JOURNAL OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
2022, VOL. 28, NO. 3, 291–312
https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2021.1874482

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Luxury and sustainability: The role of message appeals and objectivity on luxury brands' green corporate social responsibility

Eun Yeon Kang[a] and Yoon Hi Sung[b]

[a]Department of Business Administration, College of Business, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, Kutztown, PA, USA; [b]The Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA

ABSTRACT

Luxury companies are facing a dilemma over green CSR communication. Consumers expect them to engage in pro-environmental practices, but at the same time they view luxury and sustainability as incompatible. Then, how can the brands communicate their efforts with consumers? This study investigates the effects of message objectivity (high vs. low) and appeals (environmental benefit vs. personal benefit) on the consumer's evaluation of a luxury brand. Findings showed that an environmental benefit-focused message led consumers to perceive the brand's CSR motive as public-serving, which eventually generated a positive company evaluation. Also, the message objectivity significantly moderated the relationship between the message appeal and company evaluation. This study contributes to broaden the understanding of consumer responses to the luxury brand's green CSR practice and provide empirical communication strategies for luxury brands' practitioners.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 15 March 2020
Accepted 7 January 2021

Introduction

In accordance with consumers' growing concerns about companies' social and environmental responsibilities (Tang and Tang 2012), companies are now facing an 'ethics era' (Davies, Lee, and Ahonkhai 2012). They have actively engaged in various corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, and more recently, pro-environmental sustainability initiatives have received greater attention from management. These include using less chemicals, recycled materials, or no natural resources (Lozano et al. 2010; Robertson and Barling 2015). The luxury industry also cannot avoid such pro-environmental trends. Because of the greater feasibility and resources that luxury companies have, consumers anticipate them to be 'responsible luxury' (Janssen, Vanhamme, and Leblanc 2017), and the industry as a whole has been particularly pressured to integrate pro-environmental CSR into its business model (De Angelis, Adıgüzel, and Amatulli 2017; Janssen et al. 2014).

In response, luxury brands have gradually incorporated green practices into their operations. As a leading sustainable luxury fashion brand, Stella McCartney has used

CONTACT Yoon Hi Sung yhsung@ou.edu The Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication, the University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA

eco-friendly materials for its products including vegan leather, recycled synthetic fabrics, organic cotton, and faux fur (Wolfe 2018). Also, it has partnered with other fashion brands such as LVMH and Adidas and shared its expertise in sustainable skills and operations (Farra 2019; Paton and Friedman 2019). Similarly, Versace, Burberry, and Furla committed to stop using real fur for their products (Jones 2018), and Gucci has used eco-friendly materials for its eyewear since 2011 as well as a new environmentally friendly production process (Heerde 2018). With the collective efforts, several luxury companies have already had positive outcome over the years. Examples include Gucci that has reduced its detrimental environmental footprint by 21% in 2019 and further aims to decrease CO_2 emissions by 50% by 2025 (CPP-Luxury. 2020). Also, the L'Oréal group, which owns high-end cosmetic brands such as Giorgio Armani, Yves Saint Laurent, and Kiehl's, has reduced its plants' gas emissions by 78% since 2005 and 85% of its products have been newly developed to have a pro-social or pro-environmental profile (L'Oréal 2019).

Although a number of luxury brands increasingly consider CSR to be a key pillar of their business (e.g., Cervellon and Shammas 2013; Winston 2016) and make significant process toward environmental sustainability, they are prone to keeping silent about their commitments (Givhan 2015) because consumers are likely to view luxury and sustainability as contradictory (Beckham and Voyer 2014; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014). Indeed, as an example, luxury consumers showed negativity toward purchasing luxury clothes made of recycled cotton (Achabou and Dekhili 2013). Since luxury is associated with rarity and prestige (De Barnier, Falcy, and Valette-Florence 2012), such recycled material makes the product no longer unique and exclusive (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2015). Therefore, despite the consumers' concerns and expectations that companies being pro-environmental, luxury brands encounter a dilemma over their green CSR engagement and communication. That is, they should disclose their green efforts to signal that they are a responsible sector in society, but at the same time, they could make consumers confused about the value of a brand by communicating their green practices. In addition, a luxury brand's image can be significantly important for consumers since conspicuousness is a major reason for purchasing luxury items (Bagwell and Bernheim 1996; Truong and McColl 2011). This implies that luxury brands should strategically emphasize or deemphasize their characteristics to enhance their image, which may function as a driving factor for the consumer's purchase decision. Accordingly, the question arises as to what message strategies luxury brands could adopt to communicate their green CSR efforts while inducing positive consumer responses.

To answer this question, the current study delves into message strategies for luxury brands to effectively communicate their pro-environmental CSR efforts. Specifically, it investigates how message objectivity (high vs. low) and different appeals (environmental benefit vs. personal benefit) influence the consumer's evaluation of a luxury brand and its green practice. Also, with an emphasis on the consumer's perceived CSR motives, this study further examines the underlying mechanism of their evaluations. This study certainly has significance in that it provides empirical evidence of how consumers perceive green messages in the context of luxury brands, where is in need of more in-depth research to establish successful marketing communication strategies (Taylor 2016). It also extends green CSR communication and consumer research by examining consumers' reactions to different communication approaches. Further, this study suggests meaningful guidelines for luxury brands' practitioners to overcome their dilemma with respect

to communicating their pro-environmental contributions and maximizing the performance of green CSR engagement.

Literature review

The nature of luxury

There has been no consensus on the definition of luxury (Heine 2012; Vigneron and Johnson 1999, 2004; Yeoman 2011), which may be because its meaning can vary by the consumers' own experiences (Nia and Zaichhkowsky 2000) and circumstances (Gardyn 2002). Ko et al. (2019) identified some commonalities representing luxury, such as high quality, rarity, premium price, and aesthetics. However, although luxury brands are a small business sector, luxury brands have recently adopted 'abundant rarity' (Kapferer 2012) or 'masstige' (mass + prestige) strategy (Chandon, Laurent, and Valette-Florence 2016), which goes beyond a simple product's exclusivity. For example, approximately 800,000 Rolex watches are produced every year (Forbes 2019), and Louis Vuitton's net profit has increased by 18% with 53.4 USD billion of revenue in 2018, implying that more consumers are consuming its products and its rarity has been diminished (Bobila 2019). These figures indicate that luxury brands now mass produce, which makes their products more prevalent, and that they are purchased by a larger consumer segment in the marketplace. Given such ease of accessibility of luxury brands, luxury companies have attempted to develop distinctive intrinsic attributes and characteristics of their offerings in order to build strong long-term brand values and identity. In particular, as one of these means, they put a greater emphasis on engaging in social responsibility or sustainability practices to differentiate themselves and highlight the consumers' ethical and experiential values (Pavione and Pezzetti 2015).

Luxury and CSR

Luxury companies have only realized the importance of CSR since the 1990s (Pavione and Pezzetti 2015). With a limited number of companies proactively involved in pro-environmental development and communication, the significance of CSR has been regarded as 'sustainability silence' for most of luxury brands (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014). However, as the demand of luxury products has been increasing, scholars have recently placed a greater emphasis on CSR research in the luxury sector and the luxury sustainability research has been fostered since 2013 (Kunz, May, and Schmidt 2020). Despite diverse topics covered in luxury CSR research, empirical research still remains limited, particularly on the compatibility between luxury and CSR (Donato et al. 2018) and underlying factors explaining the CSR effects (Panigyrakis, Panopoulos, and Koronaki 2020).".

With the understanding that luxury consumption is considerably different from non-luxury consumption (Dubois and Laurent 1994; Dubois, Laurent, and Czellar 2001), it is expected that consumer response to luxury firms' CSR initiatives would be also different. Indeed, CSR research in the non-luxury company setting has consistently provided evidence that CSR practices engender positive marketing outcome such as favorable consumer attitudes (Berens, Van Riel, and Van Bruggen 2005), stronger company identification, higher purchase intentions (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001),

and positive brand image and reputation (Hur, Kim, and Woo 2014; Saeidi et al. 2015). However, several extant studies show that such positive results are not the case for luxury brands. In general, luxury consumers are unlikely to weigh an ethical aspect when they make a purchase decision, and therefore CSR does not seem to play a significant role in consumer response to luxury brands (Davies, Lee, and Ahonkhai 2012). Further, consumers view luxury brands and CSR as incompatible, the paradox that exists in between consumers' self-oriented values for luxury products and philanthropic values that CSR initiatives represent (Torelli, Monga, and Kaikati 2012). Accordingly, consumers have been said to undervalue luxury brands that explicitly provide CSR information compared to luxury brands that do not unveil such information (Torelli, Monga, and Kaikati 2012).

Nevertheless, in the light of symbolic meanings that luxury and CSR both may create, it is plausible that luxury companies may attain positive marketing outcomes through CSR efforts. Luxury brands confer psychological values such as prestige, which is the core trait that makes a distinction from non-luxury brands (Tynan, McKechnie, and Chhuon 2010). Also, consumers possess luxury items not only for the high quality of the products, but also to present their social status and identity to others (Vickers and Renand 2003). Similarly, companies engage in CSR in order to fulfill their social obligation, which further enables them to supplement their symbolic significance by creating an ethical and responsible image. Furthermore, a firm's CSR activities strengthen the consumers' emotional values such as altruistic behaviors and a feeling of virtue or gratefulness (Emmons and McCullough 2004; Green and Peloza 2011; Romani, Grappi, and Bagozzi 2013). In other words, CSR engagement can add a psychological value not only to the company (Ferreira, Avila, and De Faria 2010; Hartmann and Ibanez 2006; Polonsky 2011), but also for consumers by gratifying their social needs (Green and Peloza 2011). In this sense, luxury companies' CSR practices can also augment the consumer's experience by generating an intangible benefit in addition to their purchase, which eventually influences their judgment on the companies.

As such, a conflict exists between the consumer's negative stance toward luxury companies' CSR and the similar nature of CSR and luxury. This research suggests that such a discrepancy may be derived from luxury firms overlooking their CSR messages. Previous studies have demonstrated that message strategies can help mitigate consumers' skepticism toward brands' CSR engagement (Schmeltz 2014), elicit positive affect (Dhanesh and Nekmat 2019; Gross and D'ambrosio 2004), and lower the feeling of guilt (Massi Lindsey 2005), which can lead to positive evaluations of companies (Yan, Dillard, and Shen 2010). Hence, it is worthwhile to explore what message factors would be constructive for luxury firms to effectively covey their CSR information and engender positive consumer responses.

Luxury and CSR communication

Since luxury companies use communication to retain their luxurious image (Fionda and Moore 2009; Kapferer 2012), they become inactive when it comes to CSR communication (Givhan 2015). Also, due to consumers' existing belief in incompatibility between luxury and CSR, particularly sustainability, luxury brands tend to be silent to prevent potential boomerang effects such as greenwashing (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014).

Greenwashing refers to capitalizing on benefits of 'green' image or reputation by misleading consumers about companies' pro-environmental engagement (Parguel et al. 2011). Accordingly, CSR communication entails a reputational risk, which may arise criticism of manipulating or deceiving consumers (Laufer 2003; Porter and Kramer 2006). For example, using a brand logo, which embodies a shape of an animal (e.g., crocodile), may not only convey a firm's commitment to environmental sustainability, but also induce the perception of greenwashing. It is because consumers easily infer a negative symbolic meaning from the logo for the company's intention to support a green cause (Cervellon 2013). Therefore, it is challenging for luxury brands not to be perceived as greenwashing (Mohr et al. 2001), which necessitates a discreet approach for their CSR communication.

Luxury literature exploring message appeals has largely focused on goods in the context of advertising. For instance, Amatulli, Angelis, and Donato (2020) suggested that consumers were more likely to perceive luxuriousness from a product advertisement employing hedonic appeals (vs. utilitarian appeals), which further resulted in more favorable consumer attitudes. Similarly, based on implicit self-theories, Kwon et al. (2016) showed that a luxury product advertisement highlighting a symbolic benefit led more positive attitudes among consumers who used a brand as an alternative to reflect themselves. On the other hand, an advertisement emphasizing a functional benefit was more effective to those who believed their personal characteristics could be altered by themselves instead of using external signals like a brand. Furthermore, based on the Taylor's six segments message strategy wheel (1999), James (2011) concluded that an ego appeal, which could depict a consumer's self-image or -status and was associated with vanity or self-actualization need (e.g., Golan and Zaidner 2008; Taylor 1999), was employed the most in luxury brands' advertisements published from 2009 to 2010. While the existing findings provide meaningful insights into communicating luxury products, there is a lack of empirical research that explores message appeals for luxury brands' CSR practices (Donato et al. 2018). Thus, the present study reviews message appeals examined in CSR communication research and extends them to the CSR context of luxury brands.

CSR message appeals

While CSR activities can add value to companies, how consumers perceive that value depends on the way it is communicated (Grimmer and Woolley 2014). This means appeals used in a CSR message may affect the consumer's perception of a firm's CSR engagement. For pro-environmental CSR communication, one common appeal used in a message is environmental benefits (e.g., reducing the amount of gas emissions, reducing landfill) (Grimmer and Woolley 2012). Since this appeal highlights the positive outcomes for the overall society or environment, it can be associated with a value for social good or altruism (Laroche, Bergeron, and Barbaro-Forleo 2001; Polonsky 2011). On the other hand, personal benefits can be either utilitarian (e.g., lowering energy bills) or an intangible value (e.g., moral enhancement, improving self-concept). In terms of intangible value, Ferreira, Avila, and De Faria (2010) stated that an emotional benefit such as a 'warm glow' feeling (Andreoni 1989) or satisfaction of self-interest is one of the key advantages that consumers may achieve from green purchase behavior. In a similar

manner, Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) also claimed that the consumers' primary reason for pro-environmental actions is feeling good about themselves, followed by concern about environmental impacts. Thus, personal benefits in CSR messages may imply a relatively less altruistic value, rather more for the consumer's own sake.

Even though recent studies have asserted that personal benefits have a stronger persuasive power than environmental benefits because consumers can find direct benefits to themselves (Nottage 2008), to the best of our knowledge, no empirical research has examined how these two appeals would work in the context of luxury brands' CSR initiatives. Thus, in order to explore these appeals' effects, the major feature of luxury consumption, which is guilt, and the conspicuous consumption theory are reviewed.

Guilt in luxury consumption

The feeling of guilt is a distinct feature of luxury consumption (Khan and Dhar 2006; Kivetz and Simonson 2002). Particularly, when consumers purchase high-priced products such as luxurious items, guilt is more likely to be aroused given that they experience not only personal indulgence, but also a transgression of their morality (Tangney et al. 1996). Consequently, consumers tend to seek justification to assuage their feeling of guilt from luxury consumption, and information about the luxury brands' pro-social or pro-environmental involvement or partnerships with charities is found to help consumers alleviate such negative feelings (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2016). To be specific, Hagtvedt and Patrick (2016) showed that cause-related marketing communication from a luxury brand reduced the level of consumers' perceived guilt, which further increased their purchase intentions.

Conspicuous consumption theory

Conspicuous consumption theory (Veblen 1899) posits that the rich are apt to make a purchase of conspicuous products as a means to display their wealth and social status. By emphasizing the rich's willingness to pay a premium price to highlight their exclusivity in society (Bagwell and Bernheim 1996), this theory has been the foundation of substantial research on luxury consumer behavior (Truong et al. 2008). Extant research also indicates that the higher price implies significantly higher social status (Mason 1993), and therefore, consumers who purchase luxury items with the purpose of social visibility tend to make their purchases publicly so that others become well aware of their possession and use of luxury products (Bearden and Etzel 1982). As status seekers, luxury consumers are individuals who 'strive to improve their social standing through the conspicuous consumption of products that confer and symbolize status both for the individual and surrounding significant others' (Eastman, Goldsmith, and Flynn 1999, 42). Considering that consumers attempt to reflect or establish their desired image or social relationships through luxury consumption (Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010; Sirgy 1985), luxury purchases can be considered as more externally driven, compared to non-luxury consumption (Truong 2010).

Additionally, consumers have a tendency to be favorable to a brand that is consistent with their self-concept (Sirgy 1986). Self-congruity theory, developed by Sirgy (1986), argues that congruity between the one's self and a brand personality could be a strong and essential contributor to consumers' subsequent responses such as brand image, loyalty, perceived value, and purchase intentions (e.g., Bosnjak et al. 2011; Krishen and

Sirgy 2016; Hosany and Martin 2012; Hung and Petrick 2011). This indicates that consumers manage their image through a brand since such congruity between themselves and a brand helps them reinforce their self-concept, fulfill a self-esteem need, and project themselves onto the product or brand purchased (Sirgy et al. 1997). Accordingly, consumers prefer a product with a certain image associated with a positive symbolic meaning or approved by others (O'cass and Frost 2002). Applying this notion to luxury brands, it can be important for them to build an ethical image through green CSR communication so that their consumers can magnify their conspicuousness of consumption.

Taken together, luxury brands should continuously market themselves in a way that aids consumers with building their ideal social visibility and eliminating negative feelings from luxury consumption. Therefore, with respect to two types of green message appeals, it is expected that CSR messages with an environmental-benefit appeal will generate more positive consumer responses.

H1: Compared to a personal-benefit appeal, an environmental-benefit appeal will lead consumers to **(a)** perceive a CSR motive as public-serving and **(b)** evaluate the company more favorably.

CSR motives

Perceived CSR motives indicate how consumers understand the reason that firms engage in pro-social or pro-environmental activities (Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen 2010). Generally, scholars have identified two prominent CSR attributions: intrinsic and extrinsic. An intrinsic attribute means a public-serving motive, which is when a company supports a cause purely because it genuinely cares about the cause, whereas an extrinsic attribute refers to a self-serving motive where a company strategically implements such CSR actions with a specific intention such as building a benevolent image or increasing its profits (Du, Bhattacharya, and Sen 2010; Handelman and Arnold 1999; Vlachos, Panagopoulos, and Rapp 2013). While the literature evidences the conflicting effects of a public-serving and a self-serving motive on consumer responses, some argue that it may not necessarily be clear cut. That is, consumers are already aware of the fact that companies aim to make a profit; they presume a self-serving motive of a firm's CSR practice and do not view the motive as negative (Ellen, Webb, and Mohr 2006; Groza, Pronschinske, and Walker 2011; Kim and Choi 2018). The perceived motives can rather be considered as a continuum and signify the relative strength of each motive's effects on a consumer's evaluation of a company. In this manner, a public-serving motive can be a more powerful driver that increases the consumer's favorable reactions to a firm.

In addition, scholars have shown the mediating role of CSR motives. Groza, Pronschinske, and Walker (2011) revealed that CSR types influenced the consumer's perceived CSR motives, which consequently determined their attitudes toward the company and purchase intentions. In detail, consumers who read a proactive CSR article perceived a firm's motive as community-value driven and strategic value-driven, which caused positive attitudes and higher purchase intentions. Similarly, perceived CSR motives mediate a relationship between the awareness of a company's CSR engagement and the consumer's word-of-mouth decision (Walker et al. 2010). Also, Rifon et al. (2004) concluded that a higher fit

between a sponsored social event and a corporation led to a greater belief in a public-serving motive, and subsequently built stronger credibility toward the company. Later, Kim and Choi (2018) further verified the moderated mediation effect of perceived CSR motives. In their study, when the crisis issue was incongruent with a firm's pre-crisis CSR initiative, the effects of consistency between pre- and post-CSR practices influenced the consumer's responses through a perceived altruistic CSR motive.

In light of the significant role of perceived CSR motives as a mediator, this study also proposes the sequential influence of perceived CSR motives. It is predicted that an environmental benefit appeal will lead consumers to perceive a luxury firm's CSR motive as public-serving, which will result in their positive evaluation of the company. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed.

H2: Consumers' perceived CSR motives will mediate the relationship between the CSR message appeals (environmental vs. personal) and consumers' evaluations of the company.

CSR claim objectivity

Scholars have addressed the importance of developing objective messages in CSR communication because objective messages deliver accurate and explicit information (Darley and Smith 1993), whereas subjective messages contain vague descriptions of their pro-environmental CSR actions. However, luxury brands appear to commonly use vague and subjective messages when it comes to communicating their sustainability (Givhan 2015). While there is limited empirical evidence to support that a specific message is superior to an ambiguous message regarding pro-environmental communication (Ganz and Grimes 2018), extant findings claim that given the characteristics of a subjective message, consumers tend to be confused with the exact meaning of that message, thereby activating a more demanding cognitive process (Edell and Staelin 1983). Accordingly, a subjective message elicits unfavorable consumer reactions such as higher skepticism and low message credibility (Holbrook 1978; Kim and Lee 2009). Conversely, consumers can easily understand and corroborate an objective message since it offers more clues and a measurement tool such as numerical information (Darley and Smith 1993; Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990). Correspondingly, an objective message enhances the consumer's credibility toward a message (Ganz and Grimes 2018) and advertising effectiveness (Alniacik and Yilmaz 2012).

The least effort principle of the heuristic-systematic information processing model (Chaiken 1980, 1987) upholds such effects of message objectivity. The model states that individuals are 'economy-minded processors' who engage in heuristic processing rather than systematic processing; thus, they prefer the least cognitive effort to save time and energy (Taylor and Fiske 1978). Also, they heavily depend on a cue or information available in a situation and utilize it to make their final judgement (Bohner, Moskowitz, and Chaiken 1995; Chaiken 1980). Given that an objective message necessitates less cognitive effort from individuals, this study presumes that an objective message will exert positive impacts on consumer responses. In relation to the aforementioned message appeal effects, it is assumed that the positive effects of an environmental benefit-focused

message on consumers' perceived CSR motives and company evaluation will be strengthened when the message is objective, compared to when it is subjective. As such, the following hypotheses are put forth:

H3: The effects of message appeals on the consumer's **(a)** perceived CSR motives and **(b)** company evaluation will be moderated by message objectivity.

Method

Figure 1 shows a conceptual frame of this research. A 2 (Appeals: personal- vs. environmental-benefits) × 2 (Message objectivity: objective vs. subjective) between-subjects, online experimental design was employed. Both message appeals and objectivity were manipulated. Given that an existing brand was used in the stimuli, brand familiarity, brand attitude, and brand loyalty were included as covariates. Further, the cause-related individual factors of cause involvement and environmentalism were also controlled as covariates.

Stimulus development

To select a luxury brand, a pretest was conducted. A total of 78 participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Following Interbrand (Handley 2018), a list of the world's most valuable luxury fashion and accessories brands was created: Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Hermes, Gucci, Cartier, Tiffany, Dior, Burberry, and Prada. Participants were randomly assigned to three out of the nine luxury brands and asked about brand loyalty, brand familiarity, and brand attitude. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Out of the nine brands, Prada ($M_{loyalty}$ = 2.36; $M_{familiarity}$ = 3.72; $M_{attitude}$ = 5.14) was selected as a brand in this study since it did not provoke extremely biased responses, but scored around the average of brand loyalty (M = 2.37), brand familiarity (M = 3.75), and brand attitude (M = 5.32).

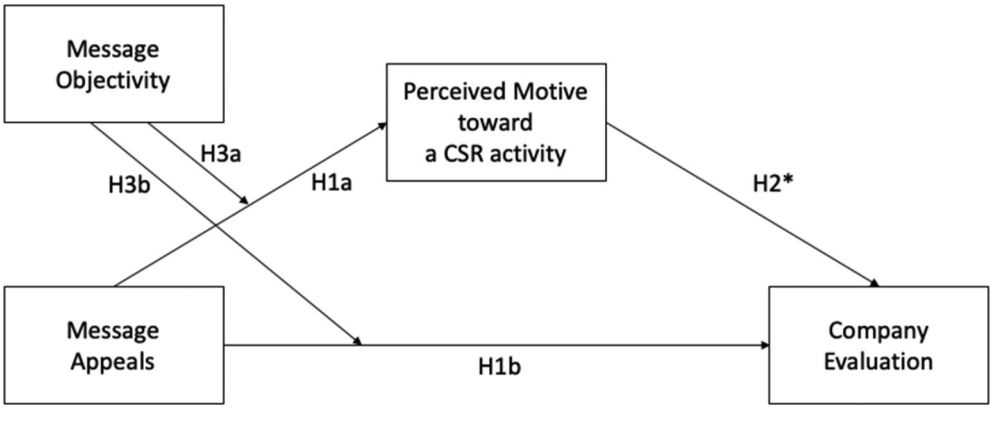


Figure 1. Research Framework.

A total of four CSR messages were developed. To secure ecological validity, a CSR initiative that numerous luxury brands have supported was selected: to protect the environment (Cheng. 2019). Regarding message appeals, a personal benefit-focused message emphasized what consumers would obtain through the firm's green CSR activity: 'FEEL GOOD AND RESPONSIBLE! The Prada Group is committed to making your luxury experience more sustainable and enhancing your well-being.' The body text described what benefits consumers gained, focusing on consumers' ethical consumption, securing their health and safety, and the beautiful and abundant environment for their descendants. An environmental benefit-focused message described how the CSR activity would help preserve the environment overall: 'SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT! The Prada Group is committed to protecting the quality of water, air, and the soil, as well as the diversity of animal and plant species.' The body text underlined corporate environmental efforts in terms of packaging, the raw material procurement process, and energy consumption in the manufacturing process. An objective message focused on providing concrete statistics and more detailed explanations (Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990). In contrast, a subjective message described the corporate efforts briefly and in an abstract way (Darley and Smith 1993).

A pretest was performed to check manipulations. A total of 82 participants were recruited from Amazon's MTurk. Participants were assigned one of the four stimuli and asked about message objectivity and appeals. Message appeals were evaluated with one item on a 7-point semantic differential scale; The ad message is, 1 = personal-value oriented; 7 = environmental-value oriented. Adopted from Alniacik and Yilmaz (2012), message objectivity was assessed with seven items on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = very little; 7 = very much; α = .93). Items included: The amount of information in the ad is; The volume of information in the ad is; How detailed is the information in the ad?; How informative is the information in the ad?; How concrete is the information in the ad?; How strong is the information in the ad?; How realistic is the information in the ad? A series of independent t-tests showed that both message manipulations were successfully secured: message appeals $M_{perssonal} = 5.80$ vs. $M_{environmental} = 6.44$; $t(80) = -3.06$, $p < .05$; message objectivity $M_{obj} = 6.43$ vs. $M_{subj} = 5.05$; $t(80) = 3.15$, $p < .05$. The final stimuli are shown in Appendix 1.

Sampling and procedure

This study aimed to examine the effect of CSR message appeals and message objectivity on general consumers. A total of 260 participants were drawn from Amazon's MTurk. Prior literature indicates that MTurk provides an online panel heterogeneous and reliable (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Ross, Irani, Silberman, Zaldivar, & Tomlinson, 2010; Stroud, Muddiman, & Lee, 2014). After agreeing to a consent form, participants were asked about cause-related covariates (cause involvement and environmentalism). Then, they were asked to read a description of a luxury brand (Prada) and answer questions about brand-related variables (brand familiarity, brand attitude, and brand loyalty). Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four CSR messages created. After exposure to a stimulus for twenty seconds, participants responded to questions about their evaluation of the company and perceived CSR motives. Finally, demographics such as age, gender, and income were recorded. Once the completion of

the survey, participants received a modest payment. Excluding incomplete data, a total of 247 participants were used in the final analysis.

Measurement

Perceived CSR motives measured the extent to which participants perceive the brand's motivation for contributing to a green movement as social. Three items on a 7-point semantic differential scale were used (1 = self-interested, firm-focused, profit-motivated; 7 = community-interested, customer-focused, socially motivated; Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006; $\alpha = .94$; $M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.82$). *Company evaluation* was assessed by four items on a 7-point semantic differential scale (1 = dislikable, unfavorable, negative, socially irresponsible; 7 = likable, favorable, positive, socially responsible; Nan and Heo 2007; $\alpha = .95$; $M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.07$).

Brand familiarity was measured with three items on a 7-point semantic differential scale (1 = not at all knowledgeable, very unfamiliar with the brand, have never seen ads about this brand in the media; 7 = highly knowledgeable, very familiar with the brand, have seen many ads about this brand in the media; Zhou, Yang, and Hui 2010; $\alpha = .88$; $M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.65$). *Brand attitude* was measured with four items on a 7-point semantic differential scale (1 = very bad, unlikable, unfavorable, unappealing; 7 = very good, likable, favorable, appealing; MacInnis and Park 1991; $\alpha = .96$; $M = 4.70$, $SD = 1.46$). For *brand loyalty*, three items on a 7-point Likert scale were employed. Items included: I consider myself to be loyal to Prada; In a luxury brand category, Prada would be my first choice; I will not buy other brands if Prada is available at the store (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree; Yoo, Donthu, and Lee 2000; $\alpha = .85$; $M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.67$).

Three items on a 7-point semantic differential scale were used to measure *cause involvement* (1 = unimportant, means nothing to me, personally relevant; 7 = important, means a lot to me, irrelevant to me; Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy 1990; $\alpha = .94$; $M = 5.81$, $SD = 1.37$). Finally, *environmentalism* was assessed with fifteen statements on a 7-point Likert scale. Statements included: We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support; Humans have the right to modify the natural environment to suit their needs (reverse-coded); When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences; Human ingenuity will ensure that we do NOT make the earth unlivable (reverse-coded); Humans are severely abusing the environment; The earth has the plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them (reverse-coded); Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist; The balance of nature is strong enough to cope with the impacts of modern industrial nations (reverse-coded); Despite our special abilities humans are still subject to the law of nature; The so-called 'ecological crisis' facing humankind has been greatly exaggerated (reverse-coded); The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources; Humans were meant to rule over the rest of nature (reverse-coded); The balance of nature is very delicate and easily upset; Humans will eventually learn enough about how nature works to be able to control it (reverse-coded); If things continue on their present course, we will soon experience a major ecological catastrophe (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree; Dunlap et al. 2000; $\alpha = .92$; $M = 4.99$, $SD = 1.18$).

Results

Manipulation checks

For the manipulation check, a series of independent t-tests was conducted. The same items used in the pretest were employed. Findings showed that message appeals and message objectivity were successfully manipulated: message appeals $M_{personal} = 5.65$ vs. $M_{environmental} = 6.37$; $t(207.64) = -4.92$, $p < .001$; message objectivity $M_{obj} = 5.46$ vs. $M_{subj} = 4.18$; $t(226.94) = 8.34$, $p < .001$.

Hypothesis testing

To assess the suggested hypotheses, a moderated mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 8). Message appeal was an independent variable (0 = personal appeal, 1 = environmental appeal) and message objectivity was a moderator (0 = objective message, 1 = subjective message). Bootstrapping was used to produce a 95% confidence interval (CI) around the indirect effect of the mediator, which is perceived CSR motives. The mediation effect was considered to be significant when the CI did not contain zero (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes 2007).

Results showed that message appeal (B = .25, 95% CI: −.01, .51, $p > .05$) and message objectivity (B = −.12, 95% CI: −.38, .15, $p > .05$) did not directly influence company evaluation. Also, there was no significant interaction of message appeals and message objectivity on company evaluation (B = −.32, 95% CI: −.69, .04, $p > .05$). Thus, H1b and H3b were not supported.

Meanwhile, in terms of perceived CSR motives, the effect of message appeals and message objectivity showed different findings. First, while there was no significant effect of message objectivity on perceived CSR motive (B = .17, 95% CI: −.41, .74, $p > .05$), message appeals had significant effects (B = .74, 95% CI: .19, 1.30, $p < .01$). The findings implied that participants exposed to a message focusing on environmental benefits were more likely to believe that the brand's CSR motive was indeed environmental protection (public-serving), not marketing effects (self-serving). Therefore, H1a was supported. Also, there was a significant interaction effect of message appeals and message objectivity for perceived CSR motives (B = −.81, 95% CI: −1.60, −.02, $p < .05$). Specifically, the effect of message appeals was significant only when the message was objective (Effect = .74, 95% CI: .19, 1.30, $p < .01$), not subjective (Effect = −.07, 95% CI: −.63, .48, $p > .05$; See Figure 2). Thus, the results supported H3a. In addition, participants' public-serving perception of the CSR activity led to more favorable company evaluation: B = .27, 95% CI: .22, .33, $p < .001$. This result indicated the significant mediating effect of the perceived CSR motives; H2 was supported.

Taken together, this indirect effect of message appeals through perceived CSR motives on company evaluation proved to be significant only when the message was objective (Effect = .20, 95% CI: .05, .37), not subjective (Effect = −.02, 95% CI: −.18, .13). And, this moderated mediation was found to be significant (Index = −.22, 95% CI: −.46, -. 01). Detailed figures are shown in Table 1.

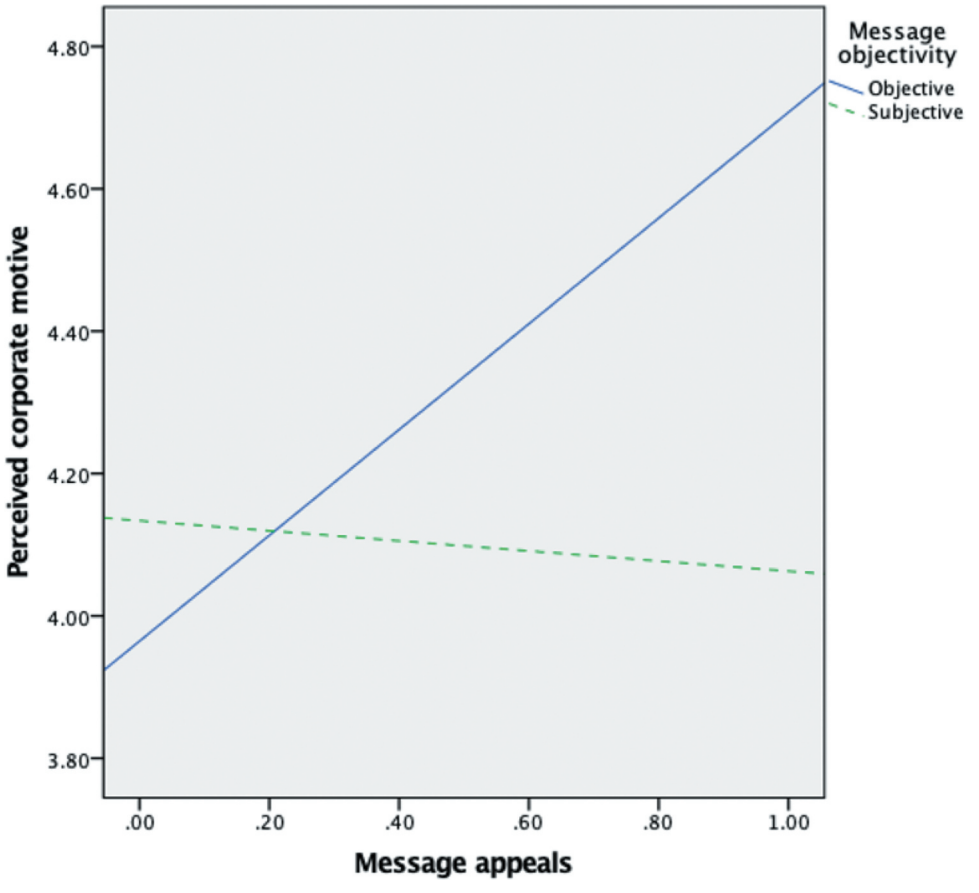


Figure 2. Interaction of message appeals and objectivity on perceived corporate motives.

Table 1. Results of Moderated Mediation Analysis.

	Dependent Variables					
	CSR Motives			Company Evaluation		
Antecedent	Coeff.	SE[a]	95% CI	Coeff.	SE[a]	95% CI
Message Appeals (MA)	.74**	.28	.19, 1.30	.25	.13	−.01, .51
Claim Objectivity (CO)	.17	.29	−.41, .74	−.12	.13	−.38, −.15
MA × CO	−.81*	.40	−1.60, −.02	−.32	.19	−.69, .04
CSR Motives	-	-	-	.27***	.03	.22, .33
Brand Familiarity	−.03	.08	−.19, .13	−.03	.04	−.10, .04
Brand Attitude	.19*	.08	.03, .35	.31***	.04	.24, .39
Brand Loyalty	.40***	.08	.24, .56	−.04	.04	−.12, .04
Cause Involvement	.34***	.10	.15, .54	.14**	.05	−.05, .23
Environmentalism	−.23	.12	−.47, .00	.02	.06	−.13, .09
Constant	1.35*	.64	−.08, 2.62	2.67***	.30	1.68, 2.86
		R^2 = .29			R^2 = .56	
		F (8, 238) = 12.19, p < .001			F (9, 237) = 34.15, p < .001	

[a]SE = Standard Errors; * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

Discussion

This research delved into the effect of message appeals on consumer evaluation of a luxury company that was involved in a green CSR initiative. Also, the moderating role of message objectivity and the mediating role of perceived CSR motives were investigated. Findings demonstrated that although message appeal was not a direct influential factor in the consumer's company evaluation, it had indirect impacts through perceived CSR motives. That is to say, a luxury firm's CSR message that incorporated environmental benefits led consumers to believe that the firm's pro-environmental practices were truly for social good, and such belief further positively affected their evaluation of the company. On the basis of the literature that luxury consumption is conspicuous by nature (Veblen 1899) and tends to provoke feelings of guilt, which consumers are generally motivated to assuage (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007; Lee-Wingate and Corfman 2010), this study validates that a CSR message accounting for altruistic values helps luxury firms effectively communicate their green efforts. While there is a prevailing conclusion that CSR communication is incompatible with luxury brands (Beckham and Voyer 2014; Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2014) and generates negative consumer reactions (Achabou and Dekhili 2013), this finding argues that strategic message content can be a remedy that allows luxury brands to overcome the challenge. Further, consistent with findings in the non-luxury context (e.g., Kim and Choi 2018; Rim and Song 2017; Walker et al. 2010), perceived CSR motives were found to be a significant pathway to formulate consumer responses to a luxury brand's green practice.

Besides, this study brings empirical evidence of the positive effects of message objectivity. We found a moderated the relationship between message appeals on consumers' perceived CSR motives. Specifically, the effect of an environmental benefit-focused appeal on a perceived public-serving motive was strengthened in the condition of an objective message, but not with a subjective message. This finding bolsters the notion that consumers respond more positively when they receive accurate and clear information from the company because it requires less cognitive effort (Darley and Smith 1993; Ford, Smith, and Swasy 1990). As luxury companies mostly use vague expressions in their CSR messages (Givhan 2015), the present study suggests the opposite approach to maximize their CSR communication performance.

Theoretical and managerial implications

In the situation where luxury brands are facing a paradox for their CSR engagement and communication, this study has significant insights into how they could effectively communicate their green CSR practices. Theoretically, this study contributes to literature streams on CSR and luxury consumer behavior. While the extant CSR research is primarily in the context of non-luxury consumption (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, and Schwarz 2006), this study fills a gap by examining the CSR messages elements and the consumer's understanding of a firm's CSR motives in the luxury brand context. Although luxury consumption is associated with self-enhancement values that connote success, hedonism, or achievement (Schwartz 1992; Torelli, Monga, and Kaikati 2012), the luxury company's CSR message can be effective when it indicates self-transcendence values such as benevolence or caring about others' welfare (Schwartz 1992). In other words, luxury

consumers may have a separate evaluation standard for the luxury firm's CSR engagement. While they look for self-oriented benefits such as fulfillment or higher social status from luxury purchases (Han, Nunes, and Drèze 2010; Wiedmann, Hennigs, and Siebels 2009), they put more emphasis on the altruistic benefits of a luxury firm's CSR message, which conflicts with their purpose for luxury purchases. Further, prior work has shown that personal benefits (e.g., lowering energy bills or enhancing a desired self-concept) have a stronger persuasive power than environmental benefits because consumers may find direct benefits to themselves (Nottage 2008). However, with respect to luxury consumers in particular, environmental benefits are superior for eliciting positive cognitive responses.

Also, this study consolidates the role of message objectivity and consumer's perceived motives in CSR communication. As found in much existing research, this study demonstrated that for a luxury brand, an objective message was effective for convincing consumers of the public-serving motive, which in turn engendered favorable company evaluation. Hence, this study broadens the understanding of consumer response mechanisms by highlighting the importance of how consumers attribute a luxury company's motivation for performing green practices.

This study further offers managerial implications, particularly for luxury brand managers. As growing attention is directed to luxury brands' sustainability development (Kapferer and Michaut-Denizeau 2017), luxury brand managers need strategies to effectively communicate their commitments to consumers while maintaining or advancing their brand values. In this regard, this study suggests empirical guidelines on what to avoid, or at least mitigate, and what to adopt when they create a message about their pro-environmental efforts.

Limitations and suggested future research

This research has a few limitations. First, although the emotion of guilt is the foundation of message appeal effects, as reviewed in this study, guilt for luxury consumption was not measured. In future research, the level of guilt that consumers feel from actual luxury purchases and its effect on their perceived CSR motives and company evaluation merit consideration. In addition, given the experimental research design, the present research covered one luxury brand and one green CSR cause. In order to validate these findings, other luxury brands and various social or pro-environmental initiatives need to be explored. Lastly, the findings from the present study suggests two message elements that practitioners need to contemplate to alleviate consumers' skeptical perception about luxury brands' pro-environmental engagement. However, for in-depth elaboration of the findings, it is worth taking into account another condition where a luxury brand does not engage in or communicate any CSR activities as a control group. This future attempt will help verify that even though luxury consumers are skeptical about luxury brands' CSR involvement, it's better to than neglecting their obligations to be a responsible member in society.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Eun Yeon Kang (Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin) is an associate professor of marketing at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on consumer psychology, green marketing, and corporate social responsibility.

Yoon Hi Sung (Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin) is an assistant professor in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma. Her research interests are primarily in digital/social media, media psychology, and corporate social responsibility.

References

Achabou, M. A., and S. Dekhili. 2013. "Luxury and Sustainable Development: Is There a Match?" *Journal of Business Research* 66 (10): 1896–1903.

Alniacik, U., and C. Yilmaz. 2012. "The Effectiveness of Green Advertising: Influences of Claim Specificity, Product's Environmental Relevance and Consumers' Pro-Environmental Orientation." *Amfiteatru Economic Journal* 14 (31): 207–222.

Amatulli, C. M. M. D. Angelis, and C. Donato. 2020. "An Investigation on the Effectiveness of Hedonic versus Utilitarian Message Appeals in Luxury Product Communication." *Psychology & Marketing* 37 (4): 523–534.

Andreoni, J. 1989. "Giving with Impure Altruism: Applications to Charity and Ricardian Equivalence." *Journal of Political Economy* 97 (6): 1447–1458.

Bagwell, L. S., and B. D. Bernheim. 1996. "Veblen Effects in a Theory of Conspicuous Consumption." *The American Economic Review* 86 (3): 349–373.

Bearden, W. O., and M. J. Etzel. 1982. "Reference Group Influence on Product and Brand Purchase Decisions." *Journal of Consumer Research* 9 (2): 183–194.

Becker-Olsen, K. L., B. A. Cudmore, and R. P. Hill. 2006. "The Impact of Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility on Consumer Behavior." *Journal of Business Research* 59 (1): 46–53.

Beckham, D., and B. G. Voyer. 2014. "Can Sustainability Be Luxurious? A Mixed-Method Investigation of Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Towards Sustainable Luxury Consumption." *Advances in Consumer Research* 42: 245–250.

Berens, G., C. B. Van Riel, and G. H. Van Bruggen. 2005. "Corporate Associations and Consumer Product Responses: The Moderating Role of Corporate Brand Dominance." *Journal of Marketing* 69 (3): 35–48.

Bobila, M. 2019. "LVMH Had Another Record-Breaking Year for Sales in 2018" *Yahoo! Finance*, January 29. https://finance.yahoo.com/news/lvmh-had-another-record-breaking-193149411.html

Bohner, G., G. B. Moskowitz, and S. Chaiken. 1995. "The Interplay of Heuristic and Systematic Processing of Social Information." *European Review of Social Psychology* 6 (1): 33–68.

Bosnjak, M., M. J. Sirgy, S. Hellriegel, and O. Maurer. 2011. "Postvisit Destination Loyalty Judgments: Developing and Testing a Comprehensive Congruity Model." *Journal of Travel Research* 50 (5): 496–508.

Buhrmester, M., T. Kwang, and S. D. Gosling. 2011. „Amazon's Mechanical Turk: A New Source of Inexpensive, yet High-quality Data?„ *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6 (1): 3–5.

Cervellon, M. C. 2013. "Conspicuous Conservation: Using Semiotics to Understand Sustainable Luxury." *International Journal of Market Research* 55 (5): 695–717.

Cervellon, M. C., and L. Shammas. 2013. "The Value of Sustainable Luxury in Mature Markets: A Customer-Based Approach." *Journal of Corporate Citizenship* 52: 90–101.

Chaiken, S. 1980. "Heuristic versus Systematic Information Processing and the Use of Source versus Message Cues in Persuasion." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 39 (5): 752–766.

Chaiken, S. 1987. "The Heuristic Model of Persuasion." *Social Influence: The Ontario Symposium* 5: 3–39.

Chandon, J. L., G. Laurent, and P. Valette-Florence. 2016. "Pursuing the Concept of Luxury: Introduction to the JBR Special Issue on "Luxury Marketing from Tradition to Innovation." *Journal of Business Research* 69 (1): 299–303.

Cheng., A. 2019. "More Consumers Want Sustainable Fashion, But Are Brands Delivering It?" *Forbes*, October 17. https://www.forbes.com/sites/andriacheng/2019/10/17/more-consumers-want-sustainable-fashion-but-are-brands-delivering-it/#33e4829334a5

Chitturi, R., R. Raghunathan, and V. Mahajan. 2007. "Form versus Function: How the Intensities of Specific Emotions Evoked in Functional versus Hedonic Trade-Offs Mediate Product Preferences." *Journal of Marketing Research* 44 (4): 702–714.

CPP-Luxury. 2020. "Gucci Reduces Environmental Impact By 21% Ahead Of 2025 Targets." *CPPLUXURY Business of Luxury*, June 9. https://cpp-luxury.com/gucci-reduces-environmental-impact-by-21-ahead-of-2025-targets/

Darley, W. K., and R. E. Smith. 1993. "Advertising Claim Objectivity: Antecedents and Effects." *The Journal of Marketing* 57 (4): 100–113.

Davies, I. A., Z. Lee, and I. Ahonkhai. 2012. "Do Consumers Care about Ethical-Luxury?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 106 (1): 37–51.

De Angelis, M., F. Adıgüzel, and C. Amatulli. 2017. "The Role of Design Similarity in Consumers' Evaluation of New Green Products: An Investigation of Luxury Fashion Brands." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 141: 1515–1527.

De Barnier, V., S. Falcy, and P. Valette-Florence. 2012. "Do Consumers Perceive Three Levels of Luxury? A Comparison of Accessible, Intermediate and Inaccessible Luxury Brands." *Journal of Brand Management* 19 (7): 623–636.

Dhanesh, G. S., and E. Nekmat. 2019. "Facts over Stories for Involved Publics: Framing Effects in CSR Messaging and the Roles of Issue Involvement, Message Elaboration, Affect, and Skepticism." *Management Communication Quarterly* 33 (1): 7–38.

Donato, C. M. D. Angelis, and C. Amatulli. 2018. "Sustainable Luxury: The Effect of Luxury Consumption Motivations on Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies: An Abstract." In *Academy of Marketing Science World Marketing Congress*, 669. Springer, Cham.

Du, S., C. B. Bhattacharya, and S. Sen. 2010. "Maximizing Business Returns to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): The Role of CSR Communication." *International Journal of Management Reviews* 12 (1): 8–19.

Dubois, B., and G. Laurent. 1994. "Attitudes Towards the Concept of Luxury: An Exploratory Analysis." In *AP - Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research*, edited by J. A. Cote and R. Siew Meng Leong, 273–278. Vol. 1. UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Dubois, B., G. Laurent, and S. Czellar. 2001. "Consumer Rapport to Luxury: Analyzing Complex and Ambivalent Attitudes." HEC Research Papers Series 736. HEC Paris.

Dunlap, R. E., K. D. Van Liere, A. G. Mertig, and R. E. Jones. 2000. "New Trends in Measuring Environmental Attitudes: Measuring Endorsement of the New Ecological Paradigm: A Revised NEP Scale." *Journal of Social Issues* 56 (3): 425–442.

Eastman, J. K., R. E. Goldsmith, and L. R. Flynn. 1999. "Status Consumption in Consumer Behavior: Scale Development and Validation." *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 7 (3): 41–52.

Edell, J. A., and R. Staelin. 1983. "The Information Processing of Pictures in Print Advertisements." *Journal of Consumer Research* 10 (1): 45–61.

Ellen, P. S., D. J. Webb, and L. A. Mohr. 2006. "Building Corporate Associations: Consumer Attributions for Corporate Socially Responsible Programs." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 34 (2): 147–157.

Emmons, R. A., and M. E. McCullough. 2004. *The Psychology of Gratitude*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Farra, E. 2019. "I Need a Few More Colleagues Linking My Arm"—Stella McCartney Sounds off on Sustainability, Faux Leather, and the Lack of Honesty around Both." *Vogue*, February 15. https://www.vogue.com/article/stella-mccartney-sustainable-fashion-leather-conversation

Ferreira, D. A., M. G. Avila, and M. D. De Faria. 2010. "Corporate Social Responsibility and Consumers' Perception of Price." *Social Responsibility Journal* 6 (2): 208–221. doi:10.1108/17471111011051720.

Fionda, A. M., and C. M. Moore. 2009. "The Anatomy of the Luxury Fashion Brand." *Journal of Brand Management* 16 (5–6): 347–363.

Forbes. 2019. "#78 Rolex" *Forbes*, May 22. https://www.forbes.com/companies/rolex/#3cd928395a26

Ford, G. T., D. B. Smith, and J. L. Swasy. 1990. "Consumer Skepticism of Advertising Claims: Testing Hypotheses from Economics of Information." *Journal of Consumer Research* 16 (4): 433–441.
Ganz, B., and A. Grimes. 2018. "How Claim Specificity Can Improve Claim Credibility in Green Advertising: Measures that Can Boost Outcomes from Environmental Product Claims." *Journal of Advertising Research* 58 (4): 476–486.
Gardyn, R. 2002. "Defining Luxury." *American Demographics* 24 (10): 30–35.
Givhan, R. 2015. "Luxury Fashion Brands are Going Green. But Why are They Keeping It a Secret?" *The Washington Post*, December, 8. https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/luxury-fashion-brands-are-going-green-but-why-are-they-keeping-it-a-secret/2015/12/08/d3d93678-8c8a-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html
Golan, G. J., and L. Zaidner. 2008. "Creative Strategies in Viral Advertising: An Application of Taylor's Six-Segment Message Strategy Wheel." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13 (4): 959–972.
Green, T., and J. Peloza. 2011. "How Does Corporate Social Responsibility Create Value For Consumers?" *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 28 (1): 48–56.
Grimmer, M., and M. Woolley. 2012. "Green Marketing Messages and Consumers' Purchase Intentions: Promoting Personal versus Environmental Benefits." *Journal of Marketing Communications* 20 (4): 231–250.
Grimmer, M., and M. Woolley. 2014. "Green Marketing Messages and Consumers' Purchase Intentions: Promoting Personal versus Environmental Benefits." *Journal of Marketing Communications* 20 (4): 231–250.
Gross, K., and L. D'ambrosio. 2004. "Framing Emotional Response." *Political Psychology* 25 (1): 1–29.
Groza, M. D., M. R. Pronschinske, and M. Walker. 2011. "Perceived Organizational Motives and Consumer Responses to Proactive and Reactive CSR." *Journal of Business Ethics* 102 (4): 639–652.
Hagtvedt, H., and V. M. Patrick. 2016. "Gilt and Guilt: Should Luxury and Charity Partner at the Point of Sale?" *Journal of Retailing* 92 (1): 56–64.
Han, Y. J., J. C. Nunes, and X. Drèze. 2010. "Signaling Status with Luxury Goods: The Role of Brand Prominence." *Journal of Marketing* 74 (4): 15–30.
Handelman, J. M., and S. J. Arnold. 1999. "The Role of Marketing Actions with a Social Dimension: Appeals to the Institutional Environment." *Journal of Marketing* 63 (3): 33–48.
Handley, L. 2018. "The Luxury Sector Is Growing Faster than Many Others and Gucci Is in the Lead." CNBC, October 4, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/10/04/the-luxury-sector-is-growing-faster-than-many-others-and-gucci-leads.html
Hartmann, P., and V. A. Ibanez. 2006. "Green Value Added." *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 24 (7): 673–680.
Hayes, A. 2013. *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach*. New York: Guilford Press.
Heerde, L. V. 2018. "Luxury Brands Moving to Sustainability" *Luxiders*, https://luxiders.com/luxury-brands-moving-sustainability/
Heine, K. 2012. "The Concept of Luxury Brands."." *Luxury Brand Management* 1: 2193.
Holbrook, M. B. 1978. "Beyond Attitude Structure: Toward the Informational Determinants of Attitude." *Journal of Marketing Research* 15 (4): 545–556.
Hosany, S., and D. Martin. 2012. "Self-Image Congruence in Consumer Behavior." *Journal of Business Research* 65 (5): 685–691.
Hung, K., and J. F. Petrick. 2011. "Why Do You Cruise? Exploring the Motivations for Taking Cruise Holidays, and the Construction of a Cruising Motivation Scale." *Tourism Management* 32 (2): 386–393.
Hur, W. M., H. Kim, and J. Woo. 2014. "How CSR Leads to Corporate Brand Equity: Mediating Mechanisms of Corporate Brand Credibility and Reputation." *Journal of Business Ethics* 125 (1): 75–86.
James, W. M. 2011. "The Appeals of Luxury Advertising: An Application of Taylor's Six Segment Message Strategy Wheel." *The Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications* 2 (2): 62–75.
Janssen, C., J. Vanhamme, J. A. Lindgreen, and C. Lefebvre. 2014. "The Catch-22 of Responsible Luxury: Effects of Luxury Product Characteristics on Consumers' Perception of Fit with Corporate Social Responsibility." *Journal Business Ethics* 119: 45–57.

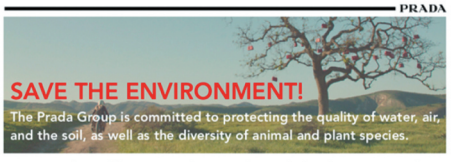
Janssen, C., J. Vanhamme, and S. Leblanc. 2017. "Should Luxury Brands Say It Out Loud? Brand Conspicuousness and Consumer Perceptions of Responsible Luxury." *Journal of Business Research* 77: 167–174.
Jones, C. 2018. "Coach Follows Burberry, Versace, Gucci and Hugo Boss, Pledging to Go Fur-free." *USA Today*, October 23, https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/10/23/coach-follows-burberry-versace-gucci-saying-go-fur-free/1743788002/
Kapferer, J. and A. Michaut-Denizeau. 2017. „Is Luxury Compatible with Sustainability? Luxury Consumers' Viewpoint.„ *Journal of Brand Management* 21 (1): 1–22.
Kapferer, J. M., and A. Michaut-Denizeau. 2015. "Are Luxury Purchasers Insensitive to Sustainable Development? New Insights from Research." In *Chapter 7 in Sustainable Luxury*, edited by Gardetti, M. A. and A. L. Torres, 94–107. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing Limited.
Kapferer, J. N. 2012. "Abundant Rarity: The Key to Luxury Growth." *Business Horizons* 55 (5): 453–462.
Kapferer, J. N., and A. Michaut-Denizeau. 2014. "Is Luxury Compatible with Sustainability? Luxury Consumers' Viewpoint." *Journal of Brand Management* 21 (1): 1–22.
Khan, U., and R. Dhar. 2006. "Licensing Effect in Consumer Choice." *Journal of Marketing Research* 43 (2): 259–266.
Kim, S., and S. M. Choi. 2018. "Congruence Effects in Post-Crisis CSR Communication: The Mediating Role of Attribution of Corporate Motives." *Journal of Business Ethics* 153 (2): 447–463.
Kim, Y. J., and W. N. Lee. 2009. "Overcoming Consumer Skepticism in Cause-Related Marketing: The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility and Donation Size Claim Objectivity." *Journal of Promotion Management* 15 (4): 465–483.
Kivetz, R., and I. Simonson. 2002. "Self-Control for the Righteous: Toward a Theory of Precommitment to Indulgence." *Journal of Consumer Research* 29 (2): 199–217.
Ko, E. J. P. Costello, and C. R. Taylor. 2019. "What Is A Luxury Brand? A New Definition and Review of the Literature." *Journal of Business Research* 99:405–413.
Krishen, A. S., and M. J. Sirgy. 2016. "Identifying with the Brand Placed in Music Videos Makes Me like the Brand." *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising* 37 (1): 45–58.
Kunz, J., S. May, and H. J. Schmidt. 2020. "Sustainable Luxury: Current Status and Perspectives for Future Research." *Business Research* 13: 541–560.
Kwon, J. Y. Y. Seo, and D. Ko. 2016. "Effective Luxury-Brand Advertising: The ES–IF Matching (Entity–symbolic versus Incremental–Functional) Model." *Journal of Advertising* 45 (4): 459–471.
L'Oréal. 2019. "2019 Progress Report: The L'Oréal Sustainability Commitment." *The L'Oréal Group*. https://www.loreal.com/-/media/project/loreal/brand-sites/corp/master/lcorp/documents-media/publications/sbwa/2019-progress-report.pdf
Laroche, M., J. Bergeron, and G. Barbaro-Forleo. 2001. "Targeting Consumers Who are Willing to Pay More for Environmentally Friendly Products." *Journal of Consumer Marketing* 18 (6): 503–520.
Laufer, W. S. 2003. "Social Accountability and Corporate Greenwashing." *Journal of Business Ethics* 43 (3): 253–261.
Lee-Wingate, S. N., and K. P. Corfman. 2010. "A Little Something for Me and Maybe for You, Too: Promotions that Relieve Guilt." *Marketing Letters* 21 (4): 385–395.
Lozano, J. Blanco, and J. Rey-Maquieira. 2010. "Can Ecolabels Survive in the Long Run?: The Role of Initial Conditions." *Ecological Economics* 69 (12): 2525–2534.
MacInnis, D. J., and C. W. Park. 1991. "The Differential Role of Characteristics of Music on High-And Low-Involvement Consumers' Processing of Ads." *Journal of Consumer Research* 18 (2): 161–173.
Maheswaran, D., and J. Meyers-Levy. 1990. "The Influence of Message Framing and Issue Involvement." *Journal of Marketing Research* 27 (3): 361–367.
Mason, R. 1993. "Cross-Cultural Influences on the Demand for Status Goods." *European Advances in Consumer Research* 1: 46–51.
Massi Lindsey, L. L. 2005. "Anticipated Guilt as Behavioral Motivation: An Examination of Appeals to Help Unknown Others through Bone Marrow Donation." *Human Communication Research* 31 (4): 453–481.
Mohr, L. A. D. J. Webb, and K. E. Harris. 2001. "Do Consumers Expect Companies to Be Socially Responsible? the Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Buying Behavior." *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 35 (1): 45–72.

Nan, X., and K. Heo. 2007. "Consumer Responses to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives: Examining the Role of Brand-Cause Fit in Cause-Related Marketing." *Journal of Advertising* 36 (2): 63–74.
Nia, A., and J. L. Zaichhkowsky. 2000. "Do Counterfeits Devalue the Ownership of Luxury Brands." *Journal of Product and Brand Management* 9 (7): 485–497.
Nottage, A. 2008. "The Green Agenda Gets Personal." *Marketing* July: 33–35.
O'cass, A., and H. Frost. 2002. "Status Brands: Examining the Effects of Non-Product-Related Brand Associations on Status and Conspicuous Consumption." *Journal of Product & Brand Management* 11 (2): 67–88.
Panigyrakis, G., A. Panopoulos, and E. Koronaki. 2020. "Looking for Luxury CSR Practices that Make More Sense: The Role of Corporate Identity and Consumer Attitude." *Journal of Marketing Communications* 26 (6): 666–684.
Parguel, B. F. F. Benoît-Moreau, and F. Larceneux. 2011. "How Sustainability Ratings Might Deter 'Greenwashing': A Closer Look at Ethical Corporate Communication." *Journal of Business Ethics* 102 (1): 15–28.
Paton, E., and V. Friedman. 2019. "Stella McCartney Teams up with LVMH, in Plot Twist in Luxury Wars." *The New York Times*, July 15, https://www-nytimes-com.eu1.proxy.openathens.net/2019/07/15/fashion/stella-mccartney-lvmh-kering.html?searchResultPosition=1
Pavione, E., and R. Pezzetti. 2015. "Responsible and Sustainable Luxury in the Global Market: New Emerging Strategies in the Luxury Sector" Paper presented at *Strategica. International Academic Conference: Local Versus Global*, Bucharest, Romania, October 29–31.
Polonsky, M. J. 2011. "Transformative Green Marketing: Impediments and Opportunities." *Journal of Business Research* 64 (12): 1311–1319.
Porter, M. E., and M. R. Kramer. 2006. "The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility." *Harvard Business Review* 84 (12): 78–92.
Preacher, K. J., D. D. Rucker, and A. F. Hayes. 2007. "Addressing Moderated Mediation Hypotheses: Theory, Methods, and Prescriptions." *Multivariate Behavioral Research* 42 (1): 185–227.
Rifon, N., S. M. Choi, C. S. Trimble, and H. Li. 2004. "Congruence Effects in Sponsorship: The Mediating Role of Sponsor Credibility and Consumer Attributions of Sponsor Motive." *Journal of Advertising* 33 (1): 29–42.
Rim, H., and D. Song. 2017. "Corporate Message Strategies for Global CSR Campaigns." *Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 22 (3): 383–400.
Robertson, J. L., and J. Barling. 2015. *The Psychology of Green Organizations*. USA: Oxford University Press.
Romani, S., S. Grappi, and R. P. Bagozzi. 2013. "Explaining Consumer Reactions to Corporate Social Responsibility: The Role of Gratitude and Altruistic Values." *Journal of Business Ethics* 114 (2): 193–206.
Ross, J., L. Irani, M. Silberman, A. Zaldivar, and B. Tomlinson. 2010. „Who Are the Crowdworkers? Shifting Demographics in Amazon Mechanical Turk.„ Paper presented at the ACM CHI Conference, Atlanta, GA
Saeidi, S. P. S. Sofian, P. Saeidi, S. P. Saeidi, and S. A. Saaeidi. 2015. "How Does Corporate Social Responsibility Contribute to Firm Financial Performance? The Mediating Role of Competitive Advantage, Reputation, and Customer Satisfaction." *Journal of Business Research* 68 (2): 341–350.
Schmeltz, L. 2014. "Introducing Value-Based Framing as a Strategy for Communicating CSR." *Social Responsibility Journal* 10 (1): 184–206.
Schwartz, S. H. 1992. "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries." In *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, edited by M. P. Zanna, 1–65. San Diego: Academic Press.
Sen, S., and C. B. Bhattacharya. 2001. "Does Doing Good Always Lead to Doing Better? Consumer Reactions to Corporate Social Responsibility." *Journal of Marketing Research* 38 (2): 225–243.
Sirgy, M. J. 1985. "Using Self-Congruity and Ideal Congruity to Predict Purchase Motivation." *Journal of Business Research* 13 (3): 195–206.
Sirgy, M. J. 1986. *Self-Congruity: Toward a Theory of Personality and Cybernetics*. New York: Praeger.
Sirgy, M. J. D. Grewal, T. F. Mangleburt, J. Park, K. Chon, C. B. Claiborne, J. S. Johar, and H. Berkman. 1997. "Assessing the Predictive Validity of Two Methods of Measuring Self-Image Congruence." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 25 (3): 229–241.

Stroud, N. J., A. Muddiman, and J. K. Lee. 2014. „Seeing Media as Group Members: An Evaluation of Partisan Bias Perceptions. *Journal of Communication* 64 (5): 874–894.
Tang, Z., and J. Tang. 2012. "Stakeholder–Firm Power Difference, Stakeholders' CSR Orientation, and SMEs' Environmental Performance in China." *Journal of Business Venturing* 27 (4): 436–455.
Tangney, J. P., R. S. Miller, L. Flicker, and D. H. Barlow. 1996. "Are Shame, Guilt, and Embarrassment Distinct Emotions?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70 (6): 1256–1269.
Taylor, C. R. 2016. "Advertising for Luxury and Fashion Goods: An Emerging Area." *International Journal of Advertising* 35 (3): 389–390.
Taylor, R. E. 1999. "A Six-segment Message Strategy Wheel."*Journal of Advertising Research* 39 (6): 7–17.
Taylor, S. E., and S. T. Fiske. 1978. "Salience, Attention, and Attribution: Top of the Head Phenomenal." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 11: 249–288.
Torelli, C. J., A. B. Monga, and A. M. Kaikati. 2012. "Doing Poorly by Doing Good: Corporate Social Responsibility and Brand Concepts." *Journal of Consumer Research* 38 (5): 948–963.
Truong, Y. 2010. "Personal Aspirations and the Consumption of Luxury Goods."*International Journal of Market Research* 52 (5): 655–673.
Truong, Y., G. Simmons, R. McColl, and P. J. Kitchen. 2008. "Status and Conspicuousness–Are They Related? Strategic Marketing Implications for Luxury Brands." *Journal of Strategic Marketing* 16 (3): 189–203.
Truong, Y., and R. McColl. 2011. "Intrinsic Motivations, Self-Esteem, and Luxury Goods Consumption." *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* 18 (6): 555–561.
Tynan, C., S. McKechnie, and C. Chhuon. 2010. "Co-Creating Value for Luxury Brands." *Journal of Business Research* 63 (11): 1156–1163.
Veblen, T. 1899. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: McMillan .
Vickers, J. S., and F. Renand. 2003. "The Marketing of Luxury Goods: An Exploratory Study–Three Conceptual Dimensions." *He Marketing Review* 3 (4): 459–478.
Vigneron, F., and L. W. Johnson. 1999. "A Review and A Conceptual Framework of Prestigeseeking Consumer Behavior." *Academy of Marketing Science Review* 1: 1–15.
Vigneron, F., and L. W. Johnson. 2004. "Measuring Perceptions of Brand Luxury." *Journal of Brand Management* 11 (6): 484–506.
Vlachos, P. A., N. G. Panagopoulos, and A. A. Rapp. 2013. "Feeling Good by Doing Good: Employee CSR-Induced Attributions, Job Satisfaction, and the Role of Charismatic Leadership." *Journal of Business Ethics* 118 (3): 577–588.
Walker, M., B. Heere, M. M. Parent, and D. Drane. 2010. "Social Responsibility and the Olympic Games: The Mediating Role of Consumer Attributions." *Journal of Business Ethics* 95: 659–680. doi:10.1007/s10551-010-0445-x.
Wiedmann, K. P., N. Hennigs, and A. Siebels. 2009. "Value-Based Segmentation of Luxury Consumption Behavior." *Psychology and Marketing* 26 (7): 625–651.
Winston, A. 2016. "Luxury Brands Can No Longer Ignore Sustainability." *Harvard Business Review*, February 8. https://hbr.org/2016/02/luxury-brands-can-no-longer-ignore-sustainability
Wolfe, I. 2018. "How Ethical Is Stella McCartney?" *Good On You*, July 23, https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-stella-mccartney/
Yan, C., J. P. Dillard, and F. Shen. 2010. "The Effects of Mood, Message Framing, and Behavioral Advocacy on Persuasion." *Journal of Communication* 60 (2): 344–363.
Yeoman, I. 2011. "The Changing Behaviours of Luxury Consumption." *Journal of Revenue and Pricing Management* 10 (1): 47–50.
Yoo, B., N. Donthu, and S. Lee. 2000. "An Examination of Selected Marketing Mix Elements and Brand Equity." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 28 (2): 195–211.
Yoon, Y., Z. Gürhan-Canli, and N. Schwarz. 2006. "The Effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities on Companies with Bad Reputations." *Journal of Consumer Psychology* 16 (4): 377–390.
Zhou, L., Z. Yang, and M. K. Hui. 2010. "Non-Local or Local Brands? A Multi-Level Investigation into Confidence in Brand Origin Identification and Its Strategic Implications." *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 38 (2): 202–218.

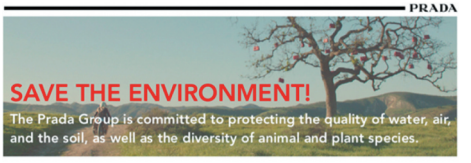
Appendix 1. Stimuli

Environmental benefit-focused & Objective



- No use of animal furs in our products. We always calculate the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) of packaging materials.
- The highest environmental standards in our raw material procurement process. Verified by ISO 14001 and with our suppliers, we aim to make it in 70% of their procurement chain by 2020, which decreases the use of toxic chemicals by 80%.
- Use of renewable energy to reduce landfill and CO_2 emissions. In partnership with National Climate Charter, we undertake actions to increase by 70% the green energy consumption in the manufacturing process and at retail stores by 2020.

Environmental benefit-focused & Subjective



- Pro-environmental performance since the design stage
- Secure access and process to raw materials
- Use of renewable energy to combat climate change

Personal benefit-focused & Objective

- Enjoy your environmentally innovative and cruelty-free ethical consumption. By our commitment of no animal furs, you can save 200 million rabbits and 50 million other animals each year.
- Experience greater value-driven purchases and protect your health and safety. We apply the highest environmental standards to our raw material procurement process, which decreases the use of toxic chemicals by 80%.
- Contribute to leaving behind a world that is as beautiful and abundant as the one we inherited to your future generation. We undertake actions to increase by 70% the green energy consumption in the manufacturing process and at retail stores by 2020.

Personal benefit-focused & Subjective

- Environmentally innovative and cruelty-free ethical consumption
- Greater value-driven purchases and protection of your health and safety
- Nurturing environment for your future generation