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# Consumer Attitudes toward Responsible Entities in Sport (CARES): Scale development and model testing

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## ABSTRACT

The advancement of empirical research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been hindered by the lack of an appropriate measure of CSR perceptions among sport consumers. Consequently, researchers have yet to fully explore the ways in which consumer's attitudes impact their responses to CSR. This article first describes (in Study 1) the development and validation of a self-report scale designed to measure consumer attitudes toward CSR in sport. Two data collections were conducted to test the seven-item, Likert-type Consumer Attitudes toward Responsible Entities in Sport (CARES) scale with two dimensions (i.e., cognition and affect). Evidence is presented confirming the scale's internal consistency, validity, and dimensionality. In the second phase, Study 2 examined the influence of the scale dimensions on actual consumer purchasing using structural equation modeling (SEM). Results suggest that the attitude scale for CSR can be a useful tool for sport academicians to gauge the effects of social efforts and social policy formation.

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## 1. Introduction

Much of the early attitude research on corporate social responsibility (CSR) was focused on manager perceptions of the practice (Abdul & Ibrahim, 2002; Basu & Palazzo, 2008; Bucholtz, Amason, & Rutherford, 1999; Carroll, 1974; Fitzpatrick, 2000; Kinard, Smith, & Kinard, 2003; Murray & Vogel, 1997; Quazi, 2003; Thomas & Simerly, 1994). This literature conceptually justified why actively supporting CSR is likely to have a strong and positive influence on firm-level outcomes (Hay & Gray, 1974; Hemingway, 2005; Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004) while literature assessing the attitudes of stakeholder groups (particularly consumers) toward CSR is somewhat limited – although growing. This is somewhat surprising given the social and scientific importance of CSR (Meijer & Schuyt, 2005) and the consummate need for organizational legitimacy in the wake of many socially *irresponsible* business practices (e.g., British Petroleum, Halliburton, Dow Chemical, etc.).

Equally observable is the appearance of CSR-related research in the sport management literature (Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Brietbarth & Harriss, 2008; Godfrey, 2009; Misener & Mason, 2009; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007). Early contributions in sport were grounded in the cause related marketing (CRM) paradigm (see Lachowetz & Gladden, 2003; Roy & Graeff, 2003), largely discussed as a partnership between the sport firm and a cause to attract consumers wanting to make a difference through their purchasing. However, heightened attention of these partnerships and increased skepticism of organizational claims

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regarding their CRM involvement had consumers looking closely at companies who were heavily invested in these causes. Sophisticated consumers are now (more than ever) closely examining the social behavior of big business. As such, altruistic intentions no longer justify charitable giving (Bronn & Vrioni, 2001) and the *business–society relationship* (Wood, 1991) has shifted from something organizations could do (i.e., strategic CRM partnership), into something they ought to, or even should do (i.e., social responsibility). For their part, many organizations (including those in the sport industry) now regard their social contributions as investments, intended to benefit the organization as well as community stakeholders – particularly localized consumers (Marquis, Glynn, & Davis, 2007).

Given this shift in corporate–community integration and the societal importance of the social role of business, investigating the attitudes of consumers toward CSR is a worthwhile pursuit. Consumers are important stakeholders with regards to CSR and sport organizations should begin to realize the strategic implications their awareness of social efforts could have on corporate outcomes. Correspondingly, many consumers now expect management to participate in addressing (and moreover rectifying) various societal issues such as health and education (Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman, & Carrier, 2007), fair-trade and worker equality (Nicholls, 2002), community development (Misener & Mason, 2009), environmental issues (Ellen, 1994; Kilbourne, Beckmann, & Thelen, 2002; Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008) and to generally (proactively) consider the effects their business operations have on society (Kok, vander Wiele, McKenna, & Brown, 2001; Thibault, 2009). Given the importance that many consumers now place on CSR, insight into their attitudes is critical when analyzing frameworks that guide “inclusive” business choices, part of which are predicated on the organization’s social agenda.

