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February 2013 Master's Degree Thesis

Effects of CSR on the Customers'
Loyalty: The Mediating Role of
Gratitude, Trust, and Satisfaction

Graduate School of Chosun University

Department of Business Administration

Leszek Moniuszko

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기업의 사회공헌활동이 고객충성도에 미치는 영향: 고마움, 신뢰, 만족의 매개역할

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Advisor: Prof. Jong-Chul Park, Ph. D.

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# 모뉴슈코 레슈의 석사학위 논문을 인준함

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Effects of CSR on the Customers' Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Gratitude, Trust, and Satisfaction

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The present study aims to develop a more refined understanding of the link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumers' loyalty by considering the role of consumer gratitude, trust and satisfaction as a mediator of the CSR-consumers' loyalty link. Toward this end, it proposes and tests a model of corporate social responsibility that specifies hypothesized relationships (1) CSR initiatives as independent variables, (2) consumer gratitude, trust and satisfaction as mediating variables, and (3) consumers' loyalty as the dependent variable. Empirical analysis based on the data collected from 374 South Korean consumers confirms the existence of positive and significant effects of CSR initiatives on consumers' loyalty. Similarly, we observed direct, positive and significant effects of CSR actions on consumer gratitude and satisfaction, as well as an indirect impacts on consumer trust. Hereby, those effects are found to mediate the core relationship hypothesized in this research. The study concludes with the main managerial implications, limitations and possibilities for future research.

**Key Words: c**orporate social responsibility, gratitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment, consumer loyalty.

## 국문초록

# 기업의 사회공헌활동이 고객충성도에 미치는 영향: 고마움, 신뢰, 만족의 매개역할

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본 연구는 기업의 사회공헌활동이 고객충성도에 미치는 관계에 있어서 심리적 메커니즘을 고찰하기 위해서 수행되었다. 기업의 사회공헌활동과 관련된 연구들은 최근 마케팅 환경에서 중요한 주제로 인식되고 있다. 이에 따라 기존 연구를 토대로 기업의 사회공헌활동이 유발하는 심리적 메커니즘으로 본 연구에서는 기업의 사회공헌활동에 대한 고마움, 기업에 대한 신뢰, 그리고 해당 기업에 대한 만족도를 매개요인으로 제시하고자 한다.

구체적인 결과는 다음과 같다. 먼저, 기업의 사회공헌활동은 소비자들로 하여금 기업에 대한 고마움을 유발시키는 것으로 나타났다. 또한, 기업의 사회공헌활동은 만족도에도 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 그러나 기업의 사회공헌활동이 신뢰형성에는 직접적인 영향을 미치지 않고, 고마움과 만족도를 통해서 신뢰를 형성시키는 것으로 나타났다. 그리고 고마움과, 신뢰, 나아가 만족도는 고객들로 하여금 기업에 대한 몰입도를 증가시키는 것으로 나타났다. 끝으로 몰입도는 고객충성도 형성에 긍정적인 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 결과적으로본 연구는 기업의 사회공헌활동이 고객충성도에 영향을 미치는데 있어서 고마움, 기업에 대한 신뢰, 그리고 만족도와 몰입도의 매개역할을 제시해주고 있다.

## Chapter 1 Introduction

Several years ago researchers suggested that the main goal of a firm was to attract consumers. Nowadays the market has become so competitive that the idea has evolved, and researchers now believe that the main objective of the firm is to capture and retain consumers. To do this companies must seek ways of retaining consumers with them for a long period of time (Boora and Singh, 2011). Recently, practitioners and academics have paid more attention to the antecedents and effects of corporate social responsibility (CSR; McWilliams et al., 2006). An increasing number of studies indicate that companies CSR activities affect various stakeholders' perceptions of and reactions to those companies (Valentine and Fleischman, 2008). For example, the growing body of research has shown that CSR has positively affected emotional attachment between consumers and firms as well as consumer satisfaction (Carroll and Ahuvia 2006; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). The mounting importance of CSR in practice has motivated researchers to prove that social responsibility programs have a significant and direct impact on various consumer-related outcomes. For example, some studies indicate that thefeeling of making a difference in issues related to society and the environment through purchase behaviors creates positive attitudes for a longer period of time and at the same time encourage consumer loyalty (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Adiwijaya and Fauzan, 2012).

In 2001 the European Commission published a Green Paper which defined Corporate Social Responsibility as "a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment." Since then CSR has risen sharply as a corporate priority. Constant globalization and changes in the world's economic environment provides companies with many new challenges. This way they are aware that corporate social responsibility

may bring direct economic advantages. Even though the main focus of a company should be making profits, it can simultaneously involve itself in social and environmental activities and in this way implement corporate social responsibility into its central business strategy, management and performance (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). According to Kanji and Chopra (2010) corporate social responsibility is conducting business that implements socially responsible actions through: (1) ethical employment and labor manners, (2) creation of local communities and contact with those communities that may be influenced by the companies' policies and products, (3) investment in social infrastructure, (4) contribution to the environment, and (5) contribution to general economic development.

Philanthropic responsibilities are easy to find especially in our community. Firms exercise their philanthropic responsibility by contributing corporate money, employee time, and facilities for humanitarian programs or causes. These activities are voluntary and not expected in an ethical sense, however, society expects good corporate citizens to be involved in these altruistic activities as a way of giving back to society. Williams and Barrett's (2000) analysis of the 'Fortune Corporate Reputations Survey' data showed that a company's philanthropic activities had a positive effect on its reputation. A similar result was obtained from 'Britain's most admired companies survey' data (Brammer & Millington, 2005) - a firm's philanthropic expenditure had a positive relationship with its reputation. Past marketing studies show that corporate philanthropic activities enhance consumers' attitudes toward that corporation (Menon & Kahn, 2003; Webb & Mohr, 1998; Yoon et al., 2006).

Many studies and literature on corporate social responsibility describe consumers' interests in social initiatives of companies and their impact on making purchase decisions. A majority of researchers expect that companies with a reputation of being socially responsible will score better on their overall performance. At the same time, companies that do not obey social responsibilities may meet consumer antipathy. Additionally, consumers

themselves declare that their perception of CSR initiatives have a huge influence on their purchasing behavior (Smith, 2003).

Previous studies did not consider the fact that CSR activities are causing various cognitive responses (i.e. trust) and emotional responses (i.e. gratitude) between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer loyalty.

Thus, the present study strives to develop a refined understanding of the link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer loyalty by considering the CSR initiatives and the role of consumer gratitude, trust, and satisfaction as a mediator of the CSR-consumer loyalty link.

# Chapter 2 Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

### 1. Corporate Social Responsibility

In the past, it has been shown that companies focused on their profit maximization, heartless competition, a lack of ethics in product manufacturing or employees rights. However, nowadays, it has been recognized that organizations should care about more than just financial profits and other gains. They should pay more attention to their stakeholders: employees, investors, community and especially consumers. Therefore, many companies try to express their business practices as one that shows moral and ethical grounding related to society. This brings the idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Kolstad, 2007). Using Carroll's conceptual work, Maignan and Ferrell (2000) defined CSR as "the extent to which businesses meet the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by their various stakeholders" (p. 284). Maignan and Ferrell's definition complies with the concept that CSR is corporate performance responsive to society's wants and expectations.

CSR then is an inherent part of a company's organizational structure whereby it contributes to the society in the fields of economics, environment, ethics and social investment. By measuring and managing those fields companies may create positive influence on both society and the company itself. Within a few decades CSR became a crucial tool for promoting and shaping organizations' images. Good CSR is a company's way of giving to the society through environmental protection and charitable activities; meanwhile creating its own profits (Kanji and Chopra, 2010).

Branco and Rodrigues (2006) suggest in their research that CSR is connected with many composite issues such as human resources. communication with local communities, relations with stakeholders as well as friendly and safe work place (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006). According to other researchers CSR may be considered as a concept of two cases: a normative case and a business case. A normative case describes the motivation of the firm to make a positive change, while the business case concentrates on maximizing the breadth of interest. The normative case states that the company should involve itself with society because it is the moral thing to do. On the other hand the business case is supposed to answer the how to perform business operations considering responsibility (Smith, 2003).

Corporate Social Responsibility has influenced the strategies management of many companies across the world, although much attention was not put on the link between CSR and marketing strategy management. The influence of CSR actions on relationships with consumers and various stakeholders are important for optimization of a company's performance (Piercy and Lane, 2009). Moreover, the fact that businesses have started to use CSR widely as a business practice has become more clear. With regard to CSR being usually described as an important factor in business, society and government relationships, there is still a lot to discover in regards to its connections with marketing strategy. CSR initiatives should be connected to their influence on consumers' behavior. As a matter of fact, cases of corporate social responsibility, ethics and morality of organizations' actions have become a core element in the explanation of consumer relationships, consumer perception and understanding of a company. Although recent studies explore many CSR related issues, there is a big gap in the theory and practice of marketing related studies (Maignan et al., 2005).

Earlier research has concentrated on consumers' general responses to CSR (Nan and Heo, 2007; Kim, 2011; Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). Melo and Galan

(2010) provide empirical evidence that CSR has effects on corporate performance. They introduce brand value as the dependent variable and confirm that corporate social responsibility positively influences corporate brand value (Melo and Galan, 2010). Other research proposes a collaborative model of corporate communication strategy's impact on company and product evaluations. The study explains that consumers will consider that a company is good at making reliable products when its involvement in CSR is strong. Consumers then will transfer those effects onto the company and its product evaluations (Kim, 2011). It is just a confirmation of other studies showing that CSR association exerted an impact on product evaluations through the influence on company evaluations (Brown and Dacin, 1997). A strong correlation between social performance and financial performance of a company has been also proven. Orlitzky et al. presents a meta-analytic review of the primary determinable studies of the companies' social vs. Thus, financial performance relationship. the reason for companies' self-interest in social responsibility field has been found (Orlitzky et al., 2003).It has also been found that CSR behavior has significant effects on purchase intentions and company identity. For instance, David, Kline and Dai (2005) found not only that CSR actions predict purchase intentions but also are likely to have an influence on the exchange and citizenship dimension of corporate identity (David et al., 2005).

#### 2. Gratitude

Gratitude is an emotion that appears when a person who benefits perceives that the other person (the one who gives the benefit) deliberately acts to positively influence the beneficiary's welfare (Fredrickson, 2004). Other researchers focused on the three particular moral functions of gratitude. The first function mentioned was a "moral barometer" – expressions of gratitude allow us to know when benefits are intentionally directed toward us. The

second one is a "moral motive" function – expressions of gratitude boost our need for contributing to the prosperity of the benefactor. The third function of gratitude was explained by authors as a "moral reinforcer" – people who experienced feelings of gratitude are more willing to act pro–socially afterwards (McCullough et al, 2001).

Becker (1986) proposes that gratitude is the emotional basis of reciprocity. Reciprocity is a higher order norm, a virtue which provides a balance in exchange actions in marketing. Reciprocity may be defined as a universal social norm that empowers us to obtain three kinds of primary traits: equilibrium (maintenance of balance), self-esteem (sense of value created by exchange transactions) and reliable expectations (expectation to return good) (Pervan and Johnson, 2002).

Overdevest (2009) provides evidence for the positive influence of the experience, communication and acceptance of gratitude in marketing relationships. Expressions of gratitude tell us that an exchange has been accomplished and that the possibility for future exchanges may exist (McAdams ad Bauer, 2004). The experience of reciprocal expression also promotes a recipient's need to act more pro-socially toward the benefactor. Psychological research studies on gratitude as an important topic within the discipline of "positive psychology", but the topic hasn't received much attention in the area of marketing (Snyder and Lopez, 2002). Equity theory, or distributive justice, draws attention to the principle of the previously mentioned reciprocity. Since consumers and firms engage in continuous exchanges, awareness of relative rewards and its costs are essential (Adams, 1965). Because these feelings of deficit are highly unwanted, consumers are stimulated to restore equity by compensating the store at some cost to themselves, like purchasing more. Thus, negative feelings of deficit eventually cause the positive reaction to reciprocate favors (Morales, 2005).

Palmatier et al. (2009) suggests that gratitude is a core factor that provides significant impact on relationships in economy, psychology, sociology

and other disciplines, as well as being the basis of reciprocity which develops and maintains those relationships. Moreover, they provide evidence of active features of gratitude in relationship marketing. Companies that invest in relationship marketing may enjoy greater levels of gratitude and reciprocity from their consumers. Additionally, the benefits from increased sales during the period of receiving feelings of gratitude give consumers a chance to reciprocate. Thus, the bonds in the relationship will become stronger (Palmatier et al., 2009).

Combining the process of a firm's high effort with the idea of general reciprocity as a core of consumer gratitude, Morales (2005) suggests that consumers will reward companies that exert extra effort, even when they do not directly receive profits from it. Although the effort's effect on quality was not found, it was proved that it has a significant influence on feelings of gratitude from consumers toward companies. Those feelings of gratitude therefore give consumers the idea of rewarding companies in many ways (Morales, 2005).

Conclusively, according to Overdevest (2009), strategic CSR initiatives characterize the high effort on the part of the company. Investing a significant quantity of resources into CSR programs may accelerate consumers' perceptions and beliefs that a company made a great effort to offer the program (Overdevest, 2009). Feelings of gratitude may induce consumers to reward the firm for its high effort in CSR, perhaps by choosing it over a competitor or increasing customer loyalty. Therefore we suggest the following hypothesis:

# H1: A company's CSR initiatives will have a positive influence on gratitude.

#### 3. Trust

Commonly, trust has been examined from viewing two different aspects (Geyskens et al., 1996; Moorman et al., 1992). On the one side, trust has been considered as a behavioral component: the willingness to rely on the partner. On the other side, trust may be analyzed as an emotional component, and has been also affiliated with a set of notions: competence, honesty and benevolence (Coulter and Coulter, 2002). Competence is defined as the consumer's perceptions of the seller's ability and skills to develop a good relationship and satisfy the needs of its clients. Honesty is the perception that the company will keep its stated promises, fulfill them and be forthright (Doney and Cannon, 1997). Benevolence describes the belief that one of the two either the company or the consumer, is interested in the welfare of the other. In other words, trust is about one party's confidence that the other party is trustworthy, convincing and has a high level of uprightness (Genesan, 1994). Therefore qualities such as honesty, responsibility, benevolence and comprehension are associated with trust (Casalo et al. 2007). The concept of trust is strongly established in the field of management and marketing research. It has many dimensions and can be employed against various levels of analysis (interpersonal, intergroup, or interorganizational) (Schoorman et al., 2007). The particular importance of trust can be found in the situation of risk. Certainly, trust can also be understood as an eagerness to participate in a situation of risk or the willingness to count on the other party. This means, that trust allows parties to take risks when being in a relationship. In the absence of other management systems in a relationship, trust is considered critical (Castaldo et al., 2009, Schoorman et al., 2007).

Trust can be also viewed in terms of outcomes. Thus, it is a belief that the other party will act in a way that brings us positive outcomes. At the same time the other party will not act unexpectedly, because it may bring negative outcomes. Indeed, positive results are anticipated from a party that is reliable and has a high level of integrity (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

In summary, trust can be defined as a trustor's expectation that the trustee is willing to keep promises and to fulfill obligations. The expectation is based on the level of competence, honesty, altruism, and goodwill of the trustee (Castaldo et al., 2009) in the framework of a relationship, its outcomes and possible risk situations (Schoorman et al., 2007).

Defined amount of studies provided results showing that associations for corporate social responsibility have significant impact on the overall evaluation of a company. A company's reputation for fairness in their relations with consumers and other stakeholders as well as socially responsible actions are positively related to consumers' trust, commitment to the relationship and willingness to continue a long lasting relationship (Brown, 1998). Consumers' trust has been identified as a mediating variable in various fields of study, including social psychology, management, marketing, and service evaluation. The primary element of trust is "the expectation of ethically justifiable behavior." Consumer may evaluate a firms' engagement in CSR initiatives as an ethically reasonable behavior (Vlachos et al., 2009). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

# H2: A company's CSR initiatives will have a positive influence on trust.

#### 4. Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction is a core concept in marketing research. It has been connected to company's general performance and is seen as a priority for marketing managers (Beatson et al.,2006). Satisfaction can be explained as a factor that affects the circumstances of a relationship between the company

and consumer. We can look at consumer satisfaction from two different perspectives (Geyskens et al., 1999). The first one is a predisposition that is maintained mainly by economic conditions. Thus, we can call it economical satisfaction, because it is based on financial performance. The second perspective is the opposite, non-economic satisfaction where psychological components, such as lack of difficulty in cooperation and keeping promisees are the foundation (Casalo et al., 2007).

Consumer satisfaction is a matter of consumer rational and emotional approaches to the action of purchase. In other words is a cognitive and affective reaction to the whole transaction. Therefore, satisfaction is based on consumer comprehensive judgments about a company's economical and social performance. A high level of perceived performance of an organization will respectively guide consumers to a high level of satisfaction (Kim, Ferrin and Rao, 2009).

According to some researchers the central role in the definition of satisfaction is the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. This means that consumers have expectations and use them as a standard when judging and choosing products or services. Then they will compare those expectations with of the product concluding their perception confirmation disconfirmation. Consumers' expectations therefore can be either confirmed, when the perception is very close or equals it, or disconfirmed, when perception differs with it. Moreover disconfirmation can be divided into positive and negative positive tells us that product attributes exceeded our anticipation, negative tell us that product attributes didn't meet our expectation (Oliver, 1999). Confirmation and positive disconfirmation of our expectation should then lead to consumer satisfaction (Oliver, 1999; Darsono and Junaedi, 2006).

How is then a company's CSR actions linked with consumer satisfaction? Researchers provide three connections between them. First, according to institutional and stakeholder theory the consumer is not viewed by a company only on an economic basis but as part of family, society and nation (Maignan et al., 2005) Consequently, consumers approached this way are willing to be satisfied more after the purchase of goods or services from socially responsible organizations. Second, studies on consumer-company identification propose that CSR has a positive connection with corporate identity that leads consumers to identify with a company (Handelman and Arnold, 1999). Therefore consumers who are identifying with a given company should demonstrate greater satisfaction. Third, studies examine the antecedents of consumer satisfaction. One of them is perceived value. Consumers will show higher satisfaction, through greater perceived value, when buying products from companies that initiate socially responsible actions. Additionally, a company's involvement in CSR initiatives helps it to get more knowledge about the consumer. This knowledge is at the same time another antecedent of consumer satisfaction (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006). Hereafter we propose:

# H3: A company's CSR initiatives will have a positive influence on satisfaction.

#### 5. Gratitude and Trust

There are many examples of research that shows the positive impact of gratitude on consumer-company relationships. As mentioned before, gratitude is defined as an emotion that appears at the time of making a transaction.

Emotions can easily affect judgments, before trusting someone people first evaluate feelings that they have toward this person (Jones and George, 1998). It was found that feelings of gratitude for gained benefit trigger the receiver's positive evaluation of the giver and feelings toward him. Therefore, since gratitude trigger positive evaluation and feelings, it also should positively influence anticipation of that person's trustworthiness. Benevolence toward other people works as a foundation for affect-based trust, because emotional connections build trust, particularly through caring for others and their welfare (Palmatier et al., 2009).

Additionally Young (2006) explains that gratitude is an emotion that maintain relationships and puts special significance on upholding trust in those relationships. Consumers can learn about companies' behaviour through the ongoing actions of cooperation and reciprocity, which develops their belief in the organizations' forthcoming actions (Young, 2006). Thus, we propose that:

#### H4: Gratitude will have a positive influence on trust.

#### 6. Satisfaction and Trust

As suggested often in research satisfaction describes the level on which expectations generated on previous interactions have been met. When looking for the point where satisfaction starts, we can see that the first step of consumer behavior is his perception of a company's reliability. In the next step he verifies if his expectations are confirmed or not. If the expectations are confirmed, the consumer will be satisfied and more convinced about the actions of given firm, since he will experience that the organization is worth

trusting and able to fulfil what he expected (Casalo et al., 2007).

The interaction between trust and satisfaction is also supported by cognitive consistency theory. This theory indicate that consumers aim for balance in their beliefs, opinions and understanding. People will naturally see imbalances and correct them through the motivation to make things consistent. Therefore, little satisfaction will lead to little trust, great trust will appear when satisfaction is high (Kim, Ferrin and Rao, 2009). It is therefore possible that satisfaction is positively related to the trust placed by a consumer in a company.

H5: Satisfaction will have a positive influence on trust.

#### 7. Commitment

Based on the concept of commitment in social exchange and organizations, commitment may be understood as two parties believing that a continuous relationship between each other is so valuable that both will take necessary steps to support and maintain it (Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

There are many definitions of commitment, but all of them propose two main dimensions: affective commitment and calculative commitment. Calculative commitment is more rational and concentrated on the economic aspects of the product – benefits of no cost switching and narrow or no choice. Affective commitment being more feelings based, evolves through cooperation and the interchange or particular engagement that a consumer has with a company, which result in greater trust and reciprocity (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005). Affective commitment is a dominant dimension in most of marketing research. It assumes that both parties have high level of

interest in preserving and continuing relationships for a long time. Thus, in other words, affective commitment can be defined as a consumer's desire to carry on a relationship in the future. The fact that consumers need to adjust to positive emotional responses in order to feel more secure in a relationship suggests that affective commitments mature over time (Casalo et al., 2007).

Apart from affective commitment, which focus on a consumer's positive emotions about a relationship, some researchers propose two different dimensions of consumer commitment. Temporal commitment concentrates on the fact that consumers desire to prolong existing relationship and continue it in the future. Instrumental commitment on the other hand, captures the anticipated losses that may appear when the relationship ends. These losses come from perceived deficit of other options and include rational and emotional costs (Beatson et al., 2006).

#### 8. Gratitude and Commitment

Reciprocity which is considered as a core of consumers gratitude, is a fundamental component of relationships. It is an emotion that is aroused by the perception of good being traded for good, even though difficulties appeared in a relationship history of exchange. Reciprocity may then increase the likelihood of consumers to trust and commit themselves toward an organization (Cialdini and Goldstein, 2004).

Commitment is defined as a consumer's long lasting desire to maintain an important relationship. It includes a devotion to act towards a company, an approach that the relationship will withstand difficulties and will bring esteemed profits in the future. Since reciprocity is affiliated with trust, it can be concluded that there is a connection between reciprocity and

commitment (Pervan and Johnson, 2002; Raggio and Garretson Folse, 2009). It is therefore logical to suggest:

H6: Gratitude will have a positive influence on commitment.

#### 9. Trust and Commitment

Many researchers postulate that trust is essential to relational exchange and is found to be the backbone of the strategic partnership. The reason for that is the fact that partnerships which are distinguished by trust are so important that parties will be willing to commit themselves to such relationships. Doubtlessly, because commitment require indebtedness, parties will desire to cooperate only with trustworthy partners. Thus it is posited that trust is a main antecedent of a relationship commitment (Mogran and Hunt, 1994).

H7: Trust will have a positive influence on commitment.

#### 10. Satisfaction and Commitment

The connection between satisfaction and commitment can be found in various studies. If consumers are satisfied with what they experienced through a company's service, there is a greater possibility that they will commit themselves to this company (Gruen et al., 2000). It is logical to think that if consumers are satisfied with the general service from a company, they will demonstrate a positive attitude toward it (Dwyer et al., 1987). Thus, a good overall experience with a company's performance leads consumers to

continue the relationship with it because they have positive feelings for this company. This propose that consumer satisfaction provoke affective commitment (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999).

Similarly, when consumers are satisfied with service delivered by an organization, the likelihood of their return to that organization increases. They will want to positively experience good service again. Thus, it links consumer satisfaction and temporal commitment. Additionally, a positive relation between satisfaction and instrumental commitment are also argued. Therefore assuming that consumer satisfaction and all three dimensions of commitment is justifiable (Beatson et al., 2006).

H8: Satisfaction will have a positive influence on commitment.

#### 11. Loyalty

Loyalty can be defined as a mixed measure explained through consumer's purchasing frequency and the amount used to buy products from one company in comparison with the amount spent on all other companies that provides products from the consumer's consideration set (Liang and Wang, 2008). Generally, researchers defined three approaches to the measurement of loyalty: (1) Behavioral measurement demonstrate loyalty as the number of repeated purchases from the same company. Although this kind of measurement has the problem that repetitious purchase behaviour doesn't have to be connected with psychological involvement with the company. (2) Attitudinal measurement demonstrates loyalty as an approach of affective and psychological attraction toward a company. It measures the level of a

consumers' engagement and strength of attachment. (3) Composite measurements of loyalty evaluate consumer preferences, ability to change products, frequency and quantity of purchase. It combines the previous two measurements which brings better results in loyalty evaluation (Darsono and Junaedi, 2006).

In so much as commitment is defined as consumer's willingness to endure strong and reliable relationships with an organization and his likelihood to generate efforts at prolonging it, it can be proposed that a positive link between consumer commitment and consumer loyalty exists. This is because a greater propensity, caused by commitment, may encourage consumers to remain consistent with their actual behavior (Liang and Wang, 2008).

An amount of research in diverse fields have argued that commitment best describes the emotional components of loyalty, and that an increase in effect, should lead to increases in behavioral intention and ultimately loyalty. Commitment strongly influences the intention to continue, consumer referrals and behavioral intentions (Chiou and Droge, 2006). Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H9: Commitment will have a positive influence on loyalty.

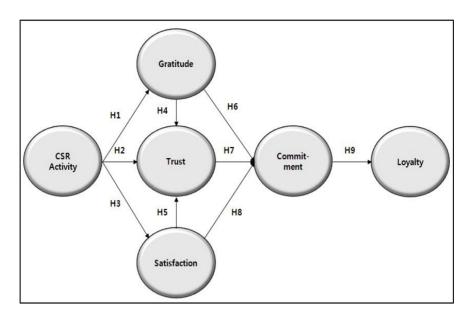


Figure 1. Proposed research model

# Chapter 3 Research Method

#### 1. Data Collection

Data was collected in three large cities in South Korea: Seoul, Daegu and Gwangju. 119 business school students and 225 general consumers participated in the survey conducted for this study. General consumers were recruited from people attending evening cultural education programs provided by local community centers (four centers in Seoul, and two centers in Daegu, one center in Gwangju), while the student participants were attending marketing classes in three universities (one in each city). In terms of demographics, slightly more than a half (54.3%) were male (n=203), and 81.4% (n=277) had a high school or higher education. The average age of the respondents was 34.6 years. General consumer respondents held various occupational backgrounds; housewives (n=54), students (n=119), corporate managers (n=69), engineers (n=25), self-employed (n=36), school teachers (n=21) and others (n=50).

#### 2. Measures

CSR is a manifestation of what society expects from corporations (Matten and Moon, 2004). Given the uniqueness of the cultural and the business environment under which Korean corporations conduct their businesses, extra effort was necessary for the development of measurement items. In order to

gain insights into Korean consumers' expectations about CSR activities, five items were generated to assess CSR activities by modifying the measurement items used in the past studies (Matten and Moon, 2004). (1) "XYZ company gives adequate contributions to charities," (2) "XYZ company forms partnerships with local schools and community organizations to do charitable work," (3) "XYZ company encourages its employees to actively participate in community affairs," (4) "XYZ company supports local sports and cultural activities," (5) XYZ company encourages and supports employees to get additional education (e.g., MBA, English enhancement programs)." CP items were measured on six-point Likert scales (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree).

Gratitude is a fundamental social component of human interactions that provides an emotional foundation for reciprocal behaviors. In our study we used an existing three-item scale for gratitude developed by Morales (2005) and Palmatier et al. (2009), considering the interactive relations between company and consumer. They were: (1) "I feel grateful to XYZ company," (2) "I feel thankful to XYZ company," (3) "I feel appreciative to XYZ company," The items used a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree).

Scale items for the trust (consider in two type of trust: expertise trust, benevolence trust) were drawn and modified from previous studies (Ferrin et al., 2007; Ganesan, 1994; McKnight et al., 2002; Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006; White, 2005). Two items were generated to assess expertise trust by modifying the measurement items used in the past studies (Ferrin et al., 2007; McKnight et al., 2002; White, 2005). They were: (1) "The XYZ company is competent and effective in producing great products and delivering services," (2) "The XYZ company has a great deal of technical

expertise in its business field." Benevolence trust was earlier defined as the consumers' belief that a corporation wants to do good for the welfare of society rather than the welfare of consumers. The existing scales, however, tended to reflect consumers' beliefs regarding a firm's concern with the welfare and interests of consumers only (Ganesan, 1994; Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 2002; Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006; White, 2005). One item was subsequently developed by modifying the existing measurement items: (1) "The XYZ company does many valuable things for the benefits and interests of society as a good corporate citizen." All trust items used six-point Likert scales (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree).

Also, the study used an existing three-item scale for consumers' satisfaction developed by Taylor and Baker (1994). They were: (1) "I am very satisfied with XYZ company," (2) "I am satisfied with the level of service of XYZ company," (3) "Overall, in purchasing the XYZ company service, I believe that I would be pleased with the XYZ company service," The items used a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree).

The study used an existing three-item scale for corporate commitment developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994). The commitment construct was designed to capture identification with the company ("proud to belong"), psychological attachment ("sense of belonging"), concern with long-term welfare ("care about the long-term success"). The items used a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree). Finally, consumer loyalty was measured using the following two dimensions: recommendations to others; and repurchase intentions (Cornin and Taylor, 1992). The items used a six-point Likert scale (1=Strongly disagree; 6=Strongly agree). Taylor et al.(2007) note that for services extending for long periods, measuring loyalty in terms of actual buying behavior may be inadequate. Hence, future purchase

intent is a commonly used surrogate measure (Lacey, 2007).

This study needed to specify a specific corporation about which respondents provided their evaluations and beliefs. In order to enhance the generalizability of the study findings, two well-known and large corporations were chosen. One of them is Korea's leading electronics company, while the other is a telecommunications company whose market share is over 40% in Korea. The total sample was divided into two, and each half was asked to provide their responses about one of the two companies. For the final data analysis, responses from the two groups were aggregated.

### 3. Analyses and Results

Data analysis was conducted in three phases. The first phase was item purification and reliability analysis. The second phase was measurement analysis (i.e., factor structure confirmation) involving the scales of CSR initiatives, gratitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment and consumers' loyalty. In the third phase, the proposed structural relationships among the key constructs (see <Figure 2>) were estimated and the results were used to test H1 to H9. In the final phase, the final model were examined.

#### 3.1 Reliability and Validity

The assessment of measurement properties (reliability and validity) for the proposed CSR initiatives, gratitude, trust, satisfaction, commitment and consumers' loyalty scale with 19 items and its item purification were carried out in an iterative procedure (Bohrnstedt, 1983; Kim and Lee, 1997). The item purification process resulted in 17 items measured (two item of CSR were eliminated). Cronbach's measure reliability coefficient was first calculated for

the items of each construct. As a result, Cronbach's a on this study turned out to be .77 at the minimum and .91 at the maximum (see <Table 1>), which indicates very high reliability. Thus, the reliability of research constructs was considered to be fair.

In addition exploratory factor analysis was carried out to analyze the validity of the measurement variables. Using principal component analysis, the varimax rotation method, one of the orthogonal rotations, kept independency among the factors.

Table 1. Resuts of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variables	Items	Factor loading						Cronbach's
CSR	1. csr1 2. csr2	.821 .784						.850
	3. csr3	.832						
	1. gra1		.685					
Gratitude	2. gra2		.604					.835
	3. gra3		.657					
	1. tru1			.691				
Trust	2. tru2			.680				.773
	3. tru3			.711				
	1. sat1				.713			
Satisfaction	2. sat2				.755			.912
	3. sat3				.806			
Commitmen	1. com1					.761		
	2. com2					.766		.850
t	3. com3					.702		
T 1.	1. loy1						.798	002
Loyalty	2. loy2						.820	.886
eigen valu % of vari cumulativ	ance	13.473 43.460 43.460	2.167 6.991 50.451	1.781 5.747 56.198	1.594 5.140 61.338	1.269 4.069 65.427	1.098 3.542 68.969	

No constructs were exempted as a result of the analysis, and the factor loadings for each concept were all above .00, so convergent validity was confirmed and, due to the use of orthogonal rotation, the discriminant validity for each factor was attained (see <Table 1>).

### 3.2 Correlation among Constructs

According to the factor analysis results, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to verify the mutual relationships among the constructs and their unidimensional characteristics. As a result, the relationships of all constructs had a positive relationship, as shown in Table 2. The results are in accordance with the relative direction among the presented variables. In addition, all measures had higher correlation among similar concepts than dissimilar concepts, showing both convergent and discriminant validity.

Table 2. Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of Key Constructs

	Mean	$\mathrm{SD}^a$	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CSR	3.62	.93	1.00					
2. Gratitude	3.70	.94	.559*	1.00				
3. Trust	4.17	.93	.341*	.486*	1.00			
4. Satisfaction	4.36	.97	.406*	.478*	.536*	1.00		
5. Commitment	4.44	.90	.364*	.462*	.527*	.654*	1.00	
6. Loyalty	4.12	1.11	.458*	.550*	.456*	.759*	.526*	1.00

Notes: <sup>a</sup>Standard Deviation

All correlation coefficients are significant at p = 0.01

#### 3.3 Measurement Model

In the subsequent stage, the six-factor structure encompassing the 17 items was subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL

VIII (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1993). The overall model fit as indicated by the  $\chi 2$  statistic fit( $\chi 2$ =239.26, df=104, p=0.00) was unsatisfactory. However, given the  $\chi 2$  test's sensitivity to sample size and our relatively large sample size (n=374), attention was focused on the fit measures that are less sensitive to sample size (Bentler, 1990), namely, the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness of fit (GFI), the adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI), and the normed fit index (NFI). For the CSR measurement model, the CFI, AGFI, and NFI values were all deemed satisfactory, equaling to 0.965, 0.930, 0.897, and 0.942, respectively. Convergent validity was assessed using the significance and magnitude of factor loadings. The magnitudes of factor loadings ranged from 0.60 and 0.90 and all the loadings were significant (p<0.01).

Table 3. Composite reliability and confirmatory factor analysis

Variables	Items	Items Standized loading		t-value Measurement error		AVE
	csr1	.81	17.87*	.35		
CSR	csr2	.82	18.16*	.33	.862	.676
	csr3	.84	18.82*	.30		
	gral	.83	18.30*	.32		
Gratitude	gra2	.77	16.50*	.41	.837	.632
	gra3	.79	17.22*	.37		
Trust	tru1	.83	17.64*	.31		
	tru2	.78	16.35*	.39	.784	.552
	tru3	.60	11.83*	.64		
Satisfaction	sat1	.85	20.20*	.27		
	sat2	.90	22.22*	.18	.913	.777
	sat3	.89	21.50*	.21		
Commitment	com1	.80	17.68*	.36		
	com2	.86	19.58*	.26	.853	.660
	com3	.78	17.00*	.40		
	loy1	.90	21.61*	.19		
Loyalty	loy2	.88	20.92*	.22	.886	.796
Fit	$\chi^2$ =239.26, df=104(p=.000), GFI=.930, AGFI=.897, NFI=.942, CFI=.965, RMR=.039					

Notes: \*p<.001

Discriminant validity among the six variables were examined by performing a  $\chi 2$  difference test between a model where all the factor correlations were fixed at 1.0 and the unconstrained model. The constrained model showed a significantly poorer fit compared to the unconstrained model ( $\Delta \chi 2$ =601.17, df=6, p=0.00). This suggests that the six variables were discriminant of one another.

### 3.4 Structural Model

To test the hypotheses in this study, we estimated the fit and parameters of the model through covariance structural analysis using LISREL VIII (Jöreskog & Sörbom 1993). The LISERL analysis shows a satisfactory fit of the model as indicated by the CFI, AGFI, NFI values of 0.871, 0.821, and 0.892, respectively. The results for the path analysis on the structural model are shown in Table 4. As expected, the chi-square test was significant ( $\chi$  =469.70,  $\chi$  =110, p<0.00). Given the overall acceptable fit of the model, the estimated path coefficients were then examined to evaluate the hypotheses.

Table 4 shows that the empirical results largely support the conceptual framework proposed in this study. First, there is evidence that CSR initiatives positively impact both consumers' gratitude and satisfaction, therefore as we expected hypotheses H1 and H3 were supported. An unexpected result was the relationship between CSR initiatives and consumer trust in the current study. Although it was hypothesized (H2) that CSR initiatives would have a positive impact on consumer trust, this was not supported. These results may be specifically influenced by the characteristics of the study. Attitudes toward the companies considered in our research may be biased by the specific type of Korean market and companies considered. Organizations evaluated in this research were well-known, large Korean corporations which on many

occasions find to be perceived by consumers as the ones that lead monopolistic activities. In this way responses to the survey could be influenced by consumers' perceptions. As hypothesized (H4; H6), gratitude positively contributed to consumer trust and commitment in the current research setting. Furthermore, trust and satisfaction also appear to positively impact consumer commitment. Thus proposed hypotheses H7 and H8 were supported.

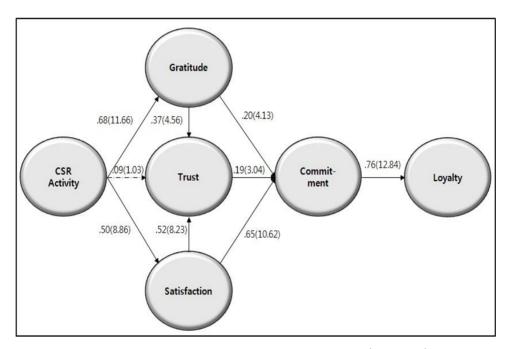


Figure 2. Hypothesized Structual Model(t-value)

At the same time, in line with hypothesis H5, consumer satisfaction was a significant, positive moderator of consumer trust. Finally, the confirmatory factor analysis used in this research indicated that commitment had a significant positive influence on consumer loyalty (H9).

Table 4. Assessment of the Effects of Exogenous and Endogenous Constructs

	Hypothesized relationship	estimate	t-value	conclusion
H1	CSR → Gratitude	.68	11.66***	supported
H2	CSR → Trust	.09	1.03	rejected
H3	CSR → Satisfaction	.50	8.86***	supported
H4	Gratitude → Trust	.37	4.56***	supported
H5	Satisfaction → Trust	.52	8.23***	supported
Н6	Gratitude → Commitment	.20	4.13***	supported
H7	Trust → Commitment	.19	3.04**	supported
H8	Satisfaction → Commitment	.65	10.62***	supported
Н9	Commitment → Loyalty	.76	12.84***	supported

 $\chi^2(110) = 469.70, \text{ GFI}(.871), \text{ AGFI}(.821), \text{ NFI}(.892), \text{ NNFI}(.896), \text{ CFI}(.916), \text{ RMSEA}(.082)$ 

<sup>\*</sup>Notes: \*p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001

# Chapter 4 Conclusion and Implications

CSR is the way corporations integrate their markets' concerns and expectations into corporate values and operations for the purpose of wealth creation as well as the betterment of society (Berger et al., 2007). Whereas there is enough evidence suggesting a significant positive impact of CSR practices on the firm's image, the existing CSR literature offers little explanation as to how CSR practices result in consumers' favorable firm perceptions. The present study addressed understanding of the link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and consumer loyalty by considering the CSR initiatives and the role of consumer gratitude, trust, and satisfaction as a mediators of the CSR-consumer loyalty link.

Our research suggests that CSR's influence on consumer loyalty is more complex than its straightforward approaches that have been analyzed so far by other researchers. Specifically, results showed that CSR initiatives conducted by a company may lead to higher levels of loyalty, although it is mediated by other consumer behaviors.

First of all, this study provides evidence that CSR initiatives positively impact consumer gratitude and satisfaction. Even though a company's effort to be more socially responsible doesn't have influence on quality of its products and services it does have a significant effect on consumer gratitude and actions of reciprocity toward it. Consumers realize that CSR initiatives are voluntary actions of an organization that align with their own moral views. Thus, even if they are exploited to market products, consumers react with feelings of gratitude. Consequently, the overall attitude toward the firm changes positively and induce consumers to identify with it. Consumers are

not only showing more reciprocal behaviors toward a firm, but also feel more satisfied with products made by an organization that is socially responsible.

Ironically, the link between CSR and consumers' trust wasn't supported in this research setting. In spite of numerous studies that suggest a significant impact of CSR on trust, our expectations were proven wrong. Although, such unexpected result may be caused by the characteristic of the research. The main focus was to explain the psychological mechanism of consumer responses to CSR initiatives and its influence on consumer loyalty. Moreover, as mentioned before, there is a strong suggestion that consumers responses in this study were biased by monopolistic image of organizations considered. Nevertheless trust has still been indirectly influenced by a company's CSR initiatives, though mediated by both gratitude and satisfaction.

Secondly, gratitude has been found to positively influence both, trust and commitment. It explains that gratitude is an emotion that maintain consumer-company relationships, puts special significance on upholding trust, as well as strengthens consumer commitment toward an organization.

Consistently, evidence that satisfaction is significantly influencing trust as well as commitment was also traced in our study. Thus, as we expected partnerships characterized by high levels of satisfaction lead consumers to commit themselves to such relationships. Moreover, since satisfaction is based on the level of fulfilling consumer expectations about the company, greater satisfaction makes consumers feel that the organization is trustworthy and capable of meeting its commitments.

Hypothesized, and well known in marketing literature, the link between trust and commitment was proved and likewise met our expectations. Thus, because commitment entails vulnerability, consumers will seek only trustworthy companies to pair with.

Finally, in terms of loyalty, we have found a positive and significant relationship between consumer commitment and loyalty. In this research, we have observed that consumers' allegiance and behavioral consistency toward a firm is preceded by their willingness to maintain strong relationship with a company and their likelihood of prolonging it.

On previous occasions many authors have studied direct effects of CSR initiatives on consumer loyalty. Our research provides strong arguments that, through socially responsible actions, companies not only gain loyalty itself but also activate mechanism of different consumer behaviors. Responses such as gratitude, trust, satisfaction and commitment mediate the relationship between CSR initiatives and eventually lead to consumer loyalty.

Like all empirical research, our study is limited in a few ways. First, our construct relied on consumer perceptions. Companies that are actually socially oriented and those that convincingly pretend to be werent separated. We can find this problem in many studies on CSR, because consumers and other stakeholders cannot always know what happens behind the organizations's walls. In this way consumer perceptions may be distorted by environmental factors that are difficult to measure.

Second, our data refer to only two companies, and specific type of business (electronic and telecommunication companies). It is legitimate to ask whether the same results hold in other business environment.

