A Cross-Cultural Examination of Corporate Social Responsibility Marketing Communications in Mexico and the United States: Strategies for Global Brands

Karen L. Becker-Olsen, Charles R. Taylor, Ronald Paul Hill, and Goksel Yalcinkaya

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of marketing-oriented corporate social responsibility (CSR) communications on perceptions of the firm and its brands among consumers in two diverse cultures, economies, and political landscapes. The authors' main hypotheses are based on global brand positioning theory, which posits that consumer perceptions are enhanced if the brand is viewed as global. In general, the results support the notion that multinational firms emphasizing global CSR efforts engender more positive perceptions across multiple dimensions. Yet regarding tactical issues, the results also show the importance of some specific needs according to local tastes and experiences. The authors provide implications for marketing theory and practice as well as future research directions.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, advertising, global consumer culture positioning, culture, survey research

I n recent years, corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs have received increased attention from scholars and practitioners. This movement has resulted in several important findings, including the belief that robust CSR efforts and communications enhance a variety of stakeholder perceptions (Sen and Bhattacharya 2001; Vian et al. 2007) and that a lack of social responsibility might damage stakeholder relationships (Argenti and Haley 2006). Because most of this

academic work has been conducted in the United States and a few other developed countries (Maignan and Ralston 2002), the findings may have limited generalizability to developing economies and offer little guidance for firms seeking to systematically promote multinational CSR efforts.

Furthermore, CSR efforts with global themes and execution tactics are emerging in the marketplace (Matten and Moon 2008). There is an observed trend that the CSR efforts of European and other non-U.S.-based multinational firms are becoming similar to those of U.S. firms, which favor explicit policies and programs along with greater transparency in reporting and communications. This perspective is indicative of CSR

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efforts that actively develop and implement programs and strategies that "combine social and business value and address issues perceived as being part of the social responsibility of the company" (Matten and Moon 2008, p. 409). Therefore, prior research and current corporate-based trends support worldwide, integrated marketing communications that highlight an explicit CSR program (Weyzig 2006).

Although some scholars have reported a positive relationship between a country's level of economic development and the importance of CSR to consumers (Marta and Singhapakdi 2005), there is an apparent movement toward increased emphasis on CSR across all markets (Matten and Moon 2008). Moreover, recent research on international marketing efforts indicates that there are benefits associated with the use of global branding and global promotional approaches (Okazaki, Taylor, and Zou 2006; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003). For example, Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) find that perceived brand "globalness" (PBG) is positively related to perceptions of both a brand's quality and its prestige, yielding a competitive marketplace advantage. Therefore, examining the degree to which CSR programs and their globally focused communications are able to universally deliver brand-building benefits is worthwhile.

The broad objective of this study is to increase understanding of CSR communications by global firms using data collected for an international telecommunications company with a strong presence in Mexico and the United States. Specifically, we address broad CSR expectations and perceived value of CSR in these two markets, and then we examine three relevant communication variables: reach, source, and program details. Because we are interested in understanding how to develop and communicate CSR programs, we examine the reach of a given program to determine consumer preferences for localized versus global approaches. In addition, because many CSR programs are implemented with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) or nonprofit organization (NPO) partner, we are interested in source effects related to specific CSR communications and their interaction with PBG. Finally, considering that CSR communications have been used to build specific brand and firm associations and enhance corporate reputations, we assess the value of providing program performance information through CSR communications.

Our research contributes to the international marketing literature in multiple ways. First, we explore the degree to which CSR programs are expected and valued in both a fully developed market and a newly developing market. Second, at a theoretical level, we examine whether it is possible to effectively implement and promote CSR programs that have global (as opposed to local) reach. Third, our research has implications for managers who want to use CSR efforts to advance their standing in the marketplace through communications programs. We also examine cross-national trends in CSR and develop research questions related to consumer expectations of CSR and consumer perceptions of the value of CSR programs. We then present hypotheses based on the premise that in today's marketplace there is a premium on PBG (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003) and that there are potential opportunities associated with implementing programs that emphasize global reach. We then provide the methodology of the study and its results, followed by a discussion of theoretical and practical implications.

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE
CSR in the United States

Modern theoretical discussions of CSR emerged in the United States during the latter half of the twentieth century as a result of growing attention to positive and negative consequences of business activity on the larger society (for a more expansive account, see Carroll 1999). For example, interest in chronicling the social responsibilities of U.S. business and its leadership occurred in the 1950s, which led to escalated vigilance by firms and consumers in the 1960s. By the 1970s, increased public demands within the United States and other developed countries caused firms to broaden their focus to include previously ignored social, environmental, and regulatory concerns. In the 1980s, firms began to think of CSR activities as being dedicated to different constituencies or stakeholders—a perspective that prevails today both in the literature and in practice (Nasi et al. 1997).

In recent years, the development of CSR as part of business strategy has received much attention in the U.S. market. Research indicates that CSR represents a differentiating factor that firms can successfully use to satisfy varying stakeholder needs and distinguish themselves within their target markets (Drumwright 1994). Proponents believe that there are substantial segments of consumers, in both size and buying power, who are interested in using their decisions to effect social change and that these consumers are likely to frame evaluations of alternative products within the context of the parent

companies' alignment with beliefs and social values (Kelley and Elm 2003). Companies that provide socially responsible products, engage in cause-related marketing, donate to nonbusiness entities, and have a strong CSR profile might engender consumer-based associations that enhance brand and firm evaluations (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006; Brown and Dacin 1997). Conversely, firms that fail to align with such consumer expectations and values are likely to face repercussions. Thus, the evidence triangulates around the belief that CSR is an important form of investment by U.S. corporations.

CSR in Mexico

In contrast to the modern perspective of CSR efforts in the United States, developing countries such as Mexico have historically been associated with a low level of philanthropy rather than a more strategic stakeholder perspective (Barkin 2003; Barkin 2005; Welford 2005). For example, the Catholic Church is a strong force that shapes the CSR environment in Mexico. Although there is a history of corporate philanthropy and even cause-related marketing, a large portion of investment in Mexico is from non-Mexican firms, particularly U.S.-based companies operating in large metropolitan areas, such as Mexico City (Weyzig 2006). The civil environment poses further challenges for multinational enterprises and Mexican firms that want to engage in CSR because skepticism and territorial disputes regarding who should manage social issues—the government, NGOs, individuals, the church, or private enterprises—continue to arise. In addition, and in contrast to the United States, Mexico is plagued with a climate of corruption, low wages, and unpaid employee benefits, as well as poor educational systems and health care options (OECD 2000, 2004). Yet despite these contextual differences, there is evidence that more strategic stakeholder-based CSR efforts are beginning to emerge, particularly in the environmental area (Muller and Kolk 2009).

Concurrently with this market development, research indicates that Mexican consumers are responding positively to CSR efforts and that they are interested in having private enterprises support social programs (ITESM 2000). This interest can be explained, at least in part, by the types of firms engaged in CSR. As we mentioned, many firms currently involved in Mexico are multinational enterprises that have actively embraced CSR as a tool to enter and develop markets and establish strong relationships with consumers (Weyzig 2006). Mexican consumers, particularly in places like Mexico City, where education levels and the frequency of international travel continue to increase, are more cosmopolitan and aware of the myriad social and environmental problems facing communities than their rural counterparts. Consequently, they are interested in CSR-oriented firms' solutions and resources for problem resolution.

Research Question 1: CSR Expectations

Expectations of CSR are based on prior experiences and are defined as beliefs regarding what is expected from CSR programs (Creyer and Ross 1997). The more robust and frequent an experience is, the greater is the intensity of the expectation associated with that event. Regarding CSR, expectations might be a function of exposure to prior CSR campaigns, mass-media messages, and/or cultural relevance. In the United States, where the CSR landscape is much more developed and competitive, consumers are exposed to large numbers of CSR communications and tend to exhibit an acceptance of and desire for a variety of CSR programs and activities (Dawkins and Lewis 2003). In contrast, the CSR climate in Mexico is not as developed, and Mexican consumers are exposed to fewer experiences, programs, and related CSR communications. Thus, we pose the following research question:

> Research Question 1: Do consumers in the United States and Mexico hold different expectations for firms regarding CSR activities?

Research Question 2: CSR Value

Because of the political and economic climate in Mexico and other less developed countries, it is plausible that there are more opportunities for firms to engage in CSR programs that have an impact on a community. Coupled with potentially lower expectations, this is likely to lead consumers to place greater value on CSR programs. Value is characterized as the ability of a CSR program to satisfy consumers' wants or needs related to their community and the importance of those needs to given consumers. Similarly, from a cultural orientation, Mexico is a highly collectivist culture and the United States is a highly individualist culture, indicating that CSR programs perceived as assisting some relevant group are more likely to be esteemed by Mexican consumers than by U.S. consumers. This does not imply that U.S. consumers do not value CSR participation; rather, Mexican consumers simply see greater potential for this form of

community involvement. Thus, we pose the following research question:

> Research Question 2: Because of contextual and cultural differences, do consumers in Mexico and the United States place disparate levels of value on CSR?

HYPOTHESES

Recent theoretical perspectives advising firms to increase the effectiveness of their communications by following global strategies inform this examination of CSR programs in an international context (e.g., Okazaki, Taylor, and Zou 2006; Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003; Taylor 2005). Global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) theory, as advanced by Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra (1999), posits that firms can benefit from associating brands with global consumer culture. Akaka and Alden (2010, p. 38) show that global consumer culture consists of shared symbols (such as brands) and behaviors that are "commonly understood but not necessarily shared by consumers and businesses around the world." As a result of the possibility of different understandings of GCC signs and behaviors, there are multiple options for marketers to associate a brand with GCC. One option is standardization across markets in which understandings are similar, and other options include foreign consumer culture positioning (FCCP) and local consumer culture positioning (LCCP). Thus, although standardization is one option for reaching some target segments, GCCP does not posit that this is universally desirable. However, research reveals that there can be advantages to a brand being accepted as "global."

Perceived Brand Globalness

Perceived brand globalness is an increasingly important concept in the international marketing literature (e.g., Taylor 2010), and the degree to which a brand is viewed as global is a result of interactions between brand positioning and consumer perceptions (Holt, Quelch, and Taylor 2004). Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden (2003) define PBG as the degree to which consumers believe that the brand is marketed and recognized as global across countries, which might have a positive impact on brand quality and prestige. Perceived brand globalness is also influenced by consumer exposure to brands in the general media and through marketing promotions (Akaka and Alden 2010). In the context of communica-

tions for CSR programs, prior research findings on PBG indicate that consumer perceptions are enhanced by the employment of a GCCP strategy in which the global element of the CSR effort is emphasized. This is similar for typical goods and services; when firms promote CSR efforts and emphasize globalness, consumers have higher perceptions of quality (impact/effectiveness) of the firms' efforts. Therefore, we predict that GCCP (as opposed to LCCP) will be associated with more positive associations with Nokia the firm as well as the brand.

> H_1: Global CSR programs are more effective at building positive firm- and brand-related associations than localized CSR programs for both U.S. and Mexican consumers.

Perceived Source

As a result of prior research on source effects, CSR programs and their communications are likely to be evaluated on the content of as well as the source delivering the message (Atkin and Block 1983; Baker and Churchill 1977; Hovland and Weiss 1951). Firms that engage in CSR programs with community/nonprofit partners must decide who will disseminate the information to consumers. Prior research has shown that sources with perceived expertise are more credible and more likely to have a positive impact on message processing (Levitt 1996; Wilson and Sherrell 1993). Although companies are experts on their own activities, they run the risk of being perceived as self-serving and sparking consumer skepticism (Pomering and Johnson 2009)—an association that has been shown to negatively affect CSR-related attributions (Forehand and Grier 2003). We posit that PBG might dominate spontaneous thoughts about the firm through GCCP (as opposed to LCCP) and drive the processing of CSR information. Following this logic, Nokia, a well-known global brand, can drive more positive perceptions of the CSR communication than their community partner.

> H_2: For both U.S. and Mexican consumers, CSR communications emanating from a global firm will be more effective at building positive firm and brand-related associations than communications from a community partner or joint communications.

> H_3: There will be a significant reach × source interaction for both the United States and Mexico such that communications that

emphasize global reach and indicate sponsorship by a global company will enhance message effectiveness.

Program Details

One consequence of CSR programs is that consumers hold firms accountable for their activities and might scrutinize such programs and subsequent communications. Prior research has identified perceived firm motivation as a key mechanism underlying consumers' willingness to reward firms for CSR actions (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006; Ellen, Mohr, and Webb 2000). When firm motivations are considered self-serving or profit related, attitudes are likely to diminish, whereas when motivations are considered socially driven, attitudes are likely to be enhanced. However, without contrasting information, research shows that consumers will primarily believe that firms are self-serving (Speed and Thompson 2000; Webb and Mohr 1998). To actively encourage positive responses, firms can provide transparent information about their activities (Darby and Kami 1973; Jeffries and Reed 2000) and demonstrate commitment to causes (Webb and Mohr 1998). With CSR, information related to social impact or program efficacy is likely to meet these goals and shape positive associations (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006). This impact might be particularly pronounced for global firms, as quality and prestige perceptions for products trickle down to other firm-related activities. Consequently, we predict that positive social impact information from Nokia will likely result in favorable evaluations.

H_4: For both U.S. and Mexican consumers, CSR communications that reveal positive social outcome details will be more effective at building positive firm and brand-related associations than communications that do not give outcome detail.

METHOD

In this study, we examined an actual CSR program run by the multinational consumer telecommunications firm Nokia. Its efforts involve a partnership with a global NPO and its local partner in the country in which the CSR programs take place. In the experimental portion of the study, we tested hypotheses by asking respondents to read a press release in which program reach, communication source, and communication style varied across experimental conditions. We followed this with a series of survey questions related to expectations of firm participation in CSR programs and the value of these programs.

Design

The general design for the experiment was a 2 (reach: global vs. local) × 3 (source: NPO vs. firm versus joint) × 2 (program detail: general program description vs. social outcome information) × 2 (country: Mexico and the United States) design in which we randomly assigned participants to experimental conditions. We replicated and repeated the design with two subject pools—one from Mexico City and the other from New York City. A native speaker translated the survey instrument and press releases from English to Spanish and then back-translated them for accuracy using Craig and Douglas's (2000) recommended procedures.

Samples

A multicultural marketing research agency solicited two independent samples. Because the study revolved around a telecommunications manufacturer, we screened all participants for cell phone ownership. The Mexican sample consisted of 480 consumers interviewed by native Spanish-speaking professional researchers. Researchers approached participants at three different shopping districts in Mexico City to ensure a broad income distribution. Of the participants, 47.7% were men, and 95% were between the ages of 18 and 40. The U.S. sample also consisted of 480 consumers. Native English-speaking professional researchers approached the participants at four different locations in New York City. Of the participants, 45.5% men, and 100% were between the ages of 18 and 40. Samples are consistent with heavy users of cell phones.

Procedures

Researchers asked participants in both samples to respond to a survey that took approximately ten minutes. Researchers first screened participants for cell phone usage and ownership and then asked a few broad questions about CSR and the focal company. Researchers then directed participants to read a news item and answer a series of questions regarding the target firm, the information received, and CSR in general (for details on the press release and directions, see Appendixes A and B). Upon completion of the tasks, researchers thanked the respondents for their participa-

tion, debriefed them, and gave them information about the firm's actual CSR efforts in their respective countries.

Measures

Independent Variables. We tested four independent variables in this study: country, reach, source, and program detail. The first variable reflects the countries in which data were collected: Mexico and the United States. Reach refers to the geographic scope of the program, and we characterized it as either global or local in the press release. Source refers to the entity described as the sender of the communication and is manipulated by logos at the top of press releases that reveal the communicator as the firm, the NPO, or both. Program detail, the final variable, refers to the type of program information shared in the press release. The program-only condition describes efforts in broad, general terms (i.e., what occurs and the target population), whereas the social impact condition provides specific outcome data (e.g., number of students who complete the program and graduate high school). In addition, country is used as a covariate in the study.

Dependent Variables. For the first research question, we evaluated consumer expectations for CSR programs using three seven-point Likert-scaled questions ("I expect firms to be engaged in CSR programs," "Firms should be engaged in CSR," and "I am surprised when firms are involved in CSR programs"; Cronbach's $\alpha_{U.S.}$ = .8245, and Cronbach's α_{Mexico} = .7956). In the next question, we determined CSR value using three seven-point Likert-scaled questions ("I value CSR programs," "CSR programs are helpful," and "CSR programs are important"; Cronbach's $\alpha_{U.S.}$ = .8637, and Cronbach's α_{Mexico} = .8574). In addition, we measured attitude toward the firm and purchase intention in a pretest–posttest way using three items for each construct (Simmons and Becker-Olsen 2006). Attitude consists of the following: "This is a good firm," "I like this firm," and "I believe in this firm" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{U.S.}$ = .9334, and Cronbach's α_{Mexico} = .9153). Purchase intention includes the following: "I would buy this product," "I would recommend this product," and "I would use this product" (Cronbach's $\alpha_{U.S.}$ = .9185 and Cronbach's α_{Mexico} = .8925).

Because these two measures provide only a general sense of how the CSR communications shape broad consumer perceptions, we also tested several specific belief statements. For H_1–H_4, we evaluated responses to a series of 20 scaled questions regarding respondents' feelings and beliefs about the target firm. Researchers presented this list of belief measures after participants read the press release, which is consistent with prior research on CSR (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006; Simmons and Becker-Olsen 2006). We conducted a principal components analysis with varimax rotation on these items separately for the Mexican and U.S. data as well as cross-validation analysis with randomly selected subsets of the data from both groups. In all cases, the analysis reveals four distinct components with eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for 70.16% and 72.07% of the variation for Mexican and U.S. consumers, respectively. All components are significant because they exceed .5 (Hair et al. 1999). Notably, across the two data sets, 19 of the items load on the same components.

The principal components are similar to those identified in prior research (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006): brand identification ("is an important brand," "has quality products," "has reliable products," "understands its customers," "is a brand I feel good about," and "is a brand I trust"), corporate citizenship ("is a brand that cares," "is a good corporate citizen," "has a strong value system," "acts for the good of the community," and "is a brand I trust"), firm motivation ("supports good causes to attract customers," "supports good causes for the good of the community," "is only interested in making a profit" [reverse-scaled], and "supports good causes to promote the firm"), and firm reputation ("is a leader in the communication industry," "is a reliable company," "is a responsible company," "is an innovative company," "is a company I can believe in," and "is a financially strong company"). Furthermore, these components align with key issues related to CSR implementation (Chahal and Sharma 2006; Godfrey and Hatch 2007) and allow for a microlevel analysis of how CSR communications influence consumer reactions (for full details on this analysis, see Table 1).

Assessment of Measurement Invariance

The cross-country measurement literature describes a series of empirical tests to evaluate the conceptual equivalence of measures (He, Merz, and Alden 2008; Mullen 1995; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). The applicability of models developed in one country must be assessed in other countries to make any meaningful comparisons across countries. Because we collected data using Mexican and U.S. samples, cross-country applicability of construct measures in this study must be assessed through multigroup confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) proposed by Steenkamp and Baumgartner

Table 1. Principal Component Analysis: Impressions of Company on Key Dimensions

	Mexico	United States
Component 1: Brand Identification		
Is an important brand	.539	.580
Has quality products	.737	.786
Has reliable products	.787	.700
Understands its customers	.585	.530
Is a brand I feel good about	.782	.765
Is a brand I trust	.799	
Eigenvalue and percentage variation	9.87/46.99%	5.51/20.09%
Component 2: Citizenship		
Is a brand that cares	.684	.873
Is a good corporate citizen	.670	.906
Has a strong value system	.762	.939
Acts for the good of the community	.870	.949
Is a brand I trust		.661
Eigenvalue and percentage variation	2.36/11.22%	8.37/30.50%
Component 3: Firm Motivation		
Supports good causes to attract customers	.764	.834
Supports good causes for the good of the community	.789	.793
Is only interested in making a profit	−.974	−.870
Supports good causes to promote the firm	.721	.793
Eigenvalue and percentage variation	1.51/7.62%	3.91/14.23%
Component 4: Firm Reputation		
Is a leader in the communication industry	.589	.651
Is a reliable company	.809	.778
Is a responsible company	.528	.571
Is an innovative company	.862	.531
Is a company I can believe in	.558	.894
Is a financially strong company	.563	.590
Eigenvalue and percentage variation	1.01/4.79%	1.99/7.24%

(1998). To make cross-country comparisons, configural invariance, metric invariance, and scalar invariance for the measurement instruments must be established (He, Merz, and Alden 2008; Mullen 1995; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998). Configural invariance is established first, then metric invariance, followed by scalar invariance.

Accordingly, we focused first on the configural invariance model (M1), which is also known as the baseline model in which no cross-group factor constraint is imposed. Configural invariance assesses whether the same pattern of factor loadings exists across different countries. As Table 2 shows, the results indicate that the baseline model with free factor loadings fits the data well ($\chi^2(86) = 186.46$, $p < .001$; incremental fit index [IFI] = .96; comparative fit index [CFI] = .96; Tucker–Lewis index [TLI] = .94; and root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .062). The normed

Table 2. Assessment of Measurement Invariance

Invariance	Models Compared	χ²(d.f.)	Δχ²(Δd.f.)	RMSEA	IFI	CFI	TLI	χ²/d.f.
Configural invariance model (M1)		186.46 (86)		.06	.96	.96	.94	2.16
Full metric invariance model (M2)	M2 vs. M1	208.27 (94)	21.81 (8)	.06	.96	.97	.94	2.22
Full scalar invariance model (M3)	M3 vs. M2	532.73 (106)	324.46 (12)	.09	.88	.92	.90	5.03
Partial scalar invariance model (M4)	M4 vs. M3	226.14 (102)	306.59 (4)	.07	.96	.97	.94	2.32
Partial scalar invariance model (M4)	M4 vs. M2	226.14 (102)	17.87 (8)	.07	.96	.97	.94	2.32
Partial scalar invariance model (M4)	M4 vs. M1	226.14 (102)	39.68 (14)	.07	.96	.97	.94	2.32

chi-square was 2.16, which is below the recommended cutoff point of 3. It can be inferred from these statistics that we achieved the configural invariance across the U.S. and Mexican samples.

Next, we tested the metric invariance model (M2) to examine whether factor loadings are identical for each scale item between the two samples. We constrained all the factor loadings to be equal between the U.S. and Mexican samples, and results show that the metric model also fits the data well ($\chi^2(94) = 208.27$, $p < .001$; IFI = .96; CFI = .97; TLI = .94; and RMSEA = .056), and the increase in chi-square was not significant between M2 and M1 ($\Delta\chi^2(8) = 21.81$, $p > .1$), indicating that the full metric invariance model is not significantly worse than the baseline model.

We then analyzed the scalar invariance (M3) by constraining all factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across groups. Scalar invariance examines whether cross-national differences in means of observed items are due to differences in the means of the underlying constructs. This model resulted in a bad fit to the data ($\chi^2(106) = 324.46$, $p < .001$; IFI = .88; CFI = .92; TLI = .90; and RMSEA = .091). The increase of chi-square over the second model was significant ($\Delta\chi^2(12) = 324.46$, $p > .05$); thus, full scalar invariance is not supported. However, Steemkamp and Baumgartner (1998) recommend that if the full metric or scalar invariance model is not adequate, constraints on certain indicators

should be relaxed to get an acceptable partial invariance model. Therefore, we tested a partial scalar invariance model by freeing invariance constraints on several intercepts.

We performed three chi-square difference tests to assess the fit of the partial scalar invariance model (M4). The first test compared M4 with M3 and revealed a significant improvement in model fit ($\Delta\chi^2(4) = 306.59$, $p < .001$). Moreover, the other fit indexes also improved (IFI = .96, CFI = .97, TLI = .94, and RMSEA = .069), indicating support for the partial scalar invariance model. The second test compared M4 with M2, which showed that the partial scalar invariance model was not significantly worse than the full metric invariance model ($\Delta\chi^2(8) = 17.87$, $p > .05$). Finally, the third test compared M4 with M1. The chi-square difference between the partial scalar invariance model and the baseline model was not significant ($\Delta\chi^2(14) = 39.68$, $p > .01$), and the other fit indexes showed no significant deterioration, as Table 2 indicates. Therefore, we conclude that these measures are cross-nationally invariant and that their means can be meaningfully compared.

Assessment of Common Method Bias

Because we collected the data for this study using a cross-sectional design with key informant self-report measures, the common method variance (CMV) could affect relationships among the constructs. To test CMV,

we conducted two types of analyses. In the first, we used a CFA approach to Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff et al. 2003). In this method, if a single latent factor accounts for all manifest variables, the conclusion might be that CMV caused a serious threat to further analysis (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). However, CMV does not show a serious threat if the fit for the one-factor model is worse than the measurement model (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Paine 1999; Podsakoff and Organ 1986). In our case, the one-factor model yielded a chi-square of 256.146 (d.f. = 32), compared with a chi-square of 23.584 (d.f. = 18) for the measurement model. Thus, the fit is considerably worse for the unidimensional model than for the measurement model, indicating that common method bias is not a serious threat in the study.

In a second analysis, we used the CMV testing technique that Netemeyer et al. (1997) recommend. This technique requires the addition of a same-source factor to the indicators of each construct. Then, the two models are compared with one another: a model in which same-source factor loadings are constrained to zero and a model in which the same-source factor loadings are estimated freely. If the unconstrained model provides a significantly better fit than the constrained model, a same-source factor exists (common method bias poses a problem in the analysis). The results reveal no presence of method bias, using a chi-square difference test for each of the two groups (χ^2_{diff} = 10.348, d.f.$_{\text{diff}}$ = 11; $p > .05$). On the basis of these findings, we conclude that there is no effect of CMV for the samples.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The manipulation checks reveal that the three independent variables operate as predicted, with more than 87% of participants identifying reach (87.5%), source (88.2%), and program detail (92%) correctly. Although participants identified the condition category (e.g., reach as global or local), they could not identify other details about the program (e.g., how long the firm had been involved with the initiative, what annual expenditures were, and so forth, at 30% accuracy), indicating that participants did not expend much effort processing CSR communications and the conditions served as processing cues (e.g., global reach program indicated a global firm and large effort). This is consistent with prior research by Webb and Mohr (1998).

In general, the results demonstrate that consumers in both countries share an overarching belief in the value of CSR and an expectation that firms should be engaged in the community, as well as providing evidence that consumers will reward firms for successfully communicating CSR programs. To answer the first research question, U.S. consumers are more likely to expect firms to be involved with CSR programs than Mexican consumers ($M_{\text{Mexico}} = 6.284$, $M_{\text{U.S.}} = 6.413$; F = 4.98, $p < .05$). However, the means for both countries are high, revealing an expectation for CSR activities in both countries. As CSR activities continue to advance and become more prolific in Mexico, it is plausible that Mexican consumers will develop even higher expectations, and this statistical difference might disappear completely.

The second research question asks whether Mexican consumers value CSR efforts more than U.S. consumers. The data indicate that Mexican consumers perceive greater value in CSR programs than U.S. consumers ($M_{\text{Mexico}} = 6.257$, $M_{\text{U.S.}} = 5.949$; F = 20.64, $p < .001$). Although the difference is statistically significant, we believe that consumers in both countries place a great value on CSR programs, as evidenced by the relatively high means. However, we caution that as CSR efforts become more pronounced and expectations rise, changes in their value might also occur. It is plausible that expectations in the United States have already increased, and CSR programs need to meet higher standards of execution and efficacy to be valued by consumers. Further research is needed to better understand the interaction between value and expectations across developed and developing countries.

We conducted a paired-sample t-test for overall brand attitude and purchase intentions within each country to determine the relative impact of the CSR communications. Although attitudes and intentions are both positive before exposure to CSR information (Mexican consumers are slightly more positive: $M_{\text{Mexico}} = 5.90$, $M_{\text{U.S.}} = 5.61$; t = 5.392, $p < .01$), the respondents in Mexico and the United States are positively influenced by the CSR communications and have stronger overall brand attitudes ($t_{\text{Mexico}} = 6.825$, $p < .001$; $t_{\text{U.S.}} = 10.218$, $p < .001$) and greater purchase intentions ($t_{\text{Mexico}} = 5.901$, $p < .01$; $t_{\text{U.S.}} = 8.983$, $p < .001$) after reading the press release. Because CSR communications appear to generate positivity toward the firm, we wanted to understand how the structure of CSR programs and communications meet specific microlevel objectives of a firm (e.g., building perceptions of corporate citizenship, building brand-related factors).

Therefore, we evaluated four factors that emerged from the 20 belief statements regarding reach, source, and program detail using multivariate analysis of variance with country as a covariate.

The main effect for country is significant only for motivation (F = 6.045, $p < .01$) in that Mexican consumers were less suspect of the firm's motivation than their U.S. counterparts. This finding might show the potential differences in consumers' experiences with CSR communications but also signals the possible rise of the global consumer. Regarding the first hypothesis, data show that there is a significant main effect for reach on all four principal components—brand identification (F = 8.191, $p < .05$), citizenship (F = 13.528, $p < .001$), motivation (F = 14.531, $p < .001$), and reputation (F = 35.314, $p < .001$)—indicating that PBG is important to consumers at both the brand and the firm level (for means, see Table 3).

Inconsistent with our prediction for the second hypothesis, there are no main effects for source across all of the components: brand identification (F = 2.655, $p > .05$), citizenship (F = .818, $p > .1$), motivation (F = 2.538, $p > .05$), and reputation (F = 2.522, $p > .05$). However, there is support for the third hypothesis; specifically, there is a significant source × reach interaction for brand identifi-

cation (F = 4.528, $p < .05$), motivation (F = 3.946, $p < .05$), and reputation (F = 6.217, $p < .01$), such that the firm is best when paired with a global initiative and the NPO partner is best when paired with a local initiative. Finally, regarding the fourth hypothesis, partial support exists with effects accruing only to U.S. consumers. Outcome detail or efficacy information has a significant main effect on three of four principal components: brand identification (F = 10.816, $p < .001$), citizenship (F = 96.214, $p < .001$), and reputation (F = 4.311, $p < .05$). Surprisingly, these details have no impact on perceptions of firm motivation (F = 2.003, $p > .1$), and there is no effect for any of the principal components with Mexican consumers, alluding to potential inexperience or naivety.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
Theoretical Implications

Our research examines the impact of CSR communications on consumers in two diverse cultures, economies, and political landscapes. The theoretical foundation is drawn from literature on PBG (Steenkamp, Batra, and Alden 2003), which demonstrates that PBG enhances brand perceptions. Correspondingly, CSR communications indicating that the program has global, as opposed

Table 3. Means for Communication Variables

	Reach		Program Detail		Source	
	United States	Mexico	United States	Mexico	United States	Mexico
Brand identification	L = 5.72	L = 5.73	O = 5.98	O = 6.02	F = 6.24	F = 6.15
	G = 6.14	G = 6.12	P = 5.51	P = 6.05	NPO = 6.02	NPO = 6.00
					J = 5.94	J = 5.97
Corporate citizenship	L = 5.63	L = 5.75	O = 6.27	O = 5.71	F = 6.03	F = 5.91
	G = 6.09	G = 5.81	P = 5.35	P = 5.84	NPO = 6.05	NPO = 5.89
					J = 5.88	J = 5.69
Motivation	L = 5.14	L = 5.23	O = 6.03	O = 5.11	F = 5.78	F = 5.43
	G = 5.68	G = 5.48	P = 5.85	P = 5.41	NPO = 6.02	NPO = 5.22
					J = 5.86	J = 5.13
Firm reputation	L = 5.63	L = 5.85	O = 6.23	O = 5.96	F = 6.24	F = 6.10
	G = 6.12	G = 6.23	P = 5.75	P = 6.00	NPO = 6.17	NPO = 5.96
					J = 6.19	J = 5.91

Notes: F = firm announcement, NPO = nonprofit announcement, J = joint announcement, L = local reach program, G = global reach program, O = outcome communication, and P = program-only communication.

to local, reach fared much better in the United States and Mexico on all key factors: brand identification, corporate citizenship, firm motivation, and firm reputation. The finding that global reach enhanced ratings on this diverse set of factors indicates that the benefits of PBG on quality and prestige might be broadened to include the promotion of CSR programs and the attractiveness of firms and brands. In this context, a CSR campaign that highlighted a global (as opposed to local) reach initiative had a positive impact on perceptions of the company's brands/products, the firm itself as caring and having good values, the firm's motivation as other focused, and the firm's overall corporate reputation as an industry leader.

The finding of a positive source × reach interaction when the firm (as opposed to an NPO) is identified in a global CSR communication yields additional credence to the assertion that globalness has positive benefits. In our study, the global source Nokia had the best overall impact as the identified sponsor of the communication. The finding that results for source and reach are consistent across the U.S. and Mexican markets, which are characterized by different cultures and economic climates, is indicative of the potential of PBG to have widespread implications. In general, findings in the United States are consistent with prior research that has shown that consumers expect program detail and efficacy to be communicated clearly in promotions to allay suspicions about motivations (Webb and Mohr 1998). However, we found no differences in Mexico. These results are consistent with other findings for our dependent factors: Mexican consumers appear to be less suspicious of firm motivations.

Managerial Implications and Further Research

Historically, regarding corporate participation and activities, CSR norms and activities have played out differently in the United States and Mexico for many reasons. Consequently, it is not surprising that U.S. consumers are more likely to expect firms to engage in socially responsible behaviors compared with their Mexican counterparts, but the difference is relatively small, and the absolute values of these metrics are high in both cases. In addition, Mexican consumers seem to value CSR actions slightly more than the U.S. complement, but again, they both clearly reveal a desire for firms to act responsibly. Consumers in both cultures respond similarly along several important dimensions. Both samples held strong positive attitudes toward

Nokia before learning about its CSR programs, and these attitudes and behavioral intentions improved significantly in both cases following exposure to CSR communications. Future studies should consider using control groups or collecting additional qualitative data to gain insights into the potential value and meanings underlying this result.

These results also have implications for marketing practice. For instance, the growth of CSR considerations and actions has changed the face of public–private partnerships and often include attempts to solve intractable problems that have plagued society for millennia (see, e.g., Hill 2002). For-profit organizations engaged in partnerships often fail to identify appropriate partners and do not know how or whether to inform their consumer bases about such activities (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, and Hill 2006). The results show the general value of CSR to global consumers and the ability of communications pertaining to these activities to improve attitudes and intentions. Nonetheless, specific details regarding which firms represent appropriate matches, how best to communicate with intended audience(s), and when to deliver information for the most positive impact must be considered separately. In addition, whether programs originate with nonprofits and are "bolted on" to firms through resource contributions or originate with firms that seek relevant partners might also affect the kinds of perceptions measured in this investigation.

Scholars and practitioners interested in the intersection between CSR and the marketing function might consider a few possible extensions of this investigation. One option is to expand the set of countries and populations to include Asia and Africa, where expectations for and the practice of CSR are less likely. In these particular cases, the test of global marketing strategies in search of cosmopolitan consumers with more universal tastes and desires would involve a very different context that could be characterized as the "acid test." The primary purpose would be to examine whether appeals associated with CSR effectively improve attitudes and intentions to buy. Such investigations might also consider whether specific details regarding delivery of promotions vary within and across these continents as well as differ from the results involving the Americas described in this study.

Our final implication relates to the theoretical consequences of this research. The use of two global cities within countries at different levels of development backed by a multinational corporation and employing targeted consumers allows for greater confidence in the findings.

The idea of a prominent global consumer marketplace continues to advance, and scholars across disciplines are interested in its further refinement through evidence that disconfirms or confirms its basic premises. Although this study might not be the first to show similarities in larger issues and differences in smaller details, the demarcation that separates them is better clarified. Additional theoretical advances require definitive answers regarding the underlying reasons for the existence of certain distinctions and exactly where the line between standard appeals and specific details must be drawn. Only then will a complete answer to this question be assured.

Appendix A. Sample Stimuli

INFORMATION RELEASE
Nokia and IYF Help Young People Around the World Connect with Success

January 16, 2006: Make a Connection, a global multiyear initiative, is promoting positive youth development by giving young people an opportunity to connect with their communities, families, and peers by improving educational opportunities and developing life skills. This program is coordinated by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and is supported by the Nokia Corporation.

Make a Connection is celebrating its fifth anniversary, having expanded to 20 countries and supporting more than 140 projects. Nokia contributes greater than $6 million annually to the *Make a Connection* program.

The *Make a Connection* global network has directly benefited over 180,000 young people and the communities in which they live by:

• Improving educational opportunities and graduation rates

• Learning life skills, such as cooperation, self-confidence, and conflict management

• Getting direct training and volunteering opportunities with other youth

• Having access to vocational training and mentorship opportunities

Nokia, the world leader in mobile communications, is committed to having a positive impact on society that extends beyond the advanced technology, products, and services the company creates. Through its initiatives with the IYF and other social responsibility programs, the company prepares young people to embrace opportunities and possibilities created by the global economy and new technological advancements.

IYF, a leading international youth organization dedicated to mobilizing resources and expertise to help young people, is committed to the *Make a Connection* program. Over the past 15 years, the IYF and its global network of alliances have helped millions of young people gain access to the life skills, education, job training, and other opportunities critical to their success.

Appendix B. Sample Instructions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. It should take about 10 minutes to complete. You will be asked to read a news item and then give us your reaction to a number of issues related to one of the articles.

First, I will ask you a series of questions. Then, we will turn the page and you can read the news clipping one time. When you are finished, turn the page and we will continue with the questions. We are interested in your immediate reaction based on a single reading of the news item.

Thank you for your help with this research.

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