CSR is viewed as a subset of corporate obligations dealing with voluntary and discretionary relationships with societal and community stakeholders (Waddock, 2004) to “... minimize or eliminate harmful effects and maximize long-run beneficial impacts on society” (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001, p. 47). In modern times, CSR is understood to be much more than a cost or a constraint. Rather, it can be a source of opportunity and competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Organizations who are heavily involved in CSR need to know what the public wants and how far they are expected to go toward helping their communities (Mohr et al., 2001). Therefore, understanding the interrelationship between sport businesses and society while anchoring these ideas in consumer awareness of CSR is not just important but necessary for the advancement of organizational strategy and social policy formation. Given this reasonable assertion, the purpose of this article was twofold. First, was to present a valid and reliable measure for sport consumer attitudes toward CSR by examining awareness, affect (i.e., emotion/attachment), and behavior. Second, was to examine the link between awareness, affect, and actual behavior to bolster empirical support for the alleged causal link between attitude and consumer behavior (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004).

The choice to develop this scale specifically for sport was made for two main reasons. First, in the sport industry where cultivation of an affective connection to the organization is critical for business sustainability, CSR information may provide “secondary value” for the organization above those seen in other industries (Walker & Kent, 2009, p. 744). Second, by most accounts the sport industry represents several larger social perspectives such as symbolism, identification, community solidarity, and sociability (Duncan, 1983; Heere & James, 2007; Melnick, 1993) which all manifest as affect. Hence, affect (characterized by enthusiasm and alertness by Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) represents an important element to how the typical sport consumer might view the social initiatives in the industry (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2000). As such, studying CSR phenomena in sport should provide certain advantages infrequently found in other business domains (Slack & Parent, 2006).

## 2. Operationalizing CSR

The general position among CSR researchers is that the concept is perceived differently across societies and cultures and has many (and sometimes conflicting) definitions. Irrespective of the alleged definitional confusion and the perceptual inconsistencies, the term CSR is essentially an umbrella term (Dawkins & Lewis, 2003) touching on many aspects of business. Moon, Crane, and Matten (2005, pp. 433–434) noted that CSR is a somewhat “... contested ... internally complex” concept having relatively open rules of application. Consequently, domains such as the environment, treatment of employees, ethical standards, trading and sourcing, consumer protection, and welfare for example, are all aspects of CSR posited in the literature. This issue could partially account for the lack of a valid and reliable scale to measure CSR attitudes among consumers.

While CSR has only begun to make its way into the sport management discourse, the recent contribution by Walker and Kent (2009) provided some valuable direction in order to understand what CSR means to sport consumers. The author’s content analyzed the socially responsible practices of several National Football League (NFL) team’s and then developed items aimed at capturing consumer perceptions of these areas. While conceptually sound, the four areas of emphasis (i.e., philanthropy, community involvement, youth educational initiatives, and youth health initiatives) did not disaggregate (via factor analysis) into distinct dimensions. One possible explanation for this result was that their sample of NFL supporters failed to distinguish among these areas. Additional research which examined perceptual differences of CSR dependant on country of origin adds support to this finding (Maignan, 2001; Maignan & Ralston, 2002; Matten & Moon, 2008). While these authors concluded that CSR does in fact mean different things to different people, the collective consensus that CSR is enacted for societal and community betterment was shown to be both implicitly and explicitly understood (Matten & Moon, 2008).

Tracing the evolution of CSR scholarship, Carroll's (1974, 1999) work centered on CSR being viewed broadly to include legal, ethical, philanthropic, and economic dimensions. Maignan (2001) examined whether these dimensions could be isolated among various consumer groups and found they indeed could stand on their own. However, CSR activities are rarely discussed in these broad terms by consumers and more recent research by Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006) suggested that many consumers only care about if CSR is performed rather than how (or in what manner) it is being performed. Therefore, we now see that the validity of Carroll's position should be challenged, as consumers may not distinguish between the various types of CSR enacted. In addition, while some of the most highly cited articles on CSR from a stakeholder perspective (Bhattacharya & Korschun, 2008; Maignan & Ferrell, 2003; Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006) have assisted in defining the concept, none have been able to present unequivocal empirical evidence that the *type* of CSR can actually induce different consumer reactions. Based on these findings, we felt confident that general attitude items would adequately account for the seemingly non-existent variation in consumer responses to divergent CSR practices in sport.

