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**Predicting behavioral loyalty through corporate social responsibility: The mediating role of involvement and commitment**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines whether consumers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities can predict behavioral loyalty, and how two attitudinal constructs drawing from the means-end chain model—involvement and commitment—mediate this relationship. A field study of 634 customers of an Australian professional football team was conducted by combining attitudinal surveys with actual behavioral data collected one year later. The results revealed a positive mediating effect of involvement on the relationship between perceived CSR and behavioral loyalty. However, when the effect of involvement on behavioral loyalty was mediated by commitment, the indirect effect of perceived CSR turned negative. The findings of this study indicate that the contribution of CSR initiatives to behavioral loyalty is not as robust as past research suggests, and is also contingent upon specific psychological states activated by consumers' perceptions of such initiatives.

*Keywords:* Corporate social responsibility (CSR); Means-end chain; Involvement; Commitment; Attendance frequency; Professional sport

## Predicting behavioral loyalty through corporate social responsibility: The mediating role of involvement and commitment

### 1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become prevalent in the corporate world, with Fortune 500 companies spending over US\$15 billion in community and philanthropic activities (Smith, 2014). From a business perspective, CSR investments and initiatives “contribute to strengthening a firm’s competitive advantage through enhancing its relationships with its customers” (Carroll & Shabana, 2010, p. 98). Academic research supports this perspective by demonstrating CSR’s link to various loyalty outcomes including development of a strong positive attitude toward the company, willingness to advocate for the company, and intention to repurchase its products (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007; Lacey, Kennett-Hensel, & Manolis, 2015; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Based on the literature, the influence of CSR activities on loyalty outcomes is substantial and well-established.

However, although a substantial body of research has demonstrated a positive relationship between CSR and attitudinal loyalty (Lacey et al., 2015; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013), research investigating CSR’s link to *behavioral loyalty* is rare, and when conducted has revealed a weak relationship (Ailawadi, Neslin, Luan, & Taylor, 2014). The lack of research linking CSR with behavioral loyalty is notable given that extant studies of service firms indicate it is far more difficult to predict behavioral loyalty than attitudinal loyalty through consumer-related attributes, such as satisfaction (Seiders, Voss, Grewal, & Godfrey, 2005; Yoshida, Heere, & Gordon, 2015). In addition, because CSR initiatives generally compete for corporate resources, companies need to show that their investment in CSR is financially justified (Ailawadi et al., 2014; Carroll & Shabana, 2010). Consequently, it is essential for companies to determine the influence of CSR on behavioral loyalty, which can directly impact profitability (Ailawadi et al., 2014). Yet most

research has failed to investigate whether CSR predicts customer behavior as measured by objective data, which is more suitable than self-reported intentions to measure behavioral loyalty (Seiders et al., 2005).

In addition to an objective measurement concern, previous studies predominantly use a cross-sectional design when investigating the effect of CSR on customer loyalty (e.g., Ailawadi et al., 2014; Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013; Walker & Kent, 2012; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). This research design is subject to limitations, most notably, common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) and the inability to infer causality (Levin, 2006). The use of a longitudinal research design is therefore necessary to address these limitations and provide an accurate evaluation of business returns from CSR.

The purpose of this current research is to address both measurement and design concerns by examining whether perceptions of a company's CSR activities can predict behavioral loyalty as measured by objective behavior over time. This research further seeks to explore how the influence of these CSR perceptions is shaped by psychological states as measured by attitudinal surveys. To this end, a field study of customers of an Australian professional football team was conducted by combining attitudinal surveys with behavioral data collected one year later. The professional sport industry, as part of large service and entertainment sectors, has been shown to serve as an ideal setting for understanding customer responses to CSR (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010; Lacey et al., 2015; Scheinbaum & Lacey, 2015; Walker & Kent, 2012), as well as psychological processes leading to customer loyalty (Yoshida et al., 2015). Within this context, a hypothesized research model (see Figure 1) has been developed based on the means-end chain model (Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen, 2009; Gutman, 1982) to examine the mediating role of two attitudinal constructs—*involvement* and *commitment*—in the relationship between customers' perceptions of CSR and behavioral loyalty measured as actual attendance frequency.

(Insert Figure 1 about here)

## 2. Background and hypotheses

### 2.1. *Defining perceived CSR and behavioral loyalty*

Previous consumer research has demonstrated that CSR encompasses various actions reflecting corporate commitment to societal obligations, and has placed particular emphasis on consumers' *perceptions* of such activities (Lacey et al., 2015; Lichtenstein et al., 2004). Such perceptions are referred to as *perceived CSR*, defined as consumers' evaluation of how well a company meets its stakeholder expectations and societal obligations by engaging in a broad range of voluntary activities (Lacey et al., 2015).

Behavioral loyalty refers to the repeat purchasing or use of a given service or product over time (Kumar & Shah, 2004; Leenheer, van Heerde, Bijmolt, & Smidts, 2007). Although the use of self-report data is common in past research, behavioral loyalty is operationalized more accurately via objective customer data related to share of wallet (Leenheer et al., 2007) and the number of store visits (Seiders et al., 2005). Within the professional sport industry, behavioral loyalty has been often measured using the frequency of attendance at sporting events over time (Yoshida et al., 2015). Increasing attendance frequency among sport customers is a key business objective for sport organizations, because repeat event attendance brings further commercial benefits, such as enhancing customers' intention to purchase event sponsor products (Lacey, Sneath, Finney, & Close, 2007) and generating venue-related revenue streams (e.g. concessions, merchandise, parking).

Behavioral loyalty is closely related but distinguishable from attitudinal loyalty which refers to the cognitive, affective, and conative elements of loyalty (Kumar & Shah, 2004). Research has shown that behavioral and attitudinal loyalty are weakly correlated with each other and have different levels of association with given consumer-related attributes, such as satisfaction (Seiders et al., 2005; Yoshida et al., 2015).

### 2.2. *The means-end chain model*

In order for CSR initiatives to influence loyalty outcomes, certain psychological processes must be activated (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). As shown in Table 1, research within event marketing and service contexts indicate that different mediators contribute to psychological processes, such as credibility (Uhrich, Koenigstorfer, & Groeppel-Klein, 2014; Walker & Kent, 2012), attributions (Walker, Heere, Parent, & Drane, 2010), trust (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010; Pivato, Misani, & Tencati, 2008), and commitment (Lacey, Close, & Finney, 2010; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010). However, as noted above and also illustrated in Table 1, most research has measured attitudinal loyalty in order to determine the effects of perceived CSR (as well as related constructs such as CSR associations) and its mediators. Consequently, the extent to which constructs examined in previous studies mediate the effects of CSR on behavioral loyalty has not been established.

