

CAN CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY ENCOURAGE PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG CUSTOMERS?

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Overview

Despite, or possibly as a response to, some national governments not prioritizing the mitigation of environment problems such as climate change, some business leaders seem to recognize their responsibility and strive for corporate environmental responsibility (CER) to reduce their environmental impact. This can influence the strategies and practices of organizations, but could this also influence pro-environmental behaviour of their customers? If so, do customers act more pro-environmentally because they think the organization expects them to do so (i.e., social norms), or because they internalize CER into a personal norm to act pro-environmentally? In a questionnaire study, we examined the effects of CER on personal norms and pro-environmental behaviour among customers of an energy utility in the Netherlands. The results showed that perceptions of CER were positively related to energy saving behaviour by strengthening people's personal norm to save energy, while social norms did not play a role in the process. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Methods

We examined the effects of CER on personal norms and energy saving behaviour in a questionnaire study among 2194 customers of an energy utility in the Netherlands. We measured perceived CER, personal norms to save energy, social norms to save energy and self-reported energy saving behaviour.

Results

The results showed that perceptions of CER were positively related to energy saving behaviours by strengthening customers' personal norm to save energy, while social norms did not play a role in this process.

Conclusions

The data suggests that energy saving behaviour of customers of an energy utility is more likely when they think the energy company aims to realize CER, because they internalize the organization's goal to realise CER into a personal norm to save energy.

References