

Apparel Industry CSR Online Reporting Strategy on Product Webpage:  
Exploring Consumers in USA and China

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## ABSTRACT

Communication of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) information to consumers is integrated within the apparel industry's marketing strategy to generate consumer trust and to influence consumers' behavioral intentions. The definition of CSR was adapted from *Managing Corporate Social Responsibility* (Coombs, 2012) for this study and presented to the participants: "CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole"(p67). This study proposes that the gap between consumers' low awareness of CSR and companies' high involvement in CSR reporting can be filled by the introduction of an effective online consumer-facing CSR reporting method through product webpages, which might affect consumers' perception of webpages about social responsibility, increase their trust level, and eventually affect their shopping behavioral intentions.

Companies in the apparel industry began investing in CSR reporting more than a decade ago (Internbrand, 2014). However, studies with stakeholders revealed that awareness of a company's CSR activities among its external stakeholders (e.g., consumers) is typically low (Xu, Yu, & He, 2014). There is a disconnection between consumers' low awareness of CSR and companies' efforts to report CSR. Specifically, this study proposed a possibility of reporting CSR online under online-shopping scenarios by embedding a CSR reporting message—using three different CSR reporting formats employed in the apparel industry: certification, action, and strategy—in a product information webpage to study participants' trust and behavioral intentions of buying and recommending the website. These were tested with consumers to find the relationship between each reporting format and behavioral intentions.

The sample included 1,220 online participants, mainly covering young online consumers from ages 18 to 29 with education from high school to graduate school in

China and the United States. Significant differences were found between treatment groups as well as with the control group in both trust levels and behavioral intentions after participants viewed the product website.

The results of this study will help provide a validated method for communicating with consumers about CSR online. Their perceptions of the experimental simulations were analyzed based on the different demographic groups they belong to. The results will also provide insights about current online shoppers in the United States and China.

It was recommended by this research that apparel industry companies and organizations treat consumers in China and the United States separately when it comes to CSR reporting. Members of different age, gender, and education groups differ in terms of how they think about CSR online reporting in the apparel industry. Reporting a CSR message on a product webpage in the apparel industry affects consumers' trust in the website and, furthermore, their behavioral intentions such as shopping on the website and recommending it to friends. To implement CSR online reporting in a global scale, companies need to consider many elements, including the factors tested in this study as well as other potential factors that might be tested in future studies.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Yuxiao Zhang, a native Chinese citizen, was born in Chengdu, Sichuan, China. Both parents were also born and raised in the same town. She finished her high school education in the town of Chengdu. Later Yuxiao moved to Shanghai with her family and finished her bachelor degree in China Textile University ( Donghua University) with an A.A.S degree in Fashion Institute of Technology in Manhattan, NY. Right after graduated from university, she moved to Cornell University to persue her master degree in department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design. During her 2-year master study, she spent half a year abroad in Germany for an internship in Puma early 2015.

Yuxiao is dedicated herself into the apparel/ textile industry with a strong passion in the research of globalization apparel cooperate and their influences both on environment and human beings. As a Chinese citizen, Yuxiao started to realize the rapid change and competitive globalization of apparel/textile industry in China when she was in college. She is trying to figure out the future development of more sustainable industry in China and also the strong consuption power in new China market in apparel/textile industry through the research study in Cornell and also working experiences in global apparel companies.

Yuxiao believes that globalization is the future and she has been trying to be a opne-minded global citizen. Her plan after master is to contribute herself into the global apparel/textile development industry. By using her education and skills, Yuxiao hopes that she can improve the current apparel/textile industry situation and find a new direction/opportunity for the very well-developed and old industry.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Zineng Zhang(1931-2014) , who was a great influencer in my childhood and instructed me on the values of being well-educated and open-minded as a global citizen in the new generation.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **Introduction**

The people involved in the apparel industry, the fast-changing pace of fashion, and the daily issues related to this industry have created one of the biggest industries in the world. It includes many different aspects, from fibers to retailing. Viewing sustainability through the lens of fashion provides unique opportunities (Hethorn & Ulasewicz, 2008).

The age of sustainability has arrived, as Al Gore, the former vice president of the United States, announced. Hethorn and Ulasewicz (2008) also state that sustainable fashion can enhance people's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, and, importantly, people are the driving force behind sustainable choices in the fashion industry. People have the power to support with their purchases the growth of sustainable practices by retailers and manufacturers.

Scholars of the apparel/fashion industry, such as Marsha A. Dickson and Suzanne Loker, firmly believe that social and environmental performance are equally critical to the sustainability of the business itself (Dickson et al, 2009). The apparel industry has been suffering from many human rights violations and factory collapses, and it has contributed to water and material pollution all over the world. This has aroused extreme attention from the public due to the industry's globalized supply chain (Mitchell, 2012). Over the past decade, negative social and environmental issues related to CSR, reported by third-party organizations and companies, have begun to affect the image of apparel brands (Wang et al, 2012).

The global context for business continues to change at an unprecedented rate. Many economists believe that sustainability will be a key driver of global economic

change over the next 50 years (Hart, 2012). Companies face an incredible opportunity to create value by helping to chart the way forward and by contributing to sustainable development. Business is a powerful agent of change, as Al Gore said, and is well equipped to forge the way to a more sustainable future in conjunction with government and a strong civil society (Dickson, Loker, & Echman, 2009). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) must be an integral part of the business formula. CSR philosophy can encourage companies to use their expertise and other resources to improve society.

There is an increasing demand but also a huge gap for consumers to learn and understand the CSR practices behind the operations of apparel businesses. Out of the 20 attributes measured in the annual Harris Interactive corporate reputation study published by the *Wall Street Journal*, people are most in the dark about corporate responsibility; questions about whether companies are socially and environmentally responsible consistently elicit the most “don’t know” responses (R.J, 2005).

A more effective method for communicating CSR practices is needed in the current apparel industry. At the same time, more informed and committed consumers who reward responsible business are needed in the business structure as well. As discussed in the May 2013 Copenhagen global expert study on sustainable fashion (Pedersen, 2013), consumers and companies alike have communication and education gaps. Without consumers’ buy-in and rewards for responsible business, the concept of CSR will not be sustainable; just like other movements, it will fade away in the midst of more pressing economic needs by a growing world population (Dickson et al., 2009). Lack of visibility in the apparel companies’ behaviors is repeatedly highlighted as a problem: “Consumers, wearers and fans of fashion are far too disconnected from the source to understand the resources required to product a garment/item” (Pedersen, 2013). Fashion companies, sometimes, are also perceived as having little knowledge

of what is actually happening in the supply chain. This makes it more difficult for consumers to make enlightened decisions about sustainability based on the limited information they have access to.

A revolution in information and communication technologies has started, changing the way we spread ideas as well as absorb them from outside. Apparel companies have to be culturally sensitive in building online trust across different nations (Shankar, Urban, & Sultan, 2002). The development of the Internet as a channel has made it easier for consumers to shop online and for retailers to attract potential consumers from different places. The new information-based economy has greatly increased transparency, fostered local self-help, and facilitated the spread of democracy throughout the world (Hart, 2012). The online environment provides unique opportunities for fashion companies to communicate with consumers about their CSR. The message can be well organized on their website and enhanced by being strongly associated with product and brand messaging. As more apparel companies go global, they need a clearer understanding of cultural differences around the world, and it is important for them to figure out effective ways to communicate with consumers.

In this study, participants were from either China or the United States. The two countries represent the current largest economies in the world, with the Chinese economy at \$17.6tn, and \$17.4tn for United States, according to International Monetary Fund data (Carter, 2014). In terms of culture, the study of two major countries from the Western and Eastern worlds can be representative of a global culture understanding of the topic. Therefore, it is meaningful to recruit participants in both China and the United States in the current study for the comparison study. The two segmentations of participants, according to previous research, will have different public understandings and levels of acceptance of CSR (Wong, 2009). It is worth

understanding the two different groups' perceptions of CSR. This comparison will provide valuable insights about this topic.

Therefore, proper cross-cultural communications and the study of consumer behaviors are necessary and crucial to developing a feasible channel. Transparent information and education can help consumers make wiser decisions through this channel. The current study of consumer behaviors and the topic of CSR communications are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

### **Purpose and Justification of Study**

In light of the rapid growth of mass media technology and Internet communications, consumer groups are calling for a more transparent apparel industry online: This need has gained increased attention over the last 15 years (Dickson et al., 2009). The apparel industry is highly complex and characterized by short runs, fast turnover, and a diverse range of products channeled through a fragmented and frequently changing supply chain distributed over many global locations ((Dickson et al., 2009). With all the practices and strategies listed, how to organize the message and communicate it to the public are critical steps in implementing the CSR concept into business and turning it into a driving force in lifting business performance.

Various categories under apparel industry sustainability have been brought to attention. Some of them explored different potential models for a sustainable supply chain; for example, the practices of apparel companies like Nike and Patagonia in the United States and manufactures like Li & Fung in Hong Kong were selected as sustainability business case studies at the Harvard Business School for their innovative performances in CSR in the apparel industry (Chen, 2012; Paine, 2013; Reinhardt, Casadesus-masanell, & Kim, 2010). Some fiber and material sciences researchers are exploring possible recyclable or biodegradable materials used in the

apparel industry. For example, Patagonia has implemented recycled polyester. In 1993, they adopted into their product line fleece made from post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic soda bottles, a positive step toward a more sustainable system—one that uses fewer resources, discards less, and better protects people's health (Patagonia, 2014b).

Consumers were gradually introduced into the research on CSR communication in the apparel industry. Many researchers and authors have studied and written about sustainability and social responsibility communication in the apparel industry in recent years (Kim et al , 2015; Black, 2013; Brown, 2010; GlobeScan, 2012; Defra & Rural, 2008; Fleming, 2013; Hethorn & Ulasewicz, 2008; Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008; Joy et al., 2012; Kang & Kim, 2013; Yan, Hyllegard, & Blaes, 2012).

Under the general topic of corporate reputation from social responsibility, Sen and Bhattacharya(2008) at Boston University began their research on CSR communications and its connections to business returns. That research aimed to explore the possibility of implementing CSR into business with acceptable profit. Hustvedt and Bernard (2008) used experiments to study consumer willingness to pay for sustainable apparel. Their research was about the influence of labeling for fiber origin and production methods. After this research, more scholars started to look at the consumer psychology associated with sustainable practices from apparel companies. Xie and Keh (2009) later tested the roles of trust, identification, and commitment in the relationship between corporate reputation and customer behavioral intentions. Yan et al. (2012) explored the influence of brand name and message explicitness in the process of marketing eco-fashion using questionnaires and experiments with college students. Kang and Kim (2013) conducted research to learn about consumers' perceived risks of the consumption of environmentally sustainable

apparel. A model of perceived risks was adopted in the research. The topic of online CSR communication has also been studied. Books such as *Management Models for CSR* (2006) and *Managing CSR: A Communication Approach* (2011) were published as references for corporations to integrate CSR practices into their business models. Some chapters in these books also addressed online communication issues. Ros-Diego et al. (2012) researched communication through online social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Previous research on corporate communication records the significant rise in the use of websites for the reporting of CSR activities (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009). Studies have also reported a positive relationship between CSR reporting and corporate reputation, as well as behavioral intentions (Keh & Xie, 2009). Although there are studies on the topics of sustainability, social responsibility, consumers, and online communication, few touch the topic of online CSR in the apparel industry specifically. No experiments of the apparel industry have been done to analyze online shoppers' behaviors related to sustainable and socially responsible reporting practices for consumers specifically.

Given the growing number of online apparel shoppers, and the large volume of information available online, most of the apparel brands' CSR reporting websites are acting as supportive information channels to promote the overall brand image of sustainability (Coombs, 2012).

The apparel industry is currently involved in the sustainability topic, and the online platform has begun to be integrated into the process; thus there is a strong need to conduct research specifically in the fashion industry to learn about online consumers' general attitudes toward online CSR reporting and their behavioral changes with the adoption of proper consumer-aimed communication methods. Given the growing usage of online shopping channels, the question of how to create the

consumer CSR communication using this method is worthy of study. Compared with in-store marketing, the growing and competitive environment of online shopping in the apparel industry now needs more attention, for companies to explore and improve their ability to communicate. The information posted online should be well considered in order to deliver a message aimed at providing accurate and understandable information as well as fostering sustainable consumer behaviors.

### **Study Objectives**

In this study, the effectiveness of different CSR reporting formats on consumer level of trust and behavioral intention were examined, taking into account nationality differences. The goal of this research is to (1) explore online shoppers' willingness to learn about CSR and spend time on it while shopping according to their membership in different demographic groups, including nationality, age, education, and gender; (2) Identify the effective reporting strategies and the mediating role of trust to communicate CSR online with consumers and finally leads to the behavioral intention including buying/recommending activities and (3) to examine the mediating role of trust in the relationship between companies' consumer CSR reporting strategies and consumers' behavioral intentions, considering nationality as a grouping factor. This study aims to explore and identify the most effective message format to use in presenting CSR online for Internet apparel shoppers and to learn about their sustainable behaviors based on their membership in different demographic groups. The results of this study will help fill the gap between companies' high involvement in CSR and consumers' low awareness of CSR. This research will expand the research possibility of developing an effective CSR reporting format by using manipulated online-shopping scenarios.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter presents a review of relevant writings and the ways in which they pertain to the objectives of this research. First, it introduces the background of social responsibility in the apparel industry, the concept of CSR communication, and the current trend of online CSR reporting. Next it discusses the meaning of this cross-cultural study of China and the United States and explains why it is valuable. The remaining five sections address the topic of consumer communication of CSR. The next part focuses on the literature on consumers' willingness to spend time on CSR online reporting. Then it addresses consumers' attitude toward CSR online reporting based on the current existing research on this topic. The last part covers the theories and research on the relationship between trust and behavioral intentions in the context of CSR communication with consumers.

### **Online CSR Reporting in the Apparel Industry**

The apparel industry is implementing social responsibility into its core business strategy to obtain a competitive position in the market. Especially after the many recent human rights violations and manufacturer fires, more consumers are starting to pay attention to the social issues behind apparel corporations. Many studies have explored effective methods for CSR communication (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2008; Keh & Xie, 2009; Coombs, 2012), but how to communicate with online consumers in a way that conveys the message correctly and maximizes their positive reactions is not well researched in this area.

### ***Social Responsibility in the Apparel Industry***

The clothing, footwear, and textiles sector is a significant global economic force, the fifth largest sector, employing up to 40 million worldwide (Black, 2013). However, in such a huge industry, unsafe factory conditions, long hours, inadequate pay, waste fabric, and use of toxic chemicals are not isolated incidents but widespread, systemic problems (Dickson et al., 2009). Several serious disasters caused by the lack of a sense of social responsibility in the apparel industry, such as the 2013 Bangladesh factory collapse that resulted in the deaths of over a thousand people, have brought social responsibility issues back into public awareness. The apparel industry has long suffered from human rights violations and factory collapses, and it has contributed to water and material pollution all over the world. This has aroused extreme attention from the public due to the industry's globalized supply chain (Mitchell, 2012).

CSR can be discerned exactly in the three words that cover the relationship between corporations and the societies with which they interact: CSR includes the responsibilities that are inherent on both sides of these relationships and by society, and it includes all stakeholders and constituent groups that maintain ongoing interest in a corporation's operations (Werther & Chandler, 2011). In the global apparel industry, educators chose social responsibility as an umbrella term that includes other terms such as corporate responsibility, environmental stewardship, human rights, and community economic development. The *triple bottom line*—concern for people, the environment, and profit—comprises the three fundamental factors that should be considered when implementing CSR initiatives. It embraces all of the social issues surrounding the relationships between workers and small and large businesses, the health and safety of workers, environmental sustainability, and communities and economic growth (Dickson et al., 2009). Corporations conduct CSR to improve

society's well-being and to build and enhance their reputation (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

By seriously considering company codes of conduct and integrating social responsibility activities into management systems, apparel brands take the next step to creating a consumer-facing communication system that links the sustainability strategies within companies to consumers. CSR is an essential element in building and maintaining a favorable corporate reputation, which is regarded as an important strategic resource factoring into a company's competitive advantage (Keh & Xie, 2009). More scholars started to look at the consumer psychology association with sustainable practices from apparel companies. They have tested the roles of trust, identification, and commitment in the relationship between corporate reputation and customer behavioral intentions. Sen and Bhattacharya (2008) began the research on CSR communications and its connections to business returns. Among the various potential business returns, corporate reputation is the largest reward. Their research aimed to explore the possibility of implementing CSR in business while generating acceptable profits. From the business perspective, corporates are profit-conscious, and strong support from stakeholders can reduce the costs of conducting sustainable business. Reputation comes from socially responsible investors. In this era of increasing global competition, declining brand differentiation, and increasing media clutter, companies are going beyond the conventional marketing mix to incorporate corporate-level intangible assets such as their identities and reputations for goodwill associated with being a good corporate citizen into their marketing initiatives in efforts to garner sustainable competitive advantages (Coombs, 2012).

Companies like Patagonia are implementing CSR practices as a core business strategy. Patagonia's entire brand image is established on its high-level CSR practices and innovation. Patagonia is recognized as one of the top ethical and responsible

brands in the United States. This gives it an excellent reputation as well as impressive sales records (Patagonia, 2014a). Other global brands, such as Adidas, implement CSR strategy as one of their business core values, in addition to the values of profit, employment, brand awareness, and others. For instance, Adidas invests in an annual sustainability report presenting its efforts in the areas of supply chain, materials sourcing, and working environment. They publish their reports online through multimedia. Their sustainability statement includes the key values of passion, performance, integrity, and diversity (<http://www.adidas-group.com/en/sustainability>). Puma also publishes an annual sustainability report. They state that sustainability remains a key value of their brand, as stated on the website : “Faster is how we are working towards a more just and sustainable future, accelerating positive change in the industry and the world.” (<http://about.puma.com/en/sustainability>). This online statement in the public platform gives them outstanding marketing strength and brand equity in such a competitive industry environment.

Traditional motivations of CSR (moral, economic, and rational arguments) which are internally operated (i.e., from corporate perspectives) are today joined by other motivations due to society and the public’s increased awareness of and concerns about business operations (i.e., increased expectations of business social responsibilities) (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009). Recognizing this increase in expectations requires a consistent and accessible communication strategy directed to different groups of stakeholders. These traditional CSR motivations reflected business leaders’ beliefs about responsibility to society that went beyond or worked in parallel with their efforts to make profits continuous. Over the past decade, negative social and environmental issues related to CSR, reported by both third-party organizations and companies, began to affect the image of apparel brands (Joy et al., 2012). Therefore,

CSR must be implemented into the core business strategy of the apparel industry in order to obtain a sustainable business development and brand reputation (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Patagonia, 2014a; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001).

### ***CSR Communication***

Communication is at the heart of perspectives on the CSR process. CSR is a contextual concept which fundamentally is a question about the relationships between a company and its environment (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007). This concept becomes optional when it meets the different expectations of specific stakeholders. Social reporting or non-financial reporting can be used by companies to demonstrate how social responsibility issues have been integrated into their operations (Noronha, Tou, Cynthia, & Guan, 2013).

Consumers report that they would like to know more about the CSR efforts of corporations. They are also skeptical of corporations that are perceived to commit too much time and effort to CSR communication (Coombs, 2012). Consumers may say that CSR actions influence their relationships with organizations (Sen, Bhattacharya, & Korschun, 2006). However, other research proves that stakeholders have a very low awareness of CSR activities (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2008). Therefore, even though they report that CSR can be one of the important decision-making criteria when selecting products, they do not have enough knowledge about it. Typically, consumers want CSR facts but are not in favor of a hard sell. Too much “effort” in CSR promotion can result in negative attributions and harm to relationships (Coombs, 2012). Existing research emphasized that when communicating CSR, companies should consider consumer attitudes (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008; Park, Lee, & Kim, 2014). It is necessary for corporations to adopt a proper communication method to convey their beliefs, actions, and CSR long-term

strategy. In this way, they will be able to educate consumers by using the most effective communication channels and formats to maximize their message efficiency.

### ***Online CSR Reporting on a Webpage***

The apparel/accessories category is currently the second largest e-commerce product category (following the computer product category) and is responsible for nearly US\$14 billion in Web sales. Online shoppers can easily shop with online retailers via devices such as personal computers, smart phones, or tablets (e.g., the iPad) by connecting with retailers' online storefronts, mobile apps, or social networks (Bahng, Kincade, & Yang, 2013). The idea behind the support of the Internet is that the computer-based method provides an array of medium-specific capabilities and technical benefits, opening several windows for forward-looking communication (Ralf Isenmann, Bey, & Welter, 2007).

Although the number of online apparel shoppers is increasing, according to the results of several studies of apparel online-shopping behavior, apparel consumers tend to use the Internet more to search for product information. Shopping has long been recognized as a risky activity in the online context. Specifically, previous research indicated that online purchase intention is negatively influenced by the perceived risk associated with the purchase (Salisbury et al., 2001; Pavlou, 2003; Wood and Scheer, 1996).

For many companies, the corporate website, also known as a non-transactional business-to-consumer website, now serves as an immediate and full-blown information hub and as a channel through which organizational messages that shape, enhance, or maintain a company's corporate identity and reputation are conveyed (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009).

Research in corporate communication shows that there is a significant rise in the use of corporate websites for the reporting of CSR activities among companies aiming to acknowledge and respond to changing societal expectations concerning business practices (R. Isenmann, 2006; Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009). For many companies, the Internet has become the best way to personalize their CSR message, to interact with target consumers, and to meet their expectations (Ros-Diego & Castellomartinez, 2012). The importance of the Internet has grown to such an extent that online actions have become essential to the communication strategy of any company. CSR online reporting has become a core part of some major companies' business strategy (Ralf Isenmann et al., 2007). Corporate website is a significant and influential communication channel that allows a company to showcase its commitment to CSR and simultaneously engage in two-way stakeholder communication (Rolland & Bazzoni, 2009).

In the past decade since CSR reporting first became a topic of broader interest in academia, business, and government, it has rapidly grown into a field of research with increasing relevance for companies (Kolk, 2004) and capital markets (Flatz, 2003), even in the eyes of investors (Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage, 2004). Sustainability reporting has already become part of companies' daily affairs, even entering the business mainstream (Ralf Isenmann et al., 2007).

Corporate sustainability reporting is a multi-faceted, rapidly developing field that is influenced by a number of driving forces, both outside and inside companies. Because of these complexities, communicating effectively with different stakeholders is not a simple process (Ralf Isenmann et al., 2007). Research also showed that academic and industry experts used to share the opinion that non-transactional B2C websites will be the best platform for conveying corporate information to interested

consumers (Pate, 2010). Therefore, corporate information has traditionally been separated from the product webpages, where most of the potential consumers are visiting. For example, Nike has two separate websites: Nike.com and Nikeinc.com. The latter serves as a non-transactional website providing information about Nike as a whole, including its CSR reporting. Zara has an online product website, zara.com, and its CSR reporting is provided at Inditex.com. As discussed above in the section “Social Responsibility in the Apparel Industry,” there appears to be a disconnect between consumers and corporate CSR reporting. Capturing consumers’ attention and enriching their knowledge of corporate CSR practices requires a more connected and straightforward communication method.

Although we see different reporting formats online, which report formats do consumers prefer? There is reporting of real data on sustainability social actions, there are company statements and plans for future development, and there are recaps of completed actions in history. However, limited research studies focus on identifying the most acceptable formats for corporations’ external stakeholders, consumers, and their preferred factors in CSR reporting in the apparel industry online in their website, where there are very heavy visiting traffic.

Online shoppers rely heavily on information stated or the visual product image on the product webpage ( Park & Stoel, 2005). Searching for information online is a key stage of a consumer’s decision-making process, and apparel shoppers need more information than shoppers in other categories to reduce uncertainty and risk in decision-making because of their inability to inspect or try on a garment. The place where product/apparel information is stated will generate the greatest visiting volume. The product webpage is the most common destination for online apparel shoppers.

The suggestion of displaying CSR messages on product webpages, therefore, becomes reasonable and feasible. Some of the apparel companies that emphasize

sustainability will show the “green features” on their product webpage to inform consumers about the technology that is embedded in the design. For example, Patagonia introduces their sustainable supply-chain efforts on their product webpage to explain their CSR practices, beneath the picture of the product. This is one of the few steps that the apparel industry is taking right now to convey their CSR practices messages to consumers directly.

Given this new CSR online reporting trend in the apparel industry, it is worth researching how to maximize communication efficiency by modifying reporting formats. In 1997, the U.N. Environment Programme worked with various partners to create guidelines for the voluntary reporting of a company’s economic, social, and environmental activities. These guidelines are called the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). GRI is the dominant framework for CSR and sustainability reports globally. A sustainability report is a report published by a company or organization about the economic, environmental, and social impacts of its everyday activities. A sustainability report also presents the organization’s values and governance model, and it demonstrates the link between its strategy and its commitment to a sustainable global economy (GRI, 2015). The GRI drives sustainability reporting by all organizations. Companies usually follow or refer to GRI when they develop an internal or external communication programs in sustainability, for example codes of conduct. The GRI produces a comprehensive Sustainability Reporting Framework, which is widely used around the world to enable greater organizational transparency. The framework, including the Sustainability Reporting Guidelines (the Guidelines), sets out the principles and standard disclosures that organizations can use to report their economic, environmental, and social performance and impacts. The GRI is committed to continuously improving and increasing the use of the framework, which is freely available to the public (GRI, 2014). It identifies what to report and how to

report it. According to the GRI guidelines, there are generally three formats for presenting a certain CSR practice: certification, action, and strategy.

### *Certification*

Certification can be described as the process of assuring consumers and industry that the company being assessed has met a set of minimum standards (Dodds & Joppe, 2005). Within the apparel industry, there are generally three categories of certification: third-party assurance, panel of experts, and awards (KPMG & SustainAbility, 2010).

### *Action*

Action is a list of activities that companies have accomplished that includes real data and describes practices the companies are involved in. It shows a detailed record of accomplishments (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001). It usually includes the reporting of the track of action and robust performance data (KPMG & SustainAbility, 2010).

### *Strategy*

Strategy is a strategic view of the organization's relationship to CSR and the future target of the corporation. It is intended to produce insights on strategic topics (UN Environmental program, 2006). Strategy should consist of statements that are constructed by the most senior decision-makers or group of the organization about the relevance of CSR to the organization and its strategy, including overall vision and strategy for the short term, medium term, and long term, particularly with regard to managing key challenges.

Based on the theoretical framework on CSR reporting, this study proposes that the different reporting formats will affect communication efficiency.

## **United States and China**

Because the Web eliminates some physical barriers, some might believe there should be no differences in online trust across the world. The Web, however, still does not eliminate psychological barriers. Therefore, firms will have to be culturally sensitive in building online trust across cultures (Shankar et al., 2002). One could even argue that because of the underestimation of the importance of cultural sensitivities online, cross-cultural differences may be more important in the online context than in the offline context.

From 1950s America to contemporary China, the meaning and application of CSR has traveled globally and dramatically (Moon & Shen, 2010). From its origins in American business in the 1950s (Bowen, 1953; Carroll, 2008; Pasquero, 2004), it has emerged as a multinational business practice (Aguilera, D.E, C.A, & J, 2007; Levy & Kaplan, 2008). CSR has been adopted in other capitalist countries (Habisch, Jonker, Wegner, & Schmidpeter, 2005) as well as in Asian countries.

CSR is perceived differently in different societies. Cultural and institutional practices affect the practice and conceptualization of CSR. In a study of CSR in 15 countries across Europe, North America, and Asia, Welford (2005) suggests that CSR may be less prevalent in developing Asian economies. CSR performance has also been found to vary greatly between Asian countries (Birch & Moon, 2004).

Researchers have pointed out that debates over CSR in Asia tend to follow developments in the West, though they have a different focus (Rock, 2002; Ruud, 2002). This is reasonable, given that CSR is recently implemented in Asia, along with other management tools from Western countries. Thanks to the rapid expansion of multinational corporations (MNCs) in Asia, they have to demonstrate and adopt socially responsible leadership in their business practices according to the different environments in which they operate.

In the apparel industry, most of the manufacturers are in developing countries in Asia, largely China, especially for apparel brands in the United States. Asia continues to dominate imports into the United States even with a modest decline in 2014. U.S. imports of textiles and apparel in 2013 rose 3% to \$117.2bn with imports increasing to \$46.2bn from China, by far the leading supplier of textiles and apparel into the United States (Russell, 2014). According to Autor, Dorn, and Hanson's (2012) research on the labor market in the United States, China has taken over 40% of the imports since 2007. In Dickson et al's book (2009), it concluded that CSR related issues such as under-paid workers and pollutions may be considered a "foreign issue" within Western countries because all of the issues happened outside the developed countries, and local consumers only have access to information to those fashion companies that are publicly reporting such sustainability issues. This causes the different attitudes toward CSR in the United States and China. All the CSR practices related to the environment, working conditions, or human issues will directly affect people in developing countries such as China, which acts both as a huge market and as a manufacturing country.

### ***CSR in the United States***

The first apparel brand credited with developing a code of conduct to establish its rules for labor standards and working conditions is Levi Strauss & Co. (Dickson et al., 2009). Today, codes of conduct, rules of monitoring, and regulations from the U.S. side are widely adopted in the apparel industry globally to better organize the industry.

As an invention originally from the United States, CSR has developed as a voluntary activity that most American corporations will adopt as a business strategy tool as well as a branding management tool. The study of U.S. firms' disclosures of

CSR shows that about 80 percent of examined publicly traded American companies published CSR reports in 2009 (Holer-Webb, Cohen, Nath, & Wood, 2009).

One of the example in the apparel industry of establishing a developed CSR strategies to fix its brand image is Nike in the United States. The change in Nike's business strategy began in the 1990s, when Nike became associated with sweatshops and the exploitation of workers. The sweatshop issues were (and continue to be) endemic to the entire garment and shoe industry (Coombs, 2012). Now Nike is still the leader in the athletic shoe and garment market globally, which developed a comprehensive CSR business strategy with an online reporting system to integrate social responsibility into the core of the whole corporation. Constituents increased public awareness, from the consumer side, of supplier practices, and other environmental and human issues created pressure for companies like Nike to change. Learning from Nike, other apparel companies also adopted CSR strategies to attain company sustainability.

To sum up, the CSR concept was created and developed in the United States. NGOs, companies, and consumers in the United States have been exploring this idea and concept since long ago, and it has been well researched in academia. Thus the United States acts as a perfect benchmark in the field of CSR in the apparel industry.

### ***CSR in China***

China presents a wholly novel environment for CSR by virtue of its regulations and the distinctive roles of government, as well as its recent integration into the global economy (Ip, 2008). China is today one of the largest economies, and it is developing at an incredible pace. There are still many other issues; it is not without its problems. As Wang (2013) put it, "As markets expanded, polarization between wealth and poverty, capital flight, social inequity, the environmental crisis, unemployment,

corruption and similar phenomena rapidly spread and the social need for the protection of basic fairness (that is, social benefits and insurance) became more acute by the day” (p774-777). Business leaders and entrepreneurs in China appear to have a very positive view of CSR in general terms, its positive relationship with business success, and its long-term significance for China (Ip, 2008). Externally, as China has engaged in the global economy through trade and institutional participation, for example, membership in the World Trade Organization, it has imported global social norms as it becomes the factory of the world and a key link in supply chains that feed Western consumer markets (Moon & Shen, 2010; Zhang, 2006). The final results of the PwC Total Retail Survey (2014), in which more than 15,000 online shoppers in 15 different territories participated, show that brand trust is the number one reason consumers give for shopping at their favorite retailers. Moreover, international organizations, Chinese academics, and NGOs have, over the years, become more vocal and have pushed for greater CSR compliance. If the social responsibility of companies in the United States is regarded as a business strategy, in China it is now endorsed and encouraged by a government still, symbolically, influenced by Marxism-Leninism and the Communist Party (Moon & Shen, 2010).

The apparel industry in China has been witnessing significant growth for the past few years, with a rise in the domestic market and an increase in exports. Government initiatives, rising investments, and private players’ active participation have taken the Chinese textile and apparel industry to new heights. According to the latest research report, “China Apparel Industry Analysis,” the country’s apparel market is estimated to grow at a compound annual rate of around 23% during the period 2012–2015 (ResearchandMarkets, 2011). The report shows that online apparel retail and the concept of multi-brands are propelling the demand for branded apparel in China. More sustainable choices, such as environmentally friendly fibers, are

implemented in production. Increasingly, purchasing agents from MNCs require suppliers to adopt green supply-chain management precepts and comply with certain codes, for example, SA8000, and exercise their market power (through cancelling orders for non-compliance) (Wong, 2009).

Due to the development of corporations' social responsibility practices as well as media, consumers in China have become more aware of their rights and more concerned about social responsibility issues. They are increasingly using online platforms through media and the emerging technological landscape to call corporations to account. The media have also been more active and aggressive, drawing attention, for example, to water shortages connected with industrial energy consumption and to desertification and pollution from coal-fired power plants (People's Daily, 27 July 2004; China Daily, 3 August 2004). Clearly the practice of effective CSR in China faces challenges, promises, and problems, and contradictions abound particularly over the roles of the state, state officials, and issues such as independent unions, access to information for workers, and freedom of expression within the workplace and beyond (Chen, 2012).

Therefore, considering the possible differences among the two countries with respect to the willingness to learn about and spend time on CSR, it is proposed in the research that across the two countries, there will be differences among their attitude towards the CSR online topic in different demographic groups. Following the differences between China and the United States, the rest of the hypotheses are divided by nationality to provide a clear comparison.

## **Consumer Attitudes toward CSR Online Reporting (China and United States Comparison Study)**

The topic of consumer attitudes toward CSR is always among the research interests in the field of CSR development; thus this stakeholder group is central in the present research. Studies including cross-culture, limited education groups, different age groups, and gender were conducted to explore various consumer groups and their attitudes toward CSR. As a result of this research, corporations can better understand their specific target consumers and convey their information in a more effective way.

In a general setting of CSR reporting, not exclusive to the online context, a comparative survey of French, German, and U.S. consumers found that U.S. consumers valued economic responsibility highly and that European consumers seemed more concerned about legal and ethical norms (I. Maignan, 2001). In 2002, Maignan again conducted cross-cultural research with Ralston (2002) about CSR information on the corporate signature websites in France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. They showed that a mix of CSR initiatives were favorable to different countries and backgrounds. In a recent study of Dutch and Indian consumer responses to CSR, researchers found similar attitudes across nationalities toward both CSR platforms and CSR initiatives. They found some cross-cultural variations in the extent to which different CSR-based marketing strategies influenced consumer outcomes (Planken, Nickerson, & Sahu, 2012).

Education and age affect attitudes toward online CSR information, too. highly Podnar and Golob (2007) educated Slovenian consumers to determine their expectations for CSR initiatives. They found that the more highly educated groups held high expectations of CSR and expected businesses to take legal responsibility. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) studied consumer reactions to CSR; all participants were MBA students with a professionally trained business background. In Park and Stoel's

(2005) survey on the effect of online information and apparel purchase, participants ( $N = 166$ ) were students at Midwestern U.S. universities. According to Lee and Johnson (2002), college students are especially likely to be potential Internet shoppers based on Internet shopper demographics.

Based on the analysis and discussion above about the potential influences of age, education, it is proposed that, based on the effect of nationality,

***H1.1 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by age and nationality.***

***H1.2 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by education and nationality.***

Gender issues are commonly seen in the industrial context: women make up a large part of bottom-level workers in the manufacturing process globally, including apparel industry. In the research on women workers and gendering CSR (Pearson, 2007), gender issues were mentioned within the CSR human rights context. The study Gender and Sustainability, from the International Food Policy Research Institute (2014), examines how gender shapes the motives, means, and opportunities for men and women to contribute to sustainability (Meinzen-Dick, Kovarik & Quisumbing, 2014). According to the authors, beginning in the 1980s theories about women's inherent connection to nature became popular in debates about the environment and development. Ecofeminist scholars posited that women are, by virtue of their biological relationship to reproduction, more closely linked to nature and thus both more likely to be harmed by its degradation and more likely to be responsible for its conservation. In other words, women are more aware of the environment and nature issues, which might lead to a result that sustainability issues for women can be a more concerned topic than for men. Based on these findings, it is proposed in the current

study that, based on gender ,consumers might also hold different attitudes toward CSR issues, therefore it is proposed that,

***H1.3 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality .***

**Consumers' Willingness to Spend Time on CSR Reporting (China and United States Comparison Study)**

Marketplace polls report that consumers not only expect businesses to be socially responsible but also want to be informed about what firms are doing and will support firms that pursue CSR initiatives (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2008). When consumers have little or no information about a company's socially responsible behavior, CSR is unlikely to be considered a decision criterion, according to a qualitative study (Oberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber, 2011). Results of one study also showed consumers' preference for limited CSR information, while they reported being willing to learn CSR (Pomering & Dolnicar, 2008).

Limited research has explored consumers' willingness to actually spend time on CSR reporting from apparel corporations. Empirical data originate from national reputation surveys in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (2006 Annual Reputation Quotient). The reputation surveys show the general public's perceptions of how companies should communicate information about their social responsibility. The survey findings from 2,005 participants suggest that the citizens in these three countries in general hold different perceptions of how companies should communicate their CSR efforts: Some believe companies should publicize proactively and openly, while others prefer more minimal communication based on websites and annual reports. Few people said that companies should not communicate about their CSR efforts at all. Fifty-nine percent of respondents in Denmark, 46% in Sweden, and 49%

in Norway responded “Yes, minimal releases such as annual reports and on website” to the question “How should companies communicate their CSR efforts?” Morsing and Schultz (2006) find that consumers prefer CSR initiatives to be communicated through minimal release channels (such as annual reports and websites) rather than through traditional communication channels (such as the published hard copy reporting) . In other words, consumers prefer to spend less time and effort searching for and receiving CSR information. Consumers’ preference for “minimal release” based on websites and for reduced exposure to CSR differs by nationality, while all the answers still show their low willingness to actually spend time reading CSR reporting. Little existing research specifies the effects of age, education, and gender on CSR reporting. Thus these also become research interests in the current study. Following the previous proposals about consumers’ attitude toward CSR online reporting, it is proposed that willingness to spend time on CSR in the apparel industry is affected by nationality, age, education, and gender.

*H2.1 Willingness to spend time on CSR in the apparel industry is affected by age and nationality.*

*H2.2 Willingness to spend time on CSR in the apparel industry is affected by education and nationality.*

*H2.3 Willingness to spend time on CSR in the apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality.*

### **CSR Reporting Formats and Trust Level (China and United States Comparison Study)**

CSR can best contribute to societal good when CSR activities acknowledge and incorporate the concerns of the wider society. Much existing research already

emphasized that when communicating CSR, companies should consider consumer attitudes (Hustvedt & Bernard, 2008; Kimeldorf, Meyer, Prasad, & Robinson, 2006; Park, Lee, & Kim, 2014). Additionally, trust has a strong influence on consumers' shopping intention: there is a positive relationship between trust and company reputation (Keh & Xie, 2009). According to GRI, three reporting formats are used to convey corporations' CSR initiatives to consumers in an understandable and direct way: strategy, certification, and action. A study in natural resources (Pappila, 2013) scrutinizes the role played by forest certification in building trust at the local level of the forest sectors of Finland and Russia. Participation related to forest certification can help to build trust in Russia. However, trust-building also requires concrete positive actions.

No existing research explores the relationship and interactions between the three formats or evaluates their effectiveness in the online apparel context. Denworth (1989) found that 71% of consumers have a good impression of a corporation if they have access to positive information about it. However, what the most effective information reporting strategy should look like remains a question even after GRI developed a guideline for corporations' CSR reporting. Based on the limited research information, this study is proposed that CSR reporting formats will affect consumer trust. Based on the discussion above about the reporting formats and trust level, it is proposed that

***H3.1 Different reporting formats will result in different levels of trust in China and the United States.***

## **Consumer Trust and Behavioral Intentions (China and United States Comparison Study)**

Trust develops as a result of a firm belief that the trustee is reliable, honest, and benevolent (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The traditional view of trust adopted in marketing has been based on a purely psychological approach. Moorman et al.'s (1993) research complements and extends that view to include sociological theories. Hence, their definition includes both confidence in an exchange partner (the psychological component) and a willingness to rely on an exchange partner (the sociological component). Trust is defined from a consumer perspective as the consumer's belief that a corporation will perform in a manner consistent with expectations regarding its expertise, integrity, and goodwill (Park, Lee, & Kim, 2013). Based on the research from Bart et al (2005), within the situation of online shopping, the behavioral intentions of buying the products on the website and recommending the websites to others are the two activities that online shoppers usually get involved in.

Given consumers' increasing awareness of social issues, to ensure its survival a firm must integrate society's interests into its corporate activities (Park et al., 2013). Consumers expect companies to possess the skills required to produce products that satisfy consumer needs. They also expect companies to earn sufficient profits to reinvest and ensure their own survival, create jobs, and innovate. Consumers can learn about a company's behaviors through using its products or through information obtained from outside sources. Based on this, consumers will subsequently develop trust. This link between the company's reporting of social responsibility efforts and consumer trust is supported by research results (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Pomeroy & Dolnicar, 2008; Y. Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006). Therefore, it is proposed that

*H3.2. Different reporting formats will result in different behavioral intentions in China and the United States.*

**Mediating Role of Online Trust in Behavioral Intention (China and United States Comparison Study)**

Morgan and Hunt (1994) researched the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing and developed a key mediation variable (KMV) model that shows that the antecedents, including shared value and communication, affect the outcomes (behavioral intentions) only through the key mediating variables of relationship commitment and trust. The results also indicate that commitment leads to trust as well. In other words, trust is the key mediator in the relationship between antecedents and behavioral intention (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

When the first websites were created, creators reviewed online trust as a construct that addressed security only—whether a user felt safe providing his or her credit card and other financial details to a company’s website (Ernst and Young Report, 1999). Today, trust has become a much larger issue than just security and privacy on the Web. It is a multidimensional, complex construct that has important antecedents and consequences (Sultan et al., 2002). In the marketing research literature, trust is primarily focused in the relationship marketing context, since it has been perceived to be important as a marketing strategy (Doney & Canon, 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Previous research and studies show that trust affects behavioral intention in the online context (Shankar et al., 2002; S. J. Yoon, 2002). Trust affects consumer attitudes and perceptions, which in turn affect willingness to buying and recommending the website to others (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Vitale, 2002). The mediating role of online trust in the relationship leading to behavioral intention in the online context is well supported by some of the research and studies in

the last decade-plus (Doney & Canon, 1997; Jarvenpaa et al., 2002; S. J. Yoon, 2002). However, no recent articles address the potential differences between rapidly growing developing country China and the well-developed country the United States or examine the consequences or differences that it could bring into the apparel industry about CSR communication globally. Consumers' trust level might be different from what it was years ago, and how companies are communicating about CSR issues has also changed due to the rapid development in industries as well as in communication methods.

Little is known about whether such mediation is stronger in one country than in the other. If it is, when deciding on a CSR reporting method, managers can formulate strategies to directly influence consumers' intentions to act on the website. The mediating relationship (if it exists) may be different between the two countries, considering all the differences, including development of CSR, culture, and politics: given the shorter development time for CSR in both apparel companies in China and education in Chinese consumers, trust formation is more likely to be an intermediate event that precedes behavioral intention. Therefore, considering the different stages of CSR communication development in China and the United States, and the previous studies' conclusions about the mediating role of trust, it is proposed in the current research that

***H4. The effects of CSR reporting on behavioral intentions are mediated by consumer trust in China and the United States.***

And the mediating role will be analyzed and compared between China and the United States.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **METHOD**

The first section of this chapter describes the study design for this research, and the second section explains the experimental design. Variables and hypotheses used to investigate the objectives of the research are discussed in the third section. The fourth section describes the sample parameters and the process by which the sample was chosen. The fifth section describes the treatment procedure and the conditions under which the treatment was administered. The sections on the development of experimental materials and the pilot test clarify the method by which the experimental materials were developed, first tested, and revised. The scale-reliability and data-analysis sections explain the appropriate reliability analyses and how the data were analyzed.

#### **Study Design**

The general goal of this research is to explore online apparel consumers' attitudes toward online CSR reporting online and understand the different influences of CSR reporting formats on consumers' trust and behavioral intentions of buying and recommending through the experimental design. There were two parts to the research: part 1 explored the effects of age, education, and gender on online shoppers' willingness to learn about CSR and willingness to spend time on it under the comparison studies between China and the United States; part 2 went deeper into the topic and understand the mechanism behind the relationship of online reporting, trust and behavioral intentions of buying and recommending. By further examining the mediating role of trust in the relationship between corporations' consumer CSR reporting strategies and consumers' behavioral intention, this study would have a better knowledge about the insights of online apparel consumers. Participants were

asked to interact with a randomized mock T-shirt shopping website via one of four simulations with a designed CSR reporting format about a material waste message and then to answer questions that measured their trust level, behavioral intentions, demographics, and CSR online behaviors. The questionnaire was designed differently for females and males using the same color and design features for a T-shirt but for different genders in both English and Chinese.

In part 1, participants were asked to answer two questions about their willingness to learn about CSR and to spend time on CSR based on a 7-point Likert scale. During the same part, information about participants' education, age, gender, and nationality was also recorded. In part 2, each participant was asked to interact with a randomized mock T-shirt shopping website at one of the four simulations with a designed CSR reporting format about a material waste message and then to answer questions that measured their trust level and behavioral intentions. The questionnaire was the same for all four groups.

### **Experimental Design**

The experiment consisted of several steps: identification of problems, research, ideation, prototype creation, translation, testing, and implementation.

In the process of designing the experiment, several problems needed to be addressed: (1) create a treatment that can test consumers' reactions to online CSR reporting in the apparel industry, (2) develop a mock website that participants could access during the questionnaire, and (3) identify the logic of this experiment design embedded in the completed questionnaire to collect the participants' data online. After finishing all the three steps mentioned above, research was conducted to invest in the existing online reporting formats in the apparel industry and the websites that offer related CSR reporting. Resources include an existing online apparel store, NGO

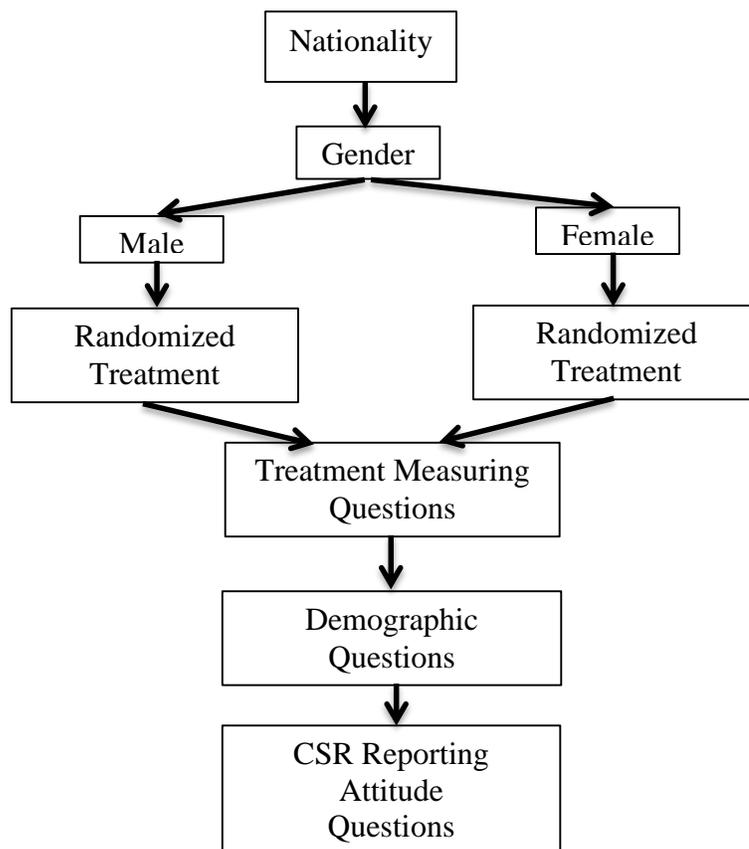
webpages, and related reporting webpages (Coalition, 2014; GRI, 2014; Nike, 2014; Patagonia, 2014c).

Key features were collected from the existing online websites of several giant retailers for reference in designing a mock website for this current study, such as the layout of the pictures and information, product details, and so forth. T-shirts were chosen as the product along with a modified website design from a sportswear online store. The T-shirt is the base product for both men and women in the sportswear/casualwear category. This choice of product eliminates most of the confounding factors from design and personal preferences. Third, the mock webpage was professionally designed in Photoshop and Illustrator. Professors in the advertising and marketing domain qualitatively tested these design materials. The questionnaire was created in Qualtrics and sent to a small group of graduate students, both English speakers and Chinese speakers, to test its use of language and its logic. Once the questionnaire with different levels of treatments was perfected, it was implemented for this research in the experimental procedure.

### *Design of Online Questionnaire Flow*

The online website was embedded in the online questionnaire using Qualtrics. Questions were asked both before and after the experiments: including questions about demographics, shopping behaviors online before the experiments, and attitude toward the website afterwards. Therefore, before testing began, the logic of the questionnaire design was also well evaluated (see **Figure 3.1**). Based on the previous literature reviews on potential gender differences on attitude, this experiment sorts the consumers into different gender groups and designs male and female products for them separately but using the same design features. It also translated the English website into Chinese. Professors at China Donghua University provided professional

suggestions for correcting the Chinese translation of the website and questionnaire based on the English version. Chinese and English versions of the questionnaires were distributed in the two countries. Four experiment groups were then randomized to consumers.

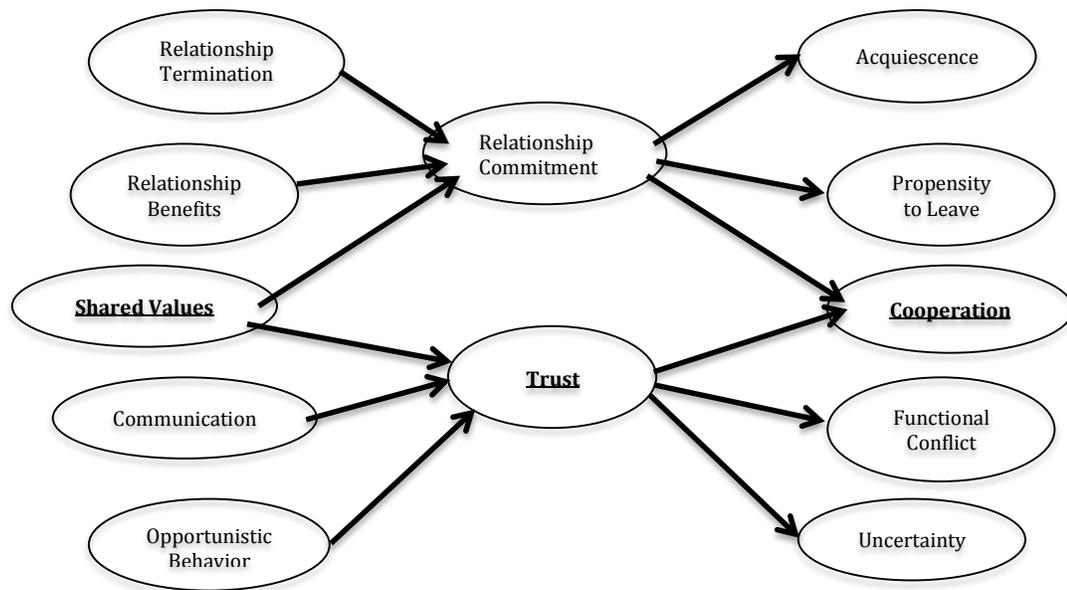


**Figure 3.1. Questionnaire design flow.**

### **Variables**

There were two parts to the research purposes in the current study. Part 1 explores question sets to understand consumers' attitudes toward CSR online reporting in the apparel industry. Part 2 is an experiment that tests the relationship between CSR reporting and consumers' actual trust levels and behavioral intentions. In part 1, two attitude questions about CSR online reporting were also asked in the questionnaire to explore the current consumers' sensitivity toward such online communication tools in

the apparel industry. In part 2, the configuration of the current research model is influenced by Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory of the relationship marketing conceptual model (see **Figure 3.2**), which provides a basic understanding of relationship marketing. Morgan and Hunt conceptualize trust as existing when a party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity. It confirms trust as one of the key mediating constructs in relationship marketing that leads to successful behavioral intentions—in other words, successful relationship marketing. As a result, trust is central to all relational exchanges in the relationship marketing process.



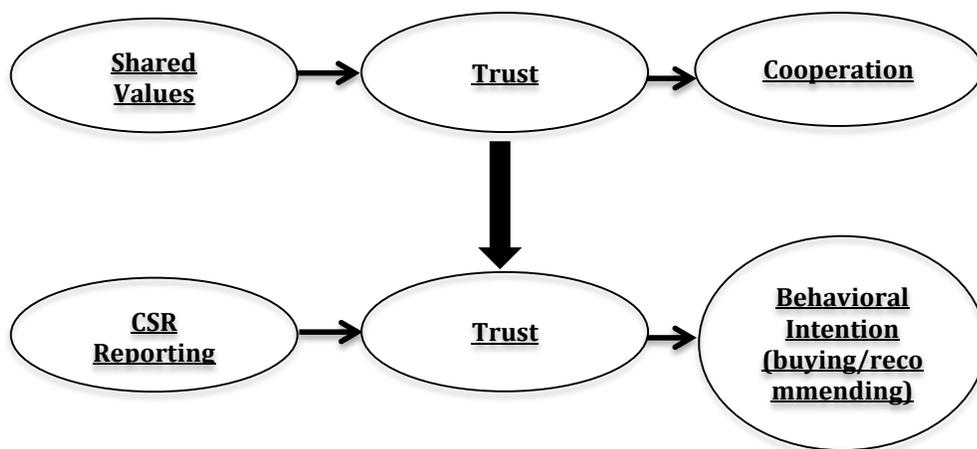
**Figure 3.2 The key mediating variable (KMV) model of relationship marketing (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).**

The KMV model by Morgan and Hunt (1994) shows trust as a key mediating variable in the relationship between shared values and cooperation (as indicated by the bolding and underlining in Figure 3.2). Shared values, according to Morgan and

Hunt, are the extent to which partners have beliefs in common about what behaviors, goals, and policies are important or unimportant, appropriate or inappropriate, and right or wrong. Values are fundamental to definitions of organizational culture (Enz, 1988; Weiner, 1988). The current study explores the shared value of CSR activities, through the action of reporting formats.

Cooperation, as the outcome of relationship commitment and trust, refers to situations in which parties work together to achieve mutual goals. A partner committed to a relationship will cooperate with another member because of a desire to make the relationship work. In the current study, cooperation is the outcome from the consumers' side as a business partner. It refers to the final behavior of buying/recommending intention toward this company.

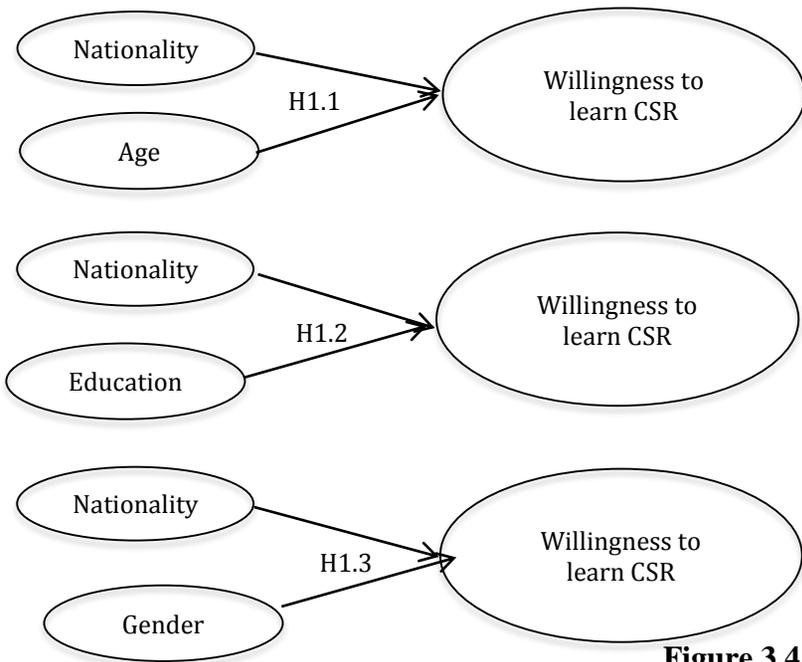
Therefore, extracting part of the whole model, it is shown as **Figure 3.3**.



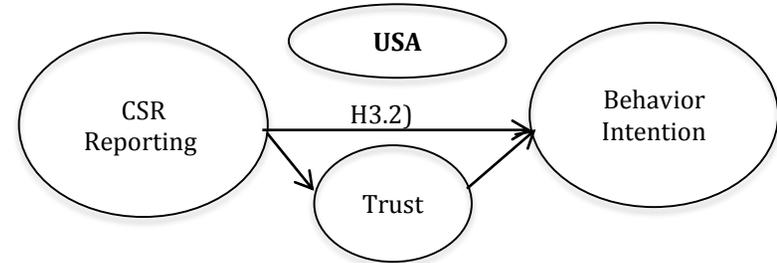
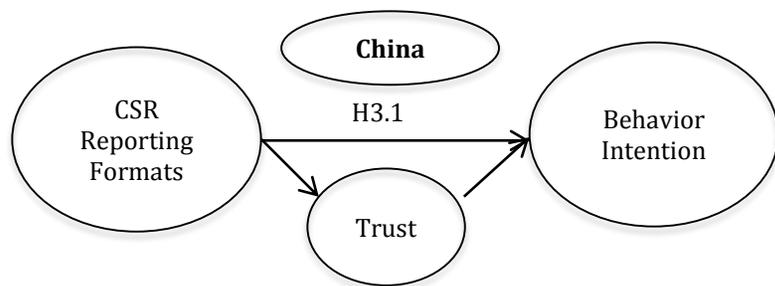
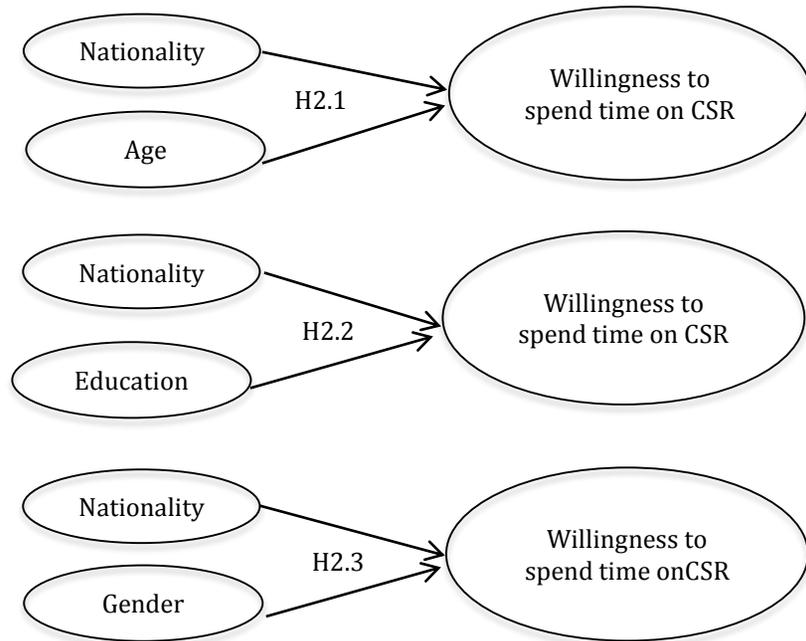
**Figure 3.3. Extracted model of KMV and adapted model for current research.**

### **Proposed Models**

In part 1, it is proposed that attitudes will be affected by demographic factors. Nationality will act as the fundamental factor for sorting the participants and understanding their willingness. Within different nationalities, it is proposed, willingness will be affected by gender groups, education groups, and age groups (see **Figure 3.4**). In part 2, it is proposed that different reporting formats will affect trust level and that trust level will act as the mediator within the relationship. Nationality will act as a moderator that influences the model (see **Figure 3.5**). The comparison study of China and United States was implemented by following the designed model.



**Figure 3.4 Proposed Model 1**



**Figure 3.5 Proposed Model 2 based on Extracted KMV Model**

### Variables and Items

For both independent and dependent variables, different items represent the levels of each variable. In Part 1, nationality act as the independent variables that serve the research propose of comparison study : ANOVA test was conducted to find the simple effects on different demographi groups and nationality on the questions of consumers' attitude towards CSR onlinre reporting issues. In Part 2, studies were conducted separately under these two countries, which compared the results from these two contries to understand the differences. **Tables 3.1** and **3.2** categorize the variables and levels that measure them. **Table 3.1** shows the independent variables, and **Table 3.2** shows the dependent variables.

**Table 3.1. Independent Variables and Measuring Items**

Independent Variables	Items
Nationality	United States
	China
Gender	Female
	Male
Education	High School Education and Lower
	Undergraduate Education
	Graduate Education and Higher
Age	18-21
	22-25
	26-29

**Table 3.2. Dependent Variables and Measuring Items**

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Items</b>
Willingness to learn online CSR reporting	7-point Likert scale
Willingness to spent time on online CSR reporting	Over one hour
	Half an hour
	15 minutes
	5 minutes
	Never
Trust on Website	This site appears to be LESS trustworthy than other sites I have visited. 7-point Likert scale
	This site represents a company or organization that will deliver on promises made. 7-point Likert scale
	My overall trust of the information on this site is: 7-point Likert scale
	My overall confidence in the recommendations on this retailer is. 7-point Likert scale
Behavioral Intention	I would purchase an item from this retailer. 7-point Likert scale
	I would recommend this retailer to a friend. 7-point Likert scale
	I am comfortable providing financial and personal information on this site. 7-point Likert scale

**Experimental Treatment**

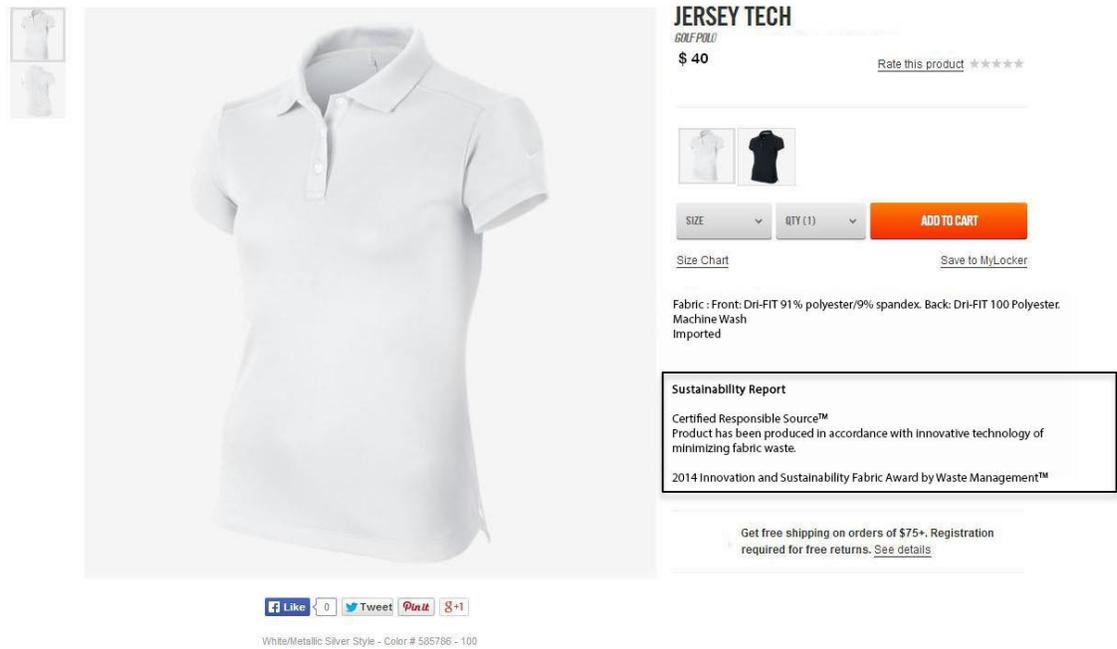
Participants were assigned randomly to three experimental treatment groups through a Qualtrics online survey. Since different genders will be shown different T-shirts (for females and males), and since Chinese-speaking and English-speaking consumers need separate websites, the final mock websites were designed with a total of 16 pieces to be used for the experimental treatment (see **Table 3.3**).

**Table 3.3. Features of the Experimental Treatment Design**

<b>Design No.</b>	<b>Reporting Format</b>	<b>Features</b>
1	Certification	Female T-shirt, English
2	Action	Female T-shirt, English
3	Strategy	Female T-shirt, English
4	Control Group	Female T-shirt, English
5	Certification	Male T-shirt, English
6	Action	Male T-shirt, English
7	Strategy	Male T-shirt, English
8	Control Group	Male T-shirt, English
9	Certification	Female T-shirt, Chinese
10	Action	Female T-shirt, Chinese
11	Strategy	Female T-shirt, Chinese
12	Control Group	Female T-shirt, Chinese
13	Certification	Male T-shirt, Chinese
14	Action	Male T-shirt, Chinese
15	Strategy	Male T-shirt, Chinese
16	Control Group	Male T-shirt, Chinese

Creating a successful webpage required that three parts of the website be addressed: the website content; the design of the website, including its overall look, images, and graphics; and the structure of the site. For this research project, the content included the apparel product (T-shirt), name, price, pictures, basic information, and all the other interactive buttons existing on a regular apparel website.

The T-shirt product was chosen for this research as a fashion item. T-shirts are basic items and reduced the confounding factors from design styles. On the Chinese version of this website, all the pictures were the same; only the text portion changed. In addition, the icons at the very bottom for social media were also changed. Although Chinese people don't have access to Facebook and Twitter, they do have access to Wechat and Weibo, similar social media sites.



**Figure 3.6. Treatment Group 1: English-language female T-shirt site with certification reporting.**

**Figure 3.6** shows the website design for Treatment Group 1. It is an English-language website with a female T-shirt product and CSR reporting information about certification. Participants assigned to this treatment group viewed this website first and then were asked to answer follow-up questions. **Figure 3.7** shows the website for Treatment Group 14, in Chinese with a male T-shirt product and CSR reporting information about action.

After participants interacted with the websites for 3-5 minutes on average according the result reports (see **Appendix 3**), they answered 13 questions that measured the dependent variables and collected demographic information (see **Appendices 4–5**). These questions were developed to be administered in Qualtrics, a Web-based online survey service. Testing was implemented to ensure that the question format was appropriate for an online interface. Participants’ responses were stored online in the cloud, allowing for easy coding and downloading.



**Figure 3.7. Treatment Group 14 : Chinese-language male T-shirt site with action reporting.**

Questions investigated trust in the retailer, behavioral intentions, and attitudes toward CSR reporting, and verified subject age ( only the answers from participants that fall into the designed age group were verified as validate), education level, and nationality. Participants interacted with the website for about 1 to 3 minutes and then completed the questions in approximately 5 minutes, making the total experimental time about 6 to 8 minutes.

The questions were developed from scales used previously to assess online trust in websites (Bart, Shankar, Sultan, & Urban, 2005). Bart et al.'s (2005) survey included a scale of questions to measure consumers' trust in and behavioral intentions toward online websites based on different website characteristics, such as navigation, privacy, brand, security, and communication. In the current study, reporting of CSR online can

be categorized as a website characteristic; therefore, it is reasonable to adopt Bart et al.'s questionnaire (see **Table 3.4**).

The definition of CSR was adapted from *Managing Corporate Social Responsibility* (Coombs, 2012) for this study and presented to the participants: “CSR is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole”(p67). Likert scale for responses was used in this section. Other questions were developed to measure attitude and to collect demographic information. Participants were asked to rate their attitude toward online CSR reporting in the apparel industry using a 7-point Likert scale, and their willingness to spend time on this topic using a modified 6-point scale (ranging from *never* to *hourly*).

**Table 3.4. Questions Used in Bart et al.'s Research (Bart et al., 2005)**

<b>Trust Items</b>	
1	This site appears to be more trustworthy than other sites I have visited.
2	The site represents a company or organization that will deliver on promises made.
3	My overall trust in this site is.
4	My overall believability of the information on this site is.
5	My overall confidence in the recommendations on this site is.
<b>Behavioral Intent Items</b>	
1	I would purchase an item at this site.
2	I would recommend this site to a friend.
3	I am comfortable providing financial and personal information on this site.
4	I would bookmark this site.
5	I would register at this site.

**Table 3.5 Measurement Model Results from Bart el al.’s research (N = 6831)**

	<b>Behavioral Intent</b>	<b>Trust</b>
<b>Variance extracted</b>	.72	.78
<b>Reliability</b>	.88	.91
<b>Cronbach’s alpha</b>	.88	.91

### **Experimental Condition**

All participants were required to complete the study online across the two countries. It was important that all participants be “real people” and that they spend a reasonable amount of time on the survey. Therefore, a test question was added before the questionnaire. A picture of dog was posted and a question “This is a \_\_\_?” was given. The question allowed respondents to choose the correct answer from the choices “dog,” “cat,” and “rabbit.” A wrong answer meant that the respondent had no chance to take part in the survey. Also, if the time spent on the survey was less than 3 minutes, the respondent was deleted from the database.

The participants were informed of the purpose of the research and the approximate time it would take them to complete the project. They were also told that a \$20.00 gift card would be offered to every 20 randomly selected participants. If they were interested in entering the drawing, they just needed to leave their e-mail address at the end of the survey to be notified of the win. E-mail addresses would not be used to individually identify the participants. Participation in this survey was completely voluntary. Participants were informed at the beginning that they could refuse to participate before the study began or could discontinue their participation at any time. The data collected from the survey were analyzed anonymously. In addition, no information from the study will be shared with anyone or used for any purposes other than this research. Participants were also informed that the survey had been approved by the Cornell Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB). Point of

contact was also provided on the webpage. The first question determined whether participants understood the instructions and agreed to participate.

### **Pilot Test**

A pilot test of the experiment was conducted to ensure the usability of the website and the validity of the questions. There were two parts to the pilot test. One was a series of interviews with seven graduate students. All had some expertise related to the current research, such as knowledge of the apparel industry, Internet experience, or Chinese translation experience. The pilot test consisted of the same steps as the main study: participation and completion of the dependent measures and demographic questions. Participants were observed during the pilot tests and asked to comment on their experiences with the Web design, understanding of the wording, and questionnaires (see **Appendix 6**). Some complained that the reporting placement was a bit difficult to find, the picture was too big, or the text was too small. Also, one person mentioned that they didn't know they could only view the webpage once and couldn't turn back. Since they had spent only a few seconds on the page, they couldn't even recall any details. The website design was revised based on the comments. Instructions for finishing the treatment and notice of only one chance to look at the webpage were provided before participants started the survey.

The questions were also evaluated in great detail. The pilot-test participants confirmed that the questions reflected what they were intended to measure. The participants had many complaints about the items used to measure trust and behavioral intention: "My overall trust in this site is" and "My overall believability of the information on this site is" were similar, and they suggested deleting one of the items to better represent the idea. Also, participants mentioned that since the experiment is not a real interactive webpage, and therefore they couldn't bookmark the site or register at

the site, they suggested removing “I would bookmark this site” and “I would register at this site” from the behavioral intention items. After interviewing and discussing with the experts, I revised the items accordingly (see **Table 3.5**) to measure trust and behavioral intention.

The concepts, terminology, and scales were discussed as well. Another pilot-test participant mentioned that it is necessary to explain the definition of CSR in the apparel industry for consumers while they are answering the questions about attitude.

**Table 3.6. Items Used in the Current Research**

<b>Trust Items</b>	
1	This site appears to be more trustworthy than other sites I have visited.
2	The site represents a company or organization that will deliver on promises made.
3	My overall trust in this site is.
5	My overall confidence in the recommendations on this site is.
<b>Behavioral Intent Items</b>	
1	I would purchase an item at this site.
2	I would recommend this site to a friend.
3	I am comfortable providing financial and personal information on this site.

### **Scale Reliability**

The correlations between questions in the scales were analyzed to establish scale reliability. In Bart et al.’s (2005) research, the Cronbach’s alpha of trust was .88 and behavioral intention was .91. Their research is very large-scale, involving 6,831 participants. Four questions measured behavioral intention, and three questions measured trust level. Those items were adopted from existing research, and one question was revised to the opposite format to create a more diverse question format. In this way, we could know if the participants truly think about the questions and can revise the questions back to give a reasonable answer to it. It originally read “This site appears to be more trustworthy than other sites I have visited”; after revision it read

“This site appears to be LESS trustworthy than other sites I have visited.” However, the inter-item correlation of this single item is 0.21, which shows the low reliability of this item. The problem with this, according to the high correlations of the other three items, may be (1) that the sentence was revised, which introduces some confounding factors; and (2) that two questions measured similar ideas about the overall trustworthiness of the website. After deleting the item and testing the other three items, the Cronbach’s alpha was .862. Therefore, only three of the items were adopted. For the reliability of the three items that measured behavioral intention, the Cronbach’s alpha was .856.

### **Data Analysis**

Microsoft Excel was used to store and to organize the data. The statistical software packages SPSS and STATA were used to analyze the data.

In SPSS, univariate analysis of variance through a general linear model was used to identify the independent variables, including categorical and numerical variables, and their effects on the dependent variables. A post-hoc test with two-way ANOVA was used to determine the level of difference in each of the variable groups. These tests identified between which groups there were significant differences. Chi-square and crosstab were also used to test for differences between the means of the different groups (age, gender, education, etc.) on the dependent measures (attitude, willingness). The questions and scales were determined significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p \leq .05$ ) (see **Appendix 8**).

The STATA data-analysis package was used to conduct structural equation model (SEM) analysis on the total (China and United States) sample to examine whether there are significant differences in the factor loadings and path coefficients across the reporting formats used in the current study, considering nationality as a grouping factor. SEM is widely used in the social sciences. The structural model shows

potential causal dependencies between endogenous and exogenous variables. Among the set of theoretically plausible models, by implementing the SEM , the results could determine whether the model proposed is the best one. The SEM analysis approach also estimates the model fit , which is the information about consistency of the hypothesized meditational model to the data.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter describes the results of the online survey and experimental study by using the data statistic analysis software. It is organized into four sections: description of the sample, overview of the general online CSR reading habits, analysis of the hypotheses, and discussion of the data results.

#### **Sample Selection**

The samples were selected based on age, education, and nationality. Two surveys were distributed through U.S. and Chinese channels. Among the target groups, questions about age and education level were asked to filter the age groups from 19–29 and education groups from high school students, undergraduate students, and graduate students. The age group that has grown up in the digital ear and spend the most of their time online shopping, according to Nielsen gobal E-Commerce research (Nielsen,2014) , is the millennials ( age 19-29) . Participants were recruited online. Using this population controlled for the likelihood of purchasing products on the Internet and the overall ability to use the Internet.

With the help of a statistician, a four-sample *t*-test was used to establish that a sample size of 64 participants per group was needed to obtain a 95% confidence level with medium effect level, based on the power, the alpha, and the variability expected in the data. For each country, the minimum number of respondents should be around 250. Because as the sample size increases, sampling errors may be reduced and the interval gets smaller, the goals was to have around 300 participants in each of the groups to reach the minimum number of respondents of 250 that can establish a stable and representative data power.

For the U.S. participants, a recruitment e-mail (see **Appendix 1**) was sent to students enrolled in a graduate program at a local university. This recruitment e-mail was also sent to the campus community through online social media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Through this method, 124 participants answered the questionnaire. For the Chinese participants, a Chinese recruitment e-mail (see **Appendix 2**) was sent to one of the local student associations; it yielded about 121 Chinese participants.

To reach a larger group of participants, we used Amazon Turk as an online survey agency to recruit online participants. The Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is a crowdsourcing Internet marketplace that enables individuals and businesses (known as Requesters) to coordinate the use of human intelligence to perform tasks that computers are currently unable to do. It is an Amazon Web Services site. The Requesters can post tasks known as HITs (Human Intelligence Tasks), such as writing product descriptions or identifying performers on music CDs. Workers (called Providers in Mechanical Turk's Terms of Service, or, more colloquially, Turkers) can then browse existing tasks and complete them for a monetary payment set by the Requester. To place HITs, the requesting programs use the limited MTurk Requester site (mturk.com, 2012). Through MTurk, 466 participants were recruited. For the Chinese online recruitment, a similar website was used in China (www.sojump.com), from which 509 participants were recruited. According to the reporting from Sojump.com website, the majority part that use this website are students from college (2012). This recruiting method can result in some unbalanced number of students across different education groups in Chinese participants: the people with undergraduate degree are more than other education groups. Therefore, in total, 590 U.S. participants were recruited: 124 from the online platform and 466 from MTurk;

and 630 Chinese participants: 509 participants from So Jump and 121 participants from the local student association.

### ***Demographics***

Demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey, except for the question about gender, which was asked at the beginning to sort people into different treatment groups. For all 1,220 participants, **Table 4.1** shows the demographic statistical information. The participants targeted are young people (age 18–29) with a basic education (having finished at least high school) and having online experience (using an online tool to finish the survey). The numbers of females and males are almost equally distributed, as is nationality. Most participants (62.1 %) fall into the 26–29 age group, followed by 22–25 and 18–21. Most participants (58.5%) are college students, 22.5% have education beyond college, and the rest hold a high school diploma.

**Table 4.1. Sample Demographics**

Demographics (N=1220)	Frequency (percent)
<i>Sex</i>	
Female	625(51.2)
Male	595(48.8)
<i>Age</i>	
18–21	105(8.6)
22–25	371(30.4)
26–29	744(61.0)
<i>Education</i>	
High School	232(19.0)
College undergraduate	714(58.5)
College graduate	274(22.5)
<i>Nationality</i>	
United States	590(48.3)
China	630(51.7)

**Table 4.2** and **Table 4.3** show the demographic statistical information separately for the two countries. In the U.S. sample, genders are evenly distributed. Most participants are in the 26–29 age group (60.8%). In the Chinese sample, three-quarters of the participants are college undergraduates (75.9%).

**Table 4.2. Sample Demographics in the United States**

Demographics (N=590)	Frequency
<i>Sex</i>	
Female	266(45.1)
Male	324(54.9)
<i>Age</i>	
18–21	54(9.2)
22–25	177(30.0)
26–29	359(60.8)
<i>Education</i>	
High School	193(32.7)
College undergraduate	236(40.0)
College graduate	161(27.3)

**Table 4.3. Sample Demographics in China**

Demographics (N=630)	Frequency
<i>Sex</i>	
Female	359(57.0)
Male	271(43.0)
<i>Age</i>	
18-21	51(8.1)
22-25	194(30.8)
26-29	384(61.1)
<i>Education</i>	
High School	39(6.2)
College undergraduate	478(75.9)
College graduate	113(17.9)

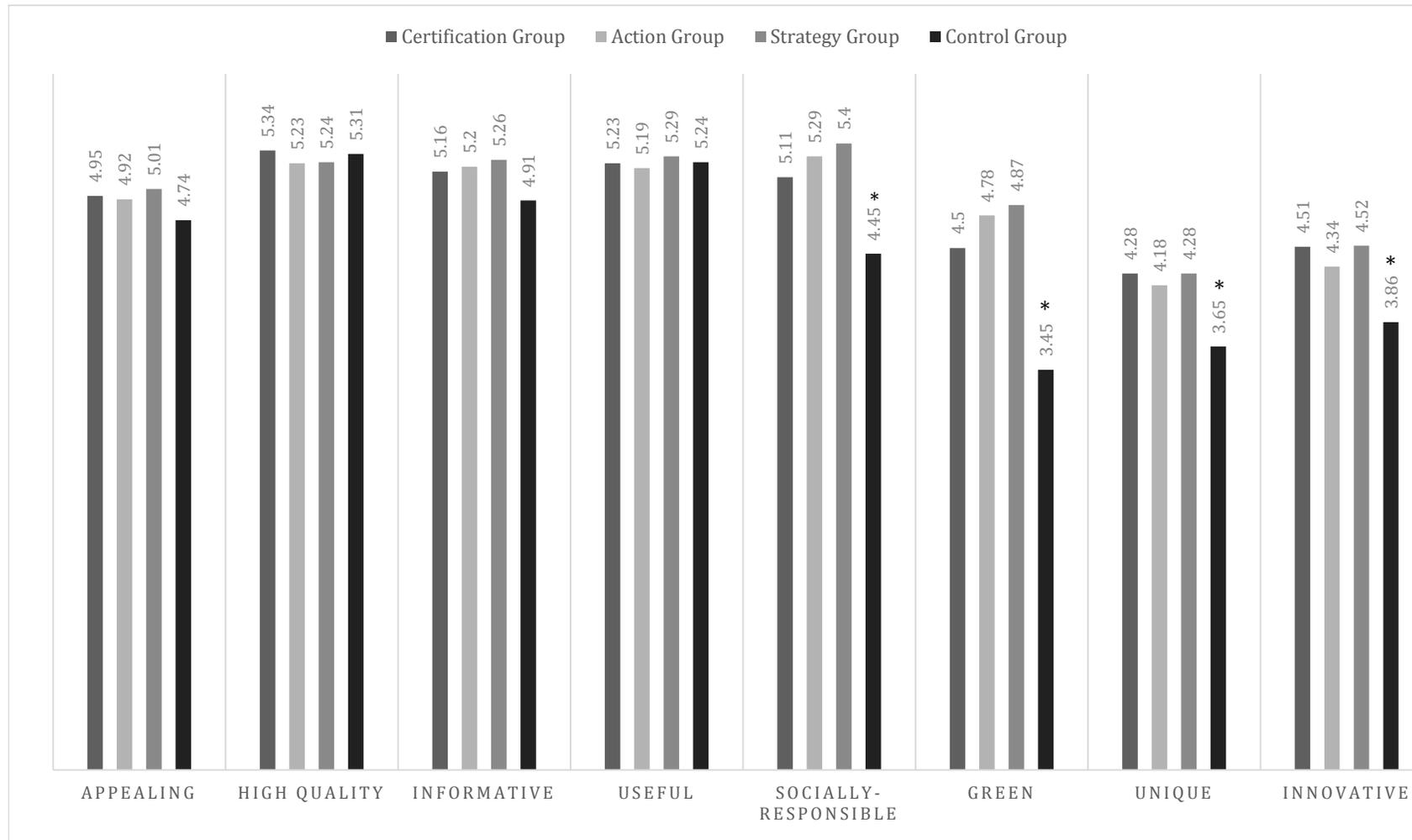
#### ***General Attitude Towards the Designed Website***

Questions about the website measured participants' overall attitudes under the randomly assigned treatment groups. This is a descriptive measure of how participants perceived the treatment websites by using key words. Key words were adopted from Bart et al.'s (2005) research on websites. Another two key words, "socially-responsible" and "green," were added to the list to match the initial idea of the sustainability topic of the website. By comparing the treatment groups with the control group, through the participants an overall picture of the differences across the treatments could be developed.

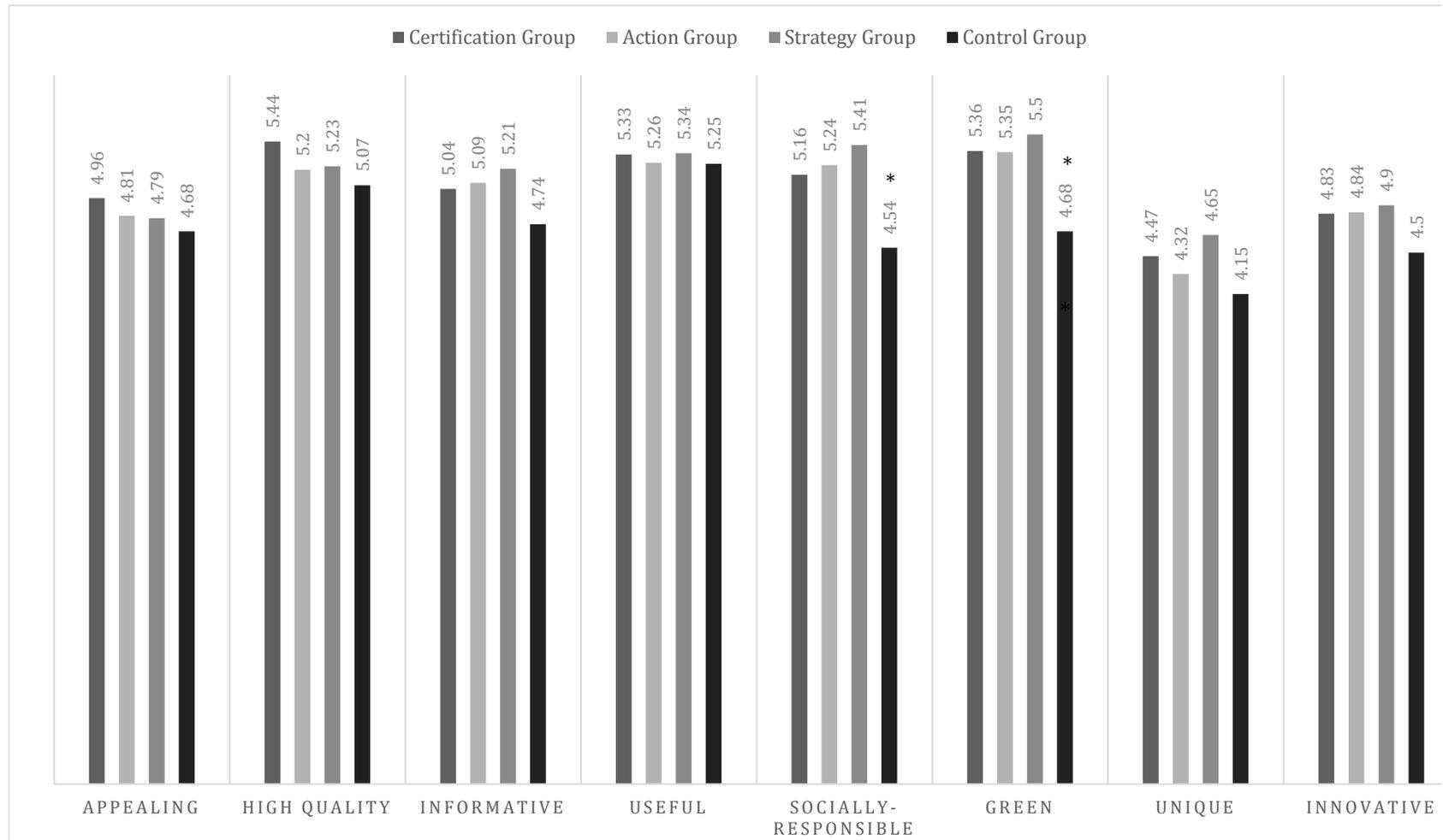
**Figure 4.4** shows the average scores for each of the perception key words for the U.S. sample. A 7-point Likert scale was used in the measurement. In the three treatment groups compared with the control group, participants' perceptions of the website are significantly different for the key words "socially-responsible," "green," "unique," and "innovative" (see Figure 4.4). Participants in the United States

considered the webpage with CSR reporting to be a “socially-responsible,” “green,” “unique,” and innovative” website compared with a normal webpage without any information about companies’ CSR.

**Figure 4.5** shows the scores for each of the perception key words for the Chinese sample. In the three treatment groups compared with the control group, participants’ perceptions of the website are significantly different for the key words “green” and “socially-responsible.” They, however, did not consider the webpage with CSR reporting to be a “unique” and “innovative” webpage compared with the control group.



**Figure 4.4. Perceptions of the website in the United States, by group.**



**Figure 4.5. Perceptions of the website in China, by group.**

### ***General Online CSR Reading Habits***

Two major questions were asked to elicit information about consumers' reading habits with respect to CSR online. One asked how often people spend time browsing CSR online reporting webpages while shopping on a fashion/apparel retailer's online store, the other asked how they want to learn about this topic online. Results were analyzed by age group, gender, and education level, and separately by country.

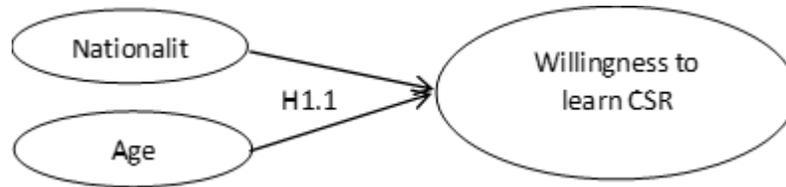
### **Hypothesis 1: Willingness to learn online about CSR in the apparel industry**

A 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree) was used to measure participants' willingness to learn about CSR. In SPSS, a univariate analysis of variance through a general linear model was used to identify the independent variables, including categorical and numerical variables, and their effects on the dependent variables. Two-way ANOVA was used to determine the levels of difference in each of the variable groups. These tests identified between which of the groups there were significant differences. Chi-square and crosstab were also used to test for differences between the means of the different groups (age, gender, education, etc.) on the dependent measures (attitude, willingness). The questions and scales were determined to be significant at the 95% confidence level ( $p \leq .05$ ) (see **Appendix 8**).

In addition, a definition of apparel industry CSR was provided immediately before the statement, which read: "CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole." ANOVA was used to analyze the differences between the groups, nationality and dependent variables.

**H1.1., willingness to learn online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by age and nationality.**

Data were collected from the two surveys distributed in the United States and China. The average means of the two countries were significantly different from each other ( $p < .001$ ).



**Table 4.6. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H1.1**

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	106.80	5	21.36	10.59	.000
<b>Age</b>	45.20	2	22.60	11.21	.000
<b>Nation</b>	3.99	1	3.99	1.98	.160
<b>Age#Nation</b>	29.35	2	14.67	7.28	.001
<b>Residual</b>	2445.42	1113	2.02		
<b>Total</b>	2552.21	1118	2.10		

*Note:* All were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

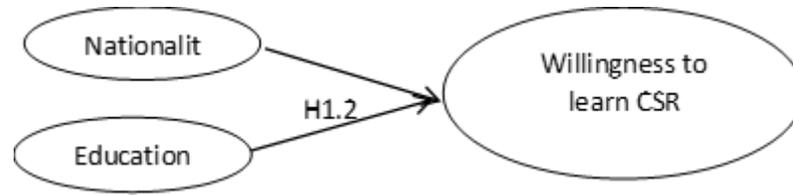
AGE	Nationality		Table 4.7 Average mean for H1.1
	USA	CHINA	
18-22	4.52	4.50	
22-25	5.02	4.93	
25-29	4.90	5.47	

	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@age</b>						
<b>(China vs USA) 18-22</b>	1	.00	.9749	-.01	.28	-.55
<b>(China vs USA) 22-25</b>	1	.37	.5449	-.09	.15	-.37
<b>(China vs USA) 25-29</b>	1	29.24	.0000	.56	.10	.36
<b>Joint</b>	3	9.87	.0000			
<b>age@nation</b>						
<b>(22-25 vs 18-22) USA</b>	1	5.21	.2260	.50	.22	.07
<b>(22-25 vs 18-22) China</b>	1	3.60	.0581	.42	.22	-.01
<b>(25-29 vs 18-22) USA</b>	1	3.43	.0641	.38	.21	-.02
<b>(25-29 vs 18-22) China</b>	1	20.42	.0000	.96	.21	.54
<b>Joint</b>		9.36	.0000			
<b>Total</b>	1120					

**Table 4.8. Simple Effects Analysis for H1.1**

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of age and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry. There was a significant difference among age groups on the willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry as well as a significant interaction between the effects of age and nationality on it,  $F(2, 1113) = 7.28, p = .0007$ . Simple effects analysis showed that in China age group 25-29 were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than age group 18-22 ( $p < 0.001$ ), and among the age group 25-29, Chinese subjects were significantly more interested in learning this topic than United States subjects ( $p < 0.001$ ), but there were no differences between nations when they were in the other age group: 18-22, 22-25. Hypothesis **H1.1** is supported.

*H1.2., willingness to learn online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by education and nationality.*



Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	88.06	5	17.61	8.67	.0000
<b>Education</b>	24.00	2	12.00	5.91	.0028
<b>Nation</b>	.58	1	.58	.29	.5930
<b>Education#Nation</b>	29.35	2	14.67	7.28	.0016
<b>Residual</b>	2464.15	1113	2.03		
<b>Total</b>	2552.21	1118	2.10		

**Table 4.9. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H1.2**

*Note:* All were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

Education	Nationality		Table 4.10 Average mean for H1.2
	USA	CHINA	
High School	4.67	4.74	
Undergraduate	4.94	5.36	
Graduate	5.12	4.79	

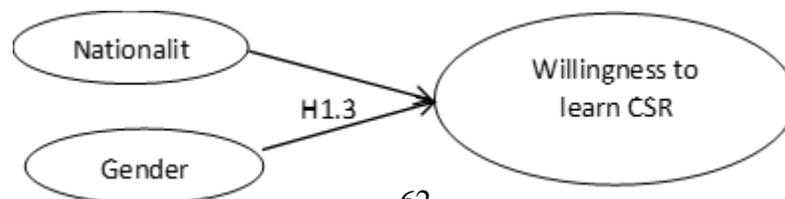
**Table 4.11. Simple Effects Analysis for H1.2**

	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@education</b>						
(China vs USA) high school	1	.08	.7803	.07	.25	-.42
(China vs USA) undergrad	1	13.92	.0002	.42	.11	.20
(China vs USA) grad	1	3.36	.0671	-.32	.17	-.66
Joint	3	5.78	.0006			
<b>education@nation</b>						
(undergrad vs high school) USA	1	3.68	.0553	.50	.22	.07
(Undergrad vs high school) China	1	6.83	.0091	.42	.22	-.01
(grad vs high school) USA	1	8.47	.0037	.38	.21	-.02
(grad vs high school) China	1	.04	.8417	.96	.21	.54
Joint	4	6.99	0.0000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1120</b>					

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of education and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry. There was a significant difference among education groups as well as a significant interaction between the effects of education and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry,  $F(2, 1113) = 6.50, p = .0016$ .

Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese undergraduate students were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States undergrads ( $p < .001$ ). In United States, master degree holders are more interested in this topic. There were no differences between nations when they were in high school degree holder ( $p = .780$ ), bachelor degree holder ( $p = .067$ ). Hypothesis **H1.2** is supported.

***H1.3., willingness to learn online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality.***



**Table 4.12. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H1.3**

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	57.80	3	19.26	9.38	0.000
<b>Gender</b>	3.56	1	3.56	1.74	0.1880
<b>Nation</b>	29.39	1	29.39	14.32	0.0002
<b>Gender#Nation</b>	23.45	1	23.45	11.42	0.0007
<b>Residual</b>	2494.42	1115	2.05		
<b>Total</b>	2552.21	1118	2.10		

*Note:* All were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

	<b>Nationality</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>CHINA</b>
<b>Female</b>	5.12	5.15
<b>Male</b>	4.73	5.32

**Table 4.13 Average mean for H1.3**

**Table 4.14. Simple Effects Analysis for H1.3**

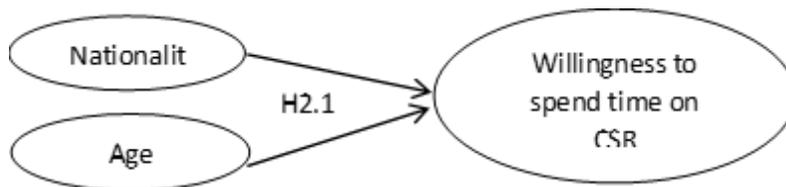
	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@gender</b>						
<b>(China vs USA) Female</b>	1	.08	.7733	.03	.12	-.19
<b>(China vs USA) Male</b>	1	25.25	.0000	.59	.12	.36
<b>Joint</b>	2	12.66	.0000			
<b>gender@nation</b>						
<b>(Male vs Female) USA</b>	1	10.72	.0011	-.39	.12	-.62
<b>(Male vs Female) China</b>	1	2.19	.1392	.17	.12	-.06
<b>Joint</b>	2	6.46	.0016			
<b>Total</b>	1120					

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of gender and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry. There was a significant interaction between the effects of age and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry,  $F(1, 1115) = 23.45, p = .0007$ . Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese male were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States male ( $p < .001$ ). In United States, female groups is more interested in learning in this topic ( $p < .001$ ), but there were no differences between genders when in China and there were no differences among Chinese and people from the United States female. Hypothesis **H1.3** is supported.

**Hypothesis 2: Willingness to spend time on CSR online in the apparel industry**

A 5-point Likert scale was adopted to measure the time a subject is willing to spend online reading about CSR in the apparel industry. Scales range from a long time—“over one hour”—to “half an hour,” “15 minutes,” “5 minutes” to “Never.” The mean time that the two groups were willing to contribute is between “15 minutes” and “5 minutes.” In comparing the two countries, Chinese participants have a higher willingness to spend time online learning about CSR in the apparel industry ( $M = 3.27$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ) than U.S. participants ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ). The higher the scores, the lower participants’ willingness to spend time on CSR online reporting.

*H2.1., willingness to spend time on online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by age and nationality.*



**Table 4.15. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H2.1**

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	96.38	5	19.28	18.36	0.000
<b>Age</b>	33.90	2	16.95	16.15	0.0000
<b>Nation</b>	1.13	1	1.13	1.08	0.2995
<b>Age#Nation</b>	30.79	2	15.40	14.67	0.0000
<b>Residual</b>	1272.24	1112	1.05		
<b>Total</b>	1368.61	1117	1.12		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

	Nationality	
AGE	USA	CHINA
18-22	3.67	3.98
22-25	3.56	3.56
25-29	3.58	3.02

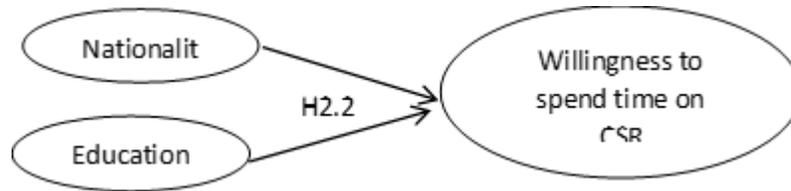
**Table 4.16 Average mean for H2.1**

**Table 4.17. Simple Effects Analysis for H2.1**

	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@age</b>						
<b>(China vs USA) 18-22</b>	1	2.46	.1171	.31	.20	-.07
<b>(China vs USA) 22-25</b>	1	.00	.9991	-.00	.11	-.21
<b>(China vs USA) 25-29</b>	1	55.73	.0000	-.56	.08	-.71
<b>Joint</b>	3	19.40	.0000			
<b>age@nation</b>						
<b>(22-25 vs 18-22) USA</b>	1	.48	.4908	-.11	.16	-.42
<b>(22-25 vs 18-22) China</b>	1	6.91	.0087	-.42	.16	-.74
<b>(25-29 vs 18-22) USA</b>	1	.30	.5849	-.08	.15	-.37
<b>(25-29 vs 18-22) China</b>	1	39.28	.0000	-.96	.15	-.13
<b>Joint</b>	4	15.60	.0000			
<b>Total</b>	1120					

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of age and nationality on willingness to spend time on CSR online reporting in apparel industry. There was a significant differences among age group as well as a significant interaction between the effects of age and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry,  $F(2, 1112) = 14.67, p < .0001$ . Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese were significantly more interested in spending time on CSR online reporting than the United States in the age range of 25-29 ( $p < .0001$ ). In China, age group 25-29 is more interested in spending time on this topic than age group 18-22 ( $p < .0001$ ), but there were no differences between nations in age group 18-22 and 22-25 and there were no differences among age groups in United States. Hypothesis **H2.1** is supported.

*H2.2., willingness to learn online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by education and nationality.*



Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	78.09	5	15.61	14.67	.0000
<b>Education</b>	25.78	2	12.89	12.11	.0000
<b>Nation</b>	1.15	1	1.15	1.08	.2984
<b>Education#Nation</b>	17.18	2	8.59	8.07	.0003
<b>Residual</b>	1290.52	1112	1.06		
<b>Total</b>	1368.61	1117	1.12		

**Table 4.18. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H2.2**

*Note:* All were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

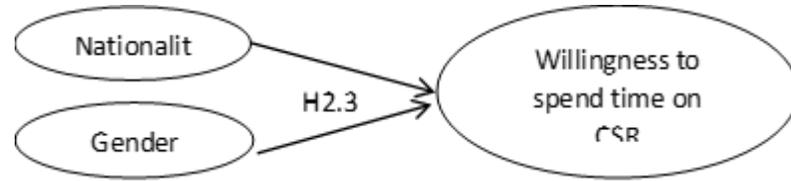
Education	Nationality		Table 4.19 Average mean for H2.2
	USA	CHINA	
High School	3.83	3.87	
Undergraduate	3.61	3.18	
Graduate	3.27	3.40	

**Table 4.20. Simple Effects Analysis for H2.2**

	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@education</b>						
<b>(China vs USA) high school</b>	1	.06	.8021	.05	.18	-.31
<b>(China vs USA) undergrad</b>	1	26.65	.0000	-.42	.08	-.59
<b>(China vs USA) grad</b>	1	1.11	.2915	.13	.13	-.11
<b>Joint</b>	3	9.28	.0000			
<b>education@nation</b>						
<b>(undergrad vs high school) USA</b>	1	4.68	.0307	-.22	.10	-.42
<b>(Undergrad vs high school) China</b>	1	16.02	.0001	-.69	.17	-.01
<b>(grad vs high school) USA</b>	1	25.74	.0000	-.56	.10	-.77
<b>(grad vs high school) China</b>	1	6.00	.0144	-.47	.19	-.85
<b>Joint</b>	4	11.09	.0000			
<b>Total</b>	1120					

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of education and nationality on willingness to spend time on CSR online reporting in apparel industry. There was a significant differences among education groups as well as a significant interaction between the effects of education and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry,  $F(2,1112)=8.07, p=.0003$ . Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese undergraduate degree holders were significantly more interested in spending time on CSR online reporting than the United States undergrads in ( $p<.0001$ ). In China , undergrads is more interested in spending time on this topic than high school degree holders( $p=.0001$ ),and in the United States, master degree holders are significantly more willing to spend time on the topic than high school. there were no differences between nations in high school degree holders and master degree holders. Hypothesis **H2.2** is supported.

*H2.3., willingness to spend time on online CSR reporting in apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality.*



**Table 4.21. Two-Way ANOVA Analysis for H2.3**

Source	Partial SS	df	MS	F	Prob >F
<b>Model</b>	31.25	3	10.42	9.45	.0000
<b>Gender</b>	.20	1	.20	.18	.6715
<b>Nation</b>	31.10	1	31.10	28.23	.0000
<b>Gender#Nation</b>	.17	1	.17	.16	.6905
<b>Residual</b>	1337.37	1114	1.10		
<b>Total</b>	1368.61	1117	1.12		

*Note:* All were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

<b>Nationality</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>CHINA</b>
<b>Female</b>	3.58	3.29
<b>Male</b>	3.58	3.24

**Table 4.22 Average mean for H2.3**

**Table 4.23. Simple Effects Analysis for H2.3**

	df	F	Prob >F	Contrast	Std.Err	95% Conf.I
<b>nation@gender</b>						
<b>(China vs USA) Female</b>	1	12.29	.0005	-.30	.09	-.46
<b>(China vs USA) Male</b>	1	16.03	.0001	-.35	.09	-.52
<b>Joint</b>	2	14.16	.0000			
<b>gender@nation</b>						
<b>(Male vs Female) USA</b>	1	.00	.9856	-.00	.09	-.17
<b>(Male vs Female) China</b>	1	.35	.5554	.05	.08	-.22
<b>Joint</b>	2	.17	.8402			
<b>Total</b>	1120					

A two-way ANOVA was run on a sample of 1120 participants to examine the effect of gender and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry. There was a significant interaction between the effects of age and nationality on willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry,  $F(1, 1115) = 23.45, p = .0007$ . Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese male were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States male ( $p < .001$ ). In United States, female groups is more interested in learning in this topic ( $p = .001$ ), but there were no differences between genders when in China and there were no differences among Chinese and people from the United States female. Hypothesis **H2.3** is supported.

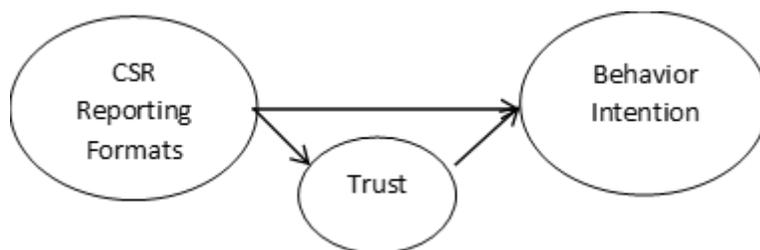
**Table 4.24. Summary of Hypotheses: Willingness to Learn About CSR by Age, Education, Gender, and Nationality**

<b>Hypothesis</b>			
<b>H1.1 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by age and nationality.</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Age	.0000	
	Nation	.1600	
	Age # Nation	.0010	
<b>H1.2 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by education and nationality</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Education	.0028	
	Nation	.5930	
	Education#Nation	.0016	
<b>H1.3 Willingness to learn online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Gender	.1880	
	Nation	.0002	
	Gender# Nation	.0007	
<b>H2.1 Willingness to spend time on online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by age and nationality</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Age	.0000	
	Nation	.2995	
	Age#Nation	.0000	
<b>H2.2 Willingness to spend time on online about CSR reporting in the apparel industry is affected by education and nationality</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Education	.0000	
	Nation	.2984	
	Education#Nation	.0003	
<b>H2.3 Willingness to learn online about CSR in the apparel industry is affected by gender and nationality.</b>			
		<b>p</b>	<b>Supported</b>
	Gender	.6715	
	Nation	.0000	
	Gender# Nation	.6905	

### **Hypothesis 3: Reporting formats, trust, and behavioral intention**

In the experiment and the survey, participants were randomly assigned to one of four treatment groups: the certification group (312 participants), the action group (285 participants), the strategy group (338 participants), or the control group (285 participants). After viewing the mock website, participants were asked to respond to the same questions. A 7-point Likert scale was adopted to measure the concepts.

In order to know the differences on this hypothesis across these two countries, analysis was conducted among the two countries' data : China and the United States. By comparing the results from treatment groups to control group within each country, we could know if there is significant influences among different reporting formats groups on trust and behavioral intentions of buying and recommending websites.



#### ***H3.1. Different reporting formats will result in different trust levels in China and the United States.***

The trust level for the control group ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) was significantly different from the three treatment groups. Of the three treatment groups, the certification group has the highest trust-level score ( $M = 5.32$ ,  $SD = .87$ ), followed by the action group ( $M = 5.18$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), which is not significant differently from the certification group. The lowest trust score was generated by the strategy group ( $M = 5.03$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ); the strategy group is significantly different from the score for the certification group, but not the action group. In general, the scores for the three

groups are all significantly different from the control group score; however, there are no clear differences between the three treatment groups. Therefore, **H3.1** is partially supported.

***H3.2. Different reporting formats will result in different behavioral intentions of buying and recommends towards the website in China and the United States.***

The results for behavioral intentions were similar to the results for trust. The certification format generated the highest behavioral intention ( $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ), followed by the action ( $M = 5.00$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ) and strategy ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ) formats. The control group had the lowest behavioral intention scores, and it is significantly different from the three treatment groups. There is a significant difference between certification and strategy, but for action, in the middle, there are no significant differences with either the certification group or the strategy group. Therefore, hypothesis **H3.2** is partially supported.

**Table 4.25. Trust and Behavioral Intentions by Reporting-Format Group**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>	<b>Std.Err</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Trust</b>	Certification	312	5.32 <sup>a</sup>	.87	.05	.00**
	Action	285	5.18 <sup>a,b</sup>	1.05	.06	
	Strategy	338	5.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.02	.06	
	Control Group	285	4.66 <sup>c</sup>	1.04	.06	
	Total	1220	5.05	1.02	.03	
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	Certification	312	5.29 <sup>a</sup>	1.58	.09	.00**
	Action	285	5.00 <sup>a,b</sup>	1.29	.08	
	Strategy	338	4.80 <sup>b</sup>	1.35	.07	
	Control Group	285	4.36 <sup>c</sup>	1.49	.09	
	Total	1220	4.87	1.47	.04	

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at

$p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

### *United States*

In the data set for the United States, 145 participants were in the certification group, 145 participants were in the action group, 160 participants were in the strategy group, and 140 were in the control group.

The certification group had the highest trust level ( $M = 5.35$ ,  $SD = .56$ ), which is almost similar to that for the action group ( $M = 5.31$ ,  $SD = .87$ ), followed by the strategy group ( $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = .85$ ). In the U.S. data set, there are no significant differences between the trust level for the control group ( $M = 4.79$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ) and all of the treatment groups. Only the certification group and the action group are significantly different from the control group.

**Table 4.26. Trust and Behavioral Intentions by Reporting-Format Group in the United States**

		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev</b>	<b>Std.Err</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Trust</b>	Certification	145	5.35 <sup>a</sup>	.56	.07	.00**
	Action	145	5.31 <sup>a</sup>	.87	.08	
	Strategy	160	5.01 <sup>b</sup>	.85	.07	
	Control Group	140	4.79 <sup>b</sup>	1.00	.08	
	Total	590	5.11	.97	.04	
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	Certification	145	5.45 <sup>a</sup>	1.96	.16	.00**
	Action	145	5.20 <sup>a</sup>	1.17	.09	
	Strategy	160	4.85 <sup>a,b</sup>	1.31	.10	
	Control Group	140	4.43 <sup>b</sup>	1.62	.13	
	Total	590	4.98	1.58	.07	

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

The certification group, again, has the highest behavioral intention level ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ ). The action group is slightly lower than the certification group. The strategy group has a lower behavioral intention score ( $M = 4.85$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ), and it is significantly different from certification treatment but not significantly different from the control group ( $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = 1.62$ ).

### *China*

In the data set for China, 167 participants were in the certification treatment group, 140 were in the action treatment group, 178 were in the strategy treatment group, and 145 were in the control group.

In China, the trust level for the control group ( $M = 4.54$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) is significantly lower than for the treatment groups. The three treatment groups are all significantly different from the control group (see **Table 4.27**). The certification treatment yielded the highest trust score ( $M = 5.30$ ,  $SD = 5.04$ ), and the action treatment was slightly below but not significantly different from the certification treatment group. The strategy treatment group ( $M = 5.04$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ) generated results similar to those for the action group. Basically, the three treatment groups were not significantly different from each other.

As with H3.1., the behavioral intention score for the control group is significantly different from those for the three treatment groups. However, there are no significant differences between the treatment groups. The certification group has the highest score ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ), followed by the action ( $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) and strategy ( $M = 4.7$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ) groups.

**Table 4.27. Results for Trust and Behavioral Intention by Reporting-Format Group in China**

		N	Mean	Std.Dev	Std.Err	P
<b>Trust</b>	Certification	167	5.30 <sup>a</sup>	.89	.07	.00**
	Action	140	5.04 <sup>a</sup>	1.11	.09	
	Strategy	178	5.04 <sup>a</sup>	1.07	.08	
	Control Group	145	4.54 <sup>c</sup>	1.06	.09	
	Total	630	4.99	1.07	.04	
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	Certification	167	5.17 <sup>a</sup>	1.15	.09	.00**
	Action	140	4.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.38	.11	
	Strategy	178	4.77 <sup>a</sup>	1.39	.10	
	Control Group	145	4.30 <sup>b</sup>	1.37	.11	
	Total	630	4.77	1.35	.05	

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

#### **Hypothesis 4: Trust as mediation**

*H4. The effects of CSR online reporting on behavioral intentions are mediated by consumer trust in China and the United States.*

The STATA data-analysis package was used to conduct SEM (Structure Equation Model ) analysis on the total (China and United States) sample to examine whether there are significant differences in the factor loadings and path coefficients across the reporting formats used in the current study. By SEM, we could find out if trust act as a mediator within the proposed model. Since this study aimed to explore the differences across China and the United States , when conducting SEM in this study, nationality was considered as a grouping factor. Grouping factor in SEM means the factor that separate the data into different groups. By comparing the fitting of

separating nationality or not, we will know if nationality will be a factor in the model that actually result in different outcomes and if we separate the data into different countries, if the model will work better than combining them together. The SEM analysis results came from two countries' data told us the story of how the model works in China and the United States and what the differences are.

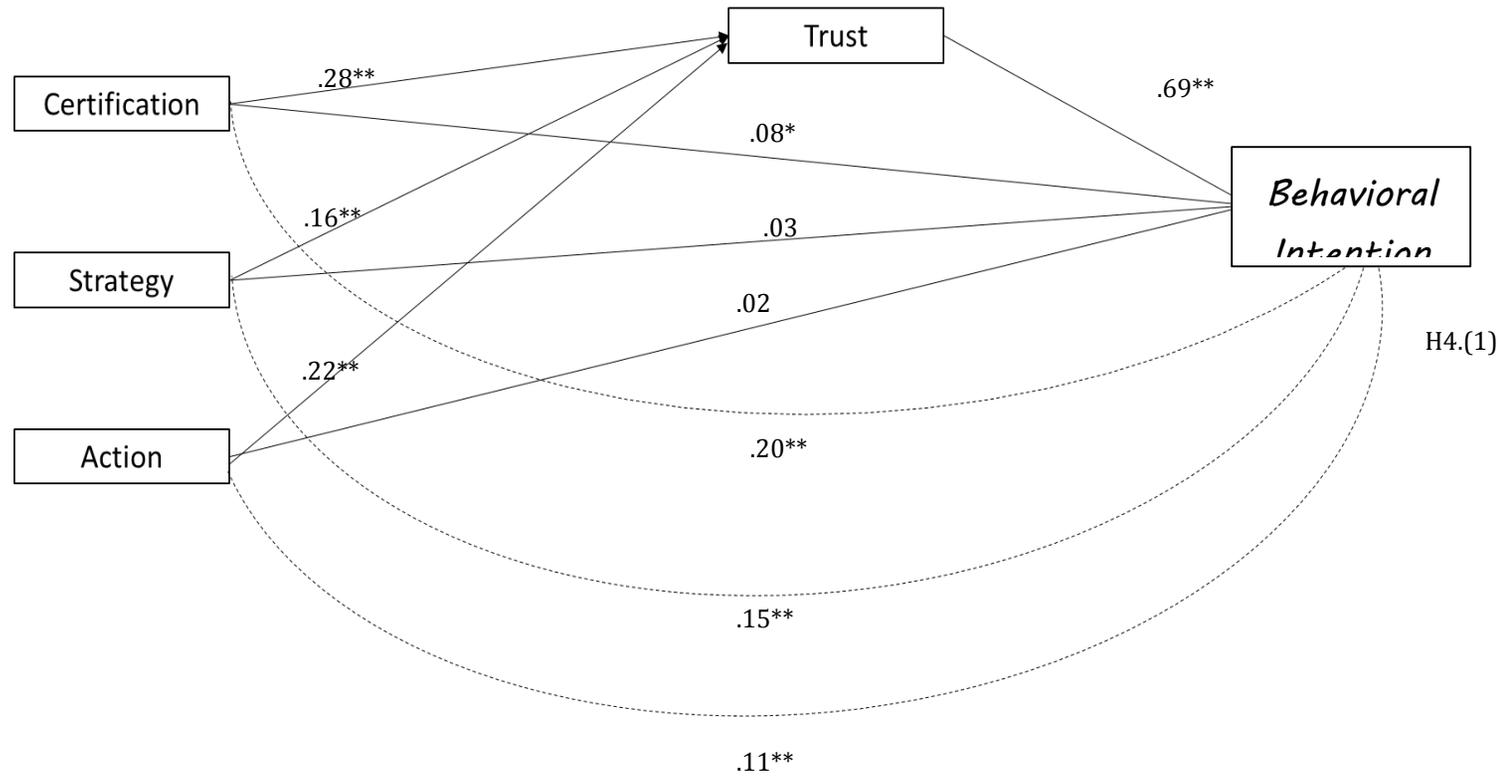
Investigating the mediating role of trust in the relationship between the reporting-formats treatment and its behavioral intention is one objective for the study to deeply understand the relationship. SEM (also called covariance structure analysis) is designed, in part, to test these more complicated models in a single analysis instead of separate regression analyses. Iacobucci, Saldanha, and Deng (2007) argues that structural equation approaches dominate the “causal steps” approach of Baron and Kenny (1986). Zhao et al. (2010) also agree that the SEM approach is superior to Baron and Kenny's because it estimates everything simultaneously instead of assuming that the three basic equations (independent variable → dependent variable; independent variable → mediator; dependent variable → mediator and independent variable) in Baron and Kenny's theory are independent.

**Figure 4.1** indicates the SEM model for mediation analysis with the whole data set: A solid line indicates the direct effect of the relationship between the concepts, and a dashed line indicates the indirect effect. If there is no direct effect from dependent variable to independent variable but a direct effect from dependent variable through mediator to dependent variable, then it shows the relationship with trust as a mediator. If the coefficient indicates significant differences in the indirect effect path, it shows the mediation function of trust in the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variables.

This section proposed the hypothesis that the format used to report CSR information on a webpage will affect consumers' behavioral intentions through the effects of trust, which acts as a mediator in the relationship. There are two models in the mediation analysis. One is the SEM for the whole data set combining U.S. and Chinese participants results' together. The other is the SEM for the data with a grouping effect, which means the mediation analysis was done by grouping the data by country. In STATA, there is a "grouping" command under the SEM command to carry out this function. Comparing the likelihoods given by the two models tells us which model (grouping or not grouping) is a better fit.

**Figure 4.1** is the SEM model with the whole data set. All indirect effects were statistically significant, which confirms the mediating role of the three types of trust. The magnitudes of the total effects indicate that certification had the largest impact on consumer behavioral intention, followed by action and strategy.

**Table 4.28** shows all the direct and indirect effects of the three independent variables on the dependent variables both in the mediation and with and without grouping.



**Figure 4.1. SEM model for mediation analysis with the whole data set.**

**Note. A solid line indicates a direct effect; a dashed line indicates an indirect effect : considering trust as a mediator .**

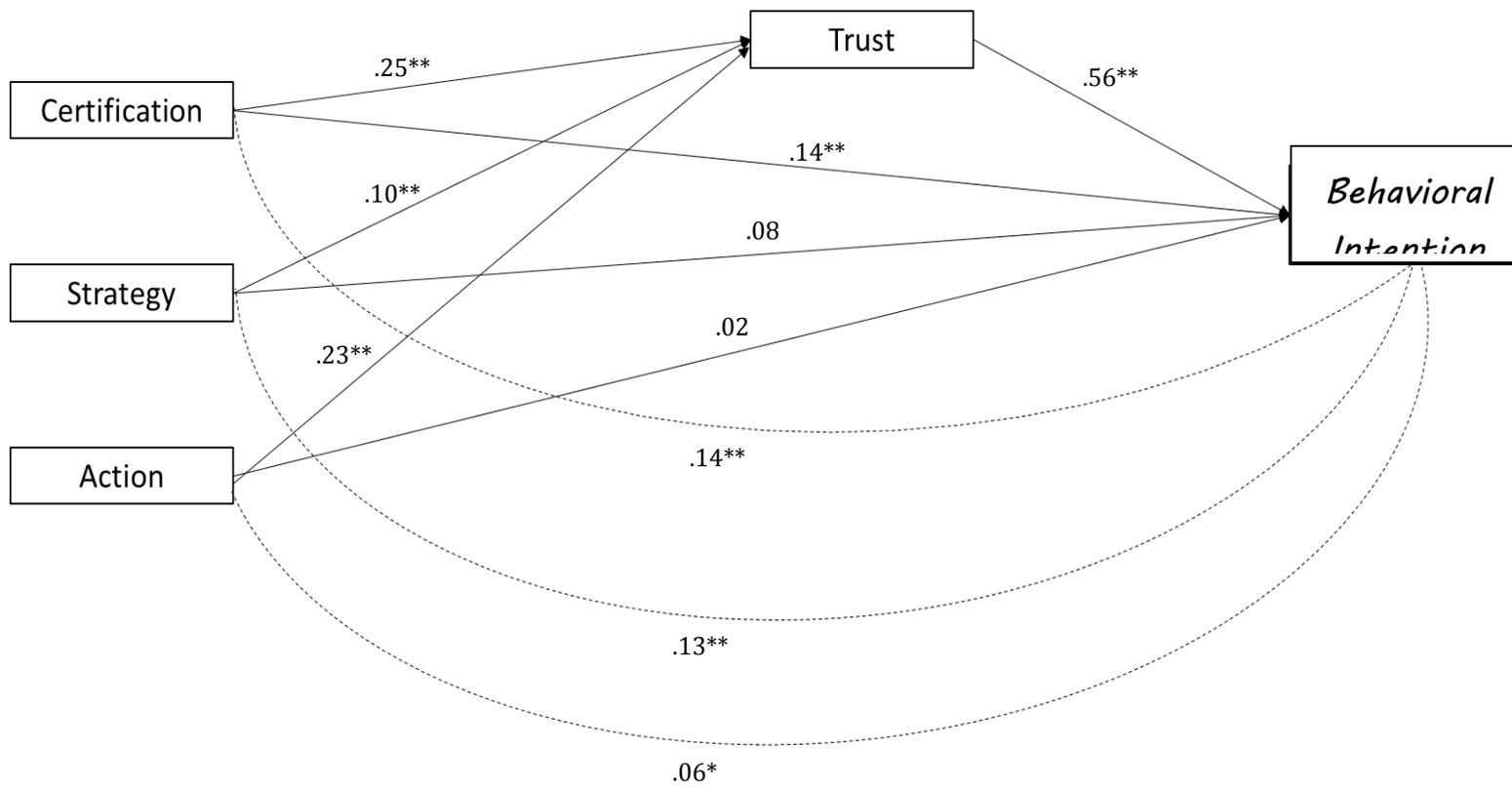
**Table 4.28. SEM Mediation Analysis**

	Total (Model 1)	By Groups (Model 2)	
		China	United States
<b>Fitting target model -2 Log-Likelihood</b>	-5207.45	-5307.72	
<b>Direct Effect</b>			
Trust → Behavioral Intention	.69**	.83**	.56**
Certification → Behavioral Intention	.08*	.02	.14*
Action → Behavioral Intention	.03	-.01	.08
Strategy → Behavioral Intention	.02	-.02	.02
Certification → Trust	.28**	.32**	.25**
Action → Trust	.22**	.20**	.23**
Strategy → Trust	.16**	.21**	.10*
<b>Indirect Effect</b>			
Certification → Trust → Behavioral Intention	.20**	.26**	.14**
Action → Trust → Behavioral Intention	.15**	.17**	.13**
Strategy → Trust → Behavioral Intention	.11**	.18**	.06*

*Note:* p<.05; \*p<.05; \*\*p<.001; all measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

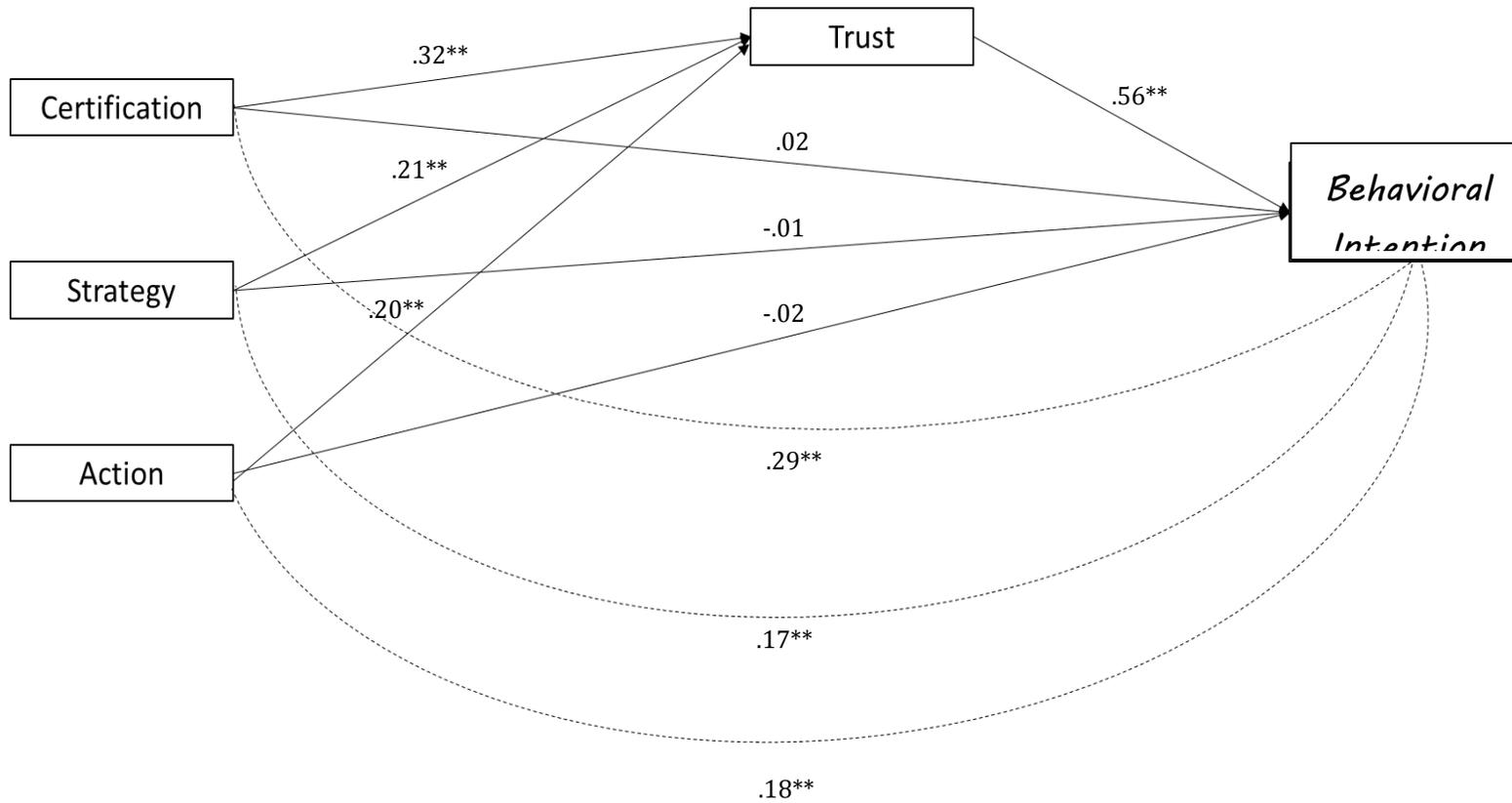
The log-likelihood values for Model 1 and Model 2 were  $-5207.45$  and  $-5307.72$ . And the difference of these two model 1 and 2's  $-2$  log-likelihood is  $200.6$ . Including grouping the two countries in the model means that there are seven more degrees of freedom in the new model. According to the Chi-square table,  $200.6 < X^2_{(7)}$  at the 95% confidence level, which indicates that the model with the grouping effect works better than the original. Therefore, trust mediated the effects of the CSR reporting formats on consumers' behavior intention. Trust should be considered as a factor that will influence consumers' shopping behaviors of buying and recommending. Therefore it should be taken into consideration when corporations develop CSR online reporting to obtain consumers' trust. The mediation model works better when we separate the participants into two countries, which means there were differences between those two countries when we conduct the SEM analysis following the proposed model. This proves the necessity of analyzing the model across these two countries separately.

**Figure 4.2** is a SEM model with the U.S. data set. All indirect effects were statistically significant, which confirms the mediating role of the three types of trust in the United States. However, the certification-reporting format has a significant direct effect on behavioral intention. This reveals the only partial mediation of trust in the U.S. model. **Figure 4.3** is a SEM model with the China data set. All indirect effects were statistically significant, which confirms the mediating role of the three types of trust in China. In addition, all the direct effects are not significant, which confirms the full mediation of trust. Hypothesis 4 was partially supported by the data.



**Figure 4.2. SEM model for mediation analysis with U.S. data.**

**Note. A solid line indicates a direct effect; a dashed line indicates an indirect effect.**



**Figure 4.3. SEM model for mediation analysis with the China data set.**

**A solid line indicates a direct effect; a dashed line indicates an indirect effect.**

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study responded to calls for an improved understanding of the CSR online communication construct in USA and non-Western settings such as China, in apparel industry. Despite large interest in CSR in China, this country has been underexposed in the academic literature (Kolk et al, 2015). It fills the gap of the current well-studied CSR communication in USA and under-studied CSR communication of consumers in China in apparel industry. Also, comparing to other existing researches (Maignan, 2001; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009; Kolk et al, 2015) that investigated in CSR communication (such as Maignan's focus on France, Germany and the USA; Ramasamy and Yueng's research on Hong Kong, Kolk et al's research on USA and China), current research not only used consumer survey but developed an experiment to investigate on the communication topic deeper.

This comparison research studies current consumer attitudes toward CSR in the apparel industry and explores the possibility of developing consumer behavioral intentions by providing CSR online reporting on a product's webpage, by adopting Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory as a framework, which proposed trust as an important mediator. The research was conducted both in the United States and in China among young adults who are currently enrolled in (1) high school education (2) undergraduate education (3) graduate education.

The first part of the research is a comparison exploratory study of participants' willingness to learn online about CSR in the apparel industry and willingness to spend time on CSR online by gender, education level, age group. It gives a general idea of current consumer different attitudes towards CSR online reporting topic considering the nationality difference.

The second part of the research is an experiment to discover CSR online reporting strategies simulate consumer behavioral intentions of buying and recommending through developing consumer trust for a website. This experiment was based on Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory. The proposed model was tested in the United States and in China. The model explained the use of different reporting strategies and their effects on consumer trust level and behavioral intention level compared to control group.

Combining the two parts, the entire study provides a deep understanding of online CSR reporting and its effects on consumers' perception of brand websites' CSR online reporting strategies. Through the experiments based on commitment-trust theory, this research provides a solution to increase consumers' behavioral intention and uses SEM mediation analysis to confirm the mediation function of trust in the model. In general, this research is an integrated study that employs both exploratory and experimental methods to understand the CSR online reporting topic in the apparel industry, which provides valuable insights.

## **Discussion**

The data were collected in two different countries, and the research was conducted in a comparative way; therefore, the discussion compares the results from these two countries. The first two parts discuss willingness to learn about and actually spend time on CSR. The third part discusses participants' general attitudes toward the designed treatment websites. Next, the results of the experiments are discussed in three parts.

**Table 5.1 Final Results from the hypothesis**

Hypothesis	Supported
H1 : The willingness to learn CSR online in apparel industry is influenced by their	
<b>age and nationality.</b>	√
<b>education and nationality</b>	√
<b>gender and nationality</b>	√
H2: The willingness to spend time on online CSR reporting in apparel industry is influenced by their	
<b>age and nationality.</b>	√
<b>education and nationality</b>	√
<b>gender and nationality</b>	√
H3:Different <b>reporting formats</b> will result in	
different levels of <b>trust</b>	<b>X</b>
different levels of <b>behavioral intention</b>	<b>X</b>
H4: The effects of CSR reporting on <b>behavioral intentions</b> are <b>mediated</b> by consumer <b>trust</b>	√

***Attitude Toward the CSR Online Reporting: nationality and demographic***

The average scores show that the whole sample, for both China and the United States, has a positive attitude toward learning online about CSR in the apparel industry. In general, Chinese participants exhibited a higher willingness than U.S. participants did. The influences of age, education, and gender are discussed in the next two sections.

*Age*

Compared horizontally cross the two countries, among all the demographic groups, Chinese people from age group 26-29 are significantly more interested in learning

CSR online reporting than people from the United States. Within the United States data set, there is no age differences between groups. For the Chinese participants, the differences between the age groups are significant. China age group 26-29 were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than other groups. The results indicate that the older the participants, the more willing they are to learn online about CSR in the apparel industry.

Chinese were significantly more interested in spending time on CSR online reporting than the United States in the age range of 26-29. In China , age group 26-29 is more interested in spending time on this topic than age group 18-22. There is a very clear trend in the age groups in China: the older the participants, the more willing they are to spend time on CSR online reporting. However, there is no age difference among age groups in the United States.

### *Education*

Chinese undergraduate students were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States undergrads. In United States, master degree holders are more interested in this topic. A very interesting finding from the China population is that neither the lower-education nor the higher-education groups have the highest willingness to learn CSR online. Instead, undergraduate population has the highest scores. Participants in either high school or graduate school exhibited a relatively lower willingness to learn this topic. This may be the result of higher education that analyzes the sustainability marketing or green branding strategy in a more objective way , which leads to the distrust of such strategies in students in graduate school. The findings for education are different than those for the U.S. data. Chinese undergraduate degree holders were significantly more interested in spending time on CSR online

reporting than the United States undergrads. In China , undergrads is more interested in spending time on this topic than high school degree holders,and in the United States, master degree holders are significantly more willing to spend time on the topic than high school.

### *Gender*

Chinese male were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States male. In the United States, there is a clear difference between males and females in this topic. Females, in general, expressed a greater willingness to learn online about CSR in the apparel industry. For the Chinese participants, there is no significant difference between females and males, even though males have slight higher scores than females. Simple effects analysis showed that Chinese male were significantly more interested in learning CSR online than the United States male. In United States, female groups is more interested in learning in this topic but there were no differences between genders within China.

By analyzing the differences among age, education and gender groups under two different countries, this research questions provide a general insights of consumers' attitude toward learning CSR online reporting. The willingness of learning the topic has to be analyzed by the willingness of spending time to create a profolio of how to communicate to different groups of online consumers.

The results from current study reflects the results of other research ( Tian et al., 2011) about the age demographic of consumer responses to Corporate Social Responsibility ( CSR ) in China. For apparel products that target at the same age group both in China and the United States, some of the demographic groups might need

special attention when apply CSR strategy in these two countries separately : The age difference between the two countries indicates that it is necessary to adopt different CSR online reporting strategy when it goes to the young adults between 26-29 : if the websites' target-consumers are among this age group in China, more CSR online disclosure won't result in very passive reactions from Chinese consumers and they are willing to learn it as well as spend more time on it. This generation who grow up in the age of globalization and experiences the Economic Reform of China is more materialistic and affected by global consumer culture (Huang et al., 2007).

For college degree holders in China and the United States, Chinese students are more welcome to the CSR reporting than the United States. Therefore, it indicates the possibility of using CSR online reporting as a communication method to improve consumers' trust and change under graduate students' behavioral of buying and recommending in China much easier than in the United States.

The gender difference can have even bigger meaning in terms of implementing the CSR online reporting strategy: Chinese male online shoppers are more interested in this topic, which can apply to many apparel brands out there that target at male consumers and have branches in both the countries. The finding of gender difference among the United States also has a very important meaning when it comes to differentiating the CSR online reporting for genders: brands that target at women's wear can be more open to the CSR topic and explore more possible way to communicate with their female consumers online. This confirms the earlier survey about the gender issues within the CSR human rights context ( Pearson, 2007) and it is potential influence on the CSR topic.

When developing the way of CSR reporting online following the results of current study, it is also very important to keep in mind that the general amount of time consumers want to spend on this topic is short. They reported that they are interested

in the CSR online reporting topic and there is a significant differences between different demographic groups in terms of how much time they are willing to spend, however, the time is limited within 5-15 minutes. This indicates the trend that companies need to develop a fast way of communicating CSR online while still can meet consumers' need of the information disclosure.

### ***Attitude Toward the Designed Treatment Websites***

Before participants were asked to report their level of trust and behavioral intentions, they were asked to rate perception key words using a 7-point Likert scale immediately after interacting with the designed treatment websites. The eight key words are “appealing,” “high quality,” “informative,” “useful,” “socially-responsible,” “green,” “unique,” and “innovative.” The scores can provide a general understanding of how they feel about the website in general and how the websites were perceived compared with the control group (without CSR reporting) or between the three different treatment groups. This question is an exploratory question to understand the “labels” that participants want to give to the websites.

Of the eight key words, the participants assigned to the three treatment groups ranked “socially-responsible” and “green” significantly higher than the control group did. This further confirms that adding CSR-related reporting to a product webpage will increase the “green” and “responsible” image of a company's website.

The words “unique” and “innovative” received relatively lower scores than the other words for the treatment groups as well as the control group. This shows the lack of innovation and creativity in online reporting of CSR information in the apparel industry. This result indicates a white space in the webpage design development. There is still potential space for apparel industries to improve their online CSR

reporting platform and to differentiate themselves from the other CSR reporting, by improving the uniqueness and innovation of their webpages.

