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How Co-Creation Increases Employee Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Engagement: The Moderating Role of Self-Construal

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Abstract

This research merges literature from organizational behavior and marketing to garner insight into how organizations can maximize the benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for enhanced CSR and organizational engagement of employees. Across two field experiments, the authors demonstrate that the effectiveness of employee co-creation activities in increasing employees' positive CSR perceptions is moderated by self-construal (i.e., whether an individual views the self as relatively independent from or interdependent with others). In particular, the positive effect of co-creation on CSR perceptions emerges only for employees with a salient interdependent self-construal (either measured as an individual difference or experimentally manipulated). Moreover, the results demonstrate that increased positive CSR perceptions then predict increased CSR engagement and organizational engagement. The research thus highlights the need to consider self-construal when trying to utilize co-creation to predict CSR engagement and organizational engagement, via CSR perceptions.

Scholarly interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR)—defined as "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance" (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855)—has become widespread. Until recently, the majority (i.e., 96%) of CSR research took place at the macro level of analysis, in which the organization is the unit of analysis (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012); however, CSR-related studies at the individual level have markedly increased (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). Indeed, Gond, El Akremi, Swaen, and Babu (2017) highlight a "rapid expansion" (p. 225) of individual-level CSR studies, noting that in recent years several special issues were devoted to CSR at the individual level in leading organizational behavior and human resources management journals.

This proliferation of CSR research situated at the individual level of analysis has resulted in a body of literature commonly referred to as micro-CSR, a field in which research is defined as "the study of effects and experiences of CSR (however it is defined) on individuals (in any stakeholder group) as examined at the individual level of analysis" (Rupp & Mallory, 2015, p. 216). To date, this work in organizational behavior has largely focused on the consequences of employees' perceptions of their firm's CSR activities (Glavas, 2016a, 2016b; Gond et al., 2017). For example, CSR perceptions are linked to turnover intentions and retention (e.g., Hansen, Dunford, Boss, Boss & Angermeier, 2011; Jones, 2010), firm attractiveness (e.g., Jones, Willness & Madey, 2014; Rupp, Shao, Thornton & Skarlicki, 2013), organizational commitment and identification (e.g., Brammer, Millington & Rayton, 2007; Carmeli, Gilat & Waldman, 2007; DeRoeck, Akremi & Swaen, 2016; Hameed, Riaz, Arain, & Farooq, 2018), organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Farooq, Rupp & Farooq, 2017; Jones, 2010; Rupp et al., 2013), employee pro-environmental behavior (e.g., Tian & Robertson, 2017), job performance (e.g., Korschun, Bhattacharya & Swain, 2014; Vlachos, Panagopolous & Rapp, 2014), job satisfaction

(e.g., Valentine & Fleischman, 2008), work engagement (e.g., Caligiuri, Mencin & Jiang, 2013; Glavas & Piderit, 2009; Rupp et al., 2018), and employee engagement (Glavas, 2016b).

Taken together, this existing body of research demonstrates that when employees have positive CSR perceptions—defined as beliefs about the degree to which their organization is socially and environmentally responsible—firms benefit through more positive job attitudes and behaviors on the part of their employees. Compared to these studies of the outcomes of CSR perceptions, much less research has examined what might influence employees' CSR perceptions. In fact, only eight studies included in Gond et al.'s (2017) review examined concepts that inform perceptions, such as awareness or knowledge of CSR. We believe that this dearth of research highlights an opportunity to more fully understand how organizations can maximize the benefits of CSR by influencing their employees' view of their firm as being socially and environmentally responsible, especially given that research suggests that employees have low awareness of their organization's CSR activities (e.g., Bhattacharya, Sen & Korschun, 2008). Moreover, relatively little micro-CSR research has examined individual differences or contextual factors that may operate as boundary conditions to how employees perceive and respond to CSR initiatives (Gond et al., 2017). This is relevant because not all employees react positively to CSR (Glavas & Godwin, 2013). To the best of our knowledge, micro-CSR research has not yet examined the effect of asking employees to collaborate with the firm in the development of CSR activities (i.e., co-creation) on their engagement with their organization and with CSR activity. In this research, we examine when and why participating in the co-creation of a CSR program positively impacts employee CSR perceptions, and subsequently CSR and organizational engagement. This research thus contributes to the broader discourse in business ethics on how organizations and their employees can facilitate positive societal outcomes regarding environmental sustainability.

Our framework draws upon work in the marketing literature, where the concept of co-creation has been shown to lead to many benefits for the firm including increased efficiency, more innovative idea generation, and products that better resonate with the target market (e.g., Franke, Keinz & Steger, 2009; Franke, von Hippel & Schreier, 2006; Hoyer, Chandy, Dorotic, Krafft & Singh, 2010; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). We apply these existing findings from marketing to the organizational domain and further suggest that co-creation can have compelling consequences for employees and firms. Accordingly, we seek to broaden micro-CSR research by extending co-creation techniques found in the marketing literature to the organizational-behavior context. We conducted two field experiments on North American employees to investigate how the co-creation of CSR activity impacts employees' CSR perceptions and, in turn, the extent to which they express a willingness to become involved with CSR activity (i.e., CSR engagement) and feel engaged with their organization (i.e., organizational engagement). We also propose a novel individual-difference moderator of the impact of co-creation on CSR perceptions: self-construal (i.e., the extent to which an individual sees the self as separate from others or as connected with others; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; see figure 1). In doing so, we delineate an important boundary condition to how employees perceive and react to CSR as a result of co-creation thereby better defining the circumstances under which co-creating activities are (in)effective. Finally, we show that self-construal can be experimentally primed within the co-creation context. As a result, we provide insight into how employees can come to perceive their firm as socially and environmentally responsible; and we offer ideas for organizations to implement techniques that involve employees in CSR activity in ways that can positively influence their organizational and CSR engagement.

[Insert figure 1 here]

THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Co-creation

The field of marketing has recently seen a shift in terms of increasing the involvement of consumers in the creation of brand identities, experiences, communications, and even products (Hoyer et al., 2010). This trend, wherein both consumers and producers collaborate to create value (Voyer, Kastanakis & Rhode, 2017), has been conceptualized as "co-creation" in the literature (Pongsakornrungsilp & Schroeder, 2011), referring to the active involvement of end-users in various stages of the production process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000; Vargo & Lusch 2004), and is grounded in the concept of interaction (Ramaswamy & Ozcan 2018). For instance, firms might involve consumers in the ideation stage, in the evaluation of new ideas or product designs, and/or in the launch of products (Chang & Taylor, 2016). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis found that the effectiveness of co-creation in new product development differs as a function of when in the development process the co-creation occurs—with the ideation and launch stages being the most lucrative time to engage end-users because they accelerate the time to market (Chang & Taylor, 2016). Co-creation will also differ with regard to the extent of collaboration with end-users. Chan, Yim, and Lam (2010) found a positive relationship between the extent to which a customer engages in co-creation (e.g., invests time and effort in sharing information, making suggestions, and being involved in the decision-making process) and customer satisfaction.

Through interactions in which customers co-create experiences with brands, organizations can gain competitive advantage (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). Examples of this strategy can be seen in campaigns that use consumer-generated advertising messages (Doritos), solicit consumer insights (MyStarbucksIdea), and crowdsource product innovation (Domino's Pizza Mogul). As a whole, co-creation is found to provide valuable consumer insights, create authentic content and brand experiences, increase consumer engagement, and positively impact

brand loyalty (Cossio-Silva, Revilla-Camacho, Vega-Vazquez & Palacios-Florencio, 2016; Thompson & Malaviya, 2013). Recently, Kirmani and Dretsch (2014) found that co-creation tasks that facilitate brand knowledge creation and brand connection are particularly effective at increasing consumer engagement. Yet, literature further indicates that the extent to which co-creation is effective is dependent on characteristics of the end-user, such as the anticipated benefits of co-creation (i.e., customers' expectations about how they and others will benefit from co-creation situations; Verleye, 2015). For instance, participants in co-creation might anticipate economic benefits, social benefits, or psychological benefits (Etgar, 2008; Hoyer et al., 2010), and each of these might differentially motivate participants and thus moderate co-creation effects (Verleye, 2015).

Companies have also used co-creation to engage stakeholders in the design and implementation of their CSR initiatives. For example, the Pepsi Refresh initiative allows individuals and charities to advertise charitable programs on its website, and then visitors to the site can vote for the program of their liking, with the winning charities receiving a donation from Pepsi (Korschun & Du, 2013). Including consumers in the design and implementation of CSR activity is becoming increasingly popular (Korschun & Du, 2013), and it has been suggested that CSR co-creation can improve organization–stakeholder relationships (e.g., Bhattacharya, Korschun & Sen, 2009), as well as add value to the firm and society at large (Korschun & Du, 2013). Moreover, case-study research supports the effectiveness of CSR co-creation in generating value for the firm (e.g., Jurietti, Mandelli & Fudurić, 2017).

While the explicit use of co-creation is not as prevalent in organizational behavior (OB) literature as it is in marketing, there is some emerging support for its application to organizational settings, and in micro-CSR contexts in particular. First, Voyer et al. (2017) argue that brand stakeholders who help co-create brand identities can encompass various stakeholder

groups in addition to customers, including employees. Therefore, there is a clear path for employees to become involved in co-creation. Second, OB scholars have for decades investigated the effects of similar concepts, such as employee voice (Hirschman, 1970; Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), participative leadership (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998), and participative decision-making (Lewin, 1947), on employees' job attitudes and behaviors. Yet none of these concepts test an explicit co-creation of an organizational initiative. Third, case-study research from a large multinational company in the energy sector indicates that employees can play a major role in the design and implementation of CSR activity and its ultimate success (Bolton, Kim & O'Gorman, 2011). Thus, we propose that engaging employees in co-creation by which they contribute ideas to jointly shape the CSR initiative is one strategy that organizations can employ to enhance outcomes. Finally, consistent with our theorizing, though not termed co-creation, Kim, Lee, Lee, and Kim (2010) found that when employees have the opportunity to suggest the nature of CSR initiatives, they are more likely to identify with their organization and, in turn, to report higher levels of commitment to the firm's goals. Accordingly, we propose that co-creation can be applied to organizational settings to gain insights into the conditions under which involving employees in co-creating CSR activity impacts their CSR and organizational engagement.

Co-creation and Perceptions of CSR

Co-creation allows organizations to shape customers' expectations and experiences with a brand (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), including expectations about a company's values (Oliver, 2006). In a similar vein, research on participative decision-making concludes that seeking employees' input in organizational decisions can increase employee knowledge about organizational goals and job expectations (Miller & Monge, 1986; Wright & Kim, 2004). Within

the HR management literature, it has been suggested that employees use organizational signals to form judgments about their organization's intentions and actions (Dögl & Holtbrügge, 2014). We argue that when applied to an organizational context, co-creation of CSR activity may also give employees an experience that shapes their CSR perceptions. According to Korschun and Du's (2013) theoretical framework, co-creating CSR can signal to consumers that a firm values environmental and social issues and therefore is committed to improve environmental and societal welfare through its CSR activity. Connelly, Certo, Ireland, and Reutzel (2011) suggest that CSR activity serves as an indicator that external stakeholders use to gain information about a firm's dedication to CSR. CSR activity can also convey important information to internal stakeholders, as job seekers' perceptions and expectations of a firm can be influenced by signals in the form of corporate environmental performance (Jones et al., 2014), and employees use signals sent through their firm's environmental communication to draw conclusions about their employer's environmental reputation (Dögl & Holtbrügge, 2014). We suggest that by engaging employees in the co-creation of CSR activity, a firm signals its social and environmental values and a collective commitment to improving environmental and societal welfare. As a result, employees will form judgments about their organization's social and environmental preferences and actions, thereby influencing their CSR perceptions—that is, perceptions of the degree to which the organization engages in positive social and environmentally responsible activity that seeks to benefit various stakeholders. Note that our definition of CSR takes into account both social and environmental impacts (El Akremi, Gond, Swaen, De Roeck, & Igalens, 2018; Tian & Robertson, 2017; Turker, 2009). Importantly, we next shift to a discussion of why we propose that the way these perceptions are formed will not be universal for all individuals.

The Moderating Role of Self-Construal

Recent research has begun to discuss how cultural differences might affect co-creation (Voyer et al., 2017), including propositions and findings that processes and outcomes of co-creation are likely to differ as a function of cultural elements. For example, dyadic (customer–employee) research identifies that co-creation can strengthen relational bonds between customers and employees, increase employee job stress, and reduce job satisfaction, particularly for those who have higher individualist value orientations (Chan et al., 2010). In the participative decision-making (PDM) literature, idiocentric employees had more positive perceptions of PDM opportunities when collective efficacy was high, yet allocentric employees' perceptions increased only when motivated by self-efficacy (Lam, Chen & Schaubroeck, 2002). While organizational behavior literature has begun to examine how individualism (as an individual difference) moderates the relationship between CSR perceptions and workplace outcomes (Farooq et al., 2017; Rupp et al., 2018), it has not examined what role such individual differences may play in forming employee CSR perceptions in the first place. We extend the above findings to suggest that individual differences may also qualify the extent to which employees perceive their firm as socially and environmentally responsible, including as a result of how employees individually respond to the co-creation of CSR initiatives.

Thus, given that CSR initiatives are shared endeavors that can only be realized with the collective support of employees and that connectedness is a critical element of co-creation (Kirmani & Dretsch, 2014), we expect the extent to which the self is connected to others (i.e., self-construal) will be particularly relevant. Self-construal can be distinguished as seeing oneself as primarily separate from others (independent self-construal) or as connected to others (interdependent self-construal; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Importantly, while self-construal is an individual difference wherein people vary in the extent to which they chronically tend to hold a more interdependent or independent construal of the self, research demonstrates that all

individuals possess some aspect of each of these dimensions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Self-construal can thus be measured as an individual difference or primed to temporarily shift an individual's salient self-construal (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gardner, Gabriel & Lee, 1999; White & Simpson, 2013). In both cases, those with a more interdependent self-construal tend to conceive of the self as interconnected with, and non-differentiated from, others. This tendency results in an interpersonal focus, emphasizing social roles, obligations, and relationships (Chiu & Hong, 2007; Oyserman, Sakamoto & Lauffer, 1998). Indeed, for those who view the self as interdependent with others, their identities tend to be related to goals that they share with other members of their group (Chen, Chen & Meindl, 1998).

Our conceptualization proposes that self-construal will be an important moderator of the impact of co-creation of CSR on employee outcomes such as CSR perceptions and CSR engagement. We make this prediction by drawing on research in marketing demonstrating that a co-creation task can increase the level of felt connectedness to a brand (Kirmani & Dretsch, 2014) and that a firm's CSR activity can signal a commitment to a collective goal of improving environmental and societal welfare (Dögl & Holtbrügge, 2014). Our conceptualization builds on this existing research to propose that those who view themselves as more connected with others (e.g., interdependents) will respond positively to co-creation activities because they are more committed to their ingroups (White, Argo & Sengupta, 2012). We make this proposition because research shows that co-creation increases the salience of working with others toward a common goal (e.g., Dögl & Holtbrügge, 2014), which resonates with those who are more interdependent (e.g., Chen, Chen & Meindl, 1998). Thus, we propose that a more interdependent self-construal will lead individuals to place greater value on the collective goal the organization aims to achieve via the co-creation of the CSR initiative, resulting in a more positive outlook on the organization's initiatives and, thus, in higher CSR perceptions.

