THE EFFECT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON BRAND EQUITY AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF ETHICAL CONSUMERISM: THE CASE OF STARBUCKS

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This study investigates the effects of customers' perceptions of multidimensional corporate social responsibility (philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic) on brand equity in the restaurant industry, specifically by examining the case of Starbucks in Korea. Furthermore, this study examines whether consumers with a high degree of ethical consumerism form more positive brand equity perceptions of restaurants than other consumers do. The results showed that ethical, legal, and economic aspects of corporate social responsibility had a significant influence on consumers' perceptions of brand equity, while philanthropic corporate social responsibility did not. The analysis of moderating effects showed that consumers with high levels of ethical consumerism exhibit stronger relationships between economic corporate social responsibility and restaurants' positive brand equity. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS: *corporate social responsibility; brand equity; restaurant; ethical consumerism*

Despite the fact that corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not a new concept, it has increasingly been in the spotlight in the contemporary business world (Albus & Ro, 2013). Customers become aware of ethical consumerism through social campaigns; many no longer have favorable impressions of companies only pursuing excessive profits. Instead, customers have begun to expect firms to act as good corporate citizens and not just make a profit (Albus & Ro, 2013). CSR is sometimes regarded as an unnecessary burden since it is costly but does not produce a significant profit immediately; however, it has long-term economic value (M. C. Kim & Kim, 2014). For instance, CSR is an important part of Starbucks' management strategy. The company takes all parties related to its

business into consideration, such as partners, customers, and communities. This management philosophy allowed Starbucks not only to create long-term relationships with its customers but also to become more competitive than other brands (Harnrungchalotorn & Phayonlerd, 2015). Given the value of CSR, marketers view CSR practices as a source of competitive advantage and a tool for enhancing performance (W. G. Kim & Kim, 2004).

In a highly competitive market, developing a strong brand is an important factor in the success of service firms, including restaurants (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2000). Brand equity is an essential key to building brand value and raising a firm's competitiveness in the market (W. G. Kim & Kim, 2004). Remarkably, CSR is a way to increase brand equity and to promote a company's positive image while attracting current and potential customers (Reich, Xu, & McCleary, 2010). Marriott Hotels and Resorts is a good example of a hospitality company with a positive reputation for CSR. It successfully differentiates itself and enhances brand equity with its "Green Marriott program" to conserve the environment and resources (Liu, Wong, Shi, Chu, & Brock, 2014).

Restaurant brands, including coffee chains such as Starbucks, can have a great ripple effect on CSR practices since they operate a large number of stores abroad and their products are related to many aspects of the world, such as the environment, animal welfare, human health, labor issues, and fair trade (Andersen & Skjoett-Larsen, 2009; Maloni & Brown, 2006). The management of such restaurant brands covers a wide area of human life, and highlighting these initiatives can directly establish trust between customers and companies (Y. J. Kim & Kim, 2013). In spite of the importance of CSR, its efficacy at forming strong brand equity for restaurants is not fully, empirically documented. Most studies focused on the overall influence of CSR, rather than specific dimensions of CSR, and financial performance as an outcome of CSR (S. Lee, Singal, & Kang, 2013; S. Y. Park & Lee, 2009). Comprehending the unique effect of each dimension is significant since CSR is composed of multiple dimensions (Y. K. Lee, Kim, Lee, & Li, 2012). In addition, recent studies have approached CSR from employees' perspectives (Y. K. Lee et al., 2012; M. C. Kim & Kim, 2014) rather than customers' perspectives.

To fill the research gap, this study encompasses the four major dimensions of CSR (philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic CSR) suggested by Carroll (1991) to fully understand the role of each dimension in association with brand equity formation in the restaurant industry. This study also investigates ethical consumerism as a part of customers' decision-making processes to explain this relationship. More specifically, the objectives of this study are to (1) identify the influence of consumers' perceptions of CSR on brand equity (composed of brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty) and (2) examine the moderating effect of customers' ethical consumerism on the relationship between perceived CSR and brand equity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility

A number of companies recognize the significance of balancing profitability and creating a favorable public image by shouldering social responsibility (Mozes, Josman, & Yaniv, 2011). CSR is a "company's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations" (Brown & Dacin, 1997, p. 72). CSR is an important management tool concept from the perspective that companies should make contributions directly or indirectly to society via socially responsible behaviors that advance social welfare (Y. K. Lee et al., 2012; H. Park, Choi, & Kim, 2014). Carroll (1979) provided a useful perspective for current research that conceives of CSR as multidimensional: philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic responsibilities. According to Carroll (1979), philanthropic responsibilities are a firm's activities that contribute to human welfare and goodwill by giving back financial or nonfinancial resources to society. Ethical responsibilities go beyond legal obligations or regulations and reflect implicit social norms and values as well. Legal responsibility refers to a company's obligation to obey rules and regulations and run the business within legal boundaries. Finally, economic responsibility is related to the belief that firms should produce profitable and competitive products or services to meet customers' and society's needs (Carroll, 1979).