Third, our data were collected in South Korea, so it is questionable whether our findings apply to other countries.

Finally, it is important to mention uniqueness of the cultural and the business environment under which Korean corporations conduct their businesses, as well as monopolistic influence of corporations with major market share. It is possible that those two factors may bias consumers'

perceptions about CSR initiatives.

In summary, we see our study as a first step toward a new way of looking at the interplay between CSR and consumer loyalty. Further studies are needed to ascertain that our conclusions do not depend on national, industry, and other contextual factors involved in the particular case we examined. At the same time, we believe that we have proved that considering CSR as a trigger not only for certain consumer behaviors but for the whole mechanism of consumer behavior is promising.

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# [Appendix]

## 기업의 사회적 책임활동에 대한 소비자 의견조사

안녕하십니까?

저는 조선대학교 마케팅 석사과정에 재학중인 모뉴슈코 레슈입니다.

본 설문지는 저의 석사학위논문을 위하여 준비된 것으로, 기업의 사회적 책임활동에 대한 소비자 의견조사에 관한 내용을 다루고 있습니다.

귀하께서 응답하신 내용은 학문적 목적으로만 사용되고, 철저한 비밀이 보장될 것입니다.

귀하의 협조에 진심으로 감사드리며, 설문과 관련된 의문사항이 있으시면 아래의 연락처로 연락바랍니다. 귀하의 솔직하고 성실한 응답 부탁드립니다.

소속: 조선대학교 일반대학원 마케팅 석사과정

연구원: 모뉴슈코 레슈

지도교수: 박 종 철

## 설문 응답 시 주의사항

- 1. 설문에 제시된 지시사항을 잘 읽고 질문에 답하여 주시기 바랍니다.
- 2. 각 질문 항목에는 옳고 그른 정답이 없으며, 귀하의 솔직한 의견만 제시해 주시면 됩니다.
- 3. 각 질문 항목에는 옳고 그른 정답이 없으며, 귀하의 솔직한 의견만 제시해 주시면 됩니다.
- 4. 다시 한번 설문에 응해주셔서 감사 드립니다.
- 5. 준비가 되셨으면 이제 시작하시기 바랍니다.

▶ 귀하께서 가장 잘 알고 있는 기업 하나를 선정하시어 해당 기업이 사회공헌 활동을 어떻게 수행하고 있는지 아래 질문항목에 체크하여 주시기 바랍니다.

### A. XYZ 기업의 '사회공헌활동'에 대한 귀하의 평소 생각을 체크해주시기 바랍니다.

,	······
	전혀 동의하지 않는다 매우 동의한다
1. XYZ기업은 지역사회 및 여러 학교들과의 협력사업을 장려하고 있는 것 같다.	123456
2. XYZ기업은 스포츠 및 문화 활동을 지원 하고 있는 것 같다.	123456
3. XYZ기업은 영업규모 대비 적절한 양의 사회공헌을 수행하는 것 같다.	123456
4. XYZ기업은 자사직원들이 추가적인 교육 (예; 해외연구, MBA, 영어교육 등)을 받 을 수 있도록 지원하는 것 같다.	123456
5. XYZ기업은 직원들로 하여금 해당 지역사 회를 지원하는 자원봉사 활동을 장려하고 있는 것 같다.	123456
6. XYZ기업은 직원들이나 학생들에게 교육 프로그램(예; 해외연구, MBA, 영어교육 등)을 지원하는 것 같다.	123456

## B. 귀하께서는 사회공헌활동을 수행하는 XYZ기업에 대하여 어떻게 생각하십니까?

1. XYZ기업에 고마움을 느낀다.	123456
2. XYZ기업은 감사하는 마음을 느낀다.	123456
3. XYZ기업을 높이 평가하고 싶다.	123456
4. XYZ기업은 자신의 산업분야에서 탁월한 기술력을 지니고 있는 것 같다.	123456
5. XYZ기업은 해당 분야에서 탁월한 전문성 을 지니고 있는 것 같다.	123456
6. XYZ기업은 해당 분야에서 뛰어난 노하우 를 가지고 있는 것 같다.	123456
7. XYZ기업은 우리사회의 요구를 충실히 받 아들이는 기업인 것 같다.	123456
8. XYZ기업은 우리사회의 최대 관심분야를 충족시키려고 노력하는 것 같다.	123456

C. XYZ기업에 대해서 전반적으로 어떻게 평가하시는지 체크해주시기 바랍니다.

1. 나는 XYZ기업에 대해 만족한다.	123456
2. 나는 XYZ기업에 서비스 수준에 대해 만족 한다.	123456
3. 전반적으로 XYZ기업의 서비스 구매시, 나는 XYZ기업의 서비스에 대 만족한다.	123456
4. 나는 XYZ기업이 자랑스럽다.	123456
5. 나는 XYZ기업의 일부라고 생각한다.	123456
6. 나는 XYZ기업의 지속적인 성공에 관심이 있다.	123456
7. 나는 XYZ기업의 제품을 다시 구매할 것이 다.	123456
8. 나는 XYZ기업의 제품을 다른 사람에게 추 천할 것이다.	123456

- D. 다음은 귀하의 인구통계학적 특성에 관한 질문입니다.
- 1. 귀하의 성별은? ①\_\_남자 ②\_\_여자
- 2. 귀하의 연령은? 만 세
- 3. 귀하께서 현재 거주하는 지역은?

\_\_\_\_ (광역시 혹은 도; 서울, 경기도, 경상도, 대구, 전라도, 광주 등)

- 4. 귀하의 월평균 가구소득은?
- ① 99만원 미만 ② 100 만원 199 만원 ③ 200 만원 299 만원
- ④ 300 만원 399 만원 ⑤ 400 만원 499 만원 ⑥ 500 만원 이상

- 5. 귀하의 최종학력은?
- ① 중졸 ② 고졸 ③ 대학 재학 ④ 대졸 ⑤ 대학원 재학 ⑥ 대학원 졸업

6. 귀하의 직업은?

 ① 주부
 ② 학생
 ③ 자영업
 ④ 공무원
 ⑤ 교육자

 ⑥ 일반 사무 및 관리직
 ⑦ 기술직 및 기능직
 ⑧ 기타( )
 )