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# The Co-Creation of Social Value: What Matters for Public Participation in Corporate Social Responsibility Campaigns

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of organization–public relationships (OPRs) and issue-related situational factors on publics’ intention to participate in CSR campaigns, based on relationship management theory and the

situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS). We surveyed 698 respondents living in the United States about two CSR campaigns, one focused on girls' empowerment and one on deforestation. The results showed that situational motivation and OPRs were strongly and directly related to publics' participation intention for both CSR campaigns. Only two situational perceptions – constraint recognition and involvement recognition – were indirectly related to publics' participation. We discuss the theoretical implications of these findings.

## KEYWORDS:

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) campaign, public participation, co-creation, organization–public relationships (OPRs), situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS)

In corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, the co-creation of social value is of increasing interest. A growing number of companies are developing CSR campaigns that invite public participation as a means of or a direct resource for generating social value (Bowen, Newenham-Kahindi, & Herremans, 2010). For example, in 2017, during or shortly after Hurricane Harvey, companies such as Amazon, Best Buy, Costco, Home Depot, eBay, and Walmart encouraged their publics to donate to disaster relief funds via links or buttons on their websites, and some of these companies offered to give matching funds. Thus, not only were the public's donations a direct resource providing aid to disaster victims, they were also a means of eliciting companies' financial support of victims.

In the present study, we refer to this type of CSR as *participatory CSR*. Participatory CSR is a two-way, interactive CSR strategy in which companies call on the public to become engaged with CSR activities by taking various kinds of action, such as following on social media or attending an event (e.g., Lim, Yang, & Chung, 2015; von Weltzien Høivik & Shankar, 2011). These participatory campaigns employ CSR as a method of dialogue between a company and its publics and as a relationship-building process in the co-creation of social value (Berger, Cunningham, & Drumwright, 2007; Clarkson, 1995; Pelozo & Shang, 2011; Smith, 2003).

Publics' participation is essential to implement such CSR campaigns successfully and to generate social value. Obtaining publics' participation is challenging, however, as the issues addressed by CSR campaigns are often not urgent or top-of-mind issues among publics, as demonstrated by research showing a low awareness of or lack of attention to CSR campaigns (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010; Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). Moreover, CSR participation requires a higher level of engagement than merely being aware of or interested in a CSR campaign and is also a voluntary action that often yields no direct benefits to participants. For this reason, understanding what motivates such participation is a topic of major significance, yet little research has addressed this issue. In particular, although it may be beneficial to use a targeted approach in CSR campaigns, as different publics have different levels of interest in the varied topics such campaigns address and the companies leading the campaigns, little is known about how publics' characteristics or situations vis-à-vis a campaign may generate different levels of engagement with or participation in a campaign.

The purpose of the present study is to synthesize two lines of public relations research and to use that synthesis to test what matters for publics' participation in CSR campaigns. Specifically, this study aims to shed light on how two types of factors related to publics – organization–public relationships (OPRs) and issue-related situational factors (i.e., three situational perceptions, situational motivation, and a referent criterion) – affect publics' intention to participate in CSR campaigns. Relationship management theory and the situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS) suggest that these two types of factors can predict publics' behavior or behavioral intention (Chen, Hung-Baesecke, & Kim, 2016; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim & Ni, 2013). This integrated approach is important in the present study context, because a company and an issue are the two basic building blocks of a CSR campaign: a company leading a campaign and a cause that the company is

addressing (Du et al., 2010). Understanding the unique contribution of one factor while other factors are controlled for will reveal the bigger picture of how these factors influence publics' behavioral intention. The results will also make a theoretical contribution by testing the utility of synthesizing the two lines of theory and applying that synthesis to the CSR context.

## Literature review

The present study aims to increase our understanding of publics' participation intention toward participatory CSR campaigns. Based on two well-established theories in public relations – relationship management theory and the situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS) – the results will enable scholars and practitioners to better understand publics. This will lay the foundation for developing more-effective participatory CSR campaigns, which will ultimately facilitate the joining of companies and publics in the co-creation of social value. In the following sections, we will introduce the theories and related concepts, explain their application to participation in CSR campaigns, and propose hypotheses based on the literature.

## Publics' participation in CSR

CSR can be defined as a company's "commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources" (Kotler & Lee, 2005, p. 3). CSR initiatives can take a variety of forms under different labels – corporate philanthropy, cause-related marketing, sponsorships, volunteerism, or corporate social marketing (Lii & Lee, 2012; Maignan & Ralston, 2002; Peloza & Shang, 2011). CSR participation refers to publics'<sup>1</sup> engaging in CSR activities by performing socially beneficial behaviors or taking any other actions requested by a CSR campaign (Lee, Zhang, & Abitbol, 2019). CSR participation takes various forms – such as following on social media, generating content and sharing it using a hashtag, pledging/signing a petition, voting, volunteering, attending an event, donating, or changing current behaviors – and leads to the co-creation of social value (e.g., Lim et al., 2015; von Weltzien Høivik & Shankar, 2011). Behavioral outcomes have not been a central focus in the CSR literature, and when they have been examined, they have mostly been company-oriented outcomes, such as purchase intention and word-of-mouth intention (e.g., David, Kline, & Dai, 2005; Lii & Lee, 2012). In participatory CSR, however, publics' engagement in CSR campaigns is of importance and the co-creation of social value is also emphasized, as publics' engagement in a participatory CSR campaign is often a process or a means of generating social value.

Publics' participation in CSR campaigns can benefit not only companies but also the larger society. First, the literature has suggested that having publics participate in CSR activities is advantageous to a company because such participation can, for example, improve how the company is perceived, increase consumers' purchase intention toward the company's products or services, strengthen OPRs with the company, enhance the company's legitimacy, or increase publics' identification with the company (Bowen et al., 2010; Du, Sen, & Bhattacharya, 2008; Lim & Greenwood, 2017; Maignan & Ferrell, 2004; Ruiz de Maya, Lardín-Zambudio, & López-López, 2016). Du et al. (2008) investigated the effectiveness of a company's oral health campaign targeting an underserved population and found that participants who perceived the benefits of the program had a higher purchase intention and higher level of support for the company's products. Ruiz de Maya et al. (2016) showed that a participatory CSR campaign resulted in greater CSR associations than did a non-participatory CSR campaign, which in turn influenced attitudes toward the company.

Second, the actions that publics take when engaging in a participatory CSR campaign, such as donating and volunteering, can themselves directly benefit the larger society or can be a stepping stone to generating social value. For instance, Lim and Greenwood (2017) conducted an online survey with executives in publicly traded U.S. companies, and the results showed that implementing a CSR engagement strategy was positively associated with achieving community goals such as improving both the social health and the economic health of the local

community. Moreover, Kim, Shen, and Morgan (2011) found that active involvement in a campaign can motivate publics to perceive related issues, implying that engagement with a CSR campaign can stimulate interest in similar issues.

Despite the value of successful participatory CSR campaigns, however, few studies have explored the antecedents of publics' participation in a CSR campaign. One that did was Lee et al.'s (2019) study, which surveyed customers of a regional grocery store chain and found that its credibility in leading a CSR campaign and OPRs were associated with the respondents' intention to participate in the company's CSR activities. In the context of cause-related marketing, Howie, Yang, Vitell, Bush, and Vorhies (2018) found that the more demanding participation was, the less likely consumers were to participate, but allowing consumers to choose the organization that would receive the company's donation mitigated the negative effects. In addition, McKeever, McKeever, Pressgrove, and Overton (2019) found that situational factors (e.g., perception, cognition, and motivation) affected several types of prosocial behaviors.

## Organization–public relationships and publics' participation in CSR

In a CSR campaign, the organizer of the campaign matters, as multiple companies may seek to address the same issue. For example, numerous companies have led campaigns addressing environmental issues, and individuals interested in such issues must decide which campaigns to participate in, given the limitations of their personal resources (e.g., money, time, etc.).

In the present study, we posit that organization–public relationships (OPRs) are one determinant of publics' participation intention. Participating in CSR activities entails communicative behaviors such as sharing posts about a campaign on social media or recruiting others to the campaign, as well as non-communicative actions such as volunteering or attending events. Publics who have previously interacted with a company and established strong relationships with the company might be more likely to invest time and effort in that company's CSR campaign (Kim & Ni, 2013; Lee et al., 2019). Moreover, similar to how OPRs function as a buffer shielding an organization from negative attribution during a crisis (Brown & White, 2011), strong OPRs might make publics more inclined to view a CSR campaign as stemming from interests or goals they share with the company, thus fostering interactions with the company.

Organization–public relationships (OPRs) have been viewed as the primary goal of public relations practices. Relationship management theory posits that “effectively managing organization–public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics” (Ledingham, 2006, p. 476). Scholars have variously defined OPRs, depending on their emphasis – as, for example, “the patterns of interaction, transaction, exchange, and linkage between an organization and its publics” (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000, p. 18), or, focusing on relationship outcomes, as the “state that exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity” (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, p. 62). In the present study, we use a more common definition that emphasizes the attributes of the relationship: OPRs are defined by the degree to which an organization and its publics trust one another, agree that each has the rightful power to influence the other, are satisfied with one another, and commit themselves to one another (Huang, 1997).

Although the varying definitions of OPRs have spawned a variety of dimensions for measuring OPRs, we follow Huang's (1997) original proposal that OPRs comprise four dimensions – trust, control mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction – which Hon and Grunig (1999) refer to as indicators of *OPR quality*. Previous studies have viewed these four dimensions as the core attributes of OPR quality, and thus these have been the dimensions

most commonly used in measurement scales (e.g., Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Huang, 2001; Ki & Hon, 2007; Yang, 2007). Huang (2001) highlighted the importance of these four dimensions:

Control mutuality reflects the unavoidable nature of power asymmetry in OPRs. Likewise, both trust and satisfaction reflect the cognitive and affective aspects of all relationships. Moreover, the level of commitment reflects the degree of resource interchange, which includes emotional and psychological aspects of interpersonal relationships and behavioral aspects of interorganizational relationships. (p. 65)

Following Hon and Grunig (1999, p. 3), *trust* is “one party’s level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party”; *satisfaction* is how favorably the two parties feel toward each other, which is typically a result of positive relational expectations being reinforced; *control mutuality* is “the degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another”; and *commitment* is the degree to which each party finds the relationship worth expending energy to maintain. In the CSR context, accordingly, OPRs refer to publics’ trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and commitment in regard to the company leading a CSR campaign.

OPRs’ effects on behavioral outcomes are well documented. For example, in surveying undergraduates, Ki and Hon (2007) found positive relationships between students’ OPRs with a university and their supportive behavior intentions – such as their intention to choose the same university if they were to start college again and their intention to recommend the university to others – mediated by enhancing a favorable attitude toward the university. Ki (2013) also found positive relationships between customers’ OPRs with a bank and their attitude toward the bank, which, in turn, influenced their supportive behavior intention toward the bank. In a similar vein, Du et al. (2010) posited that strong OPRs would enhance publics’ advocacy behaviors on behalf of a company. Other studies have demonstrated that OPRs can play a significant role in generating publics’ positive communication behaviors in support of organizations, internally and externally, in a variety of contexts: company–employee communication (Kim & Rhee, 2011), student–university communication (Shen & Kim, 2012), government–citizen communication (Kim & Krishna, 2018), and public diplomacy (Tam, Kim, & Kim, 2018).

In regard to CSR, Lee et al.’s (2019) study confirmed the significant role of OPRs in eliciting a public’s CSR participation intention, supporting the idea that OPRs might also impact behavior outcomes in the present study context. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The stronger a public perceives its relationship with a company to be, the higher the level of its intention to participate in the company’s CSR activities will be.

## Issue-related situational factors and publics’ participation in CSR

Issue-related situational factors can also influence a public’s engagement with a company’s CSR activity. Situational theories, such as Grunig’s (1968, 1997) situational theory of publics (STP) and Kim and Grunig’s (2011) situational theory of problem-solving (STOPS), suggest that situational factors – including publics’ awareness of a CSR issue (*problem recognition*), their perception of self-efficacy in tackling the issue (*constraint recognition*), the extent to which they feel connected to the issue (*involvement recognition*), and their prior experiences dealing with similar situations (*a referent criterion*) – influence their communicative behaviors related to problem-solving (Grunig, 1968, 1997; Jiang, Kim, Liu, & Luo, 2017; Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim & Ni, 2013).

Focusing on perceptual variables, the STP predicts that those who perceive a problem and stop to think about it (high problem recognition), feel closely connected with it (a high level of involvement), and see few obstacles to addressing it (low constraint recognition) are more likely to seek out and attend to information about the

problem (Grunig, 1997). To increase theoretical power and practicality, scholars developed the STP into the situational theory of problem-solving or STOPS (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim & Ni, 2013). The STOPS reconceptualized the STP's perceptual variables – problem recognition, involvement recognition, and constraint recognition – as antecedents of situational motivation in problem-solving and introduced situational motivation as a mediator connecting the relationships between publics' situational perceptions and their communicative action (Kim & Grunig, 2011). The STOPS also re-added a cognitive schema variable – a referent criterion – as another antecedent predicting publics' communicative action (Kim & Krishna, 2014).

## Problem recognition

*Problem recognition* is “one's perception that something is missing and that there is no immediately applicable solution” (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 128; Kim & Krishna, 2014). This concept, Grunig noted, “derives from John Dewey's (1938) idea that people do not think or inquire (communicate) about a situation unless it is problematic to them” (Grunig, 1983, p. 10). Accordingly, STP and STOP research has explicated how a problem is created by the interaction between *what we expect* and *what we experience* (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim & Krishna, 2014) – that is, a problem arises from a perceptual gap between expectation and experience (i.e., a *perceptual problem*) (Kim & Krishna, 2014). If such a perceptual gap is not resolved quickly or easily, the problem requires a judgment about what needs to be done to narrow the perceived gap (i.e., a *cognitive problem*) (Kim & Krishna, 2014). In the judgment process, cognitive efforts are needed to narrow the perceived gap through evaluations of “what caused the problem, how it can be resolved, and the extent to which [one] is competent to solve a problem of this kind” (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 128). In the CSR context, problem recognition is publics' perception that an issue a company is addressing (e.g., air pollution) is a serious problem, as well as their cognitive recognition of the gap between their expectations about the issue and the actual state of the issue.

## Constraint recognition

*Constraint recognition* is perceiving obstacles in a situation that limit one's ability to improve the situation (Grunig, 1997; Kim & Krishna, 2014). Constraint recognition is similar to *individual volition* (the absence of constraints) – a necessary condition for cognitive dissonance – and *personal efficacy* in Bandura's (1978) social learning theory, concepts which have been applied to health promotion campaigns (cf. Grunig, 1989). According to the STP and the STOPS, *constraint recognition* discourages communicative behaviors, as “people do not communicate about the problems or issues about which they believe they can do little or about behaviors they do not believe they have the personal efficacy to execute” (Grunig, 1989, p. 212). In the CSR context, constraint recognition is publics' perception of whether they have the ability to make a difference in the situation (the issue) addressed in a CSR campaign.

## Involvement recognition

*Involvement* is “the degree of importance or concern” that a product or an issue generates in people, leading to a commonsense interpretation (Lovelock & Weinberg, 1984, p. 73). Grunig (1997) conceptualized the *level of involvement* as “the extent to which people connect themselves to a situation” (p. 10). Later, Kim and Grunig (2011) reconceptualized this as *involvement recognition*, placing more emphasis on the perceived connection, as distinguished from the actual connection (Kim & Krishna, 2014). *Involvement recognition* is “what we perceive as being connected,” or a perceived connection between a problem and the self (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 130). In the CSR context, involvement recognition is publics' perception of the extent to which they are connected with a CSR issue – whether the CSR issue personally affects them or someone close to them.

## Referent criterion

A *referent criterion* is “any knowledge or subjective judgmental system that influences that way in which one approaches problem solving” (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 131). As a cognitive component rather than a perceptual

one, a referent criterion consists of accumulated information from previous situations that can be applied as an initial guide to resolving a current situation, because it results in knowledge activation or the immediate improvisation of a new system for judging a given situation (Grunig, 1983; Kim & Krishna, 2014). In other words, if the previous criterion seems to work in a new situation, it is likely to be applied. If not, a new criterion – a new solution – to guide one’s behavior in the new situation must be developed (Grunig, 1983). The STOPS describes specific processes people use in developing a referent criterion, starting with situation-general knowledge for cognitive instructions, moving to passive communication behaviors, and then to situation-specific information for cognitive building blocks, resulting in more active communicative behaviors (Kim & Krishna, 2014). In the CSR context, a referent criterion refers to the ways publics believe they should respond to a CSR issue and how that issue can be resolved based on their prior knowledge of and experiences with similar issues.

### Situational motivation in problem solving

As mentioned above, the effects of three perceptual variables – problem recognition, involvement recognition, and constraint recognition – on behavioral impacts are transmitted through a mediator, *situational motivation in problem solving* (Kim & Grunig, 2011; Kim & Krishna, 2014), which is “a state of situation-specific cognitive and epistemic readiness to make problem-solving efforts” (Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 132), and is distinguishable from non-situational motivations, such as pleasure, interpersonal goals, and the need for social interactions (Graham, Barbato, & Perse, 1993). It is the situational need or drive to stop and think about a problematic situation (Kim & Grunig, 2011). Hence, in the CSR context, situational motivation refers to the extent to which a public stops to think about, is curious about, or seeks more understanding of a CSR issue. According to the STOPS, situational motivation in problem solving increases when a public perceives a problematic state, its connection to that problematic state, and the absence of obstacles to doing something about it (Chon & Park, 2019; Kim et al., 2011).

### Issue-related situational factors and corporate social responsibility

Previous studies have developed and tested issue-related situational factors to predict when a public will engage with a CSR issue, or with social or environmental issues in general (Grunig, 1979; Jiang et al., 2017; Kim, Kim, & Tam, 2016; Kim & Ni, 2013; Kim et al., 2011; Stamm & Grunig, 1977).

In fact, some early studies applying the situational theory arose in contexts that today would be considered related to corporate social responsibility. Grunig (1979, 1983, 1997) suggested and tested these situational factors as new measures of public opinion on CSR activities and found empirical evidence of the factors’ application to a variety of CSR issues – initially, 11 social issues (e.g., inflation, quality of education, support of charities, and unemployment) (Grunig, 1979), and later, eight environmental issues (e.g., air pollution, the extinction of whales, and the energy shortage) (Grunig, 1983). Grunig’s studies explicated how the publics perceived various CSR issues differently, and, in turn, how the publics would be willing to engage with different CSR issue differently, implying that, for example, to generate desired outcomes (i.e., public support), environmentalists could take a target-oriented approach by segmenting publics by their positions on an environmental issue (Grunig, 1979, 1983). Focusing on internal publics, the STOPS situational factors were also used in two case studies of employee issues in the workplace (Samsung employees’ occupational diseases and an Apple supplier chain’s mistreatment of workers) to suggest a clear direction for organizational action – that of prioritizing the groups to which organizations must fulfill their responsibilities before attending to society as a whole (Kim et al., 2016).

Scholars have also applied the situational factors to general social or environmental issues. For the public health issue of organ donation shortages, Kim et al. (2011) found that problem recognition, involvement recognition, constraint recognition, and a referent criterion were significantly associated with communicative actions about the issue. Then, situational motivation in problem-solving, influenced by three perceptual variables—problem

recognition, involvement recognition, and constraint recognition – further affected the behavioral intention to register as an organ donor and to engage in other types of donation, such as bone marrow and blood. For environmental issues, Jiang et al. (2017) extended the application of the STOPS situational factors to a non-Western context, demonstrating how a referent criterion and situational motivation in problem-solving, predicted by three perceptual variables, influenced communicative and other behaviors in China, such as online and offline interaction about environmental risk governance or environmental campaigns and the building of a fully functioning community to address an environmental issue. More recently, regarding social issues in general, McKeever et al. (2019) found that active publics who are highly motivated through their situational perceptions and have a high level of knowledge (a referent criterion) are likely to engage in prosocial behaviors, including financial support (donating) and advocacy activities (signing a petition or contacting legislators).

Therefore, based on the findings of previous research on the effects of situational factors on publics' behaviors in various contexts, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: A public's problem recognition of an issue addressed by a company's CSR campaign will be positively associated with the public's situational motivation in problem solving related to the CSR issue.

H3: A public's constraint recognition of an issue addressed by a company's CSR campaign will be negatively associated with the public's situational motivation in problem solving related to the CSR issue.

H4: A public's involvement recognition with an issue addressed by a company's CSR campaign will be positively associated with the public's situational motivation in problem solving related to the CSR issue.

H5: A public's situational motivation in problem solving related to an issue addressed by a company's CSR campaign will be positively associated with the level of the public's intention to participate in the CSR campaign.

H6: A public's referent criterion for an issue addressed by a company's CSR campaign will be positively associated with the level of the public's intention to participate in the CSR campaign.

## Method

To test the hypothesized model, we conducted an online survey and performed data analysis on the results.

### Issue selection

First, in the fall of 2017, we conducted a series of tests to select the CSR issues. As part of an in-class discussion, we asked 22 undergraduate students in a corporate communication class at a Midwestern state university in the U.S. to brainstorm a list of social issues that they thought were most important to them and for the country. The issues students mentioned included race, diversity, LGBT rights, empowerment of women, health care, immigration, poverty/hunger/homelessness, the environment (including such issues as pollution, energy use, and deforestation), natural disasters, and drug abuse.

Then we created an online survey using that list of issues, along with "others" as an answer choice, allowing open-ended answers, and recruited 301 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at a large university in the southern United States. In December 2017, the participants agreed to take the survey via an informed consent form and were paid one U.S. dollar each as compensation.

Based on previous studies (cf. Lecheler, de Vreese, & Slothuus, 2009; McKeever, McKeever, Holton, & Li, 2016), we used two items to ask about issue importance on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*very important*): "how important is the issue to you personally?" and "how important is the issue for the whole country?" The results showed that the top two most-important issues were women's empowerment

( $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) and the environment (for which we supplied the examples of pollution, energy use, and deforestation, derived from the previous brainstorming session with students) ( $M = 5.25$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ), and thus these two CSR issues were selected as the contexts for the main study.

## Main study

### Study contexts

We found two companies, Disney and Boxed Water, whose CSR campaigns involved participatory activities and asked for similar forms of participation from publics related to the two social issues that ranked highest in our issue-selection survey – girls’ empowerment (Disney’s #DreamBigPrincess campaign) and deforestation (Boxed Water’s #ReTree campaign). In their campaigns, both companies asked supporters to share photos or videos using the campaign hashtags on social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, and the companies promised to take an action based on the number of hashtags shared. Disney promised that for any public post of a photo using the campaign hashtag, or for “liking” such a post on social media, it would donate one dollar (up to a maximum of 1 USD million) to organizations addressing the issue of girls’ empowerment. Similarly, Boxed Water promised that for each post on social media of a photo using the hashtag of its campaign against deforestation, it would plant two trees. Based on information about these actual campaigns, we designed two news articles in text-only format, both of which were similar in word count, structure, layout, and type of participation requested from publics (see the Appendix).

### Participants

To obtain a nationally representative sample of respondents, we followed the demographics of the U.S. Census data (Census.gov<sup>2</sup>) for gender and region. After we deleted missing data ( $n = 20$ ), the total number of the sample was 678. Among the respondents, 49.3% ( $n = 334$ ) were male and 50.7% ( $n = 344$ ) were female, and the average age was 43.77 ( $SD = 14.50$ ). A plurality of respondents had a four-year college degree (23.2%,  $n = 157$ ), followed by those with some college education but no degree (22.4%,  $n = 152$ ), and high school graduates (21.5%,  $n = 146$ ). The median income category was from 50,000 USD to under 75,000, USD and the majority racial group was White (79.8%,  $n = 541$ ), followed by Black (8.0%,  $n = 54$ ), Asian (5.5%,  $n = 37$ ), Hispanic/Latino (5.0%,  $n = 34$ ), and “other” race, including Native American and Pacific Islander (1.8%,  $n = 12$ ).

### Procedure

In February 2018, we administered an online questionnaire to 698 respondents living in the U.S. recruited through Survey Sampling International (SSI), a provider of survey services that maintains 1.5 million research panel members. Using the survey firm allowed us to recruit nationally representative and qualified research participants.<sup>3</sup> Prior to taking the survey, respondents read an informed consent form with general information about the study, including the purposes of the research, the length of survey, confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of participation. Once they agreed to take the survey, respondents moved on to the next page by clicking the “Next” button. After completing the survey, they were redirected to the SSI website to earn reward points or redeem them for PayPal cash or gift cards offered by SSI as compensation for study participation.

Respondents’ answers were securely stored in Qualtrics, the online survey platform used to collect the data. Each participant responded to both campaigns; we did counterbalancing, where the order of the two campaigns was randomly assigned to control for order effects (cf. Shaughnessy, Zechmeister, & Zechmeister, 2006). First, we asked about participants’ relationships with one company (either Disney or Boxed Water) and then provided them with some background information about the social issue at stake (girls’ empowerment or deforestation). Second, we asked participants about their problem recognition, constraint recognition, involvement recognition, and a referent criterion related to the issue. Third, we showed them a news article about one of the two real

CSR campaigns and asked about their behavioral intention toward the campaign. The same process was repeated for the second company and its CSR campaign. Lastly, demographic questions were asked.

## Measures

The question items were adapted from previous research (Chen et al., 2016; Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Jordan, Diermeier, & Galinsky, 2012; Kim & Grunig, 2011; Murray & Vogel, 1997). All items used a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), or similar labeling of response categories, such as categories ranging from 1 (*not true at all*) to 7 (*true nearly all of the time*), from 1 (*very unlikely*) to 7 (*very likely*), or from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). We slightly modified the wording of items from previous studies for each CSR context. We averaged out all items on each variable after dimensionality checks. Table 1 shows the results of the dimensionality checks and the items used in this study.

Table 1. Composite reliability and construct validity of OPRs, situational factors, and CSR participation intention (N = 678)

Latent variables	Measurement items	Standardized loading estimate ( $\theta$ )	Explained variance ( $R^2$ )	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Average shared variance (ASV)
Organization–public relationships (OPRs)	TR1: Disney (Boxed Water) treats people like me fairly and justly.	.84 (.84)	.71 (.71)	.98 (.98)	.92 (.93)	.16 (.30)
	TR2: Whenever Disney (Boxed Water) makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about people like me.	.82 (.88)	.67 (.77)			
	TR3: Disney (Boxed Water) can be relied on to keep its promises.	.87 (.90)	.76 (.81)			
	TR4: I believe that Disney (Boxed Water) takes the opinions of people like me into account when making decisions.	.88 (.86)	.78 (.75)			
	TR5: I feel very confident about Disney's (Boxed Water's) skills.	.81 (.89)	.66 (.80)			
	TR6: Disney (Boxed Water) has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do.	.72 (.89)	.52 (.77)			
	CM1: Disney (Boxed Water) and people like me are attentive to what each other say.	.88 (.91)	.78 (.81)			
	CM2: Disney (Boxed Water) believes the opinions of people like me are legitimate.	.91 (.90)	.83 (.82)			
	CM3: Disney (Boxed Water) really listens to what people like me have to say.	.93 (.93)	.86 (.86)			
	CM4: The management of Disney (Boxed Water) gives people like me enough say in the decision-making process.	.84 (.90)	.71 (.81)			
CM5: I believe people like me have influence on the decision-makers at Disney (Boxed Water).	.83 (.86)	.69 (.75)				

Organization–public relationships (OPRs)	CO1: I feel that Disney (Boxed Water) is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.	.89 (.86)	.78 (.74)	.98 (.98)	.92 (.93)	.16 (.30)
	CO2: I can see that Disney (Boxed Water) wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.	.87 (.87)	.76 (.75)			
	CO3: There is a long-lasting bond between Disney (Boxed Water) and people like me.	.90 (.88)	.81 (.78)			
	CO4: Compared to other companies, I value my relationship with Disney (Boxed Water) more.	.82 (.82)	.67 (.67)			
	CO5: I feel a sense of loyalty to Disney (Boxed Water).	.81 (.77)	.65 (.59)			
	ST1: I am happy with Disney (Boxed Water).	.87 (.86)	.76 (.74)			
	ST2: Both Disney (Boxed Water) and people like me benefit from our relationship.	.89 (.88)	.79 (.77)			
	ST3: Most people like me are happy in their interactions with Disney (Boxed Water).	.90 (.88)	.81 (.77)			
	ST4: Generally speaking, I am pleased with the relationship Disney (Boxed Water) has established with people like me.	.92 (.89)	.85 (.80)			
	ST5: Most people enjoy dealing with Disney (Boxed Water).	.92 (.90)	.70 (.80)			
Problem recognition (PR)	PR1: I think this is a serious social issue.	.86 (.82)	.75 (.67)	.93 (.90)	.82 (.75)	.37 (.36)
	PR2: Something needs to be done to improve this situation.	.88 (.77)	.77 (.59)			
	PR3: I am very concerned about this issue.	.97 (.99)	.94 (.98)			
Constraint recognition (CR)	CR1: I believe people like me have influence on the decision-makers at Disney (Boxed Water).	.91 (.86)	.82 (.74)	.91 (.90)	.72 (.69)	.51 (.57)
	CR2: I feel that Disney (Boxed Water) is trying to maintain a long-term commitment to people like me.	.93 (.88)	.87 (.78)			
	CR3: I can see that Disney (Boxed Water) wants to maintain a relationship with people like me.	.70 (.70)	.49 (.49)			
	CR4: There is a long-lasting bond between Disney (Boxed Water) and people like me.	.83 (.85)	.69 (.70)			

Involvement recognition (IR)	IR1: I feel closely connected to this issue	.93 (.90)	.87 (.81)	.95 (.93)	.84 (.78)	.49 (.58)
	IR2: I think this issue could affect me personally.	.88 (.82)	.78 (.68)			
	IR3: I feel a strong relationship between this issue and me or someone close to me.	.92 (.90)	.85 (.82)			
	IR4: I am connected with this issue and its consequences.	.93 (.90)	.86 (.80)			
Referent criterion (RC)	RC1: I know how to deal with this issue.	.88 (.88)	.77 (.78)	.93 (.94)	.78 (.81)	.36 (.49)
	RC2: I have a very clear and specific position (stance) on what should be done regarding this issue.	.84 (.88)	.71 (.78)			
	RC3: I could easily come up with a plan to deal with this issue.	.91 (.92)	.82 (.84)			
	RC4: I know about this issue in detail – both what causes it and what should be done about it.	.90 (.91)	.82 (.83)			
Situational motivation in problem solving (SM)	SM1: I often stop what I am doing to think about this issue.	.81 (.78)	.66 (.61)	.91 (.86)	.71 (.64)	.56 (.60)
	SM2: I am curious about this issue.	.84 (.74)	.71 (.54)			
	SM3: I would like to better understand this issue.	.83 (.70)	.69 (.50)			
	SM4: I frequently think about this issue.	.88 (.86)	.77 (.73)			
CSR participation (CP)	CP1: I would make a public post of a photo using the hashtag #DreamBigPrincess (I would make a public post of a photo using the hashtag #ReTree) on social media.	.80 (.82)	.64 (.68)	.95 (.95)	.71 (.72)	.34 (.47)
	CP2: I would click “like” on such a post using the hashtag #DreamBigPrincess (I would click “like” on such a post using the hashtag #ReTree) on social media.	.68 (.69)	.46 (.47)			
	CP3: I would share information about the #Dream BigPrincess campaign (I would share information about the #ReTree campaign) on social media.	.79 (.80)	.62 (.64)			
	CP4: I would donate money to support the #DreamBigPrincess (I would donate money to support the #ReTree) campaign.	.87 (.88)	.76 (.77)			

	CP5: I would attend events (e.g., leadership summits, marathons, and bike rides) that are part of the #DreamBigPrincess (I would attend events (e.g., planting trees) that are part of the #ReTree) campaign.	.93 (.92)	.86 (.85)			
	CP6: I would make my voice count by contacting policymakers to bring about lasting changes.	.88 (.88)	.77 (.78)			
	CP7: I would find a community related to the #DreamBigPrincess campaign (I would find a community relevant to the #ReTree campaign) near me and join the team.	.93 (.93)	.86 (.86)			

TR: trust, CM: control mutuality, CO: commitment, ST: satisfaction. Construct validity (standardized loading estimate > .50, convergent validity: AVE > .50, discriminant validity: AVE > ASV), and composite reliability (CR > .70) were successfully established in all measurement items (Hair et al., 2010). Measurement items and values within parentheses reflect the second issue (Boxed Water's deforestation). Both confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) models' goodness-of-fit indices met all of the criteria of Hu and Bentler (1999) and Hair et al. (2010): Girls' empowerment:  $\chi^2(986, N = 678) = 2815.00, p < .001$   $\chi^2/df = 2.86$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05; Deforestation issue:  $\chi^2(988, N = 678) = 2739.82, p < .001$   $\chi^2/df = 2.77$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04.

## Organization–public relationships (OPRs)

For OPR quality, we used 21 items from Hon and Grunig's (1999) and Grunig and Huang's (2000) measures based on Huang's (1997) four dimensions – commitment, trust, satisfaction, and control mutuality: six items for trust ( $M = 5.16$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ,  $\alpha = .93$  for Disney and  $M = 4.70$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Boxed Water), five items for control mutuality ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Disney and  $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Boxed Water), five items for commitment ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Disney and  $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ,  $\alpha = .94$  for Boxed Water), and five items for satisfaction ( $M = 5.13$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Disney and  $M = 4.59$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ,  $\alpha = .95$  for Boxed Water).

## Issue-related situational factors

### *Problem recognition*

Adapting Kim and Grunig (2011) and Chen et al. (2016), we used three items to measure problem recognition ( $M = 5.24$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ,  $\alpha = 0.95$  for the girls' empowerment issue and  $M = 5.57$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ,  $\alpha = .91$  for the deforestation issue).

### *Constraint recognition*

Again adapting Kim and Grunig (2011) and Chen et al. (2016), we used four items to measure constraint recognition ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ,  $\alpha = .91$  for the girls' empowerment issue;  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ,  $\alpha = .90$  for the deforestation issue).

### *Involvement recognition*

Following Kim and Grunig (2011) and Chen et al. (2016), we used four items to measure involvement recognition. The internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .95 for the girls' empowerment issue ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.87$ ) and .93 for the deforestation issue ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ ).

### *Referent criterion*

Adapting Kim and Grunig (2011) and Chen et al. (2016), we used four items to measure the referent criterion. The internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .94 for the girls' empowerment issue ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ) and .94 for the deforestation issue ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ).

### *Situational motivation in problem solving*

Adapting Kim and Grunig (2011) and Chen et al. (2016), we used four items to measure situational motivation in problem solving ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 1.79$ ,  $\alpha = .92$  for the girls' empowerment issue;  $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ,  $\alpha = .89$  for the deforestation issue).

## CSR participation intention

To tailor our items to the study context, we developed seven items specifying various types of actions that were or could have been requested by the campaigns. The items originated from existing measures of behavioral intentions (Jordan et al., 2012; Murray & Vogel, 1997), but we modified the wording to suit the context of our two CSR issues. We ran a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) using STATA 13 to ensure the dimensionalities of the various types of behavior and to define the variable's underlying structure (cf. Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). We adopted several criteria for extracting factors, known as *rules of thumb*: for example, the eigenvalue had to be greater than 1 (i.e., the latent root criterion), a substantial amount of factor loading had to be greater than .40, and the percentage of variance criterion had to be greater than 60% (cf. Hair et al., 2010; Netemeyer et al., 2003). EFAs revealed one factor for CSR participation intention for each issue with the seven items being retained. The oblique rotation method with PROMAX was used for interpretation. For the girls' empowerment campaign, the eigenvalue was 5.18, the variance explained was 96.54%, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .95, which all indicate one factor ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ).

Similarly, the items for the deforestation campaign resulted in one factor, as the eigenvalue was 5.25, the variance explained was 97.20%, and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .95 ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.84$ ).

## Control variables

We included existing attitudes toward the companies and respondents' demographic and socioeconomic factors (age, education, gender, income, and race) in the data analysis. Previous research has shown that *attitude* – a relatively enduring evaluative belief, feelings, and behavioral tendencies around an object (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005) or a psychological tendency (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993) – can affect behavioral patterns and has been found to be the immediate antecedent of actual behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005; see also Fishbein & Ajzen's (1974) theory of planned behavior). Although not dealing directly with CSR participation, research has shown that attitude toward a company is a significant factor affecting consumers' perception of a company's CSR activities and their purchase intention toward a company's products or services (e.g., Bae & Cameron, 2006). We used three items – *bad–good*; *negative–positive*; *unfavorable–favorable* – to measure attitudes toward Disney ( $M = 5.78$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ,  $\alpha = .97$ ) and Boxed Water: ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ,  $\alpha = .97$ ), respectively (Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989).

In addition, research has shown that demographic factors can affect participation in CSR activities (Cheah, Jamali, Johnson, & Sung, 2011). Socially responsible consumers have been shown to be better educated (e.g., Schueth, 2003), and a number of studies have shown that socially responsible investors tend to be younger (e.g., Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003), to have greater household incomes (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001), and to be predominantly female (Cheah et al., 2011; Schueth, 2003).

## Results

### Dimensionality checks: confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Prior to testing the hypotheses, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 23 to analyze the dimensionality of multi-items underlying the single construct and to finalize and confirm the theoretical factor structure of each issue (Netemeyer et al., 2003). For both issues, one problem recognition item (PR4: "The news related to this issue surprises me a lot") had construct validity problems ( $\beta < .05$ ) that hindered the goodness-of-fit of the initial CFA models. We deleted that item and ran both CFA models again. The final CFA models both for the girls' empowerment issue ( $\chi^2(986, N = 678) = 2815.00$ ,  $p < .001$   $\chi^2/df = 2.86$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .05) and for the deforestation issue ( $\chi^2(988, N = 678) = 2739.82$ ,  $p < .001$   $\chi^2/df = 2.77$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04) were an acceptable model fit by the criteria both of Hu and Bentler (1999) (i.e., CFI  $\geq .95$  and SRMR  $\leq .09$  or RMSEA  $\leq .06$  and SRMR  $\leq .09$ ) and of Hair et al. (2010) (i.e.,  $\chi^2/df \leq 3.00$ , TLI  $\geq .90$ , SRMR  $\leq .08$  with CFI  $\geq .92$ , and RMSEA  $\leq .07$  with CFI  $\geq .92$ ).

For both CFA models, we ensured that the construct validity and composite reliability of all measurement items met Hair et al.'s (2010) golden rule for construct validity – standardized loading estimate  $> .50$ ; convergent validity: average variance extracted (AVE)  $> .50$ ; discriminant validity: AVE  $>$  average shared squared variance (ASV); and composite reliability (CR  $> .70$ ) (see Table 1).

### Testing hypotheses: structural equation modeling (SEM)

Prior to hypothesis testing, we ran a series of multiple ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses using STATA 13 to assess how the control variables, including the demographic factors (age, gender, race, income, and education) and attitude, might influence an endogenous variable (CSR participation intention) for each campaign. In the regression analyses, all independent variables accounted for a significant portion of the variance in the CSR participation, both for Disney's #DreamBigPrincess campaign (girls' empowerment),  $R^2 = .54$ ,  $F(12, 665) = 65.37$ ,  $p < .001$ , and for Boxed Water's #ReTree campaign

(deforestation),  $R^2 = .60$ ,  $F(12, 665) = 108.65$ ,  $p < .001$ . The regression analyses consistently showed that only the age factor (Disney's campaign:  $b = -0.01$ ,  $t = -3.78$ , Boxed Water's campaign:  $b = -0.01$ ,  $t = -2.42$ ) yielded statistically significant effects. Additionally, income was statistically significant only for Disney's campaign ( $b = -0.05$ ,  $t = -1.99$ ). In the model for Boxed Water's campaign, attitude appeared as a significant factor ( $b = 0.13$ ,  $t = 2.38$ ). Consequently, we controlled for these variables (age, income, and attitude) in the further analyses for hypothesis testing.

We conducted structural equation modeling (SEM) to test H1 to H6 for both issues. Each of the structural models achieved an acceptable model fit:  $\chi^2 = 3046.55$ ,  $df = 1072$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.84$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .05 (Disney's campaign for girls' empowerment) and  $\chi^2 = 2962.31$ ,  $df = 1075$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .05, and SRMR = .04 (Boxed Water's campaign against deforestation). These met both the criteria of Hu and Bentler (1999) (i.e., CFI  $\geq$  .95 and SRMR  $\leq$  .09 or RMSEA  $\leq$  .06 and SRMR  $\leq$  .09) and of Hair et al. (2010) (i.e., sample ( $N$ )  $\geq$  250 & number of indicators ( $m$ )  $\geq$  30:  $\chi^2/df \leq 3.00$ , TLI  $\geq$  .90, SRMR  $\leq$  .08 with CFI  $\geq$  .92, and RMSEA  $\leq$  .07 with CFI  $\geq$  .90).

As H1 predicted, the quality of organization–public relationships (OPRs) was positively associated with the CSR participation intention for both issues:  $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .001$  for girls' empowerment and  $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .001$  for deforestation. Therefore, H1 was supported.

Regarding the issue-related situational factors, problem recognition was not statistically significant for situational motivation in problem solving for either the girls' empowerment issue ( $\beta = .01$ ,  $p = .75$ ) or the deforestation issue ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $p = .13$ ). Thus, H2 was not supported.

The other situational perceptions – involvement recognition and constraint recognition – showed statistical significance for situational motivation in problem-solving, as hypothesized. Constraint recognition was negatively related to situational motivation both for girls' empowerment ( $\beta = -.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and for deforestation ( $\beta = -.42$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, H3 was supported for both issues. The results also revealed a statistically significant association between involvement recognition and situational motivation in problem-solving for both campaigns, Disney's on the girls' empowerment issue ( $\beta = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Boxed Water's on the deforestation issue ( $\beta = .59$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Hence, H4 was supported.

The situational motivation in problem-solving was positively associated with CSR participation for both campaigns. The path was statistically significant for Disney's campaign on the girls' empowerment issue ( $\beta = .44$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and for Boxed Water's on the deforestation issue ( $\beta = .64$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, H5 was supported.

The referent criterion, however, was not consistent in both models: it was a statistically significant and positive factor in the CSR participation intention only for Disney's campaign for girls' empowerment ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The referent criterion was not statistically significant for CSR participation intention in Boxed Water's campaign against deforestation ( $\beta = .03$ ,  $p = .58$ ). Thus, H6 was partially supported.

The control variables had minimal impacts. For Disney's campaign, age ( $\beta = -.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and income ( $\beta = -.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ) showed negative relationships with the CSR participation intention. For Boxed Water's campaign, attitude toward the company was positively associated with the CSR participation intention ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ ), whereas age was negatively related with the endogenous variable ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $p < .05$ ) (see Tables 2 and 3 and Figures 1 and 2).

Table 2. Hypothesis testing in the proposed SEM Model for Disney's #DreamBigPrincess Campaign (girls' empowerment) (N = 678)

Hs	Parameters			$\beta$	S.E.	Critical ratio (z)	p
H1	Organization–public relationships (OPRs)	→	CSR Participation	.28	.05	8.41	***
H2	Problem recognition	→	Situational motivation	.01	.04	0.32	.75
H3	Constraint recognition	→	Situational motivation	-.36	.05	-8.49	***
H4	Involvement recognition	→	Situational motivation	.61	.04	14.24	***
H5	Situational motivation	→	CSR Participation	.44	.05	9.53	***
H6	Referent criterion	→	CSR Participation	.14	.04	3.33	***
-	Trust <sup>^</sup>	→	OPRs	.97	-	-	-
-	Control mutuality	→	OPRs	.94	.04	25.60	***
-	Commitment	→	OPRs	.98	.04	27.04	***
-	Satisfaction	→	OPRs	.95	.04	25.52	***
CV	Age	→	CSR Participation	-.13	.00	-4.48	***
	Income	→	CSR Participation	-.06	.02	-2.09	*

$\beta$ : Standardized Loading Estimate, S.E.: standard errors, CV: control variables. <sup>^</sup> Path from trust to OPR was constrained into 1 because OPR was constructed by second-order factors. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Table 3. Hypothesis testing in the proposed SEM Model for Boxed Water's #ReTree Campaign (deforestation) (N = 678)

Hs	Parameters			$\beta$	S.E.	Critical ratio (z)	p
H1	Organization-public relationships (OPR)	→	CSR Participation	.18	.07	4.53	***
H2	Problem recognition	→	Situational motivation	-.06	.06	-1.52	.13
H3	Constraint recognition	→	Situational motivation	-.42	.07	-7.22	***
H4	Involvement recognition	→	Situational motivation	.59	.07	9.01	***
H5	Situational motivation	→	CSR Participation	.64	.06	10.99	***

H6	Referent criterion	→	CSR Participation	.03	.05	0.56	.58
-	Trust^	→	OPR	.96	-	-	-
-	Control mutuality	→	OPR	.96	.04	28.27	***
-	Commitment	→	OPR	.98	.04	27.02	***
-	satisfaction	→	OPR	.96	.04	26.12	***
CV	Age	→	CSR Participation	-.07	.00	-2.52	*
	Attitude	→	CSR Participation	.07	.04	2.07	*

$\beta$ : Standardized Loading Estimate, S.E.: standard errors, CV: control variables. ^ Path from trust to OPR was constrained into 1 because OPR was constructed by second-order factors. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Figure 1. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$ . Proposed structural equation model for Disney’s #DreamBigPrincess campaign (girls’ empowerment) with hypothesis notation, controlling for effects of age and income factors. For brevity of the model, only the path model is demonstrated; the confirmatory factor analysis model pattern coefficient, error terms of indicators, and disturbances of endogenous variables are omitted in the figure

Model fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 3046.55$ ,  $df = 1072$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.84$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .94, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .04.

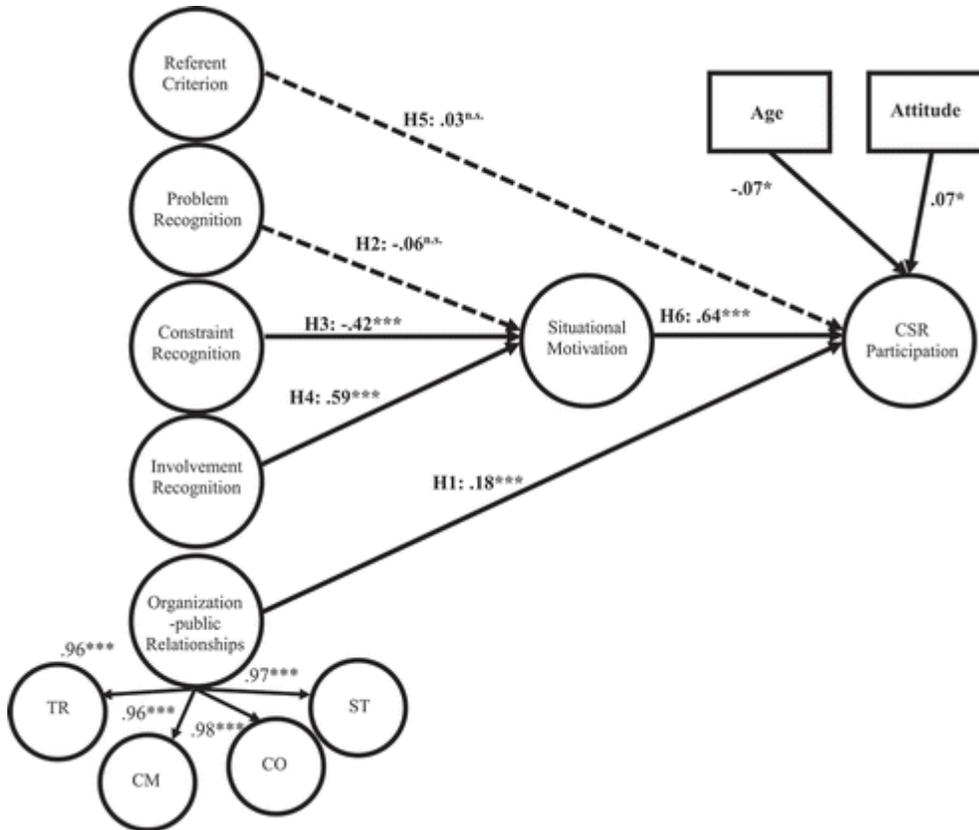
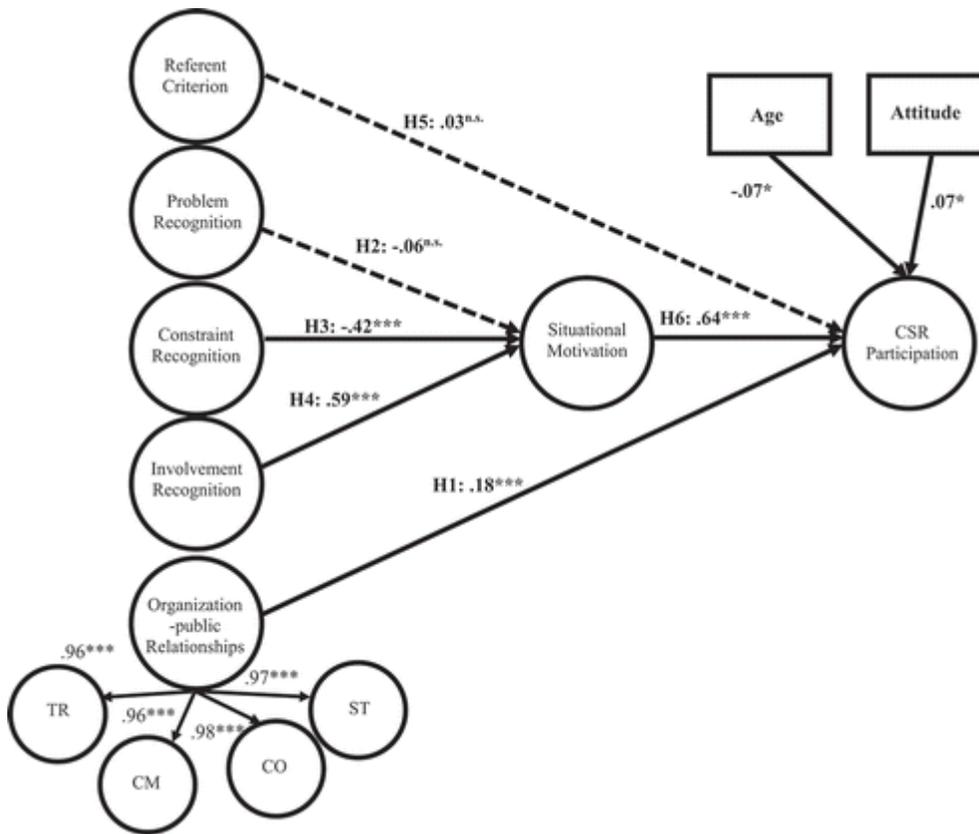


Figure 2. \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$ . Proposed structural equation model for Boxed Water’s #ReTree campaign (deforestation) with hypothesis notation, controlling for effects of age and income factors. For brevity of the model, only the path model is demonstrated; the confirmatory factor analysis model pattern coefficient, error terms of indicators, and disturbances of endogenous variables are omitted in the figure

Model fit indices:  $\chi^2 = 2962.31$ ,  $df = 1075$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 2.76$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI = .95, TLI = .95, SRMR = .04, RMSEA = .05.



## Discussion

The present study aimed to test the effects of organization–public relationships (OPRs) and five issue-related situational factors on the intention of publics to participate in CSR campaigns. Despite the growing importance of public engagement with CSR, which could serve as a channel for co-creating social value, there is a dearth of knowledge about what motivates publics to engage with CSR campaigns.

The results showed that OPRs significantly influenced respondents’ intention to participate in a CSR campaign, which is in line with a previous study (Lee et al., 2019). The stronger the relationship a respondent had with a company, the more likely the respondent was to express an intention to participate in that company’s CSR campaign. The present study, therefore, confirmed the value of OPRs in influencing publics’ behavior, as well as demonstrating the applicability of previous work on the value of OPRs to the CSR context. In participatory CSR campaigns, such support from publics ultimately allows companies to form partnerships with publics and share resources to solve social or environmental problems together. If these activities continue in the long term, the participation of publics could result in a strengthening of their relationships with the companies involved, as well as decreasing their skepticism about and increasing their understanding of companies’ CSR activities. The present results also imply that publics care about who is leading a CSR campaign. Numerous companies are working to address the same issues; OPRs seem to generate more trust in a company’s CSR activities, and thus increase publics’ willingness to participate in CSR activities initiated by those with whom they have strong OPRs.

Among issue-related situational variables, situational motivation in problem-solving was found to be a significant predictor of publics’ CSR participation intention, and the situational motivation was predicted by two situational perception variables: constraint recognition and involvement recognition. According to the STOPS, situational motivation in problem-solving refers to the *stopping to think about* tendency that reflects “a situational need for cognitive working to fill out the discrepancy between expected and observed problematic states and to improve the problematic situation” (Kim, 2006, p. 152). The results of the present study indicate

that such a *stopping to think about* tendency (situational motivation) can be enhanced by a joint function of two situational perceptions – specifically, lowered perceptual obstacles to taking action on a CSR issue and heightened perceptual connection to a CSR issue.

In contrast to what the STOPS posited, however, the other situational perception variable, problem recognition, did not predict situational motivation in problem-solving in the present study. We speculate that the results might reflect the nature of the issues we asked about in the survey or the nature of CSR issues in general. Most issues that companies seek to address in CSR campaigns are not issues of urgency among most publics, nor are they ones that will be quickly resolved; rather, they are ongoing issues. It is possible, therefore, that even when publics recognize a problem, they may not be sufficiently motivated to engage in trying to solve the problem.

Moreover, another situational variable related to publics' cognition, a referent criterion ("available and applicable knowledge and inferential rules from one's problem-solving experiences"; Kim & Grunig, 2011, p. 131) increased participation intention, but only for the girls' empowerment campaign. This finding suggests that continuous communication with and education of publics about women's empowerment could increase their participation in actions that companies' CSR campaigns ask them to take. For the deforestation campaign, however, a referent criterion was not a significant antecedent of participation intention. One possible explanation is the limited effects of knowledge on pro-environmental behavior. Scholars have endeavored to find the reason for this disconnect. For example, Finger (1994) found that environmental knowledge based on previous experiences related to the environment – such as environmental activism, experience of nature in general, and exposure to environmental catastrophes – could be a predictor of environmental behavior, but primarily of protest actions, not of pro-environmental behaviors. Messick (1992) explained that there is a "social dilemma" – individual pro-environmental behavior is effective only when a majority of people behave in a similar way. Additionally, different types of experiences constructing a referent criterion across the two issues might have led to a different weight being placed on the questions measuring the referent criterion, which could be another reason for the divergent results for this factor in the two campaigns.

In its findings about the impact of control variables, this study confirmed that the effects of attitude toward the companies and of demographic and socioeconomic factors were not consistent and were minimal. Such psychological tendencies (attitude) and demographic and socioeconomic factors are considered cross-situational or static factors that generate small effects on communicative behaviors because of the overriding effect of situational factors over cross-situational characteristics (Grunig, 1997; Kim, Jung, Park, & Dutta, 2009). Ni's (2003) in-depth interview study confirmed that cross-situational components do not stimulate active communicative behaviors across political, economic, health, and environmental situations. Other recent studies have also shown that demographic factors have minimal effects on publics' communicative behaviors in response to problematic situations ("hot issues") (Kim, 2016; Kim, Ni, Kim, & Kim, 2012).

## Implications

The present study contributes to the scholarship on CSR, relationship management, and the STOPS. As regards CSR, the present study attempts to shed light on the underexplored area of publics' engagement in CSR at the behavioral level. Despite the growing importance of public participation in CSR activities, the majority of CSR studies have predominantly focused on publics' cognitive or perceptual engagement with CSR messages and how this impacts publics' evaluation of a company or their purchase intention toward the company's products or services (Brown & Dacin, 1997; David et al., 2005; Lii & Lee, 2012). Furthermore, although interactive, two-way strategies can be applied in CSR campaigns, the type of message researchers have tested has primarily been information about what a company is doing, rather than asking for participation in its activities (Hildebrand, DeMotta, Sen, & Valenzuela, 2017; Sen et al., 2006). In previous empirical research, publics for CSR activities

have been assumed to be passive, and thus public-oriented variables have usually been neglected; the present research seeks to fill this gap.

With regard to relationship management and the STOPS, the present study demonstrates that, overall, these theories hold true in the CSR context. Specifically, the present results indicate that cultivating high-quality relationships with publics and understanding their perceptions of and cognitions about a CSR issue are vital to the success of participatory CSR campaigns. By exploring the relational and issues-related situational antecedents of publics' CSR participation intention, this study broadens the body of knowledge in CSR research by explicating the process of co-creating social value and emphasizes the interactions between a company and multiple publics (cf. Høvring, 2017).

Furthermore, the present study expands well-developed public relations theories – relationship management theory and situational theory – by testing them simultaneously, and it offers a more comprehensive view of publics' participation in CSR campaigns. Kim and Ni (2013) conceptually suggested an effective public relations intervention for organization-initiated problems that can be implemented by considering both the quality of relationships between an organization and publics and the publics' activeness on the issues involved. Organization-initiated public relations problems, a common situation, start with an organization recognizing a potential social problem and seeking to implement public relations intervention activities to increase publics' problem perception as well as to impact their behavior (Kim & Ni, 2013). CSR campaigns, thus, fall into the category of organization-initiated public relations activities, yet empirical studies applying relationship management theory and the STOPS together are scarce. The present study provides empirical evidence for and demonstrates the utility of examining how these two types of factors function in the CSR context, which has implications for CSR strategies and for segmenting publics.

## Limitations and suggestions for future research

The present study's limitations invite further research. First, we only examined participatory CSR campaigns that asked for one type of action – sharing a campaign hashtag to elicit more company action (i.e., donation or tree planting) on an issue. The type of publics' participation in CSR campaigns can vary (e.g., following on social media, making a pledge, signing a petition, voting, volunteering, attending an event, donating, or changing current behaviors), and thus the mechanism through which publics decide to take action might differ by type. Accordingly, future studies can explore different types of participatory CSR activities and explore what elicits participation in them.

Second, we only examined U.S. respondents and companies, and the perceptions of CSR activities and the factors that influence them can differ by culture – in a more collectivistic culture, for instance, social factors might affect respondents more than individual perceptions. Indeed, studies have found that U.S. publics are more appreciative of CSR activities than are Korean publics (e.g., Kim & Choi, 2013; Woo & Jin, 2016).

Third, we used various types of participants at different stages of the research. For example, we determined the issue selection using MTurk panels, whereas the main study used SSI panels. There could be differences in terms of the issue importance between the two groups, although these would be less significant factors in terms of the study's purpose. Nevertheless, future research could be consistent in the type of participants used in each part of the study.

Lastly, we did not include social media-related factors that might have played a role in this study context. The significant impacts of age in our results – where the older respondents were, the less likely they were to have an intention to participate in the CSR campaigns – suggest that this may be due to the type of participation that companies asked for in the present study. Future studies can delve into different types of participatory CSR activities, including variables tied to the specific type of CSR campaign.

Despite these limitations, the present study has broken new ground. Publics' CSR participation in a participatory CSR campaign can be a starting point for company–public interaction, dialogue, and the co-creation of social value, helping to reach the long-term larger goal of benefiting society. Future scholarship can further advance and consolidate knowledge in this area.

## Conclusion

The present study explored the factors that influence publics' participation intention toward participatory CSR campaigns as a way of co-creating social value. By synthesizing two lines of research – relationship management and situational theory – we simultaneously tested the effects of organization–public relationships (OPRs) and issue-related situational factors from the STOPS on publics' intention to participate in two CSR campaigns. The results from the survey showed that situational motivation and OPRs were strongly and directly related to publics' participation intention for both CSR campaigns, but only two situational perceptions – constraint recognition and involvement recognition – were indirectly related to publics' participation through situational motivation. The findings make theoretical contributions by demonstrating the utility of synthesizing a model of two well-established public relations theories in the context of CSR and showing that such a model explains the mechanism of why publics participate in CSR campaigns, a question that has been rarely explored, until now.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Notes

1. Some scholars use the term *stakeholders* for the group to be communicated with in the CSR context. This study uses the term *publics*, in line with Grunig and Repper's (1992) three-stage model of strategic management of public relations: stakeholder, public, and issue. An organization has a relationship with stakeholders when an organization's or a stakeholder's behavior has consequences for the other (the *stakeholder stage*). When stakeholders recognize one or more of these consequences as a problem and organize to address the problem, publics form (the *public stage*). In this stage, the organization should identify and segment publics for effective communication (Grunig & Repper, 1992). In the *issue stage*, publics create "issues" out of the problems they perceive (Kim & Ni, 2010, p. 41). Kim et al. (2016) also suggest focusing on publics rather than on stakeholders in the CSR context to emphasize "the organization's immediate responsibilities to publics and the organization's proactive efforts to be responsible for the impact of its behaviors and decisions that affect its key publics" (p. 101).
2. SSI targeted the major U.S. regions in accordance with U.S. census breakdowns, such as Northeast 17.3%, South 38%, Midwest 20.9%, and West 23.8% ([https://www.census.gov/popclock/data\\_tables.php?component=growth](https://www.census.gov/popclock/data_tables.php?component=growth)). The proportion of female participants was targeted at 50.7%, which is slightly less than the 50.8% of the U.S. population estimated to be female in 2017 (<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217#viewtop>).
3. Survey Sampling International (SSI) notes that multiple levels of randomization are built into its Dynamix sampling system. Participants entering the system may potentially qualify for various currently active projects based on their known demographic or other characteristics. The system randomly selects 10 refinement questions, representing 10 potential projects, and based on their answers, a respondent may qualify for 0 to 10 of the 10 surveys. The system randomly selects a suitable survey for the respondent to take at that moment, avoiding the self-selection bias of traditional methods, as respondents are presented with only one survey at a time and cannot choose based on the attractiveness of the reward or the topic.

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## Appendix. News article examples for participatory CSR activity

### 1) Disney's #DreamBigPrincess campaign (girls' empowerment)

#### **DISNEY DEBUTS #DREAMBIGPRINCESS PHOTOGRAPHY CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE KIDS AROUND THE GLOBE TO DREAM BIG**

Glendale, Calif. (Aug. 15, 2017) – Today, Disney unveiled a global photographic campaign in support of #DreamBigPrincess, celebrating inspiring stories from around the world to encourage kids everywhere to dream big. Nineteen female photographers from 15 countries have created a series of empowering images showcasing real-world girls and women as part of Disney's "Dream Big, Princess" initiative launched in 2016, which taps into the power of Disney Princess stories to inspire kids. Photographs will be shared on social media to help raise funds for Girl Up, a United Nations Foundation's program supporting adolescent girls' leadership and empowerment.

"The idea that stories, whether real life or fictional like those of Belle or Rapunzel, can inspire kids to follow their dreams is at the heart of the #DreamBigPrincess campaign," said Jimmy Pitaro, Chairman of Disney Consumer Products and Interactive Media. "We asked some of the most accomplished female photographers to help tell the stories of inspiring women and girls from around the world – and the results are incredible."

As well as inspiring kids with positive images and the stories behind them, through its collaboration with Girl Up, the campaign aims to make a tangible difference for girls who face challenges in achieving their dreams. Disney Worldwide Services will donate one dollar for any public post of a photo using the hashtag #DreamBigPrincess or for "liking" such a post on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, for a minimum donation of \$500,000 and a maximum of \$1 million. Girl Up's leadership program engages girls to take action and advocates for girls around the world, giving them empowering tools to help make a difference.

### 2) Boxed Water's #ReTree campaign (deforestation)

#### **COMMITTED TO PLANTING ONE MILLION TREES, BOXED WATER LAUNCHES ITS 2017 RETREE PROJECT**

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (April 26, 2017) – Boxed Water, a six-year-old company that packages water in boxes instead of bottles, is aiming to help the environment by offering to plant trees on behalf of consumers who promote its products through social media. Boxed Water has launched the third year of its ReTree project in partnership with the National Forest Foundation (NFF).

“Our ReTree project is one way we can create an avenue for people to make a real difference through simple actions, just like the act of choosing Boxed Water,” said Daryn Kuipers, CEO of Boxed Water.

To date, consumers have helped Boxed Water commit to over 500,000 trees from the last two ReTree seasons. Trees that Boxed Water committed to during the #ReTree 2016 campaign will be planted this summer in the following forests: Sierra National Forest, Calif.; Stanislaus National Forest, Calif.; and Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest, Utah. The NFF focuses on restoring critical ecosystems and planting native trees to help those ecosystems thrive.

The momentum from the last two years paves the way for this year’s project focus, “Let’s Get Growing,” where Boxed Water invites people to use the hashtag #ReTree and post a photo through their social channels. For every social media post, Boxed Water will plant two trees. In addition to the two tree commitment, Boxed Water will be introducing new ways for people to get involved, including planting six trees when people make web store purchases at [boxedwaterisbetter.com](http://boxedwaterisbetter.com). ReTree is a major tree-planting commitment by Boxed Water with a five-year goal of planting one million trees in national forests across the country.