

## **Investigating the Impact of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives on Consumer Behavior and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of How Tightly Linked Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives Are to Products**

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**Abstract :** Environmental corporate social responsibility initiatives (E-CSR) have gained increased significance amongst corporations as a means to strengthen social impact and influence consumer perception or behavior. Existing academic literature suggests that the level of fit between a company and the corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative they undertake is a key moderator to the impact that CSR initiatives have on consumer perception and behavior. While certain research substantiates the claim that the higher linkage of CSR initiatives to products positively influences consumer perceptions, others have opposed this ideology. Findings have shown that the impact of CSR linkage as a moderator to the impact CSR has on consumer behavior is contextually defined. Thus, this study distinguishes itself from existing literature by specifically examining how the linkage of E-CSR initiatives to the product that a corporation provides is a moderator to the impact that E-CSR has on purchase intention and consumer perceptions. The qualitative and quantitative studies conducted demonstrate that companies with products that are tightly linked (integrated) to the E-CSR initiative increase consumer purchase intention and positive perceptions more than companies with products that are unrelated (peripheral) or somewhat linked (partially integrated) to the E-CSR initiative. Findings have shown that the impact of peripheral and partially integrated E-CSR initiatives on consumer behavior are comparable. The presence of an E-CSR initiative, regardless of its level of fit, was shown to increase positive consumer perceptions and willingness to pay as compared to the absence of any E-CSR initiative. Finally, demographic factors such as consumers' environmental values and income were observed to impact the strength of the relationships.

**Keywords :** environmental corporate social responsibility, purchase intention, company-cause fit, consumer response to environmental initiatives, product-cause fit, consumer behavior

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