### *United States*

In the results for the U.S. participants, besides the two words “socially-responsible” and “green,” for another two words—“unique” and “innovative”—there were significant differences between the treatment groups and the control group. Even though the average scores assigned to “unique” and “innovative” are less than for the other words, this may still indicate that CSR reporting online will increase a company’s image as “unique” and “innovative.” This confirms that CSR reporting on a webpage will differentiate webpages and increase a firm’s image in the United States. For U.S. consumers, more effort could be devoted to improving how CSR is reported to make it more unique and innovative.

### *China*

For the Chinese participants, only “socially-responsible” and “green” were significantly different between the treatment groups and the control group. Unlike for the U.S. sample, Chinese participants didn’t find putting CSR reporting on a webpage to be “unique” or “innovative.” This difference between the two countries shows the various preferences of the participants with respect to the topic. It is a valuable insight when apparel companies start introducing CSR reporting in China that reporting CSR can increase their image as “responsible” and “green,” but not as “unique” and “innovative.”

### ***Reporting Formats and Trust***

We proposed that participants assigned to different groups would report different trust levels. The average trust scores generated from the survey were significantly different

from those for the control group. This confirms that the treatment, providing the CSR reporting online on a product webpage, can increase consumers' trust in a website.

Within the three treatment groups, reporting with certification information generates the highest mean score of trust factor, followed by action information and strategy information. There is a significant difference between certification and strategy in terms of how much participants trust the website: a website with third-party certification is most effective, that highlights the business's strategy for sustainability development.compared with a strategy

The results confirms the early research on consumer CSR attitude that the increasing ethical and environmental concerns on the part of consumers have driven some companies to implement standards stemming from the concept of CSR(Magistris et al.,2014) . This may be a result of green-washing and marketing in recent business strategies, which can create a very untrustworthy image of companies. From previous research it shows that current consumers needs have generated an increasing demand for more complex credence attributes that include a wide range of certification characteristics (Moser and Raffaelli, 2011). We can clearly see the trend of more critical consumers seeking objective and certified business reporting in apparel industry in the near future.

#### *United States*

For U.S. participants, the trend is exactly the same. Certification generates the highest trust level, followed by action and strategy. Certification and action, however, are not significantly different. The strategy and control groups are not significantly different, either. However, the difference between the certification and control groups is clearly significant ( $p < .001$ ).The findings support again that certification and action now are the more trustworthy reporting formats compared with strategy reporting. The use of

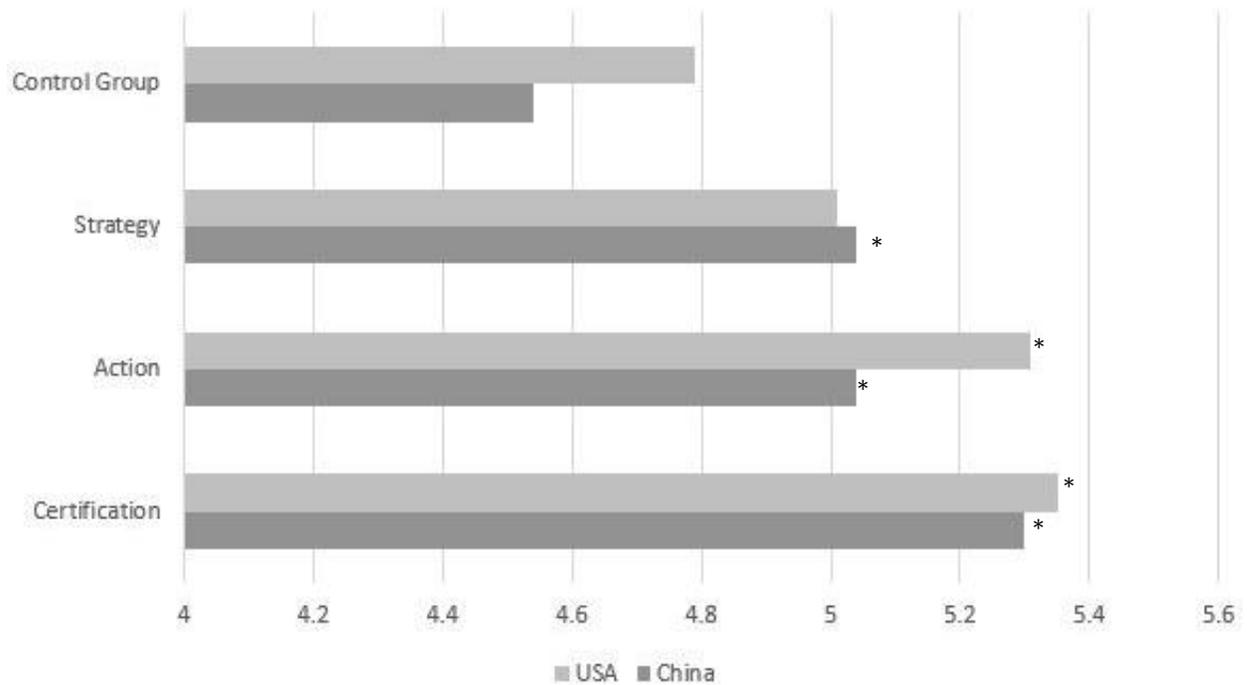
strategy reporting does not have any effect on trust compared with the control group. This confirms that it is useless for a company to report strategy online if it wants to generate consumer trust.

### *China*

For Chinese participants, the order remains the same: certification, action, and strategy. Unlike the U.S. sample, all three treatment groups can affect participants' trust levels by increasing them a significant amount. Certification and action, for Chinese participants, are no different in how they can generate their trust. Strategy, however, has the lowest ability to increase their trust. To sum up, in China, the reporting of certification information and action information are most useful in terms of generating consumer trust. Strategy reporting works, compared with nothing to report, but it is not the most effective method.

The findings from the experiment disclose the relationship of reporting strategies and level of trust and provide a reference of how to choose the effective reporting strategy when companies plan to report CSR online on their product webpage directly to consumers( see **Table 5.2**). The results also indicates that strategy reporting is not useful specially in the United States. It is valuable when companies implement the CSR online reporting into these two contries : generally speaking the trend remains the same that certification and action report can result in a higher level of trust but when it comes to strategy, companies might need to adopt different communication methods.

**Table 5.2 Reporting formats and level of trust : USA and China**



*Note : \* means the significant difference between the treatment group and control group on the graph.*

***Reporting Formats and Behavioral Intention***

Similar to trust level, certification reporting generates the highest behavioral intention followed by action and strategy. We proposed that participants assigned to different groups would have different behavioral intention levels. The behavioral intention average scores generated from the survey end up significantly different from those for the control group. This confirms that the treatment, providing CSR reporting online on a product webpage, can increase consumers’ behavioral intention of buying and recommending the brand’s website to others.

Within the three treatment groups, reporting with certification information generates the highest mean behavioral intention factor score, followed by action information and strategy information. There is a significant difference between certification and strategy in terms of how participants might perform shopping and

recommendation actions for the website. It indicates that a website with third-party certification is most effective, compared with a strategy that highlights the business's strategy for sustainability development.

#### *United States*

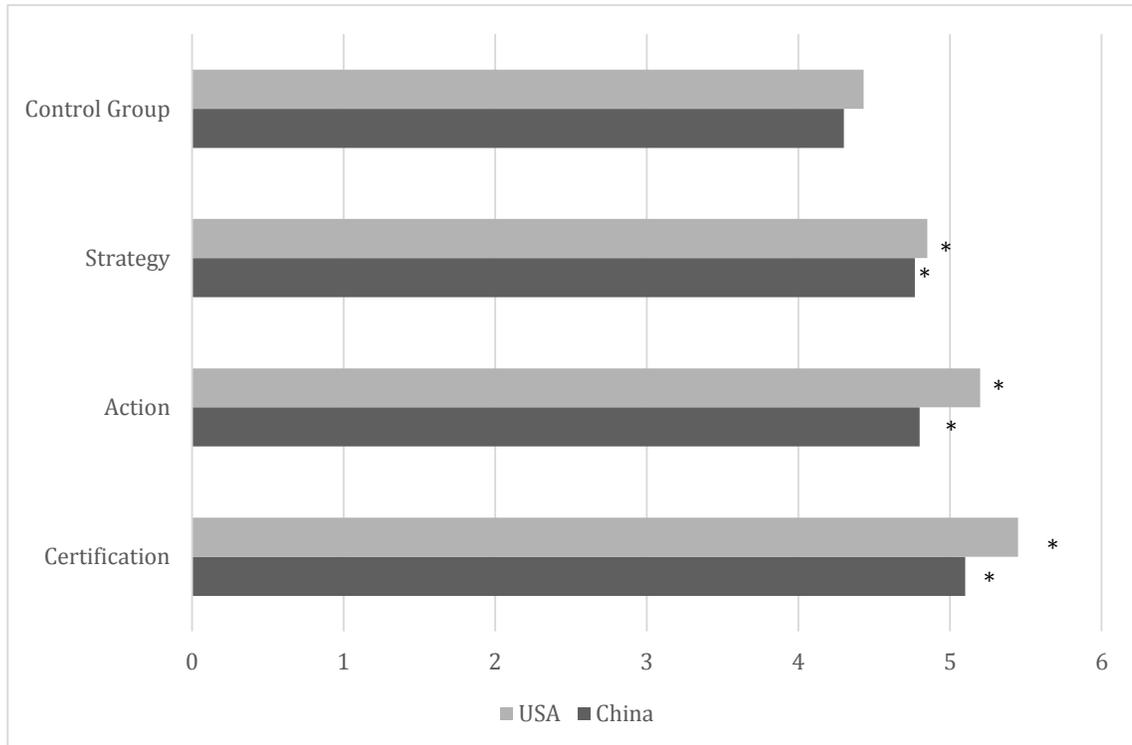
For the U.S. sample, the trend is the same. Certification generates the highest behavioral intention level, followed by action and strategy. Certification and action, however, are not significantly different. The strategy and control groups are not significantly different, either, but the difference between the certification and control groups is clearly significant ( $p < .001$ ).

The findings support again that certification and action are now more effective reporting formats than strategy reporting. The use of strategy reporting has no effect on behavioral intention compared with the control group. This confirms that it is useless for a company to report strategy online if it wants to increase consumer behavioral intention.

#### *China*

For the Chinese participants, the order remains the same: certification, action, and strategy. All three treatment groups are not significantly different from each other; however, they are all different from the control group. All three treatment groups can affect participants' behavioral intention level by increasing them in a significant amount.

**Table 5.2 Reporting formats and level of behavioral Intention : USA and China**



*Note : \* means the significant difference between the treatment group and control group on the graph.*

It is clear that behavioral intention is highly related to trust. The results generated from the survey show very similar differences between treatment groups and control groups. It was confirmed in the commitment-trust theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994) that trust acts as mediator in the relationship between marketing strategy and behavioral intention.

### ***Trust as Mediation***

Based on the findings of the previous analysis and also the model adopted from Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust can mediate the relationship between marketing strategy and behavioral intentions (shop and recommend).

Two sets of mediator analysis were conducted with the whole data set and with the grouping of “United States” and “China.” Findings showed that the effects of CSR reporting on behavioral intentions were fully mediated by consumer trust. The model is, however, a better fit when analyzing the two countries separately. For the U.S. participants, trust partially mediates the effects of CSR reporting on behavioral intentions; for the Chinese participants, trust fully mediates the effects of CSR reporting on behavioral intentions.

In other words, these provide a further testament to the importance of consumer trust. The mediator role of trust in both countries confirms the results from previous research and theory that the positive relationship between consumer behavioral intention of buying and recommending was transmitted by trust (Kim et al., 2015). This result is partially consistent with the work of Hur et al (2013), which shows that consumer perception of CSR and corporate reputation were fully mediated by corporate brand credibility. The research also suggested that CSR researchers need to pay attention to cognitive mechanisms (e.g., trust and credibility) and explore the possibility of other affective mechanisms (e.g., satisfaction) (Kim et al., 2015). A company needs to build its CSR practices before it can expect to generate consumers’ behavioral intentions such as buying and recommending. The development of consumer trust can affect consumers’ behavioral intention much more in the Chinese population. There may be other factors that influence U.S. consumers beyond just trust factors.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, reporting CSR information on a product webpage in the apparel industry is recommended. However, when implementing the strategy, the

content, the formats, and the targeted consumers all need to be carefully considered to create a more effective reporting method.

### ***Recommendations for the Apparel Industry***

The topic of CSR has been discussed in the apparel industry for a while, and it is still a crucial element that almost every company in the industry would like to include. For giant retailers and manufacturers, sustainability and social responsibility can affect their global image and business significantly. Consumers play an important role in promoting a company's CSR strategy. The annual CSR report for stakeholders is necessary, and it is also necessary to develop a CSR communication outside the company targeted at consumers specifically. For the two most representative countries, the United States and China, there are several differences between consumers in terms of how they think about the topic and what could affect their behaviors. These findings are very valuable for industry players that have a global vision of the business.

### ***For Businesses cross the two countries***

Generally speaking, compared the two group of subjects' willingness to learn CSR online reporting, Chinese subjects show stronger interests than United States and they are more like to spend time on it. When corporates plan to implement CSR online reporting strategy, based on their target consumers group, these groups below may need more attention and they are easier to target at:

Compare the same age group, Chinese people in their late 20's are significant more interested in this topic and spend more time on it. The same situation goes to the education group and undergraduates in China are easier to target. Also, for male group, Chinese are more willing to learn this topic as well as spend time on it. When it goes to the time they want to spend, Chinese female is significantly more willing to spend

time on this topic. Those groups are the main targets that corporates may want to pay attention when they implement the CSR reporting into these two countries.√√√

*For Businesses in the United States*

In general, people in the United States might have relatively lower interest in CSR than people in China do. This doesn't mean they lack interest in CSR in the apparel industry; it may be the reason for the longer-term implementation of CSR reporting or marketing in the United States apparel markets. In other words, consumers in the United States may have higher expectation of the quality of CSR online reporting than consumers in China.

The findings from the experiments confirm that creating a space on a product webpage for presenting CSR information is effective in increasing behavioral intentions (e.g., shop and recommend). Since “innovative” and “unique” are associated with CSR reporting in the apparel industry according to the participants, companies that emphasize innovation and uniqueness in the market might need to work on adding more CSR reporting to their product webpages.

When companies decide which reporting format is used online, certification and action can be a choice but not strategy reporting format. Since trust is the partially mediation, there can be more other factors that are possibility able to mediate the path. In future research, more testaments can also be done to explore other possible mediators that generate behavioral intentions of buying and recommending. When companies' target consumers are the group with various demographic groups, the reporting of CSR should be differeciated by the education groups and also gender groups.

### *For Businesses in China*

As the literature review pointed out, CSR, as a new business term, was introduced to China just a short time ago. This new term was very new to Chinese consumers. This explains why participants in China generally have higher willingness to learn about and to spend time on CSR online reporting in the apparel industry. Also, since many clothing manufacturers are based in China, the pollution it produces as well as worker rights issues come from this industry, compared to western countries where those issues are generally considered as “foreign issue” . It can generate more consumer attention if apparel companies emphasize their CSR. The attitude consumers have toward the designed website are that it is socially responsible and green. It is apparent that Chinese participants view CSR reporting as a positive method for improving a company’s online webpage image as responsible and green. However, Chinese consumers didn’t think such activity ( reporting CSR online on product webpage) is innovative or unique.

When companies try to implement CSR online reporting in China, education and age needs to be considered when it applies to different demographic groups. Based on the findings, apparel retailers that target higher-income consumers need to pay more attention to reporting CSR online for consumers. Also, keep the time range as lower as possible to avoid consumers’ getting tired to reading reporting online( suggesting 5-15 minutes according to the experiment) , which supports the idea that CSR reporting for consumers needs to be separated from the main reporting for inner business communication.

The findings from the mediation analysis confirm that trust mediates the effects of different CSR reporting formats on consumer’s behavioral intentions. In other words, when choosing a method for reporting CSR on a product webpage, companies need to consider if the communication format can generat consumers’

trust. Based on the current research result, all of the three reporting formats (certification, action and strategy), compared to control group, will result in generating consumers' trust level for the websites.

### ***Recommendations for Research***

This is a cross-culture study with relatively large sample. There is much information, including demographic, general attitude and consumer psychology, in the results. The demographic information can be not only used in the attitude study but also combined with the experimental results. For example, certification reporting has a different effect on consumers' trust in different demographic groups (higher in the Chinese group in the current study). Taking age, gender, and education level into consideration may generate many more interesting findings.

Based on the findings from the current research, there are several interesting phenomenon that can be studied in the future:

(1) The lower willingness of consumers to spend time on CSR reporting but relatively high willingness to learn about CSR.

This indeed reveals consumers' attitude toward this issue: I care about the topic and if it is provided in a convenient and easy-to-absorb way, it will affect my shopping behaviors; however, I am not going to spend extra time on it. Increasing the information density of reporting for consumers becomes important. This also supports the current findings that certification is the most effect reporting method, since it is certified and reliable from the consumers' side.

(2) Reporting CSR on the product website will increase consumers' perceptions of the webpage.

No matter what kinds of reporting strategies were chosen, having CSR information on the webpage can increase consumers' perception of the webpage in

terms of being “socially- responsible” and “green.” In other words, this study confirms that displaying CSR-related information directly on the product page is an effective way to improve a company’s image from the consumer side. If this activity is supported, then more research can be done to explore possible ways to use the product webpage platform to increase the image of sustainability in the apparel industry.

(3) There are nationality-related differences in the CSR reporting in the apparel industry and in consumers’ attitudes toward this issue.

The concept of CSR was invented in the United States, and now it is being introduced into different territories around the world, interacting with local cultures and business models. It is certain that the way local consumers treat the concept and the way businesses treat the concept are different from their treatment in the United States. In the apparel industry, products can be sold in every corner of the world, and they are everyday goods that people might encounter the most. The apparel industry is very consumer-oriented, and there are many existing confounding factors that can influence how a fashionable brand is perceived. Therefore, how to treat CSR reporting for consumers in a positive and acceptable way is very demanding from the industry and can be a potential research topic in the future.

This study also confirms that grouping participants by nationality will increase the fit of the model. A CSR reporting or marketing strategy can’t remain the same when it is implemented in different countries or even cultures. This is quite valuable for companies or academic groups that are interested in global study of the apparel industry and CSR. Consumers with different cultural backgrounds have various personal preferences for website designs and reporting strategies. Besides this study, other research on the topic of CSR reporting and consumers can also include nationality as a grouping factor.

(4) Trust fully mediates the relationship between reporting formats and behavioral intention in China, and partially in the United States.

This difference is rooted in the history of CSR and its expansion outside the United States. Why is trust a full mediator in China but only a partial mediator in the United States? What procedure affects changes in the development of CSR consumer communication? In the current study, only a mediation analysis within the two countries was performed, but it does not explore deeply enough to uncover the reason behind the difference. Future studies can target cross-cultural differences in the mediation of trust.

### ***Recommendations for Consumers***

The trend of more critical and careful consumers is apparent in this study. Especially in the United States, the reporting of strategy has no effect on trust or behavioral intentions. This reveals that consumers are becoming more rational in the age of green marketing or green-washing. This is a very promising finding, because it confirms that consumers are becoming more demanding than in years past, and this trend will push the entire industry toward a more objective and strict reporting policy.

Consumers have the right to doubt and to ask for more transparent supply-chain reporting in the apparel industry. The more consumers require, the more retailers and manufactures have to change. A similar thing happened to Nike several years ago, and now it has become one of the leading sustainable brands leading the revolution. Even though third-party certification is currently the most reliable way to measure a company's CSR performances, consumers need to still be careful about the reporting and certification that emerges from the source because the quality of third-party certifications are still various on the market. Once again, in the world of marketing,

consumers are the information receivers and screeners. Consumers also have the ability to regulate the market and its products.

### ***Recommendations for Educators***

As the findings revealed, the more education participants have, the more interested they are in the topic of CSR in the apparel industry. There is a very clear difference between participants with higher education and those without higher education. As we could imagine, if consumers are not interested in the CSR reporting in the apparel industry, the industry won't change its ways of doing business since there will be no benefits behind the practice at all. The study also showed that certification is one of the effective strategies. This is due to the objective and reliable feature of third-party certification, and consumers believe in it.

Educators' responsibility is to decrease the gap in education and enlarge the coverage of exposure to the issue. The definition of educator here is not limited to college education or graduate education; moreover, it can refer to non-profit organizations, local charities, and media services as well as to national campaigns. Besides traditional education, there are other ways to improve consumers' knowledge of CSR and help them become more critical about businesses' marketing strategies.

The development of a healthy industry relies on several parts, and each of the parts has its own responsibility. To make the business more sustainable and grow in a healthy direction, consumers, educators, and businesses themselves need to put more effort into it. This research discovered the underlying mechanism of the process of CSR consumer communication through reporting it on online product webpages, and this is only one of the practices that industry can adopt and follow. The exploratory research also mapped out a general understanding of consumer psychology behind this

topic, which can be used by industry, consumer, and educators as a reference when they implement smarter and more sustainable strategies.

### ***Limitations***

The study tested a population of men and women age 18–29 in China and United States. The age group can be expanded to learn about more generations' attitude towards this topic, which will result in more applicable suggestions for the industry. It would be more accurate to have the participants more focused within the same population to minimize confounding factors. The population was broad, and other confounding demographic factors such as different states and income level might affect the results. The communication of CSR in this research only focused on the waste management in apparel industry as representing of CSR activities. Only one apparel product—a T-shirt—was used on the website without consideration of sizing, design, or fitting issues. Although these limitations restricted the generalizability of the study, this research project was a step toward understanding consumer communications in relation to the Internet and apparel CSR online reporting formats development.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 United States Recruitment Email

Dear Participant,

We are currently studying the influence of Corporate Social Responsibility reporting formats on consumers via product web page. This survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. As a Thank you , we are offering a \$20.00 gift card to every 20 randomly selected participants. If you are interested in entering the draw, please leave your email address at the end of the survey to be notified of the win. Email address will not be used to individually identify the participants.

We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts from participating in this survey. You may refuse to participate before the study begins or discontinue at any time. The data collected from this survey will be analyzed anonymously. In addition, no information from the study will be shared with anyone, or be used for any other purposes other than this research.

This survey has been approved by the Cornell Institutional Review Board for Human Participants (IRB).

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please feel free to contact Yuxiao Zhang, a graduate student in the Department of Fiber Science and Apparel Design at Cornell University by email: yz698@cornell.edu

Your response will not be linked to your name.

Thank you again for your participation !

Survey Link: [https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_8dY9hvqgAgNRdvn](https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8dY9hvqgAgNRdvn)

## Appendix 2 Chinese Recruitment Email

您好！

感谢您百忙之中抽空参与此次研究！

我们目前研究的方向是网络零售商产品页上，企业社会责任报告的方式对消费者的影响。此次研究的目的是调查企业和消费者在对企业社会责任报告的沟通中，网络产品页上不同的企业社会责任报告方式对获得消费者信任以及行为意愿的效力高低，并将消费者的国籍作为一个调节变量。参加者会随机抽取到一个网站，其中包含了模拟的变量，并要求在浏览完网站之后完成一个关于他们关注程度，信任度以及行为意愿调查问卷。基本背景资料包括年龄，性别，教育程度以及国籍。

这个调查将会进行大概 10 分钟。参与这项调查是完全自愿的。我们将会在每 20 个参与人里抽取一位参与人，奖励价值 120 元(20 美元) 的礼品卡作为感谢。如果您对这个抽签奖励感兴趣，请在调查问卷最后留下您的邮件地址。

我们没有观察到任何此次调查对参与者的危险以及不适。您也可以在测试开始前或者任何时间拒绝继续参加实验。从此次实验所得数据将会进行匿名分析。另外，此次研究的数据将不会与任何与本实验无关的第三方进行共享，或者用于其他用途的研究。

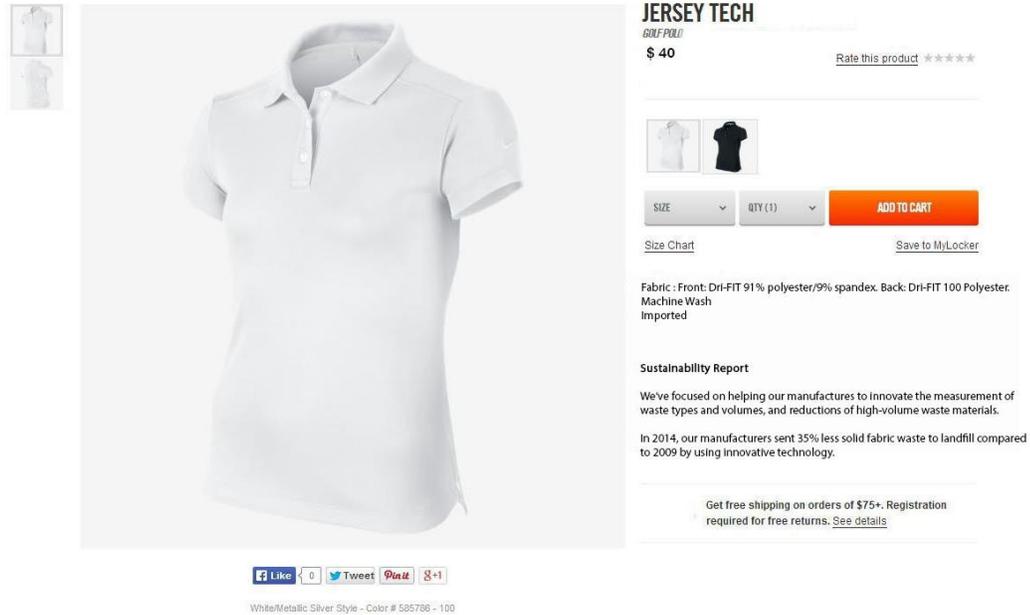
这项调查已经被美国康奈尔大学人类参与实验制度检阅机构通过。

如果您还有任何问题或者担心，请联系 [yz698@cornell.edu](mailto:yz698@cornell.edu)。

您的任何回答都将进行匿名处理。

感谢您的参与。

## Appendix 3 Designed Web Sites



**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

SIZE [v] QTY (1) [v] **ADD TO CART**

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric : Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

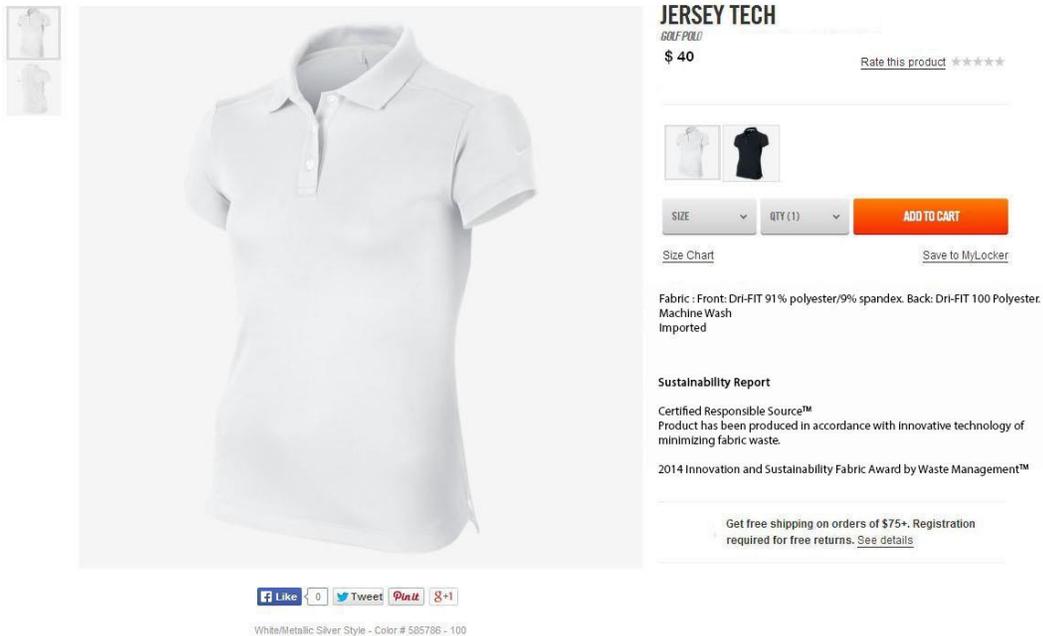
**Sustainability Report**  
We've focused on helping our manufactures to innovate the measurement of waste types and volumes, and reductions of high-volume waste materials.  
In 2014, our manufacturers sent 35% less solid fabric waste to landfill compared to 2009 by using innovative technology.

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

[Like](#) 0 [Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) [+1](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## English Website with Female Action Simulation



**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

SIZE [v] QTY (1) [v] **ADD TO CART**

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric : Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

**Sustainability Report**  
Certified Responsible Source™  
Product has been produced in accordance with innovative technology of minimizing fabric waste.  
2014 Innovation and Sustainability Fabric Award by Waste Management™

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

[Like](#) 0 [Tweet](#) [Pin it](#) [+1](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## English Website with Female Certification Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

Size: [dropdown] Qty: (1) [ADD TO CART](#)

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric: Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

**Sustainability Report**  
We believe the world must innovate faster for minimising fabric waste that is good for all.  
-- Letter from President & Chief Executive Officer

Waste Management will be our next 5-year priority social responsibility target: Reduce 35% solid fabric waste to landfill by using innovative technology.

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

### English Website with Female Strategy Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

Size: [dropdown] Qty: (1) [ADD TO CART](#)

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric: Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

**Sustainability Report**  
We've focused on helping our manufactures to innovate the measurement of waste types and volumes, and reductions of high-volume waste materials.

In 2014, our manufacturers sent 35% less solid fabric waste to landfill compared to 2009 by using innovative technology.

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

### English Website with Male Action Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

SIZE QTY (1) **ADD TO CART**

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric : Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

**Sustainability Report**  
Certified Responsible Source™  
Product has been produced in accordance with innovative technology of minimizing fabric waste.  
2014 Innovation and Sustainability Fabric Award by Waste Management™

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

Like 0 Tweet Pin It +1

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## English Website with Male Certification Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
GOLF POLO  
\$ 40 [Rate this product](#) ★★★★★

SIZE QTY (1) **ADD TO CART**

[Size Chart](#) [Save to MyLocker](#)

Fabric : Front: Dri-FIT 91% polyester/9% spandex. Back: Dri-FIT 100 Polyester.  
Machine Wash  
Imported

**Sustainability Report**  
We believe the world must innovate faster for minimising fabric waste that is good for all.  
-- Letter from President & Chief Executive Officer  
Waste Management will be our next 5-year priority social responsibility target: Reduce 35% solid fabric waste to landfill by using innovative technology.

Get free shipping on orders of \$75+. Registration required for free returns. [See details](#)

Like 0 Tweet Pin It +1

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## English Website with Male Strategy Simulation



White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## JERSEY TECH

高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

[评价此商品](#) ★★★★★



尺码

数量 (1)

加入购物车

[尺码表](#)

[添加到我的装备库](#)

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

### 可持续性发展报告

我们将发展重点放在 帮助制造商以创新的方式测量废物类型及数量, 降低大规模的面料浪费。

相比于2009年, 今年 (2014) 我们的制造商运用技术创新, 成功将直接作为垃圾废料处理的面料数量减少了35%。

购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。  
[查看详情](#)

Chinese Website with Female Action Simulation



White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## JERSEY TECH

高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

[评价此商品](#) ★★★★★



尺码

数量 (1)

加入购物车

[尺码表](#)

[添加到我的装备库](#)

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

### 可持续性发展报告

环保采购及生产™ 认证  
产品利用创新技术在生产过程中使面料浪费降到最低值

2014 Waste Management™ 最佳创新及可持续性面料奖

购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。  
[查看详情](#)

Chinese Website with Female Certification Simulation



White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## JERSEY TECH

高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

[评价此商品](#) ★★★★★



尺码

数量 (1)

加入购物车

[尺码表](#)

[添加到我的装备库](#)

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

### 可持续性发展报告

我们相信世界必须在减低面料消耗的技术上进行积极创新, 如此才能造福人类。

-- 来自公司首席执行官的一封信

废弃面料管理将会是我们公司未来5年的首要社会责任目标: 通过采用创新技术将直接作为垃圾废料处理的面料数量减低35%。

购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。

[查看详情](#)

## Chinese Website with Female Strategy Simulation



White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

## JERSEY TECH

高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

[评价此商品](#) ★★★★★



尺码

数量 (1)

加入购物车

[尺码表](#)

[添加到我的装备库](#)

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

### 可持续性发展报告

我们将发展重点放在帮助制造商以创新的方式测量废物类型及数量, 降低大规模的面料浪费。

相比于2009年, 今年 (2014) 我们的制造商运用技术创新, 成功将直接作为垃圾废料处理的面料数量减少了35%。

购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。

[查看详情](#)

## Chinese Website with Male Action Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

评价此商品 ★★★★★

加入购物车

尺码表 添加到我的装备库

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

**可持续性发展报告**  
环保采购及生产™认证  
产品利用创新技术在生产过程中使面料浪费降低到最低值  
2014 Waste Management™ 最佳创新及可持续性面料奖

购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。  
[查看详细信息](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

### Chinese Website with Male Certification Simulation

**JERSEY TECH**  
高尔夫Polo衫  
¥229

评价此商品 ★★★★★

加入购物车

尺码表 添加到我的装备库

面料细节: 前身: Dri-FIT 91% 涤纶/9% 氨纶。后身: Dri-FIT 100 涤纶  
可机洗

**可持续性发展报告**  
我们相信世界必须在减低面料消耗的技术上进行积极创新, 如此才能造福人类。  
--来自公司首席执行官的一封信  
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购物满¥399 免运费。立即注册享受免费送货服务。  
[查看详细信息](#)

White/Metallic Silver Style - Color # 585786 - 100

### Chinese Website with Male Strategy Simulation

## Appendix 4 Questionnaire in United States

Q1: I understand the purpose of this survey and the instruction provided by the researchers. I agree to participate in this survey voluntarily.

- Agree
- Disagree

Q2: What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Q3: You will be shown a webpage in following step. Please read it carefully. Questions will be asked after you finish browsing the web page, you ONLY have ONE chance to browse this web page, and you CAN'T go back once you click on NEXT on the lower right corner.  
(Simulation)

Q4. For each scale below, please circle the number to indicate how well the words describe the web site that you browsed.

	Describes very poorly				Describes very well		
<i>Appealing</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>High quality</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Informative</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Useful</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Socially-responsible</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Green</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Unique</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Innovative</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q5: This site appears to be LESS trustworthy than other sites I have visited.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q6: The site represents a company or organization that will deliver on promises made.

Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q7: My overall trust in this site is.

**Lowest**  
**Highest**

**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q8: My overall believability of the information on this site is.

**Lowest**      **Highest**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q9: My overall confidence in the recommendations on this retailer is.

**Lowest**      **Highest**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q10: I would purchase an item from this retailer.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Strongly Agree**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q11: I would recommend this retailer to a friend.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Strongly Agree**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q12: I am comfortable providing financial and personal information on this site.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Strongly Agree**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q13: CSR ( Corporate Social Responsibility ) is the voluntary actions that a corporation implements as it pursues its mission and fulfills its perceived obligations to stakeholders, including employees, communities, the environment, and society as a whole

I am willing to learn Corporate's Social Responsibility.

**Strongly Disagree**      **Strongly Agree**  
**1**      **2**      **3**      **4**      **5**      **6**      **7**

Q14: How often do you spend time on browsing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) online reporting webpage while shopping on a Fashion/Apparel retailer's online store?

(Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting: The voluntary reporting of a company's economic, social, and environmental activities.)

- I visit the CSR reporting webpage every time when I shop at a retailer's online store.
- I visit the CSR reporting webpage several times to check the updates for the retailer that I shop at.
- I visit the CSR reporting webpage the first time when I shop at a retailer's online store.
- I seldom visit the CSR reporting webpage while I am shopping online.
- I don't know how to get the retailers' online CSR reporting.
- I didn't know what CSR online reporting is.

Q15: How much time you are willing to spend on visiting Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting online?

- Over one hour
- Half an hour
- 15 minutes
- 5 minutes
- Never

Q16: What is your age?

- 18-21
- 22-25
- 25-29

Q17: What is your current education status?

High School

- College Undergraduate Student
- College Graduate Student : Master
- College Graduate Student: PhD
- Others

Q18: What is your nationality?

- United States
- China
- Others

## Appendix 5 Questionnaire in China

Q1：我已经明白由调查者提供的对此次研究的目的以及指导的讲解。我同意自愿参与此次研究。

- 同意
- 不同意

Q2：请问您的性别是？

- 女性
- 男性

Q3：接下来您将看到一个网页，且只有一次浏览机会。请务必仔细浏览网页，浏览完毕后点击右下角 NEXT 继续，并回答之后的问题。

Q4. 下列每一个描述，请圈出一个数字代表您认为最符合刚才您所预览的网页的程度

	描述非常不准确					描述非常准确	
吸引人的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
高质量的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
信息量丰富的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
有用的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
对社会负责的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
绿色环保的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
独一无二的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
创新的	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q4：当我浏览网页的时候，我有注意到企业社会责任报告这一栏

强烈不同意						强烈同意
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q5:当我浏览网页的时候，我有认真阅读企业社会责任报告这一栏

强烈不同意						强烈同意
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q6：这个网站显得没有其它我曾访问过的网站让人感到信任

强烈不同意						强烈同意
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q7：这个网站显示出这个公司会信守承诺

强烈不同意						强烈同意
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q8：我对这个网站的总体信赖程度是：

强烈不同意						强烈同意
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q9：我对这个网站提供的信息的信赖程度是：

<b>最低</b>			<b>最高</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q10：总的来说，我在推荐这个零售商时候的自信程度会是：

<b>最低</b>			<b>最高</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q11：我会从这个零售商这里购买相关商品：

<b>强烈不同意</b>			<b>强烈同意</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q12：我会给我的朋友推荐这个零售商：

<b>强烈不同意</b>			<b>强烈同意</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q13：我在提供个人信息以及银行信息给这个零售商的时候会感觉舒适：

<b>强烈不同意</b>			<b>强烈同意</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q14:

(Corporate Social Responsibility 服装行业社会责任报告：包括所有关于员工与大小型企业之间的问题，员工的健康和安全问题，环境可持续性发展，以及服装行业的沟通和经济增长。)

我会非常愿意了解企业的社会责任进展

<b>强烈不同意</b>			<b>强烈同意</b>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Q15: 当您在网上从时尚/服装类零售商网店购买产品的时候，您会经常花时间在浏览企业的社会责任报告吗？

(社会责任报告：企业自愿公开的，关于自己商业活动对经济，社会以及环境影响的报告)

- 我每次在一个零售商那里购买产品的时候都会去浏览他们的企业社会责任报告
- 我会偶尔去浏览我所消费的零售商的社会企业责任报告，了解最新的进展
- 当我第一次在这个零售商这里购买产品的时候，我会去了解他们的企业社会责任报告
- 当我网上购物的时候，我几乎不会去浏览企业社会责任报告
- 我不知道如何去获取企业社会责任报告
- 我不知道什么是企业社会责任报告
- 

Q16:您通常愿意花多少时间在浏览企业社会责任报告上？

- 一小时以上
- 半个小时
- 15分钟
- 5分钟
- 从来不

Q17：您的年龄是：

- 18-21

- 22-25
- 25-29

Q18：您目前的教育水平是：

- 高中
- 大学本科
- 硕士
- 博士
- 其它

Q20：您的国籍是：

- 中国
- 美国
- 其它

## Appendix 6 Pilot Test Results

ID	Occupation	Suggestions
1	Master Student in Apparel Design, age 30,female	When ask about the willingness to learn Corporate Social Responsibility, it is necessary to explain the term first so that people have the same understanding.
2	Master Student in Apparel Design,age 25,female	When translate the English website into Chinese, make sure that price is accurate based on the different marketing situation in the two countries.
3	Master Student in Apparel Design,age 24, female	Add a question in the very beginning to filter people who are not real person behind the computer, for example a picture of animal and ask them to choose the right answer.
4	Master Student in Business,age 27, male	Edit the instruction of Q3 that remind subjects that they only have one chance to browse the web page and can't go back.
5	Master Student in Business,age 26,male	In the questions of how often do you spend time on browsing CSR online, it is also possible that people don't know what is CSR reporting. It would be more accurate to add this choice.
6	Master Student in Marketing,age 26,female	On the web page, make sure that the information of your simulation is visible and easy to recognize. Make it clear and simple.
7	Phd Student in Apparel Design,age 28,female	The question about “ bookmark” the website is not very suitable for this survey since people usually won't bookmark a product page but only a company website in most cases.

## Appendix 7 Cornell IRB Exemption Form



Cornell University  
Office of  
Research Integrity and Assurance

East Hill Office Building, Suite 320  
395 Pine Tree Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
p. 607-254-5162  
f. 607-255-0758  
www.irb.cornell.edu

## Institutional Review Board for Human Participants

### Concurrence of Exemption

**To:** Yuxiao Zhang  
**From:** Amita Verma, Director, ORIA   
**Approval Date:** May 15, 2014  
**Protocol ID#:** 1405004694  
**Protocol Title:** CSR Communication and the Consumer: The Influence of Reporting Formats on Consumers via Product Page

Your above referenced request for **Exemption from IRB Review** has been approved according to Cornell IRB Policy #2 and under paragraph 2 of the Department of Health and Human Services Code of Federal Regulations 45CFR 46.101(b).

Please note the following:

- Investigators are responsible for ensuring that the welfare of research subjects is protected and that methods used and information provided to gain participant consent are appropriate to the activity. Please familiarize yourself with and conduct the research in accordance with the ethical standards of the Belmont Report (<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/belmont.html>).
- Investigators are responsible for notifying the IRB office of change or amendments to the protocol and acquiring approval or concurrence **BEFORE** their implementation.
- Progress reports or requests for continuation of approval are not required for this study.

For questions related to this application or for IRB review procedures, please contact the IRB office at [irbexemptions@cornell.edu](mailto:irbexemptions@cornell.edu) or 254-5162. Visit the IRB website at [www.irb.cornell.edu](http://www.irb.cornell.edu) for policies, procedures, FAQs, forms, and other helpful information about Cornell's Human Participant Research Program.

Please download the latest forms from the IRB website [www.irb.cornell.edu/forms/](http://www.irb.cornell.edu/forms/) for each submission.

Cc: Tasha Lewis

## Appendix 8 Post-Hoc analysis for willingness and demographic groups

### Willingness to Learn Online About CSR in the Apparel Industry for the Two Countries

Nationality	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
United States	590	4.90	1.54	15.10	.00**
China	630	5.22 <sup>a</sup>	1.34		
Total	1220	4.90	1.54		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

### Willingness to Learn Online About CSR in the Apparel Industry in the United States

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
<b>Age</b>					
18-21	54	4.52	1.53	2.216	.11
22-25	177	5.02	1.47		
26-29	359	4.90	1.57		
<b>Education</b>					
High School	193	4.66 <sup>a</sup>	1.67	4.294	.01*
Undergraduate	236	4.94 <sup>a</sup>	1.45		
Graduate	161	5.14 <sup>b</sup>	1.47		
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	266	5.12	1.39	9.38	.00**
Male	324	4.73	1.64		
Total	590	4.90	1.54		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

### Willingness to Learn Online About CSR in the Apparel Industry in China

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	F	p
<b>Age</b>					
18-21	51	4.51 <sup>a</sup>	1.90	19.29	.00**
22-25	195	4.93 <sup>a,b</sup>	1.40		
26-29	384	5.47 <sup>c</sup>	1.13		
<b>Education</b>					
High School	39	4.74 <sup>a</sup>	1.77	11.30	.00**
Undergraduate	478	5.36 <sup>b</sup>	1.22		
Graduate	113	4.80 <sup>a</sup>	1.49		
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	359	5.15	1.34	2.53	.112
Male	271	5.32	1.33		
<b>Total</b>	630	5.22	1.33		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale.

### Willingness to Spend Time on Online CSR in the Apparel Industry

Nationality	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
<b>United States</b>	590	3.58 <sup>a</sup>	1.06	28.06	.00**
<b>China</b>	630	3.27 <sup>b</sup>	1.03		
<b>Total</b>	1220	3.42	1.06		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

**Willingness to Spend Time on Online CSR in the Apparel Industry in USA**

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
<b>Age</b>					
18-21	54	3.67	1.06	.220	.80
22-25	177	3.56	1.09		
26-29	359	3.59	1.05		
<b>Education</b>					
High School	193	3.83 <sup>a</sup>	.89	14.01	.00**
Undergraduate	236	3.61 <sup>a,b</sup>	1.04		
Graduate	161	3.25 <sup>c</sup>	1.18		
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	266	3.58	1.03	.000	.98
Male	324	3.58	1.09		
Total	590	3.58	1.06		

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.

Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	F	p
<b>Age</b>					
18-21	51	3.98 <sup>a</sup>	.93	33.49	.00**
22-25	195	3.56 <sup>b</sup>	1.07		
26-29	384	3.02 <sup>c</sup>	.95		
<b>Education</b>					
High School	39	3.87 <sup>a</sup>	1.06	9.39	.00**
Undergraduate	478	3.18 <sup>b</sup>	.99		
Graduate	113	3.40 <sup>b</sup>	1.13		
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	359	3.29	1.02	.36	.55
Male	271	3.24	1.04		
Total	630	3.27	1.03		

**Willingness to Spend Time on Online CSR in the Apparel Industry in China**

*Note:* Means showing at least one letter in common are not significantly different at  $p < .05$ ; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$ ; all measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale.