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Candle Under a Bushel: Informative Advertising and the Global CSR Initiatives

Abstract: Both academics and the general public suspect a relationship between advertising and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The quantitative research thus far addresses only whether advertising precedes CSR practices, on the basis that advertisers use CSR as yet another tool for building the corporate brand. Findings have been inconclusive. This paper, rather, builds the “informative advertising” hypothesis, the idea advertising follows CSR practices, as firms attempt to publicize their good deeds. The global CSR initiatives are the case for analysis, namely the Global Compact, Global Reporting Initiative, and Carbon Disclosure Project. Results from this paper fail to support the informative advertising hypothesis, as companies in the Global CSR initiatives, controlling for size, industry, and headquarter nation, are not more likely to appear in leading CSR performance indices.

Full text of paper to be made available when published.