Alternatively, those who tend to view themselves as more independent conceive of the self as autonomous, separate, and differentiated from others, resulting in a primary focus on self-related goals and needs (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). They are less motivated to cooperate with other group members outside their individual roles and less inclined to view group activities as their responsibility (Lam et al., 2002). This is likely because those who are more independent see themselves as less connected to their social context (Duclos & Barasch, 2014) and desire autonomy and agency (Simpson, White & Laran, 2018; White & Argo, 2011). Thus, while the co-creation task is expected to lead to heightened levels of connectedness with the organization for all participants (Kirmani & Dretsch, 2014), a shared goal is not congruent with individual-level motivations of those who are more independent. For those with a relatively more independent self-construal, we therefore do not expect that participation in a co-creation activity will positively impact CSR perceptions. In sum, we propose self-construal as a novel moderator of the effect of co-creation on CSR perceptions, specifically hypothesizing:

> **Hypothesis 1:** *Self-construal will moderate the relationship between CSR co-creation and perceived CSR such that participation in a co-creation activity (vs. a control task) will lead to more positive perceptions of the organization's CSR activities (i.e., CSR perceptions) as the level of interdependent self-construal increases.*

Perceptions of CSR and CSR Engagement

Bolton and colleagues (2011) suggested that CSR enables employees to partake in the management of corporate affairs. This is consistent with research that has begun to explore how employees' CSR perceptions influence involvement with their firm's CSR initiatives. For example, supervisor commitment to CSR has been linked to employee CSR engagement (Muller & Kolk, 2010). Likewise, Vlachos et al. (2014) demonstrated that when employees view their company as socially and environmentally responsible, they are more likely to contribute ideas to, get involved with, and embrace their organization's CSR program. Further, in line with the

notion that higher levels of pro-environmental behaviors are expected in companies committed to environmental sustainability (Ciocirlan, 2017), Tian and Robertson (2017) found that employees' CSR perceptions impact their own environmentally responsible behavior.

CSR engagement is traditionally defined as an organization's or its employees' participation in CSR (e.g., Aguinis & Glavas, 2012)—a definition strictly focused on the behavioral aspect of CSR engagement. Scholars have recently begun to conceptualize CSR engagement more broadly, recognizing that this construct consists of attitudinal (e.g., care and concern for CSR), cognitive (e.g., managers' appraisals of CSR), and behavioral (e.g., employees enacting environmentally responsible behavior; Gond et al., 2017) components. Importantly, Opoku-Dakwa, Chen, and Rupp (2018) define employee CSR engagement as employees' level of investment in pursuit of CSR goals, and they make a distinction between CSR participation and CSR engagement. The former refers to an employee partaking in CSR initiatives, while the latter involves an employee's personal and psychological investment that can manifest in the form of voice, caring behaviors and/or initiative taking. Consistent with this work, we take a psychological approach in conceptualizing CSR engagement as an employee's investment in pursuit of CSR goals, reflected in intentions to learn more about the CSR initiative (Study 1) and to take part in the CSR activity (Study 2). We suggest that among employees who are more interdependent, positive CSR perceptions that are shaped by CSR co-creation will predict their willingness to further engage with CSR activity.

> **Hypothesis 2:** *The indirect effect of the interaction of self-construal and co-creation on CSR engagement is mediated by employees' CSR perceptions.*

Perceptions of CSR and Organizational Engagement

Participative decision-making literature suggests that participation can increase affective ties with an organization (Miller & Mogne, 1986); and we build upon this notion to suggest that

the positive CSR perceptions of those who are more interdependent who take part in the co-creation of CSR will have additional positive downstream consequences, including enhancing their organizational engagement. To support this proposition, we draw on literature from employee engagement, broadly defined as "a positive, fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Based on the arguments of Rokeach (1973) and Heidegger (1962) that all individuals value caring, Glavas and Piderit (2009) suggest that employees become more engaged when they have opportunities to care for the well-being of others and the natural environment. Thus, it is possible that involving employees in CSR initiatives creates an opportunity for them to express their valuing of the well-being of others (Rupp & Mallory, 2015). In line with this notion, studies show that employees' positive CSR perceptions can indeed lead to increased work engagement (Caligiuri et al., 2013; Glavas & Piderit, 2009; Lin, 2010; Lin, Tsai, Joe & Chui, 2012). Moreover, research finds that employee participation in CSR activities positively impacts job absorption (a sub-component of work engagement; Rodell, 2013).

Although this body of research supports the relationship between perceived CSR and work engagement, research has not yet explicitly considered *organizational* engagement as an outcome of employees' CSR perceptions. Employee engagement is a multi-dimensional construct (Saks & Gruman, 2014) that encompasses the relationship between an employee and his/her occupation, work, and organization (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2011). Organizational engagement is a type of employee engagement (Saks, 2006; Saks & Gruman, 2014) that includes employees' involvement of their complete selves with their organization, and it is influenced by factors such as organizational goals, values, and beliefs (Saks & Gruman, 2014). Based on this, as well as findings that link CSR perceptions to employee engagement (Glavas 2016b), we

suggest that co-creation of a CSR activity can positively influence employees' organizational engagement through CSR perceptions. As noted above, we further suggest that this will be primarily observed for those with a more interdependent self-construal, as their personal goals and outcomes tend toward congruence with group goals and outcomes.

> **Hypothesis 3:** *The indirect effect of the interaction of self-construal and co-creation on organizational engagement is mediated by employees' CSR perceptions.*

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Study 1 was run in a mid-sized North American organization using an existing CSR program and measuring self-construal as a continuous individual difference, aiming to show that those with a relatively higher level of interdependent self-construal respond positively to co-creation. It further demonstrates that the interaction between co-creation and self-construal predicts both CSR engagement and organizational engagement, and that this effect is mediated by perceived CSR. Study 2 is designed to generalize the focal effect, priming self-construal to replicate the findings in an online experiment using employees recruited from an online labor market.

STUDY 1

Context, Sample, and Procedure

In Study 1, we conduct a preliminary test of our hypotheses. A total of 1,032 full- and part-time employees from a medium-sized North American university, consisting of faculty (28%), administrative personnel, and other staff (72%) from a wide range of departments, were recruited to participate. Most work in an office setting. Participants were recruited through an email the researchers sent with the support of management and the organization's Office of Sustainability. A total of 223 employees self-selected to participate, yielding an effective response rate of 22% with 206 employees completing the survey fully. The average age of

participants (33% male) was 42.34 years (SD = 11.90, range 20–70). On average, employees had

been working for the organization for 11.64 years (SD = 10.36, range 0–43). All participants

were offered a $10 gift card as an incentive.

This study used a randomized between-subjects field experiment, a methodology

specifically highlighted as a powerful technique to understand behavior as it relates to

sustainability in organizations (Delmas & Aragón-Correa, 2016) and useful for assessing

causality (Jones, Newman, Shao & Cooke, 2018). The employees completed an online

questionnaire within which they first completed the measure of organizational identification.

They were then randomly assigned to the CSR co-creation participation (*N* = 109) or control (*N*

= 97) conditions. All participants were first presented with a brief description of an existing

program in the organization, the Green Office Program, which asks employees to generate

innovative ideas that seek to make environmentally responsible impacts within the workplace;

the program also allows the organization's community to identify areas for improvement, and to

recognize progressive efforts. Some examples of ideas implemented by the program were

provided (e.g., the "bring your own bottle," "smart commute," and "please switch me off"

initiatives). Following Kirmani and Dretsch (2014), we asked employees who were assigned to

the CSR co-creation condition to brainstorm an idea for the Green Office Program and write

about "how the idea expresses what [organization] means to you, and why you like your idea." In

other words, they were asked to jointly contribute, along with the organization, in producing the

initiative. In this way, co-creation was conceptualized and employed in the ideation stage of

project development (Chang & Taylor, 2016), requiring only a small level of co-creation

participation from employees (Chan et al., 2010). Employees assigned to the control condition

were asked to write about an item recently purchased from the grocery store and "why you like

the item" (see Appendix A; adapted from Rucker & Galinsky, 2008). This was done to allow

adequate experimental control by having participants carry out a written task for a similar length of time. After completing either of these tasks, participants responded to measures of the manipulation check, the mediating, moderating, and dependent variables, as well as some additional control variables (prior familiarity with the initiative and biospheric values) and demographic questions. All ideas generated in the co-creation task were later shared with the organization's Office of Sustainability for future implementation as program possibilities.

Measures

 Manipulation Check. Kirmani and Dretsch (2014) suggest that co-creation activities that involve consumers reflecting on and feeling connected with a brand are particularly effective at increasing engagement. Thus, to ensure that co-creation was manipulated successfully, we asked participants about the extent to which completing the task (i.e., either CSR co-creation or the control task) made them reflect on: a) what the organization means to them, and b) how connected they feel to the organization. Both questions were rated on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so*).

 CSR Perceptions. To measure CSR perceptions, participants responded to Wagner, Lutz, and Weitz's (2009) three-item measure ("Organization X is a socially responsible company [it undertakes social and environmental initiatives on a voluntary basis]; Organization X follows high ethical standards; Organization X is concerned with improving the well-being of stakeholders and society at large"). Consistent with research demonstrating that employees perceive CSR as a set of interrelated practices targeting various stakeholders (e.g., society, the natural environment, consumers, etc.; El Akremi et al., 2018), we adapted Wagner et al.'s (2009) items by including a qualifier in our first item noting that socially responsible companies are those that undertake social and environmental initiatives to benefit various stakeholders. In so

doing, we ensured that participants would rate this measure while thinking about CSR in terms of both social and environmental responsibility. The response scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree;* $\alpha = .90$).

Self-construal. Participants completed Singelis' (1994) measure of self-construal on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The summed score of the 12 interdependent items ($\alpha = .84$) was subtracted from the summed score of the 12 independent items ($\alpha = .79$), such that higher scores reflect a more independent self-construal (Singelis, 1994).

CSR Engagement. To assess the extent of participants' willingness to further engage with the organization's CSR activity as a result of completing either the co-creation or control task, we asked employees to rate how interested they are in learning more about sustainability initiatives at their organization, and how willing they would be to learn more about participating in the Green Office Program, on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so;* $\alpha = .92$).

Organizational Engagement. Using Saks' (2006) six-item measure of organizational engagement (e.g., "I am highly engaged in my organization"), items were ranked on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree;* $\alpha = .87$).

Control Variables. Because the Green Office Program is an existing CSR initiative that employees may be aware of, levels of familiarity with the program might affect CSR perceptions as well as CSR engagement. Thus, employees indicated whether or not they were previously familiar with the program (no/yes), and this factor was controlled for in the analyses. Given the body of literature that links CSR perceptions to organizational identification, we also control for employee organizational identification in our model to demonstrate that the indirect effects of co-creation occur above and beyond this construct. Organizational identification was measured with six items (e.g., "Organization X's successes are my successes") ranked on a scale of 1

(*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree;* α = .90; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Finally, it is also possible that environmentally concerned individuals will differentially respond to the dependent variables, thereby biasing our sample. Therefore, participants' biospheric values were measured using Stern, Dietz, Abel, Guagnano, and Kalof's (1999) scale (e.g., please rate how important the following values are to you: protecting natural resources, harmony with other species, etc.) and controlled for in our analyses. The four items were ranked on a scale of 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important;* α = .91).

Data Analyses

To test our moderated mediation hypotheses, we used ordinary least squares path analysis as implemented by PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). Asymmetric bootstrapping confidence intervals (CI) were used to make statistical inferences about the conditional indirect effects at varying levels of the moderator, thereby avoiding issues related to violating assumption of normality of the sample distribution (Hayes, 2013). Because the conditional indirect effect of only one independent variable on one dependent variable can be examined at a time, we ran PROCESS twice to estimate two models, each with a different dependent variable (organizational engagement and CSR engagement). All participants were included in all analyses, regardless of the extent to which they elaborated in their response on their assigned task. Descriptive data and intercorrelations appear in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Results

Manipulation Checks. Those in the co-creation condition responded more positively (*M* = 4.55, SD = 1.94) to whether "completing the task made me reflect on what [organization]

means to me" than did those in the control condition (M = 1.87, SD = 1.62; $t(204)$ = -10.67; p <

.001), as well as more affirmatively to whether "completing the task made me feel connected to

[organization]" (M = 4.48, SD = 1.96) compared to those in the control condition (M = 1.80, SD

= 1.54; $t(204)$ = -10.82; p < .001), indicating that the co-creation task did indeed result in

increased feelings of connectedness to the organization as predicted. Importantly, the co-creation

task had no impact on the measure of self-construal ($M_{control}$ = 2.06, SD = 13.07; $M_{co\text{-}creation}$ =

2.27, SD = 13.50; $t(204)$ = -.12; p = .91).

Hypotheses Tests. Consistent with our theorizing, an interaction of self-construal and

co-creation predicted CSR perceptions (b = -.03, p < .05, 95% CI = [-.054, -.006]) ($t(199)$ = -

2.48, p = .01; see Figure 2). A floodlight analysis to identify Johnson-Neyman points was

conducted. Following Hayes (2013), the analysis tested percentiles of the self-construal measure,

which, as noted above, was calculated such that higher scores reflect greater levels of

independence. Thus, the 10th percentile refers to those who are most interdependent, while the

90th percentile refers to those who are most independent. Results demonstrate that participating

in the co-creation task had a positive effect for employees who were most interdependent (10th

percentile, self-construal ≤ -14.00; b_{JN} = .48, p = .05). Taken together, these findings support

Hypothesis 1, that CSR co-creation is positively linked to CSR perceptions, but only among

employees who are highly interdependent. CSR perceptions in turn were positively related to

CSR engagement (b = .48, p < .001, 95% CI = [.326, .634]) and organizational engagement (b =

.32, p < .001, 95% CI = [.246, .402]).

Probing the conditional indirect effect revealed that the interaction of self-construal and

CSR co-creation indirectly affects CSR engagement for employees who are most interdependent

(10th percentile, self-construal = -14.00; b = .13, p < .05, 95% CI = [.007, .378]). There was no

conditional indirect effect for employees in the 25th percentile (self-construal = -.7.00, b = .076,

n.s., 95% CI = [-.016, .246]), 50th percentile (self-construal = 1.00, *b* = .01, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-

.074, .112]), 75th percentile (self-construal = 9.00, *b* = -.06, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-.193, .037]), or 90th

percentile (those most independent, self-construal = 20.00; *b* = -.15, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-.394,

.002]). Likewise, co-creating CSR indirectly affects organizational engagement only for

employees who are most interdependent (self-construal = -14.00, *b* = .10, *p* < .05, 95% CI =

[.006, .3253]) and has no effect for employees in the 25th percentile (self-construal = -.7.00, *b* =

.06, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-.012, .163]), 50th percentile (self-construal = 1.00, *b* = .01, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-

.053, .082]), 75th percentile (self-construal = 9.00, *b* = -.04, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-.126, .036]), or 90th

percentile (i.e., those most independent, self-construal = 20.00, *b* = -.12, *n.s.*, 95% CI = [-.259,

.011]). The index of moderated mediation was significant for CSR engagement (index = -.01,

95% CI = [-.021, -.001]) and organizational engagement (index = -.01, 95% CI = [-.014, -.001]).

Taken together, these findings support Hypotheses 2 and 3. See Tables 2 and 3 for the model

summaries.

[Insert figure 2 here]

[Insert table 2 here]

[Insert table 3 here]

STUDY 2

Context, Sample, and Procedure

While Study 1 demonstrates our predicted effect, it is not without limitations. First, given

that self-construal was a measured individual difference variable, we cannot make any causal

conclusions about its role. Second, we note that only a small percentage of our sample (those

very high in interdependence) exhibited positive reactions to engaging in co-creation. One

question that arises, then, is how useful the construct of self-construal is to managers wishing to

implement a co-creation of CSR strategy in ways that increase both CSR and organizational

engagement. Third, we note that in Study 1, all measures were taken at the same point in time. In Study 2 we endeavor to overcome these limitations. We do so, first of all, by manipulating self-construal. This has the benefit of both a) allowing us to make causal conclusions about its role, and b) extending the generalizability of the results in a way that highlights how managers can prime self-construal to observe the positive consequences of co-creation. Notably, given that we use a US sample in Study 2, the data allow the demonstration of priming employees from an independent culture toward a more interdependent self-construal. Second, we temporally separate the dependent variables from the independent variables.

The research design was again a randomized between-subjects field experiment, in which 300 US participants were recruited from the general online labor market Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT) to become employees of a fictional company in completing short online work tasks. Studies support the use of AMT for management research purposes (e.g., Horton, Rand & Zeckhauser, 2011), as it offers a natural labor market in which to study worker–organization interactions (Burbano, 2016). The recruitment description indicated: "Three tasks: brief copy editing, feedback, transcription." After accepting the job, employees were first given some information about the copyediting and transcribing nature of the organization (Appendix B). Next, under the guise of a copyediting task, participants completed a validated manipulation of self-construal in which they read a short story and clicked on pronouns to heighten the salience of either an independent (i.e., singular pronouns such as I, me, my) or interdependent (i.e., plural pronouns such as we, us, our) self-construal (e.g., Gardner et al., 1999; Simpson et al., 2018; White & Argo, 2011; Appendix C). They then viewed some information for an initiative at the head office of the Transcription Inc. organization, the Green Office Program (as in Study 1). Those in the control condition then proceeded to the rest of the tasks while those in the co-creation condition were asked to "help brainstorm ways to encourage and incentivize on

transportation ideas for the Green Office Program 'Smart Commute' initiative. We would then specifically like you to write about how your idea expresses what Transcription Inc. might mean to employees and why you like your idea." After the co-creation manipulation, participants completed the mediation items (CSR perceptions of the organization), then the final filler work task in which they transcribed some brief handwritten notes to typed text.

Three days after completing the initial study, all participants who completed the work tasks received a follow-up study. A total of 213 participants completed the task within four to seven days of receiving the email. In this second survey, employees again read the brief information about the organization then responded to feedback questions regarding the Green Office Program: the dependent and covariate measures. Thus, the dependent variables were collected up to one week following the manipulations, allowing for time separation between the constructs. Gender and age were not collected in this study, as asking for such information would seem unnatural in an online labor-market context. All 300 participants were later debriefed regarding the research nature of the tasks they had completed.

Measures

CSR Perceptions. To be more precise in our measure relative to Study 1, an environmentally specific measure of employees' environmental climate perceptions (six items; Norton, Zacher & Ashkanasy, 2014) was used to ensure that the measure of CSR perceptions aligned with the environmental CSR nature of our manipulation (e.g., "Transcription Inc. implements special programs to minimize its negative impact on the natural environment"). Items were ranked on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree;* $\alpha = .92$).

CSR Engagement. To assess the extent of employees' willingness to further engage with the organization's CSR activity as a result of completing either the co-creation or control task,

we asked employees to respond to the following: "If you worked in our head office…how likely would you be to participate in the Green Office Program, how inclined would you be to participate in the Green Office Program, and how willing would you be to participate in the Green Office Program," all on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much so;* α = .95).

Organizational Engagement. One limitation of the temporary nature of online labor-market employees is the lack of existing relationship with the organization. Therefore in this study we adopt a more state-oriented measure of organizational engagement by drawing on literature regarding felt engagement (Saks, 2017; Stumpf, Tymon & van Dam, 2013). The five-item felt-engagement scale was used (Stumpf et al., 2013; e.g., "I feel energized by the work I have done"), with items ranked on a scale of 1 (*little or no extent*) to 5 (*greatly agree;* α = .95).

Control Variable. While it was not possible for participants to have prior familiarity with the Green Office Program nor prior identification with the organization in this study (unlike Study 1), we again control for participants' biospheric values (Stern et al., 1999). The four items were ranked on a scale of 1 (*not at all important*) to 7 (*extremely important;* α = .93).

Data Analyses

Again, we tested our moderated mediation hypotheses using an ordinary least squares path analysis as implemented by PROCESS macros for SPSS (Hayes, 2013), with two models run to estimate each dependent variable separately (organizational and CSR engagement). Descriptive data and intercorrelations appear in Table 4.

Results

Hypotheses Tests. Consistent with our theorizing, the interaction of self-construal and co-creation predicted perceived CSR (b = -.44, p = .04, 95% CI = [-.856, -.024]; $t(208)$ = -2.09;

see Figure 3). Participating in the co-creation task had a positive effect for participants primed with interdependence ($b = .31$, $p = .04$, 95% CI = [.016, .593]; $t(208) = 2.08$) but not independence ($b = -.14$, $p = .38$, 95% CI = [-0.436, .165]; $t(208) = -0.89$), again supporting Hypothesis 1 that CSR co-creation is positively linked to CSR perceptions among employees with a more salient interdependent self-construal. CSR perceptions in turn were positively related to CSR engagement ($b = .38$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.217, .545]) and organizational engagement ($b = .22$, $p = .014$, 95% CI = [.045, .388]).

Probing the conditional indirect effect revealed that the interaction of self-construal and CSR co-creation indirectly affects CSR engagement for employees with a salient interdependent self-construal ($b = .12$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [.023, .240]) and has no effect for employees with a salient independent self-construal ($b = -0.052$, $n.s.$, 95% CI = [-.178, .087]). Likewise, co-creating CSR indirectly affects organizational engagement among employees with a salient interdependent self-construal ($b = .07$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [.005, .161]), and it has no significant effect for employees with a salient independent self-construal ($b = -0.294$, $n.s.$, 95% CI = [-.100, .052]). The index of moderated mediation was also significant for CSR engagement (index = 0.168, 95% CI = [0.009, 0.337]) and organizational engagement (index = .095, 95% CI = [0.005, 0.205]). These findings support Hypotheses 2 and 3. See Tables 5 and 6 for the model summaries.

[Insert figure 3 here]

[Insert table 5 here]

[Insert table 6 here]

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to merge the literatures of organizational behavior and marketing to provide insights into how organizations can maximize the benefits of CSR in terms of enhanced organizational and CSR engagement. Through the use of two between-subjects field experiments with employees, one with a real organizational initiative allowing for actionable change implications, we contribute to a better understanding of organizational mechanisms of sustainability (Delmas & Aragón-Correa, 2016). Moreover, this research responds to calls for more attention on behavioral approaches to studying the nature and consequences of CSR (Gond et al., 2017; Morgeson, Aguinis, Waldman & Siegel, 2013). We demonstrate that for those who exhibit higher levels of interdependence, both as a measured individual difference and as a primed mindset, engaging in the co-creation of CSR can indirectly influence employees' organizational engagement and willingness to further engage with the firm's CSR activities. This effect occurs because, among those higher in interdependence, co-creation increases CSR perceptions and subsequently leads to greater levels of CSR and organizational engagement.

Theoretical Contributions

This research offers several theoretical implications. Foremost, it makes a theoretical contribution to our understanding of what might influence employees' CSR perceptions, as called for in Gond et al. (2017), serving as a complement to the body of literature that has focused primarily on outcomes of CSR perceptions. Second, little research to date has examined the effects of co-creation in the workplace (for an exception see Kim et al., 2010), and to the best of our knowledge, research had not yet experimentally tested the effects of CSR co-creation on employees. In doing so, we extend the co-creation literature to demonstrate co-creation's effectiveness in an organizational CSR context; and furthermore, we demonstrate organizational

engagement as an outcome of co-creation, and subsequently CSR perceptions, which was not explicitly tested in prior literature.

Third, we demonstrate that self-construal moderates the effect of co-creation on organizational and CSR engagement through CSR perceptions. This is a response to recent calls for the examination of individual differences in the micro-foundations of CSR literature (Gond et al., 2017). While literature has examined individualism and collectivism in relation to how they impact post-CSR outcomes (e.g., Farooq et al., 2017; Rupp et al., 2018), we extend this literature by shedding light on how CSR perceptions are moderated by self-construal, and on the conditions under which co-creation activities are (in)effective (i.e., for those with a more independent self-construal). Specifically, our results demonstrate that engaging in a CSR co-creation task can lead employees who view the self as interconnected with others to report higher levels of CSR perceptions, and subsequently to exhibit increased CSR and organizational engagement.

Managerial Implications

Practically, our research contributes to an understanding of how organizations can implement techniques to involve employees in CSR in ways that influence their willingness to engage further with CSR activity and the organization generally, by facilitating reflection on the congruent individual–organizational collective goals. Because employees may not be aware of all their organization's CSR activities (Rupp et al., 2013), engaging them in CSR co-creation could be one way of increasing such awareness (Jones, Newman, Shao & Cooke, 2018). Our research provides a nuanced insight into whether doing so would lead to positive organizational outcomes, with results suggesting that having employees engage with and reflect on the firm's CSR initiatives can positively influence CSR perceptions for those with a more interdependent

self-construal. Since employees' CSR perceptions have been linked to a variety of positive job attitudes and behaviors (see Gond et al., 2017; Rupp & Mallory, 2015), organizations that wish to maximize the benefits of being socially and environmentally friendly should consider implementing co-creation activities but do so under conditions that either target or activate a more interdependent self-construal.

For employees who view themselves as more interdependent, organizations could benefit from engaging them in CSR activity by asking them to contribute ideas for CSR initiatives. However, such a co-creation task may not be effective for those who are more independent. Thus, organizations might consider developing different co-creation techniques to positively impact employees high in independence. Given that those who are more independent focus on self-related goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), organizations might allow employees to choose their own ways to contribute (Howie, Yang, Vitell, Bush & Vorhies, 2018), which could be ways that simultaneously meet the employee's own goals (e.g., self-development goals through employer-sponsored volunteering programs). Such approaches might be more effective for employees with a more independent self-construal. Finally, given the effectiveness of priming self-construal, it may be worthwhile for organizations to construct co-creation tasks using interdependent language in communication materials (White & Simpson, 2013) to increase the number of employees who will be inclined toward more positive CSR perceptions.

Indeed, while our Study 1 findings indicate that co-creation is primarily effective for those who are highly interdependent, we emphasize that this finding potentially holds broader implications given that our data were collected in a highly independent culture: North Americans tend toward independence, and our descriptive statistics are consistent with this (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As such, we would expect the effect to be stronger for organizations in cultures where interdependence is more common (east Asian and Latin American cultures; Markus &

Kitayama, 1991), and thus the variance in a measured interdependent self-construal would tend to be broader. Importantly, in Study 2 we extend the generalizability of our effect by replicating the Study 1 effect via a self-construal prime that was, notably, implemented amongst a North American (i.e., more individualistic) population. In doing so, we extend the potential implications of the effect by demonstrating that the co-creation task need not positively impact CSR perceptions of only a small percentage of highly interdependent employees. Specifically, we show that a self-construal prime can be utilized in a real organizational setting to broaden the range of employees whose CSR perceptions are positively impacted by the task.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The context of Study 2 (a fictional company) created restrictions surrounding an existing relationship with the organization, and thus prohibited a replication of our measure of organizational engagement from Study 1. The use of a different measure introduces both limitations and opportunities regarding the ability of Study 2 to inform all of the findings of Study 1. We propose that the outcomes of both heightened organizational engagement (Study 1) and task engagement (a sub-component of organizational; Study 2; Stumpf et al., 2013) across two studies demonstrates a consistent positive effect on employee engagement constructs and raises the possibility that future inquiry should explore the range of engagement outcomes that are impacted by participation in co-creation activities. Additionally, while co-creation can occur at many different stages with a product or service, we conceptualized co-creation in our studies at the ideation stage (Chang & Taylor, 2016); and thus an important consideration is whether this effect would replicate if co-creation were to occur at a different stage. For instance, future research might explore whether co-creation employed during the launch stage—wherein

employees are asked for their feedback on the program and additional ideas—would have the same effect as being asked to engage in ideation for the program. We asked employees to engage in a relatively low level of co-creation participation and thus anticipate that this effect is a conservative estimate given that a higher level of participation has been found to increase positive consumer outcomes (Chan et al., 2010). Future research might examine the impact of heightened levels of interactive co-creative tasks.

It is also worth exploring what happens over time within an organization that engages in co-creation CSR activities—specifically regarding how those who are aware, but have not taken part, are influenced. While statistically insignificant, preliminary patterns in our data indicate that co-creation may be more effective at increasing positive CSR perceptions among those with a more salient interdependent self-construal who were not previously familiar with the program, suggesting that field research exploring the longitudinal role of exposure versus participation would be valuable. Additionally, since our Study 1 response rate (i.e., 22%) is lower than average response rates (48.3%) obtained in organizational research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008), concerns about nonresponse bias are raised. In particular, it could be argued that nonresponse bias due to interest level in the study's topic affects our results. To assuage this concern, we follow Rogelberg and Stanton's (2007) recommendation by controlling for biospheric values (i.e., interest level in the environmental nature of our study) as compensation for nonresponse bias. Our results remain significant when controlling for this variable. According to Rogelberg and Stanton (2007), replicating results across samples (as in our two separate studies) provides substantial evidence for an absence of nonresponse bias, helping to alleviate this concern.

Several additional avenues for future research arise from our study's findings. While consumers often engage in co-creation of products, brands, and identities (Black & Veloutsou, 2017), doing so may be motivated by end outcomes that could be viewed as a benefit to the self

(e.g., greater customer satisfaction; Bendapudi & Leone, 2003; Ennew & Binks, 1999). Indeed, while co-creation literature has previously identified economic, social, and psychological benefits as potential motivations (Etgar, 2008; Hoyer et al., 2010; Verleye, 2015), it does not appear to have considered societal benefits. This raises two interesting possibilities for future research. First, CSR by its nature indicates a primary outcome of action for the greater good—in other words, a focus on other-benefits rather than self-benefits (White & Peloza, 2009). Therefore, a consideration of who explicitly benefits in co-creation outcomes (whether in organizational or consumption contexts) and the role of societal benefits may be worthwhile in predicting the effectiveness of co-creation. It may be, for example, that those who are relatively more independent (vs. interdependent) exhibit more positive reactions to the co-creation of CSR when benefits to the self are made salient. Additionally, since all participants who were asked to contribute ideas in the co-creation tasks responded to some extent and thus were included in our analyses, future research could explore whether contributing ideas in particular, versus simply being asked to do so, drives the effect.

In organizational contexts the motivation for participating in co-creation activities may actually come from the hierarchal structure above, and thus it may be fruitful to further probe how those who are more independent respond to co-creation activities. Our theorizing predicted a null effect for those with a more independent self-construal with regard to the indirect effect on engagement through CSR perceptions, as collective goals made salient via a task are not congruent with their focus on personal goals, which the data supported. However, an examination of the direct interaction effect on CSR perceptions (see Figures 2 and 3) indicates preliminary support for the proposition that co-creation activities could perhaps have detrimental impacts for highly independent individuals. One reason for this may be their focus on agency and autonomy over one's own actions (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Bandura, 1989; Markus &

Kitayama, 1991), as highly independent employees may resent being asked to engage in such a task, rather than viewing it as an opportunity to achieve collective goals. It is interesting, however, that the interaction of self-construal and co-creation only negatively predicted CSR perceptions rather than supporting an indirect pathway to either type of engagement (CSR, organizational). One question, then, is: Are the reactions of those who are relatively more independent perhaps more superficial and less inclined to drive intentions? Indeed, these findings are particularly interesting in light of research demonstrating that the link between CSR perceptions and work engagement is moderated by CSR-specific autonomy, particularly for those who were more individualistic (i.e., those with a more independent self-construal). Given the importance of perceived CSR in its own right, and the combination of these findings with our own, the potential negative reaction of independents warrants additional investigation. Further, we believe this relationship is worthy of exploration in both workplace and consumer contexts. For instance, if an employee or consumer who tends toward an independent self-construal feels forced into co-creating with an organization or brand to receive outcomes (i.e., get something they want), they might perceive this as a threat to autonomy and react negatively.

Finally, the current research focused on individual-level boundary conditions to the effect of co-creating CSR. Future research should examine the moderating effects of other individual-level variables that might negatively impact employees' CSR perceptions and reactions, such as employees' CSR attributions. For instance, co-creating CSR might have a negative impact for employees who hold egoistic attributions regarding the firm's motives, as these employees believe their firm engages in CSR in an exploitive manner for personal gain without any intention to help the cause (Ellen, Webb & Mohr, 2006). Conversely, future research could consider individual-level variables that might strengthen the indirect effects of CSR co-creation, such as employees' interest in or value of CSR. Finally, given that perceived importance of a

CSR cause has been linked to consumers' participation intentions in CSR-related activity (Howie et al., 2018), future research might investigate how employees' (de)valuation of the CSR cause impacts the program's success.

CONCLUSION

Relative to research that has examined the effects of CSR perceptions on employees, less research has examined what factors influence employees' CSR perceptions, and what factors may operate as boundary conditions to how employees perceive and respond to CSR. The goal of the current research was to apply co-creation to the context of CSR within organizations and in doing so provide a contribution to the broader business ethics literature regarding how organizations and employees can contribute to positive societal outcomes. We demonstrate that engaging employees in the co-creation of CSR impacts their CSR perceptions, as well as their CSR and organizational engagement, though only among those who view the self as being relatively more interdependent. Our findings provide initial insight into how organizations can successfully use CSR co-creation to influence employees' CSR perceptions and, in turn, their organizational engagement and willingness to be involved with CSR activity.

APPENDIX A:
Study 1, Co-creation Manipulation

Green Office Information (given to all conditions):

Study 1 Control task:

In this task, we would like you to take a few moments and think about an item you bought while grocery shopping this past week. We would then specifically like you to write about why you like your item.

Study 1 Co-creation task:

In this task, we would like you to take a few moments and brainstorm a new idea for the Green Office Program. We would then specifically like you to write about how your idea expresses what [organization] means to you and why you like your idea.

APPENDIX B:
Study 2 Materials

Transcription Inc provides English-language transcription and copy editing services to all industries and professions – from media, business, financial, legal, academic to technology start-ups, government departments and other corporates – across North America.

Our services include a range of audio, video, and custom transcription, as well as copy editing for requirements such as dictations, legal and disciplinary hearings, focus group recordings, medical and health consultations, general research, teleconference discussions, sermons, and many others.

You will be working on three short (less than 5 minutes each) tasks:

1. Copy editing - identify pronouns to ensure consistency
2. Feedback - provide thoughts on an office initiative
3. Transcribing - type a section of hand written notes

INSTRUCTIONS:

- If a symbol or special character is present and not on your keyboard, insert a question mark in its place.
- Be careful, "ABCD" and "abcd" are different.
- Type just one space at the beginning of a new sentence.

Study 2 Control task:

No further information provided; participants moved directly to measures.

Study 2 Co-creation task:

In this task, we would like your help to brainstorm ways to encourage and incentivize transportation options for the Green Office Program 'Smart Commute' initiative. We would specifically like you to write about how your idea expresses what Transcription Inc. might mean to employees and why you like your idea.

Appendix C:
Self-construal Manipulation

(Independent Condition)
(Interdependent condition was identical with plural pronouns)

This first task involves some copy editing, we need to be certain that pronouns align.

Please click on any words that are first person singular pronouns in the story (i.e., "I," "my," "me," etc.)

My Trip to San Francisco

My San Francisco trip started out with a flight from John F. Kennedy Airport in New York that left at 6:00am. Why did I book such an early flight? After getting my boarding pass and making my way through security I grabbed a drink and waited at my gate for the call to board. Fortunately, I didn't have to wait long and when my row number was called I boarded the plane and promptly fell asleep. I woke up when the plane started its decent into the San Francisco area. Feeling refreshed I watched as the plane passed over the bay and peninsula and then landed safely at the Airport. I had decided in advance that I would rent a car and drive it to downtown so that I had freedom to explore on my trip, so I had to make my way to the car rental area. After paying for the car and getting the keys I found my rental out in the parking lot. I then left the airport to head towards downtown. Wow was it ever crazy on the roads. Clearly I had hit San Francisco and the surrounding areas' rush hour! I had planned to stay the night in Sausalito and finally, I made it to the Golden Gate bridge at about 9:00am. I enjoyed heading over the bridge that took me across South Bay and into Sausalito.

Once I arrived in Sausalito I wasn't able to check into my hotel just yet, so I decided to take the ferry to San Francisco to visit the Cable Car Museum where there were displays of all of the different cable cars and transport systems around the area. I was going to go on a tour of Alcatraz but they were charging too much admission and you had to book in advance. So I ventured downtown and into the Union Square shopping district. I stopped for lunch at a fast food place in the area. After that I stopped for a look at the historic Painted Ladies Victorian homes, including 'Postcard Row' where so many TV programs have filmed. I got some wonderful photographs, using the homes as a backdrop. I spent the night in a hotel back in Sausalito close to the Bay.

The next day I decided to 'experience' the West Coast. It was definitely the highlight of my trip! I took scenic Shoreline Highway north and west out of Sausalito and a great small community I hit was Bolinas. I could immediately tell the difference in atmosphere between the hectic, high-paced urban lifestyle of San Francisco and the more laid-back, carefree lifestyle outside the city. I talked to some locals who recommended a place called 'Stinson Beach' to see the open Pacific Ocean. I was on my way past Bolinas when I came across a sign that said 'Check Your Fuel!' Glancing at the gas gauge, I realized I wasn't gonna make it to the next town, so I made a U-turn back to Bolinas to gas up. Stinson Beach was great! I ventured into the water and mucho my dismay it was FREEZING. The beach itself was breathtakingly beautiful. I was happy to spend some time just relaxing. By the time I headed back to my hotel in Sausalito, it was pitch black and I had to negotiate the twisty highway in the dark. It was pretty freaky, as I could maybe see 10 feet in front of me the entire time with only the center line to use as a guide. And I was using the high-beams too! I spent the next day in Sausalito and enjoyed the restaurants and then decided to spend my last day exploring downtown San Francisco further. It was a great trip.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Funding: The research was funded by an internal departmental faculty research grant from the institution of the first and second authors for which no grant number is provided.

Ethical approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committees and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in Study 1. Informed consent was waived with institutional ethics approval for Study 2 on the basis that participants were not asked to participate in tasks that were unusual compared to their daily workplace activity on MTurk, and no identifiable or demographic data were collected. All participants were debriefed following the data collection and offered the opportunity to withdraw their participation.

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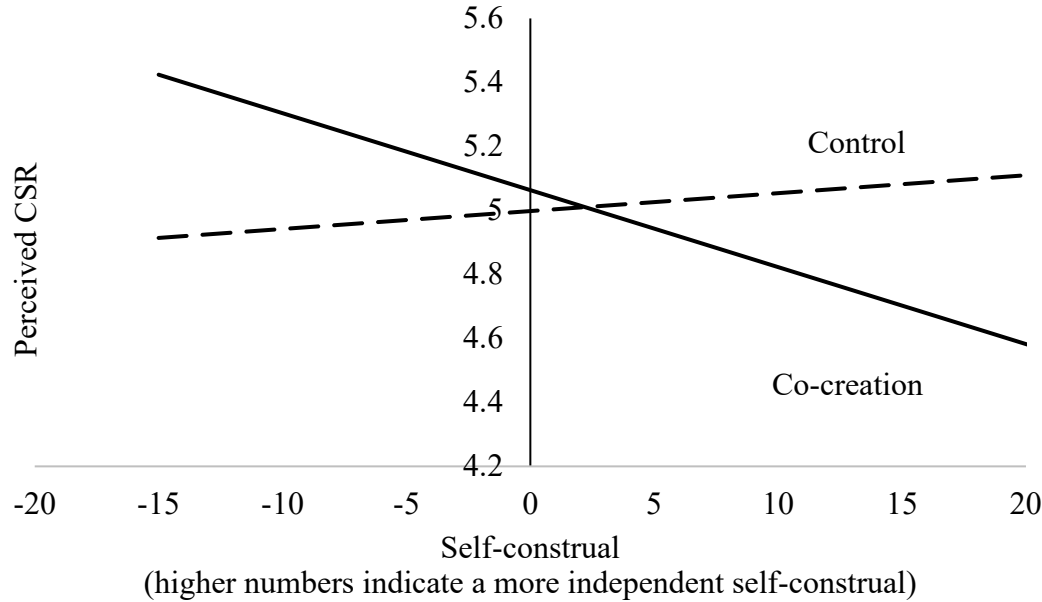
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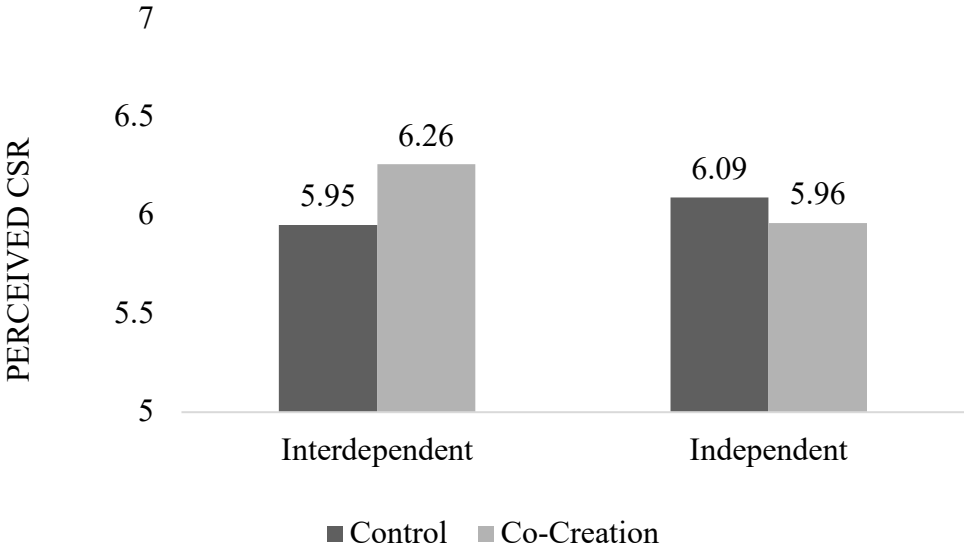
FIGURE 1:
Theoretical Model
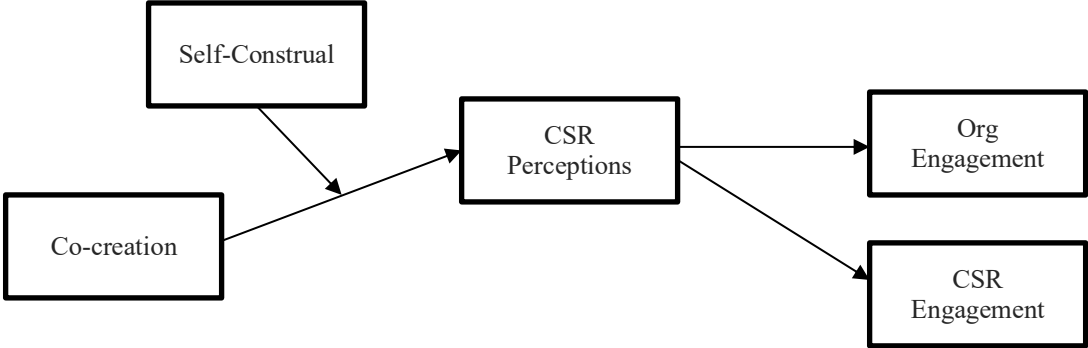
FIGURE 2:
Study 1, Perceived CSR

FIGURE 3:
Study 2, Perceived CSR

TABLE 1:
Study 1, Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Means, standard deviations and correlations of studied variables (N = 206)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Co-creation	0.47	0.50	-						
2. Perceived CSR	5.01	1.24	0.00	-					
3. CSR engagement	5.29	1.49	0.07	.39**	-				
4. Organizational engagement	3.12	0.81	0.01	.51**	.45**	-			
5. Self-construal	2.17	13.24	0.01	-.20**	-.24**	-.12	-		
6. Familiarity with Green Office Program	1.53	0.50	-0.10	0.12	-0.03	.19**	.09	-	
7. Organizational identification	4.69	1.28	.01	.34**	.44**	.54**	-.27**	-.03	-
8. Biospheric values	5.96	0.94	.08	.24**	.36**	.27**	-.22**	.04	.17**

$**p < .01$ or $*p < .05$

TABLE 2:
Study 1, Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficients (standard errors) analyses ($N = 206$)

	Estimate	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediator variable model (DV = Perceived CSR)						
Constant	1.968	0617	3.190	0.002	0.751	3.184
Co-creation	0.065	0.161	0.406	0.685	-0.252	0.383
Self-construal	0.006	0.009	-0.657	0.512	-0.011	0.023
Co-creation * Self-construal	-0.030	0.012	-2.481	0.014	-0.053	-0.006
Familiarity	0.291	0.160	1.817	0.071	-0.025	0.607
Organizational identification	0.284	0.065	4.393	<.001	0.157	0.411
Biospheric values	0.210	0.087	2.404	0.017	0.038	0.382
Model summary: R2 = .195, F(6, 199) = 8.06, p < .0001						
Dependent variable model (DV = Organizational Engagement)						
Constant	-0.186	0.330	-0.565	0.573	-0.837	0.465
Perceived CSR	0.212	0.038	5.614	< .001	0.137	0.286
Co-creation	0.018	0.086	0.206	0.837	-0.152	0.188
Familiarity	0.260	0.087	2.998	0.003	0.089	0. 431
Organizational identification	0.266	0.036	7.401	< .001	0.195	0.336
Biospheric values	0.099	0.047	2.099	0.037	0.006	0.193
Model summary: R2 = .450, F(5, 200) = 32.68, p < .001						
Dependent variable model (DV = CSR Engagement)						
Constant	-0.026	0.671	-0.039	0.969	-1.350	1.297
Perceived CSR	0.277	0.077	3.612	< .001	0.126	0.428
Co-creation	0.130	0.175	0.741	0.460	-0.216	0.475
Familiarity	-0.176	0.177	-1.000	0.319	-0.524	0.172
Organizational identification	0.369	0.073	5.058	< .001	0.225	0.513
Biospheric values	0.405	0.096	4.212	< .001	0.216	0.595
Model summary: R2 = .324, F(5, 200) = 19.21, p < .001						

TABLE 3:
Study 1, Conditional Indirect Effects

Conditional indirect effects of co-creation via perceived CSR at self-construal percentiles
($N = 206$)

Conditional indirect effects of moderator (DV = Organizational Engagement)

Self-Construal	Ind. Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	p
10th percentile (most interdependent)	0.102	0.062	0.006	0.253	< .05
25th percentile	0.058	0.045	-0.012	0.163	> .05
50th percentile	0.008	0.034	-0.053	0.082	> .05
75th percentile	-0.043	0.040	-0.126	0.036	> .05
90th percentile (most independent)	-0.112	0.066	-0.259	0.011	> .05
Conditional indirect effects of moderator (DV = CSR Engagement)					
10th percentile (most interdependent)	0.133	0.094	0.007	0.378	< .05
25th percentile	0.076	0.066	-0.016	0.246	> .05
50th percentile	0.010	0.047	-0.074	0.112	> .05
75th percentile	-0.056	0.056	-0.193	0.037	> .05
90th percentile (most independent)	-0.146	0.098	-0.394	0.002	> .05

TABLE 4:
Study 2, Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations

Means, standard deviations and correlations of studied variables (N = 213)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Co-creation	-	-	-				
2. Perceived CSR	6.06	0.83	0.08	-			
3. CSR engagement	5.74	1.30	0.13	.46**	-		
4. Organizational engagement	3.24	1.11	0.10	.32**	.54**	-	
5. Self-construal	-	-	-0.01	0.02	-0.06	-0.04	-
6. Biovalues	5.64	1.23	0.06	.37**	.66**	-.47**	-.04

**p < .01 or *p < .05

TABLE 5:
Study 2, Regression Coefficients

Regression coefficients (standard errors) analyses ($N = 213$)

	Estimate	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediator variable model (DV = Perceived CSR)						
Constant	4.721	0.265	17.79	< .001	4.197	5.244
Co-creation	-0.136	0.152	-0.890	0.375	-0.436	0.165
Self-construal	0.145	0.147	0.990	0.324	-0.144	0.435
Co-creation * Self-construal	-0.440	0.211	-2.085	0.038	-0.856	-0.024
Biovalues	0.244	0.043	5.687	< .001	0.159	0.329
Model summary: R2 = .159, F(4, 208) = 9.82, p < .001						
Dependent variable model (DV = Organizational Engagement)						
Constant	6.797	0.512	13.27	< .001	5.788	7.807
Co-creation	0.139	0.134	1.033	0.303	-0.126	0.403
Perceived CSR	0.217	0.087	2.492	0.014	0.045	0.388
Biovalues	0.366	0.058	6.261	< .001	0.251	0.481
Model summary: R2 = .247, F(3, 209) = 22.82, p < .001						
Dependent variable model (DV = CSR Engagement)						
Constant	-0.035	0.490	-0.071	0.941	-1.000	0.931
Co-creation	0.193	0.128	1.506	0.134	-0.060	0.446
Perceived CSR	0.381	0.083	4.585	< .001	0.217	0.545
Biovalues	0.598	0.056	10.71	< .001	0.488	0.708
Model summary: R2 = .496, F(3, 209) = 68.42, p < .001						

TABLE 6:
Study 2, Conditional Indirect Effects

Conditional indirect effects of co-creation via perceived CSR at each self-construal ($N = 213$)

Conditional indirect effects of moderator (DV = Organizational Engagement)

Self-construal	Ind. Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	p
Interdependent	0.066	0.039	0.005	0.161	< .05
Independent	-0.029	0.037	-0.100	0.052	> .05
Conditional indirect effects of moderator (DV = CSR Engagement)					
Interdependent	0.116	0.055	0.023	0.240	< .05
Independent	-0.052	0.066	-0.178	0.087	> .05