(Insert Table 1 about here)

This study seeks to advance understanding of CSR's link to behavioral loyalty by testing the mediating role of commitment and involvement. Commitment is an established mediator between perceived CSR and attitudinal loyalty (Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011; Lacey et al., 2010; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010), while involvement is introduced as a new potential mediator in this study. The selection of these two attitudinal constructs is based on the means-end chain model (Gutman, 1982), the theoretical framework used in this study to explain how perceived CSR may influence behavioral loyalty. Focusing on the influence of personal values on behavior, this model stipulates that people consume a product as a means to achieve their desired ends, or "valued states of being" (Gutman, 1982, p. 60). From this perspective, CSR represents an attribute of a company (i.e., means) that produces desired ends for consumers.

Specifically, the perception that a company's CSR initiative provides functional benefits for a cause (e.g., protecting the natural environment) can generate two types of desired ends for consumers: (1) psychosocial benefits, such as experiencing positive feelings (e.g., happiness,

enjoyment) through their support of the company's CSR; and (2) affirmation of personal values by knowing that the company supports a cause they care about (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Subsequently, achieving the desired ends (e.g., affirming values) strengthens the relationship between the company and consumer, which in turn increases the consumer's likelihood of becoming loyal to the company (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). In summary, based on the means-end chain model, this study proposes the following pathways by which perceived CSR enhances behavioral loyalty: (1) perceived CSR helps consumers achieve their desired ends; (2) achieving the desired ends strengthens consumers' relationships with the company; and (3) the strengthened company–consumer relationship enhances behavioral loyalty (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Gutman, 1982).

The aforementioned pathways suggest the effects of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty are mediated by two psychological states. The first state reflects the extent to which customers are motivated to achieve their desired ends by consuming products of a company engaging in CSR, and the second reflects the strength of the company–consumer relationship enhanced by the achievement of their desired ends. In this study, the first psychological state is conceptualized using *involvement* (Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, & Jordan, 2011; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985); while the second is conceptualized using *commitment* (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The next sections explain how these two constructs are expected to mediate the effects of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty.

### 2.3. Mediating effects of involvement

Involvement has been examined as a unidimensional construct of personal relevance or importance (Zaichkowsky, 1985), or as a multidimensional construct capturing different desired ends achieved by consuming a product (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Unlike a unidimensional approach, multidimensional enables the inclusion of numerous contextual influences that account for the observed differences in consumer profiles related to a given activity, not the activity itself



(Beaton, Funk, & Alexandris, 2009). Using the multidimensional approach, recent research on sport consumers has conceptualized involvement based on three desired ends (or ‘facets’)—centrality, pleasure, and sign—which are the most relevant to the consumption of sport products (Beaton et al., 2011; Kunkel, Funk, & Hill, 2013).

First, *centrality* represents how important the consumption of a product (e.g., attending sporting events) is to one’s personal life. Second, *pleasure* refers to hedonic value, or sense of enjoyment, individuals derive from consuming the product. Third, *sign* reflects the extent to which consuming the product provides consumers with symbolic value that allows them to express their self (Beaton et al., 2011). Together, these three facets represent a meta-psychological state, with motivational qualities determining the level of time, energy, and emotion customers devote to consumption activities, information processing, and pursuit of knowledge for a product (Holbrook, Berent, Krosnick, Visser, & Boninger, 2005).

Using these three facets, this study defines involvement as an attitudinal construct reflecting the degree to which consumers evaluate the consumption of the product (attending games and holding membership with the sport team herein) as central to their life (centrality), and providing them with both hedonic (pleasure) and symbolic (sign) values (Beaton et al., 2011). Based on this definition, involvement captures the achievement of the two types of desired end states—psychosocial benefits (through pleasure) and affirmation of personal values (through sign and centrality)—that are proposed by the means-end chain model (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Gutman, 1982).

The literature has highlighted the potential effects of perceived CSR on each of the three facets of involvement. Regarding pleasure, CSR enables the company to enhance the attractiveness of its organizational identity (Lichtenstein et al., 2004) and provide consumers with psychosocial benefits, such as experiencing positive feelings (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). For consumers, these affective functions of CSR increase the hedonic values of consuming the

company's product. As for sign and centrality, the perception that CSR benefits a worthy cause can affirm the personal values of consumers and lead them to perceive that the company shares their values (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Lichtenstein et al., 2004). In turn, the perceived overlap of values allows consumers to express their self-concept through the consumption of the company's product (for sign), and increases the importance of the product in their life (for centrality). Given the expected effects of perceived CSR on each facet of involvement, it is hypothesized here that the positive perception of a company's CSR activities increases consumers' involvement with the consumption of its product. Thus, the first hypothesis is:

**H1.** Perceived CSR has a positive effect on involvement.

Involvement has also been proposed to have motivational qualities that energize goal-directed behavior, such as repeat consumption of a product (Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Consistent with this proposition, existing evidence supports the effect of involvement on behavioral loyalty (Kunkel et al., 2013; Olsen, 2007). Kunkel et al.'s (2013) examination of customers of professional sport teams revealed those with high levels of involvement tended to report elevated levels of loyalty. Examining loyalty toward a food product, Olsen (2007) found that involvement strongly predicted behavioral loyalty measured by the frequency of repeat product consumption. It is therefore hypothesized that:

**H2.** Involvement has a positive effect on behavioral loyalty.

Given the hypothesized positive effects of perceived CSR on involvement (H1) and of involvement on behavioral loyalty (H2), perceived CSR is expected to have a significant indirect effect on behavioral loyalty through involvement. Statistically, the presence of a significant indirect effect indicates mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). Hence, involvement is proposed here to mediate the positive effect of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty, leading to the following hypothesis:

**H3.** Involvement mediates the positive effect of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty.

#### *2.4. Mediating effects of commitment*

Commitment refers to “an enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship” (Moorman, Zaltman, & Deshpande, 1992, p. 316). According to Morgan and Hunt (1994, p. 23), such a desire “is central to all the relational exchanges between the firm and its various partners.” For customers, commitment represents a psychological state through which they form an attitude concerning the strength of their relationship with the company (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rauyruen & Miller, 2007). Evidence indicates that customers are more likely to be committed to a company that shares their values (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The means-end chain model further asserts that consumers establish a strong relationship with the company when the consumption of its products enables them to achieve desired end states, such as affirmation of their values (Bhattacharya et al., 2009).

Based on the definitions of involvement and commitment provided above, this assertion proposes that consumers’ involvement level with the use of the company’s products determines the extent to which they develop strong commitment to that company. Consistent with this perspective, Beatty, Kahle, and Homer (1988) found that involvement with the consumption of a given product precedes commitment to the associated brand. Consequently, the next hypothesis is:

**H4.** Involvement has a positive effect on commitment.

By applying the means-end chain model, Bhattacharya et al. (2009) suggested that the strength of consumers’ relationships with a company determines how likely they are to engage in behavior benefitting the company. This suggestion is supported by empirical evidence indicating that commitment influences customer loyalty (Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Roberts, Varki, & Brodie, 2003; Walsh, Hennig-Thurau, Sassenberg, & Bornemann, 2010). For example, in a study of customers in the service industry, commitment significantly predicted loyalty intentions in both traditional and electronic service contexts (Walsh et al., 2010). Studies of professional sport

events have also identified the effect of commitment on purchase intention (Lacey et al., 2010) and self-report purchase behavior (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010). Consequently, the positive effect of commitment on behavioral loyalty is hypothesized as:

**H5.** Commitment has a positive effect on behavioral loyalty.

H4 and H5 collectively suggest commitment serves as a mediator between involvement and behavioral loyalty. In line with this, Iwasaki and Havitz's (1998) conceptual model proposed that involvement would increase behavioral loyalty through commitment. Their subsequent work tested the model using data from customers of recreation service agencies, confirming that commitment mediated the relationship between involvement and behavioral loyalty (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). The final hypothesis here proposes that commitment mediates the effect of involvement (enhanced by perceived CSR) on behavioral loyalty:

**H6.** Commitment mediates the positive effect of involvement on behavioral loyalty.

### **3. Methods**

#### *3.1. Setting*

The hypothesized model was tested using data from customers of a professional football team in the Australian Football League (AFL). The sport played is 'Australian rules football', commonly referred to as 'AFL' in keeping with the professional league name. This sport is one of four football codes played professionally in Australia, with the others being soccer, rugby union, and rugby league. There are 18 teams in the professional AFL, spread throughout the country, and they play a 22-match regular season followed by a play-off style finals series between the top eight teams to determine a champion. The AFL is the largest professional sport league in Australia with a total revenue of AU\$446 million and an average attendance of over 32,000 per game, as recorded in 2013 (Bowen, 2014). Television rights for the league have set record levels for Australian sport in the last two negotiations, allowing the league to broadcast all of its regular-season games via television (Fox Sports, 2015).

Based on the core values of respect, progressive, and accountability, the AFL and individual teams have been actively involved in CSR by addressing such issues as employee welfare, community engagement, and environmental sustainability (“AFL Community,” n.d.; Australian Football League, 2013). The AFL’s CSR model is designed to drive connections with non-profits and charities, primarily through its teams. The AFL has a small number of league-wide partners, but these are typically charities established by the league itself, such as a homeless youth support service established by the AFL Players Association. Each team is encouraged to select partners that fit with their specific community objectives or values. This is where the bulk of the interaction between teams and outside non-profits occurs.

The specific AFL team investigated in this study has a focused approach to its CSR activities, having elected to develop strong, multi-year partnerships with local charities. The team donates a percentage of sales from merchandise and tickets, promotes the charities to its fans, and provides support in terms of player access and facilities. The relationships are prominently promoted on the team website and magazine, and club efforts to assist the charity partners and the outcomes of the partnership are regularly updated.

### *3.2. Participants and data collection*

Data were collected from customers of the aforementioned AFL team who had purchased the team’s club membership for the 2013 season. Club membership provides customers (or ‘club members’) with various tangible and intangible benefits, such as the ability to secure game tickets, merchandise, exclusive communications, and access to team organizational functions (McDonald, Karg, & Leckie, 2014). The team offered various membership categories in 2013, ranging from an entry-level membership providing no game access to a more comprehensive membership providing full home and away game access (16 games maximum). All club members regardless of their specific membership category were included in the study. This was because their actual game attendance, a measure of behavioral loyalty in this study, was not

constrained by the number of games they were entitled to as part of their memberships.

A survey design was used to collect data on perceived CSR, involvement, and commitment. For this design, a web-based survey including scales for these constructs was developed, and an email containing the link to this survey was sent to the AFL team's member database at the end of the 2013 season. This database contained email addresses of just over 16,000 club members who were over 18 years of age, had provided a viable email address, and had given permission to be contacted by the club for purposes such as this. Of these members, the final sample used in this study consisted of 634 members: (1) who provided complete information for the three constructs in the web-based survey; and (2) whose data could be matched up with their actual attendance collected one year after the survey via the scanning of membership cards at the sport venue.

Of the 634 members constituting the final sample, 75.6% were male, and 24.4% were female; and their age ranged from 18 to 87 years old, with the mean age of 46.5 years old ( $SD = 11.3$  years). In terms of age groups, 8.8% were 18–29 years old, 14.4% were 30–39 years old, 35.1% were 40–49 years old, 30.7% were 50–59 years old, and 11% were 60 years and above. In addition, these members maintained their club membership for an average of 10.9 years ( $SD = 8.3$  years). Lastly, based on the club's database, the average number of games these 634 members attended during the 2014 season was four games ( $M = 3.80$ ;  $SD = 4.33$ ).

The final sample of 634 members accounted for approximately 4% of the population (i.e. about 16,000 club members) who were invited to complete the web-based survey. Although this low response rate is consistent with previous sport consumer studies that utilize a longitudinal research design (Kunkel, Doyle, Funk, Du, & McDonald, 2016; Yoshida et al., 2015), it would still suggest potential nonresponse bias (Miller & Smith, 1983). Thus, the extent of nonresponse error was examined by comparing the final sample to two known characteristics of the population from the team's database: gender and age (Miller & Smith, 1983). According to the

database, 68% of all club members were male; and among adult members (20 years old and above), 18.5% were 20–29 years old, 15.8% were 30–39 years old, 30.2% were 40–49 years old, 22.9% were 50–59 years old, and 12.6% were 60 years and above. These values mostly correspond to the characteristics of the final sample reported above, although the sample included somewhat higher proportions of male members and those aged 30–59 years. To control for any effects that the overrepresentation of these segments may have on hypothesis testing, both age and gender were included as control variables in the main analysis.

### *3.3. Measures*

#### *3.3.1. Independent and mediating variables*

Multi-item measures with a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) were used to assess perceived CSR, involvement, and commitment (see Table 2 for descriptions of items). Perceived CSR, defined as the perception of overall CSR activities by the AFL team, was measured with three items from Fombrun, Gardberg, and Sever (2000) and Walsh and Bartikowski (2013). A 9-item involvement scale including subscales for centrality (3 items), pleasure (3 items), and sign (3 items) was adapted from Beaton et al. (2011) and Kunkel et al. (2013). Commitment was measured with a 3-item scale developed and validated by Roberts et al. (2003). All three constructs were measured through the web-based survey at the end of the 2013 season (hereafter ‘T1’).

(Insert Table 2 about here)

#### *3.3.2. Behavioral loyalty*

To measure behavioral loyalty, information on the actual number of games each respondent attended during the 2014 season (i.e., one year after the surveys; hereafter ‘T2’) was obtained from the AFL team ( $M = 3.80$ ;  $SD = 4.33$ ). Actual attendance data for all club members are collected by a national ticketing agency when membership cards are scanned at the entry gate, and are passed on to clubs. Membership is not transferable, allowing the attendance data to

be matched up with the survey data using the member identification number. Operationalizing behavioral loyalty by actual attendance frequency is consistent with past research in the professional sport context (Yoshida et al., 2015).

### 3.3.3. *Control variables*

Based on past research (Lacey et al., 2015; Seiders et al., 2005), four control variables were included to take into account their potential effects on the hypothesized relationships. First, Lacey et al.'s (2015) study of a professional basketball team highlighted that organizational performance, specifically on-court performance, may affect the relationship between perceived CSR and loyalty. To control for respondents' perceptions of the team's on-field performance, *perceived performance* was measured with three 11-point Likert scale items adapted from McDonald, Karg, and Vocino (2013). These items, which are shown in Table 2, were specifically developed to assess customer perceptions of professional sport organizations' performance (McDonald et al., 2013). Next, respondents' *gender* (1 = Male; 0 = Female) and *age* were included based on the evidence indicating that consumer response to CSR may vary by these characteristics (Lacey et al., 2015). Finally, because the length of prior experience with an organization can influence loyalty toward it (Seiders et al., 2005), *membership tenure* (i.e., number of consecutive years respondents had maintained their club membership) was included. The information for all control variables was obtained at the end of the 2013 season.

### 3.4. *Reliability and validity assessment for the multi-item scales*

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using Mplus 7.0 software was used to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs measured by the multi-item scales. The maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors (MLR) was employed as an estimation method to address the potential violation of multivariate normality (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). The measurement model consisted of perceived CSR, involvement, commitment, and perceived performance. Based on prior conceptualization (Beaton et al., 2011; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985),



involvement was specified as a second-order factor formed by its three first-order subdimensions of centrality, pleasure, and sign. The analysis provided the following indices, indicating an acceptable model fit (MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Podsakoff, 2011): Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.95; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.06; and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.05. In addition, involvement had a factor loading of at least 0.81 for its three subdimensions, supporting the hierarchical structure of the second-order factor.

The reliability and validity of the constructs were further assessed by calculating construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 2, all constructs exceeded the recommended level of 0.70 for CR and 0.50 for AVE, demonstrating adequate reliability and convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; MacKenzie et al., 2011). In addition, the square root values of AVE for perceived CSR (.78), involvement (.87), commitment (.83), and perceived performance (.77) were greater than correlation coefficients between any pair of the constructs (see Table 3), supporting discriminant validity for all constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Given the evidence supporting reliability and validity, the measurement model was retained without modifications.

(Insert Table 3 about here)

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Hypothesis testing

A structural model was performed using Mplus 7.0 to test the hypothesized model. This model specified perceived CSR as an exogenous variable with a direct path to involvement (included as the second-order factor). Next, involvement was specified as a mediator transmitting the effect of perceived CSR on attendance frequency, and commitment was included as a mediator between involvement and attendance frequency. Along with these hypothesized paths, the structural model included additional paths from the four control variables to attendance frequency. The analysis yielded the following results for the goodness-of-fit indices, CFI = 0.93,

RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.06, indicating an acceptable model fit (MacKenzie et al., 2011).

Figure 2 shows the hypothesized model with standardized path coefficients. Overall, this model explained a significant amount of the variance in involvement ( $R^2 = .48, p < .001$ ), commitment ( $R^2 = .63, p < .001$ ), and attendance frequency ( $R^2 = .12, p < .001$ ). Of the control variables, gender ( $\beta = -.17, p < .001$ ) and membership tenure ( $\beta = .10, p = .02$ ) significantly predicted attendance frequency. Regarding the hypothesized paths, perceived CSR had a significant positive effect on involvement ( $\beta = .69, p < .001$ ), which in turn positively predicted attendance frequency in the next season ( $\beta = .46, p < .001$ ). These results confirmed H1 and H2. Moreover, consistent with H3, these path coefficients yielded the significant indirect positive effect of perceived CSR on attendance frequency ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ) through involvement. As shown in Table 4, the bias-corrected 95% confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effect based on 5,000 bootstrap samples excluded zero [.20, .43], providing robust support for the mediating effect of involvement (Zhao et al., 2010).

(Insert Table 4 about here)

(Insert Figure 2 about here)

As for the mediation of commitment between involvement and attendance frequency, involvement ( $\beta = .79, p < .001$ ) was positively associated with commitment, as predicted by H4. However, commitment negatively predicted attendance frequency ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ), which was inconsistent with H5. These coefficients produced a negative indirect effect ( $\beta = -.24, p < .001$ ), with the bias-corrected 95% CI of this effect excluding zero [-.37, -.10]. The results rejected H6 by indicating the negative mediating effect of commitment.

To further understand the influence of perceived CSR on attendance frequency, a total effect was obtained by calculating the sum of the indirect effects (Zhao et al., 2010). As previously noted, involvement positively mediated the relationship between perceived CSR and attendance frequency ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ); however, when the effect of involvement on behavioral

loyalty was mediated by commitment, the indirect effect of perceived CSR turned negative ( $\beta = -.16, p < .001$ ; see the third path in Table 4). These indirect effects collectively provided a standardized coefficient of .15 ( $p < .001$ ), with its bias-corrected 95% CI excluding zero [.09, .21], which indicates that perceived CSR in total contributed to the enhanced level of the next season's attendance frequency.

#### *4.2. Follow-up analyses*

Two additional analyses were performed to check the robustness of the hypothesis testing reported above. First, to achieve model parsimony, the hypothesized model did not consider the direct effects of perceived CSR on commitment and attendance frequency. Although the exclusion of these direct paths is theoretically supported by the means-end chain model (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Gutman, 1982), available evidence suggests that perceived CSR may directly influence both commitment and attendance frequency (Ailawadi et al., 2014; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010). To determine the appropriateness of the hypothesized model, it was compared to an alternative direct effects model that included the direct paths from perceived CSR to commitment and attendance frequency (Olson, 2010). As shown in Table 5, the direct effects model provided goodness-of-fit indices very similar with those for the hypothesized model. Moreover, a chi-square difference test indicated that the inclusion of the two direct paths did not improve the overall fit of the model:  $\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df = 2) = 5.87, p = .05$ . These results supported that, because of its greater parsimony, the hypothesized model represents the more appropriate solution than the alternative direct effects model (Olson, 2010).

(Insert Table 5 about here)

Second, the study sample included club members that had different membership categories ranging from an entry-level category (no game access) to a full-benefit category (access to 16 home and away games). The inclusion of all members was deemed appropriate because members with lower-level membership were still eligible to purchase regular tickets to

attend games. However, because members with full benefits made financial sacrifices prior to the start of the season, attendance frequency may not adequately reflect their behavioral loyalty. In an extreme case, if full-benefit members did not use any ticket associated with membership during the 2014 season, they would be classified as having the lowest level of behavioral loyalty based on attendance frequency, despite the purchase of full-benefit membership.

To address this concern, a multi-group analysis was performed to compare the model fit between two multi-group models (Kline, 2005): (1) a less constrained model that freely estimated the hypothesized paths for a group consisting of full-benefit members ( $n = 112$ ) and another group consisting of the remaining non-full-benefit members ( $n = 522$ ); and (2) a constrained model that specified that both models would produce equal coefficients for each hypothesized path. Goodness-of-fit indices (as presented in Table 6) indicated that both constrained and less constrained models fit the data equally well. The results of a chi-square difference test further suggested that the free estimation of the paths for the less constrained model did not improve the model fit:  $\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df = 4) = 4.15, p = .39$ . These results support that the path coefficients reported in Figure 2 provided adequate estimates for both membership groups, alleviating the concern that the results of hypothesis testing would be influenced by membership categories (Kline, 2005).

(Insert Table 6 about here)

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

By examining the relationship between perceived CSR and behavioral loyalty, this research reveals that, for customers of an Australian professional football team, the influence of CSR on behavioral loyalty may not be as robust as previous research suggests. The contribution of perceived CSR to attitudinal loyalty is substantial and well-documented (Lacey et al., 2015; Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Pivato et al., 2008; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). For example, in their

analysis of German retail customers, Walsh and Bartikowski (2013) found that perceived CSR significantly predicted loyalty intentions both directly ( $\beta = .32$ ) and indirectly through satisfaction ( $\beta = .28$ ), with the total effect generating a standardized coefficient of .60. Similarly, in Lacey et al.'s (2015) study of US professional sport customers, perceived CSR together with control variables explained over 70% of the variance in word of mouth intentions. In the current study, however, the total effect of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty was significant but moderate ( $\beta = .15$ ), which indicates the extent of CSR's contribution to customer loyalty is lower when objective behavioral data are used.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that the context of Australian professional football represents a unique setting where perceptions of CSR activities have a minimal effect on customer loyalty. The current study is the first to link perceived CSR with objective behavior over time. Hence it is uncertain if the study's findings are applicable to other professional sport and larger service industry contexts. Nevertheless, the observed weak contribution of perceived CSR to behavioral loyalty is consistent with Seiders et al.'s (2005) perspective that decision-making related to actual behavior (as captured by behavioral loyalty) is more complex than the assessment of behavioral intentions (as captured by attitudinal loyalty), and that this complexity can result in a lower predictive ability for the behavior than for intentions. This research thus contributes to the literature by suggesting that considering objective behavioral data is essential to fully understanding the effects of CSR initiatives on customer loyalty.

Another key contribution of this research is to show that involvement operates as an important mediator for the relationship between perceived CSR and behavioral loyalty. The means-end chain model posits that the achievement of desired ends must occur for CSR to influence customer loyalty (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Gutman, 1982), but the literature has not specified what these ends entail. The current study extends the theoretical underpinning of the

means-end chain model by conceptualizing these desired ends based on the three facets of involvement—centrality, pleasure, and sign (Beaton et al., 2011)—and by providing empirical evidence for this conceptualization. Notably, the results of the follow-up analysis for the comparisons between the hypothesized indirect effects model and alternative direct effects model indicate that the effect of perceived CSR on attendance frequency is fully mediated by the second-order factor of involvement constituting the three facets. This study's evidence underscoring the central mediating role of involvement enhances the application of the means-end chain model to better understand how behavioral loyalty is developed through CSR activities.

The results further reveal a negative mediating effect of commitment, indicating when consumer involvement enhanced by perceptions of the company's CSR initiatives leads to increased commitment to the company, customers are less likely to repurchase or reuse the company's products. This identified negative mediation of commitment may seem to be counterintuitive and contradict the means-end chain model. The finding can, however, be explained by considering the context and conceptualization of commitment examined here. Specifically, this study defines commitment as capturing consumer desire to maintain a strong connection with the organization (Moorman et al., 1992). The nature of brand loyalty, and sport loyalty in particular, is that once a deep connection has been made, continual consumption of specific products is not required to maintain that connection (McDonald et al., 2014). This effect is heightened when there are multiple ways to connect with the organization, or consume its products. Within the professional sport context, the direct competition between live attendance and the rapidly improving broadcast consumption experience also plays a part in allowing deep connections to remain without reliance on consistent consumption patterns (Pritchard & Funk, 2006). Live game attendance, in particular, has been shown to be a very good tool for building connections, but not necessary for maintaining it (McDonald, 2010). An often-given example is

of heavily allegiant sport fans whose consumption is impacted by relocation to foreign countries or distant towns, yet they still remain strongly connected to their team.

The relationship between commitment and attendance frequency could further be weakened by financial, social, and environmental constraints that can prevent actual game attendance and alter behavior, as consumers may stay home and watch the game on television (Pritchard, Funk, & Alexandris, 2009). Past research in other contexts has found similar results, indicating that commitment to the organization is distinct from the increased use of its specific product as captured by behavioral loyalty (Pritchard, Howard, & Havitz, 1992). This research supports this distinction by suggesting that behavioral loyalty measured by attendance frequency is negatively correlated with commitment when the effect of involvement (which positively predicted attendance frequency) is simultaneously examined. In this context, it seems the level of commitment and behavioral loyalty may not be synchronized, and this may be the case whenever strong brand attitudes and multiple methods of consumption exist.

To explore the above explanation, two additional analyses were performed. The first analysis removed involvement from the original structural model while keeping all variables. This analysis yielded a nonsignificant coefficient ( $\beta = .05$ ) for the path from commitment to attendance frequency, indicating that commitment does not increase attendance frequency even when involvement is excluded from the model. In the second analysis, commitment was excluded from the original model while involvement and all other variables were retained. This analysis identified the positive effect of involvement on attendance frequency ( $\beta = .23$ ), as well as the total positive effect of perceived CSR on attendance frequency through involvement ( $\beta = .15$ ). Collectively, the results of the two additional analyses revealed that despite the large overlap between involvement and commitment ( $r = .78$ ), these two constructs differ in their ability to predict behavioral loyalty.

The negative mediating effect observed in this study should not discount the value of

commitment, which has been demonstrated to affect attitudinal loyalty (Rauyruen & Miller, 2007; Walsh et al., 2010) and self-report behavior (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010). Nevertheless, these results reveal that commitment may be insufficient to predict an enhanced level of behavioral loyalty as measured by objective behavior. In contrast, the finding that involvement positively affects behavioral loyalty confirms that involvement is a situational psychological state where fulfilment may depend on repeat consumption of a product (Beaton et al., 2011; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985). Based on the evidence, involvement can be viewed as a robust predictor of behavioral loyalty.

### *5.2. Managerial implications*

The positive mediating effect of involvement found in this research suggests that CSR initiatives help create loyal customers if the initiatives satisfy their desired end states. Hence, companies should design, communicate, and activate their CSR initiatives, such that the initiatives facilitate the desired end states of centrality, pleasure, and sign. First, because centrality is concerned with the perception of importance (Beaton et al., 2011), before implementing a new CSR program, soliciting information on specific causes perceived to be important by target customers and designing the program to address the most valued causes are essential. Next, once the CSR program is designed and implemented, the company should communicate to customers the degree to which the program has benefitted the causes via various channels (e.g., websites, CSR reports, press releases, announcements at events). In particular, managers of sport teams and events should focus on promoting such CSR-related communication at venues through event-day announcements and promotions because pleasure and centrality are enhanced when customers are satisfied with their consumption experience (Yoshida & James, 2010). Such communication efforts should help customers recognize the functional benefits of the CSR program and allow them to gain hedonic value (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Moreover, as sign refers to the attainment of symbolic value (Beaton et al., 2011), it is important to activate the



CSR program by providing customers with the opportunity for program participation (e.g., donating money, volunteering) and empowering them to express their support for the program and its beneficiaries.

Another important managerial implication relates to this study's finding about the effect of commitment. The results of the hypothesis testing reported in section 4.1 and the additional analysis reported in section 5.1 collectively indicate that commitment does not increase behavioral loyalty. This finding suggests that once customers develop a strong level of commitment to the company, it would be difficult to further increase their product consumption. As such, this finding informs companies of the need to change their perspectives about the business benefits of developing highly committed consumers, and to reconsider the roles that these customers play in increasing revenue and market share. As shown in this study, the creation of highly committed customers is unlikely to contribute to immediate increases in product sales. Rather, the benefits these customers bring to the company should be understood from a long-term perspective; that is, highly committed customers are likely to help the company attract and retain other customers by engaging in positive word of mouth communication (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010) and providing helpful feedback to improve the company's service (Bartikowski & Walsh, 2011).

### *5.3. Limitations and future research*

Some limitations of this research should be noted. First, the professional sport context as a subset of the larger service and entertainment economy provided a beneficial setting for examining the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty (Lacey et al., 2015). However, the Australian professional football context may limit the generalizability to other segments of the professional sport industry and non-sport industries because the importance given to CSR varies across contexts and its influence on loyalty outcomes may be context-specific (Ailawadi et al., 2014). Second, although this study contributes to the literature by linking the perceptions of CSR

initiatives with objective behavior over time, data on actual game attendance one year later represent a unique but narrow measure of behavioral loyalty. Third, the current focus on involvement and commitment is supported by the means-end chain model (Bhattacharya et al., 2009; Gutman, 1982); however, a review of previous studies as summarized in Table 1 suggests that other constructs may also influence the relationship between perceived CSR and behavioral loyalty. Fourth, this study addressed potential nonresponse bias by following a remedy suggested by Miller and Smith (1983). Yet given the low response rate, the possibility that this bias might have influenced the current results cannot be disregarded. Fifth, the generalizability of the results is further limited by the use of a web-based survey, which can prevent certain segments of consumers, such as those with limited internet access, from responding (Evans & Mathur, 2005). In this regard, surveying consumers on-site at a live game would possibly yield a higher number of less-engaged consumers, but adds the complexity of having the on-field results of that particular game interfere with respondents' emotional states and responses.

Given the abovementioned limitations, the following suggestions for future research are made. First, future studies should test this study's findings using data from customers in other professional sport segments, such as US and European professional sport leagues and teams, as well as other industries within and outside the service and entertainment sectors. Second, to complement and extend the findings of this study, it is important to test the hypothesized model using other objective measures of behavioral loyalty, including actual data on share of wallet and the amount of repurchase spending. Third, building on the current evidence, future research should attempt to investigate if additional constructs, such as those presented in Table 1, may serve as mediators, and how these constructs may affect the roles of involvement and commitment identified in this study. Lastly, to achieve a higher response rate and include various segments of customers in the study sample, future research could collect data using both web- and paper-based surveys while considering the effects that different data collection methods may

have on consumers' survey responses.

#### *5.4. Conclusions*

Understanding how CSR influences objective customer behavior is essential to providing a realistic assessment for the return on investment from CSR activity (Ailawadi et al., 2014). The current investigation of CSR's link to professional sport customers' actual attendance data suggests that CSR initiatives may only moderately increase behavioral loyalty as measured by objective data. This research further introduces the multifaceted construct of involvement to the research on CSR and loyalty outcomes, and reveals that its three facets—centrality, pleasure, and sign—adequately capture customers' desired ends that transmit the effect of perceived CSR on behavioral loyalty.

This study represents the first attempt to investigate the relationship between perceived CSR and objective behavior over time, as well as psychological processes underlying this relationship. It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage future research to further advance the understanding of CSR's contribution to behavioral loyalty by using other objective behavioral data and undertaking investigations in various research contexts.

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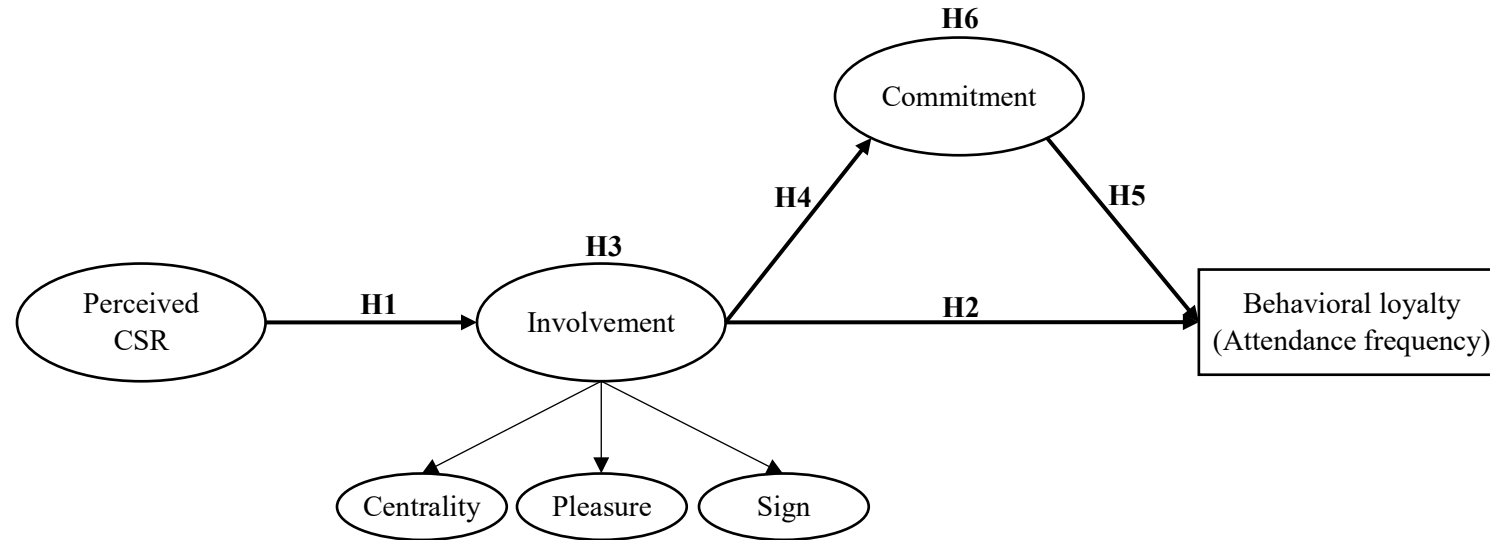
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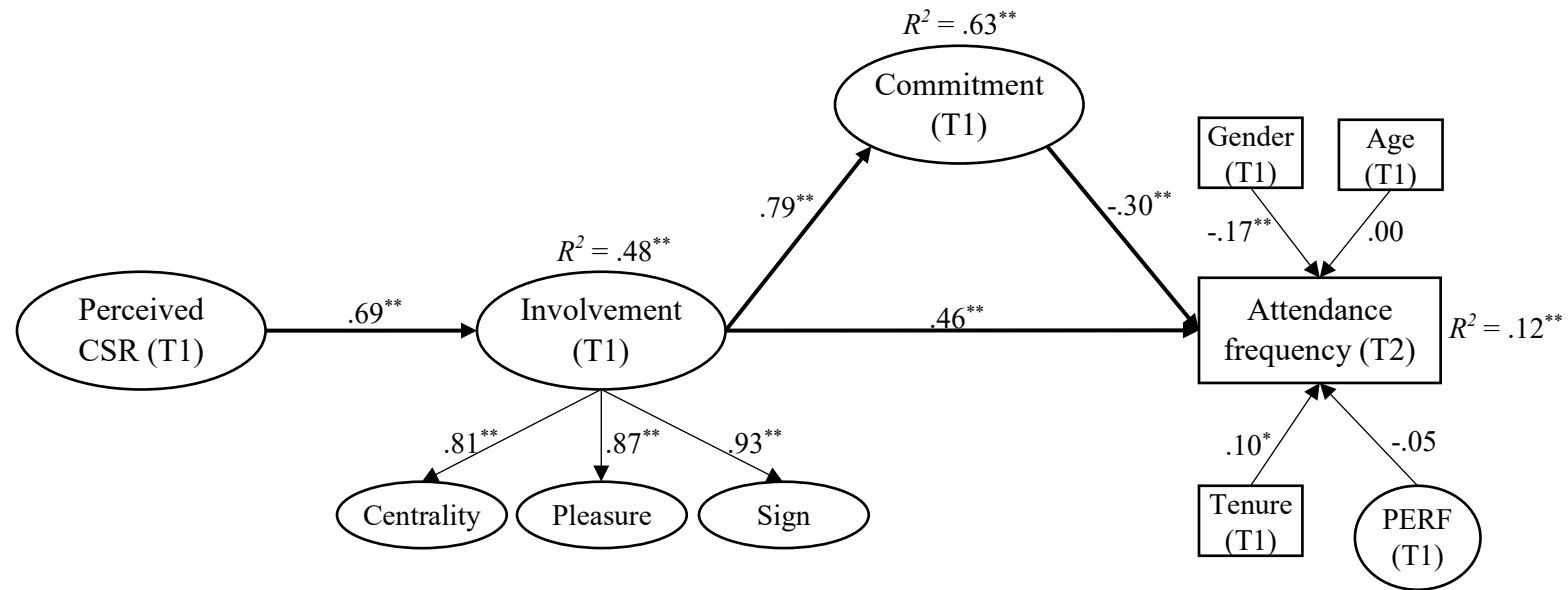
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**Fig. 1.** Hypothesized model. The rectangle represents an observed variable, and the circles represent latent variables. Control variables are not shown. H = Hypothesis.



**Fig. 2.** Results of structural model. The rectangle represents an observed variable, and the circles represent latent variables. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ . Tenure = Membership tenure; PERF = Perceived performance.



**Table 1**  
Previous research examining mediators in the CSR–loyalty relationship.

Study	Setting	Aspect(s) of CSR	Mediator(s)	Loyalty outcome(s)	Key findings
Ailawadi et al. (2014)	A US retail grocery chain	Perceptions of four CSR activities: environmental friendliness, community support, local products, employee fairness	Attitude toward the store	Share of wallet (SOW)	The four CSR activities generally had a positive effect on attitude toward the store, which in turn increased SOW. However, some activities, especially environmental friendliness, had a negative direct effect on SOW, decreasing the total effect of CSR.
Bartikowski & Walsh (2011)	French service providers (e.g., banking, retailing)	Customer-based corporate reputation (CBR) capturing the evaluation of social and environmental responsibility	Commitment	Willingness to engage in customer citizenship behaviors (CCBs)	Commitment partially mediated the relationship between CBR and one type of CCBs—willingness to help the company through providing information and helpful feedback.
Close et al. (2006)	A US professional cycling event	Attitude toward an event sponsor's community involvement activities	Positive opinion of the sponsor's brand	Intention to purchase the sponsor's products	Event attendees with positive attitudes toward the sponsor's community involvement tended to have a positive opinion of its brand. The positive opinion, in turn, led to increased purchase intention.
Lacey et al. (2010)	A US professional cycling event	Perceptions of an event sponsor's CSR	Commitment	Intention to purchase the sponsor's products	Perceived CSR positively affected event attendees' commitment to the event sponsor and purchase intention. A strong positive effect of commitment on purchase intention was also identified.
Lacey et al. (2015)	A US professional basketball team	Perceived CSR	Relationship quality	Word-of-mouth (WOM)	Data supported a path model demonstrating that perceived CSR of the team has a direct effect on customers' willingness to engage in positive WOM, as well as an indirect effect through relationship quality. Moreover, these effects were contingent upon the degree to which customers believed the team's CSR activities were important and necessary.

(Continued)

Study	Setting	Aspect(s) of CSR	Mediator(s)	Loyalty outcome(s)	Key findings
Lacey & Kennett-Hensel (2010)	A US professional basketball team	Perceived CSR	Trust, commitment	Level of purchase, WOM, follow performance	Perceived CSR had a positive effect on trust and commitment. In turn, commitment positively predicted all three loyalty outcomes. Moreover, the effects of perceived CSR on commitment and of commitment on loyalty outcomes strengthened over time.
Lichtenstein et al. (2004)	A US national food chain	Perceived CSR	Customer–corporate (C–C) identification	Perceptual corporate benefits measured by attitudinal loyalty, emotional attachment, and store interest	Perceived CSR had a positive effect on perceptual corporate benefits both directly and indirectly, through the mediation of C–C identification.
Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque (2013)	Spanish hotel companies	Perceived CSR	C–C identification, trust, satisfaction	Customer loyalty	C–C identification, trust, and satisfaction mediated the effects of perceived CSR on customer loyalty measured by survey items.
Pivato et al. (2008)	Italian retail food chains	Perceived CSR	Trust	Brand loyalty	Perceived CSR of food chains positively influenced trust in organic products. In turn, trust predicted brand loyalty measured by survey items.
Scheinbaum & Lacey (2015)	A US professional cycling event	Perceptions of event social responsibility (ESR)	Fan attachment	WOM	Perceived ESR had a positive direct effect on event attendees' willingness to engage in positive WOM. Perceived ESR also positively influenced fan attachment, which subsequently had a positive effect on WOM.
Uhrich et al. (2014)	An international mega-sport event (Soccer World Cup)	Perception of an event sponsor's CSR	Credibility of the sponsor	Attitude toward the sponsor	A message stressing the event sponsor's CSR activities increased the sponsor's perceived CSR. Subsequently, perceived CSR positively affected attitudes toward the sponsor through the enhanced perception of the sponsor's credibility. Furthermore, these relationships were contingent upon the degree of congruity between the sponsor and the event.

*(Continued)*

Study	Setting	Aspect(s) of CSR	Mediator(s)	Loyalty outcome(s)	Key findings
Walker et al. (2010)	An international mega-sport event (the Olympic Games)	CSR awareness	Values-driven, stakeholder-driven and strategic-driven attributions	Patronage intentions measured by merchandise consumption, WOM, and repeat purchase	Event attendees' awareness of CSR activities by the event organizer positively influenced measures of patronage intentions through values-driven and stakeholder-driven attributions. On the other hand, strategic-driven attributions negatively mediated the effects of CSR awareness.
Walker & Kent (2012)	US professional golf events	Awareness of philanthropy	Credibility	Advocacy, willingness to make financial sacrifice	The credibility of the event organizer mediated the positive effects of the awareness of philanthropy on event attendees' advocacy and willingness to make financial sacrifice for the organizer. These relationships were contingent upon attendees' level of social consciousness.
Walsh & Bartikowski (2013)	German and US retail firms	CSR associations	Satisfaction	WOM, loyalty intentions	Satisfaction mediated the effects of CSR associations on WOM and loyalty intentions. These mediating effects were stronger among German customers than US customers.

**Table 2**

Standardized factor loadings, construct reliability coefficients, and average variance extracted for the measurement model.

Construct / Item	$\beta$	CR	AVE
<i>Perceived CSR</i>		.82	.60
This team seems to be environmentally responsible.	.75		
This team looks like a good company to work for.	.79		
This team does a lot of good for the community.	.79		
<i>Involvement: Centrality</i>		.96	.88
I find a lot of my life is organized around following this team.	.95		
Following this team has a central role in my life.	.91		
A lot of my time is organized around following this team.	.96		
<i>Involvement: Pleasure</i>		.84	.63
Following this team is one of the most satisfying things I do.	.84		
I really enjoy following this team.	.72		
Compared to other activities following this team is very interesting.	.82		
<i>Involvement: Sign</i>		.88	.71
Watching this team says a lot about who I am.	.86		
When I watch this team I can really be myself.	.83		
I feel like this team is part of me.	.83		
<i>Involvement (second-order)</i>		.90	.76
Centrality	.81		
Pleasure	.87		
Sign	.93		
<i>Commitment</i>		.87	.69
I feel emotionally attached to this team.	.71		
I continue to be a member of this team because I like being associated with them.	.88		
I continue to be a member of this team because I genuinely enjoy my relationship with them.	.90		
<i>Perceived Performance</i>		.81	.59
The number of games won: Poor (1) — Excellent (11).	.82		
The finishing position of the team: Poor (1) — Excellent (11).	.77		
The effort put in by players: Poor (1) — Excellent (11).	.72		

*N* = 634; unless noted otherwise, items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7); all standardized factor loadings were significant ( $p < .001$ ); CR = Construct reliability coefficients; AVE = Average variance extracted.



**Table 3**  
Descriptive statistics and correlations of the constructs.

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived CSR	5.44	0.93	(.78)			
2. Involvement (second-order)	5.42	1.15	.67	(.87)		
3. Commitment	6.20	0.92	.60	.78	(.83)	
4. Perceived performance	9.10	1.07	.40	.30	.27	(.77)

*N* = 634; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; values in parentheses represent the square root of the average variance extracted; all correlations were significant ( $p < .01$ ).

**Table 4**

Bootstrap test of indirect and total effects.

Path	$\beta$	SE	Bootstrapping (95% CI)	
			Lower 2.5%	Upper 2.5%
<i>Indirect effects</i>				
Perceived CSR (T1) → Involvement (T1) → Attendance frequency (T2)	.32	.06	.20	.43
Involvement (T1) → Commitment (T1) → Attendance frequency (T2)	-.24	.07	-.37	-.10
Perceived CSR (T1) → Involvement (T1) → Commitment (T1) → Attendance frequency (T2)	-.16	.05	-.26	-.07
<i>Total effects</i>				
Perceived CSR (T1) → Attendance frequency (T2)	.15	.03	.09	.21

*N* = 634;  $\beta$  = Standardized coefficient; *SE* = Standard error; CI = Confidence interval.

**Table 5**

Comparison of model fit indices between direct effects model and hypothesized model.

	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$CFI$	$RMSEA$	$SRMR$
Direct effects model	638.27	196	3.26	–	–	.93	.06	.06
Hypothesized model	644.15	198	3.25	5.87	2	.93	.06	.06

$N = 634$ ;  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square;  $df$  = Degrees of freedom;  $\Delta\chi^2$  = Difference in chi-square values;  $\Delta df$  = Difference in degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; the critical value for a  $\chi^2$  with  $df = 2$  is 5.99 at the .05 level.

**Table 6**

Results of multi-group analysis by club membership category.

	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	$CFI$	$RMSEA$	$SRMR$
Constrained model	958.69	430	2.23	–	–	.92	.06	.08
Less constrained model	954.54	426	2.24	4.15	4	.92	.06	.07

$N = 634$ ;  $\chi^2$  = Chi-square;  $df$  = Degrees of freedom;  $\Delta\chi^2$  = Difference in chi-square values;  $\Delta df$  = Difference in degrees of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; the critical value for a  $\chi^2$  with  $df = 2$  is 9.45 at the .05 level; the constrained model specified all factor loadings and path coefficients to be equal between two membership groups, whereas the less constrained model allowed for free estimation of only the hypothesized path coefficients for each group.