In the restaurant industry context, S. Y. Park and Lee (2009) pointed out that in spite of the fact that the initial cost of CSR practices is greater than the benefits the company obtains from an accounting perspective, CSR ultimately attracts customers and motivates restaurant's employees to commit to their work. S. Lee et al. (2013) suggested that managers in restaurants should consider CSR as an investment in product quality, safety, employment, and corporate governance because it creates corporate value and a competitive advantage, especially during recessionary periods. A corporation's participation in CSR initiatives to conserve the environment enhances customer satisfaction with its services (Gao & Mattila, 2014). In accordance with the preceding perspectives, CSR effectively creates company identification and builds long-term relationships with customers. For example, customers' awareness of CSR programs is a driver of company–customer identification and trust in quick-service restaurants (Swimberghe & Wooldridge, 2014). Similarly, Siu, Zhang, and Kwan (2014) suggested that customers' perceptions of a firm's reputation based on CSR initiatives facilitate customer identification in the restaurant industry. CSR creates a halo effect around a firm that enhances the company's positive image (H. Park et al., 2014).

Brand Equity

Brand equity is conceptualized from the customer's perspective, and its conceptual framework integrates what a customer knows about a brand and what this knowledge can contribute to marketing strategies (Keller, 1993). Aaker

(1991, p. 15) defined brand equity as "the set of brand assets and liabilities associated with brands, brand names, and brand symbols, which adds to or subtracts from the value provided by a product or service to a company and to the customers" and proposed a multidimensional concept of brand equity that consists of brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. *Brand awareness* is defined as the strength of a brand's presence in the customer's mind (Aaker, 1996). *Brand image* is unique and sets a firm apart from its competitors: a favorable brand image encourages customers to maintain cognitive consistency and avoid discrepancies (Beckwith & Lehmann, 1975). *Perceived quality* relies on customers' subjective evaluations of quality and is defined as a customer's assessment of overall excellence or superiority of a product or service (Zeithaml, 1988). *Brand loyalty*, the core element of brand equity, is the customer's attachment to a brand (Aaker, 1996).

In the restaurant industry context, Hyun (2009) demonstrated that establishing strong brand equity is the most important target for chain restaurant brands because brand equity creates a closer relationship between customers and the brand. W. G. Kim and Kim (2004) argued that strong brand equity increases a restaurant's revenues; however, lacking brand equity can damage potential cash flows. Namkung and Jang (2013) examined the effects of restaurant green practices on brand equity. They suggested that management focusing on environmental issues enhances customer's perception of a green brand image and consequently increases behavioral intentions. In Hyun and Kim's (2011) study concerning the interrelations of four elements of brand equity (brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and loyalty), the authors demonstrated that a customer's awareness of a brand is a key antecedent that reinforces brand equity by forming a positive brand image and perceptions of high quality.

Ethical Consumerism

As customers become increasingly interested in ethical consumption, they take into account not only embedded product and service features but also social issues, such as the ethical treatment of employees, customers, and the environment (Huh & Kim, 2012). Barber (2014) stressed the importance of understanding consumers' level of green consciousness and suggested targeting specific strategies to particular green consumer segments as a powerful operational tool in attracting and retaining more guests. Ethical consumerism refers to "the practice of purchasing products and services that actively seek to minimize social and environmental damage, and the avoidance of products deemed to have a negative impact on society on the environment" (Institute of Grocery Distribution, 2007).

Despite the rising amount of interest in marketing ethics and social responsibility recently, there is a paucity of research on ethical consumerism or ethical consciousness in the field of the hospitality industry including food service. Few studies have examined ethical consumerism. Instead, the majority of studies

have focused on employees' ethical consciousness (Jung, Namkung, & Yoon, 2010; Whitney, 1989). Therefore, this article aims to examine the role of ethical consumerism on customers' perceptions of CSR and brand equity formation.

MODEL DEVELOPMENT AND HYPOTHESES

CSR and Brand Equity

A corporation's reputation for socially responsible behavior is an important part of forming a brand property (Brickley, Smith, & Zimmerman, 2002). Brand equity is derived from interactions between customers and a brand that fulfill customers' expectations. Socially responsible behavior is the one of the most desired expectations (Jones, 2005).

Previous studies dealt with the effects of advertising CSR initiatives on reinforcing brand equity. Lai, Chiu, Yang, and Pai (2010) argued that marketers need to devote energy to encouraging CSR activities as an antecedent of brand equity. Torres, Bijmolt, Tribó, and Verhoef (2012) claimed that sincere CSR programs are an efficient means to improving brand equity. In the restaurant industry context, Jung and Yoon (2009) found that customers' evaluations of service quality are influenced by philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic CSR activities. Ji (2010) revealed that CSR leads to positive brand awareness, brand image, and brand preference. Choo and Kim (2012) recommended that companies need to be open and transparent about management's performance and the firm's philanthropic work. Philanthropic responsibility, such as returning profits to society, donating to charity, and improving the local community's well-being, can positively affect a corporation's image (M. C. Kim & Kim, 2014). M. C. Kim and Kim (2014) suggested that restaurant managers need to support CSR and create a responsible image of the corporation to promote long-term success. Thus, on the grounds of these previous discussions, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Null Hypothesis

> **Hypothesis 1a:** Perceived philanthropic CSR is not positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1b:** Perceived ethical CSR is not positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1c:** Perceived legal CSR is not positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1d:** Perceived economic CSR is not positively associated with brand equity.
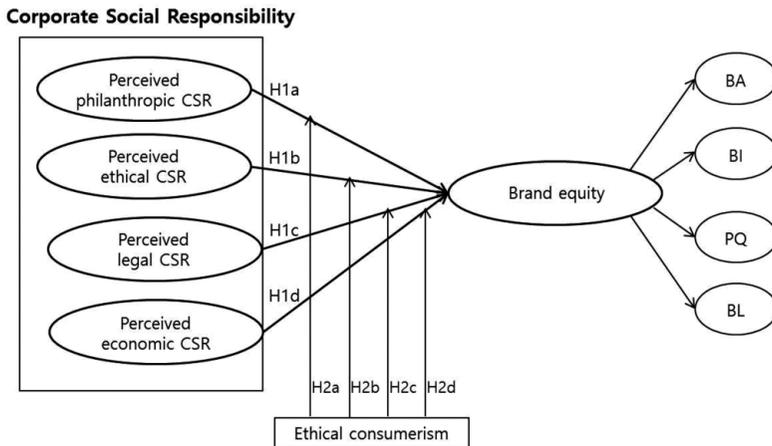
Alternative Hypothesis

> **Hypothesis 1a:** Perceived philanthropic CSR is positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1b:** Perceived ethical CSR is positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1c:** Perceived legal CSR is positively associated with brand equity.
> **Hypothesis 1d:** Perceived economic CSR is positively associated with brand equity.

Figure 1
A Proposed Model of Perceived CSR, Brand Equity, and Ethical Consumption

Note: CSR = corporate social responsibility; BA = brand awareness; BI = brand image; PQ = perceived quality; BL = brand loyalty.

Moderating Role of Ethical Consumerism

Understanding individual's values offers great insight into why they behave as they do (Solomon, Bamossy, & Askegaard, 1999). Personal values influence an individual's behavior, including consumption attitudes, to a considerable degree (Parson & Shils, 1951). Previous studies had investigated the role of consumer social or ethical consciousness on the subject of CSR or green brand equity. G. Kim, Song, and Lee (2009) found that consumers with high levels of ethical consumerism have strong brand loyalty, brand commitment, and repurchase intentions toward fair trade products. Similarly, Tsai and Tsai (2008) revealed a positive relationship between customers' environmental ethics and green consumption behaviors toward green hotels. Customers who are fully conscious of ethical consumption are more likely to build brand equity toward socially responsible firms since personal moral perceptions affect personal behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). These prior studies confirmed the importance of ethical consumerism as a moderator in the relationship between consumers' perceptions of CSR and brand equity (see Figure 1). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

Null Hypothesis

> **Hypothesis 2a:** The effect of perceived philanthropic CSR on brand equity is not moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2b: The effect of perceived ethical CSR on brand equity is not moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2c: The effect of perceived legal CSR on brand equity is not moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2d: The effect of perceived economic CSR on brand equity is not moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Alternative Hypothesis

Hypothesis 2a: The effect of perceived philanthropic CSR on brand equity is moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2b: The effect of perceived ethical CSR on brand equity is moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2c: The effect of perceived legal CSR on brand equity is moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism.

Hypothesis 2d: The effect of perceived economic CSR on brand equity is moderated by a customer's ethical consumerism; this effect is significantly greater for customers with high levels of ethical consumerism rather than low levels of ethical consumerism (see Figure 1).

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

To select a sample restaurant brand, this research considered several points and chose Starbucks. Starbucks ranked first in an environmental ranking of America's 500 biggest companies (Newsweek, 2009). In 2008 Starbucks invested in responsible programs for ethical sourcing, reducing environmental impact, and improving communities as a strategy for translating serious management crises into better performance; it was successful and increased operating margins by 1.5% from 2012 to 2013 (Ritter, 2014). Starbucks publishes annual sustainability reports addressing CSR strategies, the progress of CSR projects, and goals for next year that it shares on its websites. And customers are highly aware of Starbucks as a "green restaurant" compared with other food service chains (Brooks, 2009; Harnrungchalotorn & Phayonlerd, 2015).

Moreover, Starbucks' determined efforts at CSR have paid off. It has been ranked top in the coffee brand category for the fifth consecutive year by a Korean sustainability conference that assesses sustainable management and indexes sustainable performance (Starbucks Korea, 2015). Before the questionnaire was completed, a Starbucks representative and two academic experts in the restaurant industry examined the questionnaire to check content validity. Minor modifications were made based on their advices. To ensure the reliability of each construct, a pilot test was carried out with 40 students and faculty members. Online questionnaires were sent out over a 2-week period in February 2015, by an online research company to randomly chosen South Koreans who had visited Starbucks within the past 3 months. By using screening items (e.g., Which coffee brand have you visited within the past 3 months?), 507 questionnaires qualified for the current research on Starbucks and CSR. If respondents checked "Starbucks" they moved on to the next question. After 76 responses were excluded for missing information and incomplete answers, a total of 431 surveys were used to test our hypotheses. Table 1 described detailed information about respondents' profiles and characteristics.

Measurement Development

This study employed four dimensions of CSR as suggested by Carroll (1991): philanthropic, ethical, legal, and economic. Drawing on literature reviews, perceived philanthropic CSR was defined as a customer's perception of whether a corporation's activities promote human welfare or good will (Fu, Ye, & Law, 2014; Y. K. Lee et al., 2012). Perceived ethical CSR referred to a customer's perception of a corporation's additional initiatives, such as environmental activities or ethical operations that go beyond its legal obligations but are expected by society (Carroll, 1991; Fu et al., 2014; Y. K. Lee et al., 2012). Perceived legal CSR is related to the necessity for corporations to abide by laws and regulations, whereas perceived economic CSR is defined as a customer's perception of a company's economic responsibility to efficiently produce profitable goods and services (Carroll, 1991; Fu et al., 2014; Y. K. Lee et al., 2012). The items for each construct were developed based on previous management and business journals and hospitality literature (Carroll, 1979; Ji, 2010; H. R. Kim, Kim, Yoo, & Lee, 2005) and revised based on Starbucks' annual CSR report to fit the coffee industry (Starbucks, 2014). On the basis of the literature reviews, perceived CSR was measured using 14 items.

Brand equity was defined as a customer's overall values and responses toward a brand's marketing mix (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). Brand equity was measured using 12 items adopted from works by Hyun and Kim (2011) and Hyun's (2009). And it consisted of four subdimensions: brand awareness, brand image, perceived quality, and loyalty.

Drawing on previous research, ethical consumerism was defined as a customer's consciousness regarding purchasing ethically produced products/services for the greater good (Cowe & Williams, 2000). It was measured using five

Table 1
Profile of the Sample (*N* = 431)

Variable	Descriptive	Frequency (*n*)	Percentage
Gender	Male	171	39.7
	Female	260	60.3
Age (years)	20-29	152	35.3
	30-39	144	33.4
	40-49	90	20.9
	50-59	45	10.4
Education	High school and below	34	7.9
	College/university	349	81.0
	Graduated school and above	48	11.1
Occupation	Student	87	20.2
	Office worker	175	40.6
	professional	56	13.0
	Self-employed	27	6.3
	Housewife	68	15.8
	others	18	4.2
Family income (US$)	<2,000/month	32	7.4
	2,000-2,999/month	75	17.4
	3,000-4,999/month	151	35.0
	5,000-6,999/month	99	23.0
	7,000-9,999/month	50	11.6
	≥10,000/month	24	5.6
Frequency of visiting coffee shops	<1 time/month	36	8.4
	2-3 times/month	109	25.3
	1-2 times/week	150	34.8
	3-4 times/week	97	22.5
	5-6 times/week	26	6.0
	>7 times/week	13	3.0
Frequency of visiting Starbucks	<1 time/month	104	24.1
	2-3 times/month	170	39.4
	1-2 times/week	118	27.4
	3-4 times/week	31	7.2
	>5 times/week	8	1.9
Total		431	100

items adopted from the studies of Huh and Kim (2012) and G. Kim et al. (2009). All constructs were measured with multiple items using a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The measurement items are presented in the appendix. The second part of the survey examined five items related to demographics, including gender, age, education, occupation, family income, and coffee consumption behavior.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were conducted to profile the respondents by using SPSS 18.0. This study followed a two-step approach to identify the hypothesized model with the use of AMOS 18.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to estimate the measurement of the constructs: components that determine the relationships of the indicators with their posited constructs. Then, structural equation modeling was employed to specify relationships among the hypothesized constructs and assess the proposed model and hypotheses. To examine the moderating effects of consumers' ethical consumerism on the proposed relationships, a multigroup analysis was performed using a chi-square difference test (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

RESULTS

Measurement Model

A CFA was conducted on the specific constructs proposed in the model. A CFA was performed to test whether the underlying structure was a rational measurement model for the constructs and to validate the overall measurement model. A CFA was performed to ensure that the underlying structure was a reasonable measurement model for the constructs and to confirm the overall measurement model. Due to the multidimensional nature of the constructs, second-order CFA was employed to evaluate the validity of the measures. Using second-order type is a suitable method when high correlations exist between proposed dimensions (Byrne, Baron, Larsson, & Melin, 1995) because it offers a useful simplification of the interpretation of complex measurement structures (Eid, Lischetzke, Nussbeck, & Trierweiler, 2003). Moreover, according to Lai et al. (2010), using second-order rather than first-order CFA of brand equity made the model more precise and produced better goodness of fit. The overall model fit of the conceptual model was acceptable at $\chi^2 = 458.817$; degrees of freedom (df) = 142; $\chi^2/df = 3.231$; comparative fit index (CFI) = .948; normed fit index (NFI) = .927; incremental fit index (IFI) = .949; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .072. Table 2 presents the specific measurement items with standardized factor loadings, composite reliabilities, average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each construct. The factor loadings were greater than .50 at a significance $p < .001$. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .797 to .952. Values exceeding .70 are considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Discriminant validity was tested by comparing the squared correlations between the two constructs of interest with the AVE (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Discriminant validity was satisfactory since the AVE for each construct exceeded .50 and ranged from .508 to .764. It was greater than all squared correlations for each pair of constructs, ranging from .072 to .452. Table 3 illustrates the correlations among the constructs in this study. All the composite reliability estimates of the constructs, from .784 to .928, were above the appropriate level of .70 and considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2
Reliabilities and Confirmatory Factor Analysis Properties

Construct (Cronbach's Alpha)	Standardized Factor Loadings	Composite Reliabilities	AVE
Factor analysis (Level 1)			
Perceived philanthropic CSR (.952)		.928	.764
Philanthropic CSR 1	.860		
Philanthropic CSR 2	.924		
Philanthropic CSR 3	.941		
Philanthropic CSR 4	.923		
Perceived ethical CSR (.839)		.801	.508
Ethical CSR 1	.684		
Ethical CSR 2	.609		
Ethical CSR 3	.837		
Ethical CSR 4	.902		
Perceived legal CSR (.897)		.883	.656
Legal CSR 1	.890		
Legal CSR 2	.895		
Legal CSR 3	.723		
Legal CSR 4	.804		
Perceived economic CSR (.796)		.784	.555
Economic CSR 1	.629		
Economic CSR 2	.806		
Economic CSR 3	.913		
Factor analysis (Level 2)			
Brand equity		.884	.663
Brand awareness (.804)	.576		
Brand awareness 1	.659		
Brand awareness 2	.816		
Brand awareness 3	.787		
Brand image (.872)	.924		
Brand image 1	.875		
Brand image 2	.857		
Brand image 3	.743		
Perceived quality (.899)	.746		
Perceived quality 1	.863		
Perceived quality 2	.861		
Perceived quality 3	.850		
Brand loyalty (.897)	.904		
Brand loyalty 1	.917		
Brand loyalty 2	.841		
Brand loyalty 3	.824		

Note: AVE = average variance extracted; CSR = corporate social responsibility. Fit indices: χ^2 = 458.817; *df* = 142; χ^2/df = 3.231; comparative fit index = .948; normed fit index = .927; incremental fit index = .949; root mean square error of approximation = .072.

Table 3
Correlations Matrix Among the Latent Constructs.

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived philanthropic CSR	1.000				
2. Perceived ethical CSR	.600**	1.000			
3. Perceived legal CSR	.534**	.497**	1.000		
4. Perceived economic CSR	.210**	.243**	.530**	1.000	
5. Brand equity	.382**	.378**	.566**	.503**	1.000
M	3.826	4.168	4.488	4.894	5.046
SD	1.162	0.983	0.939	0.918	0.844

**p < .01.

Table 4
Standardized Parameter Estimates

Hypothesized Path	Standardized Estimate	t Value	p
H1a: Philanthropic CSR → Brand equity	.028	0.453	.651
H1b: Ethical CSR → Brand equity	.126	2.063	.039*
H1c: Legal CSR → Brand equity	.426	6.228	.000***
H1d: Economic CSR → Brand equity	.243	4.356	.000***

Note: CSR = corporate social responsibility. χ^2 = 458.817; df = 142; χ^2/df = 3.231; comparative fit index = .948, normed fit index = .927; incremental fit index = .949; root mean square error of approximation = .072.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

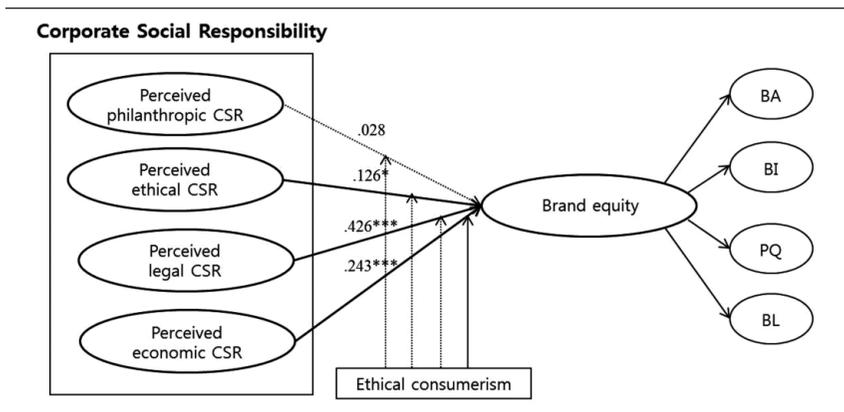## Structural Equation Modeling

Table 4 provides the estimates of the structural modeling. The model-fit indices for the structural model were satisfactory (χ^2 = 458.817; df = 142; χ^2/df = 3.231; CFI = .948; NFI = .927; IFI = .949; RMSEA = .072); thus, it provided a good basis for examining the hypothesized paths. Table 5 shows the structural results of the proposed model with standardized path coefficients for significant relationships. Perceived ethical CSR (β = .126; t = 2.063; $p < .05$), perceived legal CSR (β = .426; t = 6.228; $p < .001$), and perceived economic CSR (β = .243; t = 4.356; $p < .001$) had significant effects on brand equity, not supporting Null Hypotheses 1b, 1c, and 1d. However, the path from perceived philanthropic CSR (β = .028; t = .453; p = .651) to brand equity was not significant. Thus, Null Hypothesis 1a was supported. More specifically, comparing the values of the coefficients of CSR's four dimensions, perceived legal CSR has greater influence on brand equity than any other dimension. These findings indicate that perceived ethical CSR, perceived legal CSR, and perceived economic CSR have positive relationships with brand equity, while perceived legal CSR is the most influential factor for increasing brand equity (see Figure 2).

Table 5
Results of Multiple Group Analysis

	Standardized Estimate		Δχ²
Hypothesized Path	High Group (n = 228)	Low Group (n = 203)	(Δdf = 1)
H1a: Philanthropic CSR → Brand equity	−0.001	0.072	0.297
H1b: Ethical CSR → Brand equity	0.113	0.118	0.030
H1c: Legal CSR → Brand equity	0.433	0.443	0.014
H1d: Economic CSR → Brand equity	0.310	0.134	3.916*

*$p < .05$.

Figure 2
Structural Equation Model With Parameter Estimates

Note: CSR = corporate social responsibility; BA = brand awareness; BI = brand image; PQ = perceived quality; BL = brand loyalty.
→▶ (Alternative hypothesis) statistically significant.
┈▶ (Alternative hypothesis) statistically not significant.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

Moderating Effect of the Value of Ethical Consumption

Multiple group analysis was employed to identify the moderating effects of customer's ethical consumerism on the relationships between perceived CSR and brand equity. Respondents were split into two independent groups based on the mean value of ethical consumerism ($M = 4.775$): a group with high ethical consumerism ($n = 228$) and a group with low ethical consumerism ($n = 203$). The respondents with a mean of 4.775 or higher belong to the high group, while

those with means below 4.775 belong to the low group. Among the four dimensions of perceived CSR, only the path between perceived economic CSR and brand equity was found to have a moderating effect (Table 5). Therefore, Null Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c were supported and Null Hypothesis 2d was not supported. The difference in chi-square between the constrained model and the unconstrained model was found to be significant at the .05 level ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 3.916$). This finding indicates that the effect of perceived economic CSR on brand equity differs depending on the consumer's level of ethical consumption; the path coefficient was .310 for the high group, but only .134 for the low group. However, statistical tests demonstrated that ethical consumerism does not moderate the relationships between philanthropic, ethical, and legal CSR. These results imply that recognition of a corporation's responsible actions is an important factor for customers in general regardless of whether they are more or less conscious of ethical behavior in general.

DISCUSSION

Theoretical Implications

This study encompassed four major dimensions of CSR to more fully understand the role of each dimension in association with brand equity formation in food-service business. Applying a comprehensive view of CSR in a restaurant context contributes to the body of knowledge with respect to CSR research.

First, the results show that customers' perceptions of CSR partially cultivated brand equity; all dimensions of CSR other than perceived philanthropic CSR had positive effects on brand equity. It could be inferred from the mean value of perceived philanthropic CSR, which was the lowest among the four dimensions, that Starbucks' customers may not really be aware of their philanthropic CSR activities. Even though Starbucks posts about such activities on in-store bulletin boards or on websites, many of their current marketing strategies to publicize CSR initiatives are not really efficient. It is necessary to expand channels to introduce Starbucks' CSR programs. In contrast to the philanthropic works, ethical CSR such as reducing disposable products, recycling, and using reusable cups, is initiated based on customers' participation and are visible in stores when customers visit. In addition, customers are not greatly interested in a corporation's philanthropic works, such as raising money for charity or donating to the poor, since they do not directly receive the benefits of the corporation's activities (Choo & Kim, 2012).

Second, perceived economic CSR had the greatest effects on reinforcing brand equity among the four dimensions. This result shows that, as Singh, de los Sanchez, and del Bosque (2008) stated, economic or commercial issues such as product quality, information accuracy, and honesty of management are closely related to company image. Consumers pay attention to a corporation's management of a huge amount of economic and productive resources, for example, technology, finances, and labor. Consumers expect corporations to share profits

and assets with stakeholders (employees, customers, and suppliers), offer products at a reasonable price while paying good wages, and focus on customers' welfare and rights. These economic responsibilities are used as criteria for customers to evaluate a brand.

Third, perceived legal CSR significantly affects brand equity. This finding implies that customers are able to establish brand equity more objectively by evaluating a firm's legal CSR performance since these responsibilities are carried out according to fixed standards, regulations, or laws. Whereas customers think of philanthropic CSR as reflecting what society desires, legal CSR activities are regarded as a company's obligation rather than optional (Lantos, 2001). In addition, the food-service industry must consider food safety related laws. Thus, health and safety attributes greatly determine whether a restaurant brand succeeds or fails.

Another noteworthy finding is that customers' levels of ethical consumerism only moderated the relationship between perceived economic CSR and brand equity. In comparison to the low ethical consumerism group, the customer group with high levels of ethical consumerism established stronger brand equity based on positive perceptions of economic CSR. This could be related to the fact that the media has recently highlighted big food-service franchises (e.g., restaurants, coffee shops, and bakeries) excessively seeking profits by aggressively expanding their stores, which disrupts small or local stores in Korea. The economic growth of these franchises is intertwined with national economic growth and employment, but lots of customers may also be sensitive to a corporation's management, including pursuing immoderate profits. In addition, due to the world economic recession, consumers may place a higher value on pursuing economic CSR than others dimensions and believe that it is desirable for companies to be good corporate citizens by contributing sustainable economic development (e.g., creating jobs, improving the quality of life of the workforce, etc.).

Furthermore, the moderating effects of ethical consumerism were not apparent between the other three dimensions of CSR (philanthropic, ethical, and legal CSR) and brand equity. According to previous research on ethics, customers tend to have high levels of interest in ethical issues, yet devote little in terms of actual actions toward ethical consumption (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Tsai & Tsai, 2008). This incongruent behavior is partly due to the lack of extensive marketing communications supporting ethical goods and services (Nicholls & Opal, 2005) and customers' unwillingness to undergo extra inconveniences to consume ethically (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001).

Managerial Implications

This research suggests several managerial implications that may help Starbucks' operators and other restaurateurs to meet their CSR implementation goals and build brand equity. First, customers are sensitive to corporations' unethical operations regarding labor law and excessive profits (e.g., monopoly, oligopoly, and

price-fixing, etc.); when they receive news concerning these unethical behaviors they are outraged and boycott the company's products/services. Thus, marketers need to focus on communications via social networking sites, websites, and magazine advertising that provide objective evidence, such as annual reports or certification, that a firm meets legal standards and economic regulations. Specifically, Starbucks should continue their endeavor to build stronger brand equity and design new economic CSR strategies, even though the mean value of perceived economic CSR showed that Starbucks is already highly engaged in economic CSR initiatives. For example, Starbucks should educate its employees so they can promote ethical business practices. Legal and economic CSR are not just an obligation for managers; it takes everyone's efforts to accomplish goals related to the public's welfare. Employees are also under an obligation to fulfill these responsibilities.

Second, even if it did not show a significant influence to brand equity, philanthropic CSR is a vital dimension that cannot be ignored. Most research emphasizes the important role of philanthropic CSR on business performance (Choo & Kim, 2012; Jung & Yoon, 2009), so further studies need to reexamine the relationship between philanthropic CSR and brand equity. To increase customers' perceptions of philanthropic CSR initiatives, marketers should actively promote their actions and express their need for people's participation. Customers are interested in self-oriented benefits/value (Green & Peloza, 2015), so benefits for participation, such as priority reservations or a special invitation to an event, not only increase commitment to philanthropic programs but also easily enhance brand equity. Besides, restaurant firms are well positioned to run many programs that contribute to society such as a food bank for low-income families or nutrition/cooking education classes.

Third, marketers can emphasize communication strategies that persuade customers to buy ethical products and continually reawaken their ethical consciousness. Restaurant brands should communicate in terms of social reasonability more effectively by using social media and rewards (e.g., coupons, gift cards, or mileage) for customers who actively participate in ethical consumption. In addition, marketers should create slogans (e.g., "Do green" or "Sustainable growth") that promote firm's CSR activities and express their values to customers.

Fourth, the food service industry's participation in CSR is lower than other industries, but Starbucks has succeeded in the business world while enthusiastically practicing CSR (Harnrungchalotorn & Phayonlerd, 2015). Therefore, Starbucks needs to try to provide other restaurants/coffee brands with guidelines for constructing CSR systems and act as a benchmark to encourage others to engage in sustainable management practices to make the world a better place for everyone. Furthermore, there are several incentive programs (e.g., Green Globe, Blue Flag, Green Hotels, etc.) run by tourism organizations that stimulate CSR activities and promote the need for both private and public level efforts toward sustainable management (Sheldon & Park, 2011). Thus, restaurant-related associations and the government should not overlook the importance of their roles in encouraging CSR and prepare policies, regulations, and compensation systems for sustainable operation.

Finally, companies often face challenges committing to CSR. Because CSR practices are not part of a company's main services or core competencies and do not generate revenue in the short term, companies hesitate to invest resources in CSR (M. C. Kim & Kim, 2014). The effectiveness of CSR would be greatly improved if various levels of government supported companies' CSR programs (Albareda, Lozano, & Ysa, 2007). Therefore, governmental efforts to encourage CSR and executive training to reinforce sustainable management might be useful for overcoming these challenges.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its useful implications, some limitations of this study should be considered as opportunities for future research. First, the subject of this study was a single restaurant brand in a single largely homogeneous culture. The data collection limits the generalizability of the results. Thus, further studies should adequately address this issue. The results might also differ depending on demographic characteristics, geographical area, and the location of the coffee shops visited. Second, a sample of respondents with Internet access may not be representative of certain populations. So, it is necessary to supplement this sampling method to overcome this limitation in further studies. Third, social desirability bias when respondents were asked to answer questions on ethical consumerism may be another limitation of this research. However, social desirability is an inevitable issue when using self-administered questionnaires. Therefore, in future research it is necessary to include the social desirability scale developed by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) to minimize the bias. Furthermore, future research needs to take into account the moderating role of frequency of coffee shop visits, since Koreans' love of coffee is growing even more intense. Finally, the items used to measure CSR in the restaurant industry need to be practically refined since the definition of social responsibility is still steadily evolving and there is no consensus (Fu et al., 2014; S. Y. Park & Lee, 2009).

APPENDIX

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Construct	Items	$M \pm SD$	Cronbach's α
Philanthropic CSR (3.82 ± 1.16)	I think Starbucks participates in the management of philanthropic activities.	3.87 ± 1.23	.952
	I think Starbucks donates a sum of money to philanthropic activities.	3.83 ± 1.22	
	I think Starbucks allocates its profits to charity work.	3.86 ± 1.27	
	I think Starbucks offers financial support for philanthropic activities.	3.76 ± 1.24	

APPENDIX (continued)

Construct	Items	M ± SD	Cronbach's α
Ethical CSR (4.16 ± 0.98)	I think Starbucks is involved in several activities to reduce the use of disposable products.	4.41 ± 1.25	.839
	I think Starbucks recycles coffee grounds by packaging them up for free to customers (e.g., for garden compost, deodorant, etc.).	4.12 ± 1.12	
	I think Starbucks offers eco-friendly products and services.	4.08 ± 1.12	
	I think Starbucks is concerned with protecting the environment.	4.08 ± 1.21	
Legal CSR (4.48 ± 0.93)	I think Starbucks observes fair trade laws.	4.38 ± 1.06	.897
	I think Starbucks observes consumer protection laws.	4.58 ± 1.14	
	I think Starbucks carries out its legal obligations.	4.41 ± 1.05	
	I think Starbucks meets legal standards.	4.57 ± 1.03	
Economic CSR (4.89 ± 0.91)	I think Starbucks tries to yield the largest profit possible.	5.22 ± 1.16	.796
	I think Starbucks continually improves the quality of its products.	4.65 ± 1.05	
	I think Starbucks tries to improve productivity.	4.79 ± 1.05	
Brand awareness (5.85 ± 0.87)	I recognize Starbucks among competitive brands.	6.08 ± 0.88	.804
	When I am thinking about coffee brands, Starbucks comes to mind immediately.	5.87 ± 1.08	
	I am familiar with Starbucks.	5.60 ± 1.12	
Brand image (4.83 ± 1.02)	I have a favorable image of Starbucks.	4.71 ± 1.14	.872
	Starbucks is more attractive than other coffee brands.	4.84 ± 1.17	
	Starbucks has a differentiated image from other coffee brands.	4.93 ± 1.14	
Perceived quality (4.92 ± 0.96)	Starbucks is very good quality.	5.00 ± 1.04	.899
	Starbucks provides excellent quality coffee with other brands.	4.91 ± 1.03	
	Starbucks' coffee tastes good.	4.88 ± 1.09	
Loyalty (4.57 ± 1.09)	I would tell others about my positive experiences in Starbucks.	4.57 ± 1.16	.897
	I would recommend Starbucks to others.	4.29 ± 1.21	
	I intend to visit Starbucks again.	4.86 ± 1.23	

(continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

Construct	Items	M ± SD	Cronbach's α
Ethical consumerism (4.77 ± 0.90)	I do not use products/services produced by unethical corporations.	4.84 ± 1.18	.811
	I try to buy products made with recycled materials rather than disposable products.	4.97 ± 1.34	
	I try to buy fair trade products (e.g., chocolates, coffee, etc.).	5.08 ± 1.18	
	I try to buy eco-friendly products/organic food.	4.39 ± 1.20	
	I try to use ethically produced goods.	4.60 ± 1.09	

Note: SD = standard deviation; CSR = corporate social responsibility. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

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