behavior. Positive CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities (e.g. environmental protection) promote the moral emotion of elevation, which increases the intention to buy products of the company. CSI (Corporate Social Irresponsibility) activities (e.g. environmental damage) elicit negative emotions such as disgust and contempt, which reduce consumers' purchase intention. The hypotheses that CSR promotes positive emotions and CSI negative emotions were confirmed. However, moral licensing, whereby previous CSR behavior reduces the negative effects of CSI, could not be demonstrated. Negative consequences are not affected by previous CSR activities. The study shows that moral emotions play a central role in the perception of CSR and CSI and underlines the importance of consistent sustainability strategies for the long-term success of brands.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Social Irresponsibility, Moral Emotions

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics