

Article

Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility Actions on South Korean Adolescents' Perceptions in the Food Industry

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Abstract: Our objective in this study is to understand how adolescents respond to the food industry's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities, especially the effects of such activities on consumers' emotional responses, perceived authenticity, and attitudes toward the company. Understanding which types of CSR actions most influence adolescents is important for managers. This study examines adolescents' responses to three types of CSR actions (career-related, environment-related, and wellbeing-related) across two types of products (unhealthy and healthy foods). We find that CSR actions related to career issues have the greatest effects on adolescents' emotional responses, perceived authenticity, and attitudes toward a company under the condition of healthy food products. In other words, when a healthy food company offers a career-related CSR program, adolescents have better responses than when an unhealthy food company offers the same CSR program.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; healthiness; emotional response; authenticity; attitude

1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become a focal topic for many marketing researchers, business managers, and policy makers [1]. Research has been actively conducted in this area [2] and provides theoretical and practical implications. Prior research [3] has demonstrated that CSR affects consumer behaviors. However, only a few studies have explained how CSR activities influence young consumers (i.e., adolescents) [4]. CSR issues for young consumers are particularly important because they are current and are future consumers for most companies, and they also constitute the future leadership of corporations. Young consumers, especially adolescents, are a significant market segment, and during adolescence they are learning consumption habits and building their preferences and attitudes toward corporations and brands. Possibly, those generated preferences will affect their adulthood purchasing behavior [5]. It is relevant to build consumer–company relationships with adolescents because those ties can help firms gain a competitive advantage in the long-term [6]. In addition, current business decisions influence both society and the environment and thereby affect the quality of life of young people. According to Aguinis and Glavas [1], marketers need to investigate questions such as: Are there differences regarding CSR-related values and attitudes based on age, such that younger generations are interested in CSR because of firm reputation? Are perhaps older generations interested in CSR for different reasons, such as leaving a legacy? What is the effect of generational differences on the types of CSR actions and policies that a firm could choose to initiate? That kind of individual-level CSR analysis could make important contributions in guiding CSR research

and understanding today's young people. In this study, we examined the effects of CSR actions on adolescents' emotional responses and attitudes toward a company in South Korea.

CSR has become a particular focal topic for businesses in South Korea [7]. Traditionally, many corporations in Korea have been required to take responsibility for the welfare of children and teenagers [7]. From the perspective of social investment, many companies' CSR strategies have focused on education services and programs for children and youth [8]. Even though many studies have emphasized the importance of work experience programs supported by companies whose target participants are adolescents, there is little research empirically validating career exploration programs supported by companies as one type of CSR action [9].

We could list many examples of companies actively helping children and youth explore their careers in many parts of the world [10]. In more than 20 countries, Intel provides its Intel Computer Clubhouse, a community-based after-school program where young people can explore their creativity, build their confidence, and develop skills through the use of innovative technology [10]. As a result of those activities, young people have a chance to imagine a future career. Nokia and the International Youth Foundation (IYF) provide a variety of youth-development programs for more than 280,000 young people worldwide [10]. In South Africa, unemployed college graduates receive practical training in computer literacy, effective communication, and goal setting and acquire skills for overcoming personal and professional obstacles. Microsoft is operating Boys and Girls Clubs of America, which offer guidance-oriented programs, on a daily basis for children 6–18 years old [10]. The programs emphasize character and leadership development, educational enhancement, career preparation, health and life skills, sports, fitness, and recreation. McDonald's Korea launched the "Happy Burger Campaign" in 2013 to deliver 800 BBQ burgers and drinks to child welfare institutions in eight major cities across the country each week [11]. Nestle, a food and beverage company, founded Nestle Academy in 2011 and provides about 100 young students with work experience and career education at its offices and factories every year [9].

The food industry is where adolescents spend most of their money and is also closely related to their nutrition and health [12]. Through its marketing strategies, the food industry plays a critical role in adolescent health [13]. According to a guideline by the US Department of Health and Human Services [14], *healthy food* can be defined as nutrition-rich food products in the categories of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and low-fat meat that can help improve overall health and wellbeing as well as reduce the risk of chronic disease. On the other hand, *unhealthy food* can be defined as energy-dense foods rich in saturated fats, trans fats, sodium, added sugars, and chemical additives. The fast food industry faces declining sales because of its unhealthy menus, along with increasing pressure to provide more nutritious menus that include vegetables and fruits [15]. In addition, the fast food industry has a great impact on the environment. It also generates solid and liquid waste from food packaging and food waste, contributes to deforestation, and is responsible for water and soil pollution [16]. Companies in the fast food industry thus pursue CSR initiatives to mitigate the negative effects of environmental and health-related marketing programs and improve their reputation and brand image. Many Korean firms in the food industry encourage adolescents to participate in their CSR programs as volunteers [17]. The companies hope that such voluntary participation in CSR programs will help them build a long-term relationship with these young consumers and improve their brand image [18]. Therefore, it is important to understand if and how CSR affects adolescents' relationships with companies, especially in the food industry.

Although companies engage in a wide range of CSR initiatives, herein we study the effects of CSR action types (career-related, environment-related, and wellbeing-related) on consumers' emotional responses, perceived authenticity, and attitudes toward the company. As a moderator, we consider the healthfulness of the food products (unhealthy and healthy). First, environment-related actions include campaigns to reduce energy and water consumption, to reduce waste by incorporating reusable items, and to create recycling solutions. Second, career-related actions include job-related skills training programs, and in our study, a professional cooking class in the food industry. Third, wellbeing-related

actions include campaigns to encourage individual exercise or sports. In this paper, wellbeing is defined as physical wellbeing, which emphasizes regular work-outs, enough sleep, and a balanced diet. Our main purpose in this study is to investigate the joint effects of CSR action types and the healthfulness of food products on adolescents' reactions.

2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Minton and Cornwell [19] use cueing theory to examine the effect of cause-related marketing on food product evaluation in packaged food products. They refer to cause-related marketing information as *cause-cues*. In cueing theory, a specific piece of information can manipulate the activation of knowledge to produce specific outcomes [20]. Minton and Cornwell [19] suggest a cause-cue effect in which a cue relating to being healthy activates information in the mind associated with health. As a result, when health cues are more available in consumers' minds, they perceive packaged foods to be more healthful than they actually are. Minton and Cornwell [19] found that a health-oriented cause-cue for food packaging increases consumer health perceptions of the food, whereas a non-health food cause-cue does not influence health perceptions. They compared three types of causes: health, environment, and society. In their results, consumers' overall evaluations were higher in the health-cause condition than in the environment-cause and society-cause conditions.

Numerous educational marketing campaigns raise children's awareness of the benefits of good nutrition and exercise, and some children are concerned about sustainability issues such as wasteful consumption and environmental degradation [21]. Francis and Davis [4] develop a scale to measure adolescents' sustainability concerns (ASC). Using interviews and surveys with adolescents aged 12 to 17 years, their ASC scale identifies key sustainability concerns across the dimensions of the environment, wellbeing, and society.

In particular, the food industry has many effects on both the environment and wellbeing. Consumer concerns about the food industry's effects on the environment include deforestation, waste disposal, water pollution, and global warming from methane [22]. Several companies in the food industry are trying environmentally responsible activities. For example, McDonald's incorporates environmental factors into purchasing guidelines, including elements such as water and energy conservation, air pollution, waste and recycling, habitat preservation, and the use of chemicals [11]. The food industry also directly influences consumers' health. Specifically, many countries face problems with obesity [23], and fast food restaurants often receive some blame for that [24]. The fast food industry faces pressure to provide more nutritious menus that include vegetables and fruits as well as pressure to engage in socially responsible actions related to consumers' wellbeing. For example, McDonald's Korea provides a "soccer classroom" for youth, in which children can improve their physical fitness through funding a systematic training program and cooperative group play. Career-related CSR actions are specially designed education programs for adolescents to learn job-related skills and knowledge. For example, since 2014, Jamba Juice Korea has provided an education program for disabled people to learn how to make smoothies [25]. In our study, we focus on three types of CSR actions in the food industry: career development, the environment, and wellbeing. Based on previous studies [4], the environmental dimension relates to trees and plants, pollution, rubbish, oceans and rivers, and animal welfare. Wellbeing incorporates physical health, nutrition, and fitness. Career development covers skills training to prepare for a future career and supporting local schools and educational organizations.

CSR research indicates that consumers are more likely to form an emotional attachment with brands that provide opportunities to do good [26]. Consequently, food companies that provide socially responsible CSR action programs to adolescents might induce positive emotional responses that form positive attitudes. According to Bhattacharya and Sen [27], when consumers participate in the CSR activities of a company, they feel a closeness with the corporation. This connection leads consumers to make a more positive assessment of the company. Thus, it is important that companies actively

encourage youth participation in CSR activities aimed at them. In our study, we discern which types of CSR activities drive adolescents to have the most favorable responses.

Regarding research on adolescents' concerns and attitudes toward CSR dimensions, several researchers have found that adolescents have different interests in social, economics, and environmental issues [28–30]. Especially, adolescents have less interest in environmentally friendly actions. However, these studies compared the three dimensions of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic. From the perspective of adolescents, work experience programs supported by companies whose target participants are adolescents are interesting CSR actions because they are designed for adolescents to participate proactively. Kaplan and Kaplan [31] suggest that adolescence is a period that shows an increase in risk-taking attitudes and behaviors, and adolescents readily explore new and unfamiliar areas and concern meaningful activity. Meaningful activities for adolescents should involve high degrees of participation and a less normative approach. Adolescence is a crucial time to explore personal career paths, considering interests and abilities [32]. Among a variety of career exploration activities, work experience emphasizes learning by doing and work-based learning [33]. Adolescents often desire to be adults as soon as possible, and they are increasingly exposed to concerns about their future careers [34]. Young consumers should be able to understand why they decide to purchase a specific brand, and they focus on empathy with brands and companies [4]. On the other hand, excessive advertising and communication efforts can lead to skepticism among adolescents [35]. To avoid the risk of skepticism and to effectively and efficiently communicate with adolescents through CSR programs, authenticity is vital [36]. Among adolescents, *perceived authenticity* can be described as charity by firms that give help without the goal of selling a product or gaining financial profits [37,38]. To achieve authenticity perception, a CSR program has to generate emotional empathy with its consumers [39]. Empathy with companies is very important to building relationships with adolescents, and that empathy can be induced through a CSR program designed to appeal to adolescents' interests. Thus, companies need to offer a CSR program that supports adolescents' self-realization because adolescents are likely to pay more attention to CSR actions that directly affect themselves [40]. Kaplan and Kaplan [31] also suggested that adolescents need to feel that they are involved in activities including CSR-related education programs. Based on these discussions, we derive the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *CSR actions related to career issues have the greatest effects on adolescents' responses.*

Hypothesis 1 (H1(a)). *Adolescents have more positive emotional responses to career-related CSR actions than to environment-related and wellbeing-related CSR actions.*

Hypothesis 1 (H1(b)). *Adolescents perceive higher authenticity with career-related CSR actions than with environment-related and wellbeing-related CSR actions.*

Hypothesis 1 (H1(c)). *Adolescents have more favorable attitudes toward a company that offers career-related CSR actions than toward companies that offer environment-related or wellbeing-related CSR actions.*

There is a stream of studies examining the CSR perception of healthy foods. Lee et al. [41] examined consumer CSR perception under the consideration of healthful foods and nutrition information using a scenario-based experiment. They found that customers perceive restaurants to be socially responsible when they are provided with healthful foods and nutrition information. Schroder and McEachern [42] found that consumers perceived the restaurants' provision of nutrition information and healthful options as one of their CSR actions. Many other researchers [43–45] have found that providing healthy menus helps companies to create a socially responsible image. Based on the above literature, we assumed that healthiness of food menus would have a moderating role in the evaluation of CSR actions.

Because adolescence is a period of maximum anxiety and distrust, adolescents might be skeptical of the authenticity of a company's CSR motives. Attrition theory posits that consumers attempt to understand the company motives behind marketing communications about a CSR program [3].

The attributions of motives underlying a company's CSR initiatives affect consumers' perception [46]. Because fast food companies generally have a negative image, CSR actions by a fast food company can be perceived as a trick by which the company is trying to hide its marketing goal (i.e., increasing sales and profits) and be seen as good [47]. Thus, CSR actions by a fast food company can lead to negative evaluations. In other words, we expect that when companies that sell unhealthy food participate in career-related CSR actions, adolescents will have relatively strong negative emotional responses, authenticity perception, and attitudes toward the company. When healthy food companies practice career-related CSR actions, on the other hand, we expect that the effect will be more positive because adolescents pay attention to CSR actions that directly affect them. Thus, we derive the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *When a company offers a career-related CSR program, adolescents have better responses when the company sells healthy foods than when it sells unhealthy foods.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2(a)). *Adolescents have more positive emotional responses to a career-related CSR action when the company is offering relatively healthy foods than when it is offering unhealthy foods.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2(b)). *Adolescents perceive higher authenticity in a career-related CSR action when the company is offering relatively healthy foods than when it is offering unhealthy foods.*

Hypothesis 2 (H2(c)). *Adolescents have more favorable attitudes toward a company's career-related CSR action when the company is offering relatively healthy foods than when it is offering unhealthy foods.*

3. Research Method

Our research tests our hypotheses using a scenario-based 3 (types of CSR actions: career-related, environment-related, and wellbeing-related) \times 2 (unhealthy/healthy food restaurants) between-subjects experiment design (Table 1). In total, 125 high school students at a public high school in South Korea participated in the experiment. We carefully performed the experimental design and data collection because our research focused on adolescents as participants. Before conducting the experiment, our research proposal was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Seoul Medical Center, Seoul, South Korea. The Seoul Medical Center IRB reviewed and approved the experiment materials, questionnaires, and consent form. Our experiment was conducted in a high school located in Seoul, South Korea, with the school's permission. The high school teachers were provided with full documents that stated the nature and purpose of the research and the potential enrollment of their students. We provided complete information about the experiments to the participants and teachers. Testing was conducted on school grounds in a spare classroom deemed appropriated by both the School Principal and the researchers. Information letters were sent to parents about the nature of the study, with consent sought for their children to participate. We provided a copy of the consent document to the participants and their parents. We randomly assigned participants to one of six conditions. Participants' ages ranged from 15 to 18 years, with a mean age of 16.0 years, and 48% of participants were male and 52% were female.

After participants read a simple scenario, we asked them to evaluate website content and answer questions about their emotional responses, authenticity perception, and attitude toward the company.

Table 1. Between-subjects factor sample size.

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Action	Food Type	N
Career	Unhealthy	20
	Healthy	20
Environment	Unhealthy	22
	Healthy	21
Wellbeing	Unhealthy	21
	Healthy	21

We used company websites as stimuli to provide information about CSR actions in our study because company websites generally act as communication channels to consumers [33]. Our experiment websites contained stimuli portraying career-related, environment-related, or wellbeing-related CSR actions in two service contexts: a fast food restaurant (unhealthy) and a ready-to-drink juices and smoothies restaurant (healthy). We created two fictitious restaurants (“XYZ burger” and “XYZ juice”) for the experiment to control for preexisting knowledge and attitudes. We manipulated the website content to reflect the three types of CSR actions. To prevent potential confounding effects, all experimental website content used the same format and structure. The websites contained information about CSR programs offered by XYZ restaurant to teenage volunteers across three conditions: career-related, environment-related, and wellbeing-related CSR programs. Before viewing the website, all subjects read the same description: “Imagine that there is a new restaurant in town that you would like to visit. This restaurant, XYZ, is known for good food and great service. Before visiting the restaurant, you visit the company’s website”. The subjects then viewed the website of their randomly assigned condition (CSR action by unhealthy or healthy restaurant). The career-related CSR program was described as follows: “We continue to develop a work experience program to support the dreams of young people who want to become a chef making smoothies and juices (or burgers). In particular, [XYZ Cooking Class] is a professional chef training program for young people to learn how to make smoothies and juices (or burgers)”. The environment-related CSR program was described as follows: “We continue to develop environmental protection activities to beautify our lives. In particular, [XYZ Environment-Protection Class] recruits young participants to experience the preciousness of life and the environment through creative activities and a forest experience with recycling education”. The wellbeing-related CSR program was described as follows: “We continue to develop programs that can promote healthy young bodies and minds. In particular, [XYZ Work-Out Class] recruits young participants to improve their physical fitness and encourage cooperation and social cohesion through fun and structured physical activity”.

Measures from the literature provided the basis for our dependent measures. We used two items (to what extent the CSR program makes adolescents feel happy/pleasant: 1—not at all, 7—very strongly; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.807) to measure emotional responses to the CSR program [48]. For measuring perceived authenticity, we used a three-item semantic differentiation scale: profit-motivated/socially-motivated; self-interested/community-interested; and company-focused/consumer-focused (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.849). A four-item semantic differential scale from Berry [49] (bad/good; not favorable/favorable; negative/positive; likeable/not likeable) measured attitudes toward the company (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.939). As a control variable, we measured environmental concern using three items with a seven-point Likert scale (1—strongly disagree, 7—strongly agree; Cronbach’s alpha = 0.951): “the environment is one of the most important issues that the world is facing”, “issues relating to the environment are very important to me”, “the increasing destruction of the environment is a serious problem” [50].

4. Results

4.1. Manipulation Checks

We conducted a manipulation check to verify the level of healthfulness of the food products. Respondents answered the questions: “How healthy is the product?” on two 7-point semantic differential scales (very unhealthy/very healthy; harmful/beneficial). The independent t-test results indicated that the two levels of healthfulness of the food were significantly different from each other. As per expectations, consumers perceived the ready-to-drink juices and smoothies to be healthier than the fast food ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.095$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.580$; $t = -2.712$, $p = 0.007$). Similarly, participants perceived the ready-to-drink juices and smoothies to be more beneficial to health than the fast food ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 3.905$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.296$; $t = -2.204$, $p = 0.029$). Thus, the two levels of healthfulness of the food were successfully manipulated.

We conducted a manipulation check to verify the CSR action perception. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with three sentences on a 7-point scale (1—not at all, 7—very strongly): “I think XYZ company’s program is very career-related”, “I think XYZ company’s program is very environment-related”, and “I think XYZ company’s program is very wellbeing-related”. Manipulation checks revealed that respondents exposed to the career-related CSR website perceived it as career-related ($M_{\text{career}} = 4.500$), not environment-related ($M_{\text{environment}} = 3.395$) or wellbeing-related ($M_{\text{wellbeing}} = 3.262$; $F(2, 122) = 11.347, p = 0.000$). Respondents exposed to the environment-related CSR website perceived it as environment-related ($M_{\text{environment}} = 4.575$), not career-related ($M_{\text{career}} = 3.488$) or wellbeing-related ($M_{\text{wellbeing}} = 3.405$; $F(2, 122) = 11.482, p = 0.000$). Respondents exposed to the wellbeing-related CSR website perceived it as wellbeing-related ($M_{\text{wellbeing}} = 4.725$), not career-related ($M_{\text{career}} = 3.381$) or environment-related ($M_{\text{environment}} = 3.558$; $F(2, 122) = 12.026, p = 0.000$).

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

We tested the research hypotheses using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the existence of significant interaction effects between CSR action types and food types on adolescents’ responses (emotional response, perceived authenticity, and attitude toward the company), while controlling for the effect of environmental concern (Table 2).

Table 2. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) results.

	Environmental Concern (Covariate)	CSR Action (CSR)	Food Type (F)	Interaction (CSR × F)
Emotional Response	14.258 *** (0.000)	0.338 (0.714)	0.356 (0.552)	4.369 ** (0.015)
Authenticity Perception	5.390 ** (0.022)	1.207 (0.303)	0.841 (0.361)	3.636 ** (0.029)
Attitude Toward the Company	7.463 *** (0.007)	1.453 (0.238)	0.002 (0.967)	3.657 ** (0.029)

Note: p -values in parentheses. CSR Action (Career vs. Environment vs. Wellbeing), Food Type (Unhealthy vs. Healthy). *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$.

We found no main effect of CSR action types on adolescents’ emotional response, authenticity perception, or attitudes toward the company. We conducted follow-up tests in which we split the data by food types and conducted one-way ANCOVA tests, controlling for environmental concern as a covariate. Under the condition of unhealthy food products, we found no significant effects of CSR action type on adolescents’ emotional response, authenticity perception, or attitudes toward the company. Thus, respondents did not substantially distinguish CSR action types when the company sold unhealthy foods. Under the healthy food products condition, we did find significant effects of CSR action type on authenticity perception ($F(2, 58) = 3.587, p = 0.034$) and attitudes toward the company ($F(2, 58) = 5.108, p = 0.009$), but not on emotional response. When the company selling healthy food products offered a career-related CSR program, respondents showed significantly higher authenticity perception and attitude toward the company. Thus, the hypotheses H1, H1(a), H1(b), and H1(c) were partially supported. CSR actions related to career issues had the most positive effect on adolescents’ responses, but only under the condition of healthy foods.

A two-way ANCOVA test revealed a significant interaction effect between CSR action types and food types (unhealthy vs. healthy) in adolescents’ emotional responses ($F(2, 118) = 4.369, p = 0.015$). We performed follow-up tests to determine the effects on adolescents’ emotional response more closely. As Figure 1 shows, we found a significant simple effect of food types (unhealthy vs. healthy) on adolescents’ emotional response under the career-related CSR action condition, and an insignificant simple effect under the environment-related and wellbeing-related CSR action conditions. When a restaurant that provides a career-related CSR program is selling relatively healthy food, respondents show higher emotional responses than when the food is unhealthy ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.195$ vs. M_{healthy}

= 5.016; $F(2, 118) = 6.919, p = 0.010$). When a restaurant provides an environment-related program, respondents do not substantially distinguish the differences between unhealthy and healthy foods ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.825$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.402$; n.s.). Likewise, when a restaurant provides a wellbeing-related CSR program, respondents do not substantially distinguish the differences between unhealthy and healthy foods ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.497$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.416$; n.s.). Thus, hypothesis H2(a) was supported.

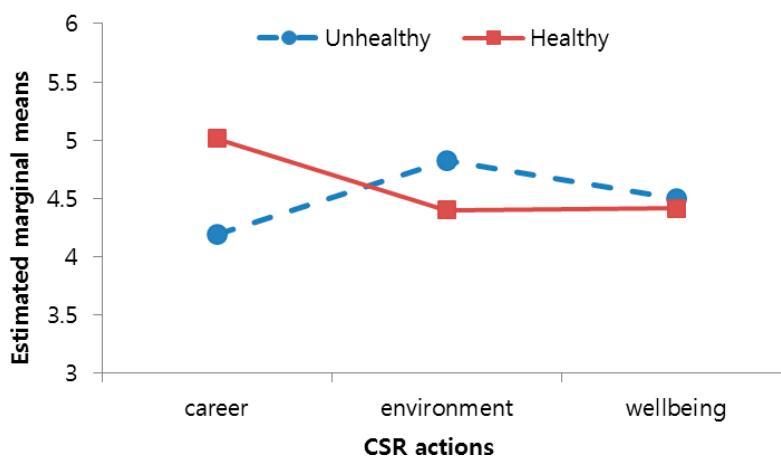


Figure 1. Interaction effect between CSR action and food type (Unhealthy vs. Healthy) on consumer CSR emotional response.

A two-way ANCOVA test also revealed a significant interaction effect between CSR action types and food types on adolescents' perceived authenticity ($F(2, 118) = 3.636, p = 0.029$). We performed follow-up contrast tests to determine the effects on adolescents' perceived authenticity more precisely. As Figure 2 shows, we found a significant simple effect of food types on adolescents' perceived authenticity under the career-related CSR action condition and insignificant simple effects under the environment-related and wellbeing-related CSR action conditions. When a restaurant that provides a career-related CSR program sells relatively healthy food, respondents show higher perceived authenticity than when the food is unhealthy ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 3.366$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.170$; $F(2, 118) = 7.239, p = 0.008$). When a restaurant provides an environment-related CSR program, respondents' perceived authenticity does not substantially distinguish between unhealthy and healthy foods ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 3.979$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 3.851$; n.s.). Likewise, when a restaurant provides a wellbeing-related CSR program, respondents' perceived authenticity does not substantially distinguish between unhealthy and healthy foods ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 3.703$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 3.439$; n.s.). Thus, hypothesis H2(b) was supported.

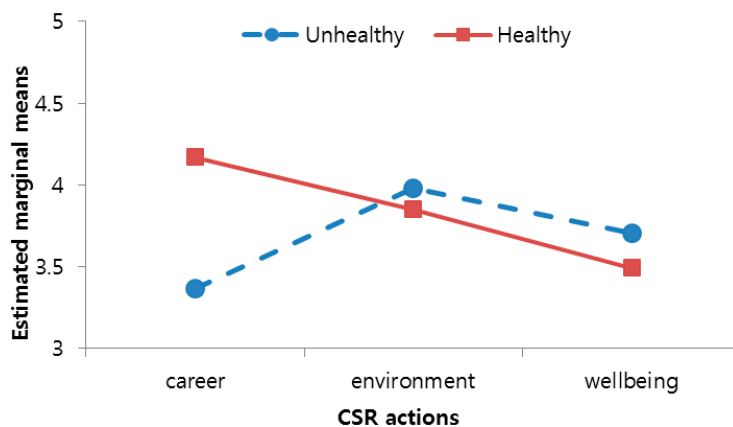


Figure 2. Interaction effect between CSR action and food type (Unhealthy vs. Healthy) on consumer CSR authenticity perception.

Finally, a two-way ANCOVA test revealed a significant interaction effect between CSR action types and food types on adolescents' attitudes toward the company ($F(2, 118) = 3.657, p = 0.029$). We performed follow-up tests to determine the effects on adolescents' attitudes toward the company more closely. As Figure 3 shows, we found a significant simple effect of food types on adolescents' attitudes toward the company under the career-related CSR action condition and insignificant simple effects under the environment-related and wellbeing-related CSR action conditions. When a restaurant that provides a career-related CSR program sells relatively healthy food, respondents show a more favorable attitude toward the company than when the food is unhealthy ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.265$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.956; F(2, 118) = 4.540, p = 0.035$). When a restaurant provides an environment-related CSR program, respondents do not have different attitudes when the foods are unhealthy or healthy ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.591$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.141; n.s.$). Likewise, when a restaurant provides a wellbeing-related CSR program, respondents do not have different attitudes when the foods are unhealthy or healthy ($M_{\text{unhealthy}} = 4.361$ vs. $M_{\text{healthy}} = 4.098; n.s.$). Thus, hypothesis H2(c) was supported.

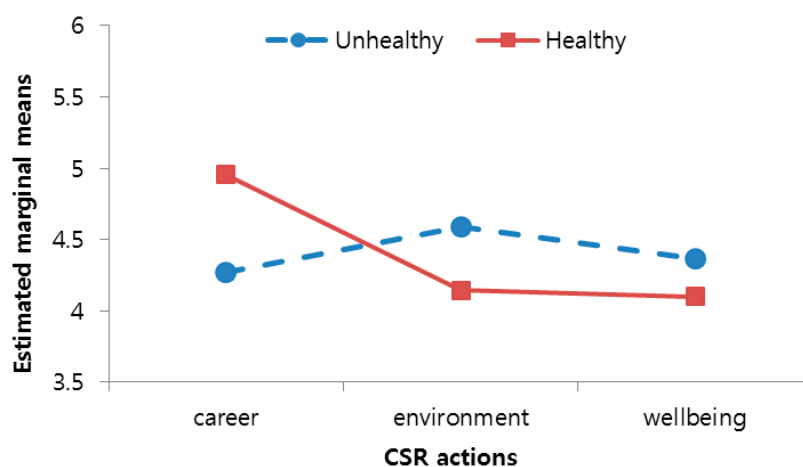


Figure 3. Interaction effect between CSR action and food type (Unhealthy vs. Healthy) on attitude toward the company.

5. Conclusions

Our study reported here contributes to marketing knowledge by studying adolescents' perceptions and attitudes about CSR actions in the food industry. Our findings have several implications for academics and practitioners. First, our work shows that adolescents pay more attention to CSR actions that are directly related to their interests: adolescents' reactions depended on the type of CSR action (career-related, environment-related, and wellbeing-related) and the type of food product (unhealthy vs. healthy). Career-related CSR actions in the healthy food industry are the most effective for adolescents, but career-related CSR had an adverse effect in the unhealthy food industry. These findings support notions of previous research that providing healthful foods has a positive effect on perceived CSR [41]. In addition, our results provide empirical support to previous research [31,40] that argues that companies need to offer a CSR program that supports adolescents' self-realization because adolescents are likely to pay more attention to CSR actions that directly affect themselves and that adolescents need to feel that they are involved in activities including CSR-related education programs. Second, our findings provide direction for targeted CSR campaigns and programs. If businesses want to take advantage of CSR activities that target adolescents, consumer researchers, social marketers, policy makers, and educators have to understand the relationship between youth and CSR initiatives. These career-related CSR activities are beneficial not only to the companies, but also to the adolescents. These work experience programs help the companies improve their images and performance and help adolescents understand job descriptions and their career paths. The higher the level of corporate participation, the higher the quality of career-related education programs and career

exploration activities. In order to more actively develop these career-related CSR actions, a consensus between the regional communities and companies should be formed, and the government should support them. Third, understanding adolescent consumers is vital to fostering a sustainable future because they are the future consumers and leaders in society. Companies will be able to work together with organizations that have expertise regarding adolescents in order to design their CSR activities more efficiently and to understand the characteristics of adolescents and youth. Companies need to invest in creating a dedicated organization and developing working experience contents suitable for the characteristic of company. Thus, our work contributes by offering ideas and insights about adolescents' responses to CSR actions.

Our study has some limitations. We chose the food industry, but future research should examine CSR action strategies in other industries. Our sample was limited to Korean high school students. Our scenario-based experimental design with a hypothetical company also has limited external validity. Future research should examine the robustness of our findings.

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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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