### 3. Measuring attitudes toward CSR

Research has provided much empirical support for the benefits that CSR initiatives provide in terms of fiduciary outcomes (Margolis & Walsh, 2001; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988; Mills & Gardner, 1984; Stanwick & Stanwick, 1998), the effects of CSR on stakeholder groups (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000; Mohr & Webb, 2005; Mohr et al., 2001; Murray & Vogel, 1997), and purchase (and other behavioral) intentions (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Ellen et al., 2006; Klein & Dawar, 2004; Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004; Maignan & Ferrell, 2003). Much of this work, designed to elicit consumer responses to CSR, has utilized hypothetical scenarios and controlled experimental designs (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2007). However, a long-standing criticism of hypothetical designs is that responses may be a poor indicator of actual consumer perceptions (Diamond & Hausman, 1994) or more importantly – predictive validity (Whitehead, 2005). Overall, the studies conducted under these restricted parameters have suggested (in the aggregate) that consumers possess positive attitudes toward companies associating themselves with causes that benefit society.

Several instruments measuring the general attitudes of consumers toward socially involved businesses or their sensitivity to CSR have been published (see Table 1). While these studies suggest that CSR can have an impact on consumer attitudes, few have measured awareness of CSR directly. Regarding this issue, Sen et al. (2006) and Du et al. (2007) noted that research with “real” consumers has shown that awareness of a company's CSR activities among its consumers is a key stumbling block to reap strategic rewards from CSR. And although several researchers have alluded to the importance of CSR awareness (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001), this link has only begun to be examined (Du et al., 2007). Thus, one of the primary goals of this research was to draw on the attitude formation research (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), and gauge consumer awareness of CSR as a starting point to understand more clearly how the typical sport consumer conceptualized the practice.

Attitudes represent a collection of feelings (i.e., favorable or unfavorable) toward an object, person, issue, or behavior. Over time these attitudes become learned through direct experience with, or through receiving information about any of the aforementioned. An attitude is therefore, “... a learned disposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6) and may also represent a similarly learned predisposition (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995). Abelson (1963) was among the first to acknowledge that most social concepts in memory are affectively charged. As a result of Abelson's commentary, researchers have proposed that cognitive and affective responses to a stimulus can serve to mold consumers' evaluative judgments, which notably include patronage behaviors (Oliver, 1997). Accordingly, purchasing behavior has been regarded as a fulfillment response resulting from awareness and positive (affective) associations (Foxall & Yani-de-Soriano, 2005). Russell's (1980) model of affect underpins this idea by suggesting that affect is the mediating

**Table 1**  
Measurement of CSR and general attitudes toward business.

Author(s)	Scale name	Description
Strahan and Gerbasi (1972)	M-C 1 (short version: Marlow–Crowne Social Desirability Scale)	Measure of social desirability
Lundstrom and Lamont (1976)	Consumer Discontent Scale	Attitudes of consumers toward marketing-related practices
Antil and Bennett (1979) and Antil (1984)	Socially Responsible Consumption Behavior	Behaviors and purchase decisions related to environmental and resource-related problems
Richins (1983)	Attitudes Toward Business	Attitudes about business as an institution
Roberts (1993)	Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal scale (SRPD)	Socially responsible consumer behavior
Singhapakdi, Vitell, Rallapalli, and Kraft (1996)	Perceived Role of Ethics and Social Responsibility (PRESOR)	Role of ethics and social responsibility in achieving organizational effectiveness
Paul et al. (1997) and Zalka et al. (1997)	US Consumer Sensitivity Scale	Consumer sensitivity to corporate social performance
Ellen et al. (2006)	Consumer Attributions for Company Motives Scale	Consumer attributions for corporate socially responsible programs
Webb, Mohr, and Harris (2008)	(Reexamination) Socially Responsible Purchase and Disposal (SRPD)	Socially and environmentally responsible consumers

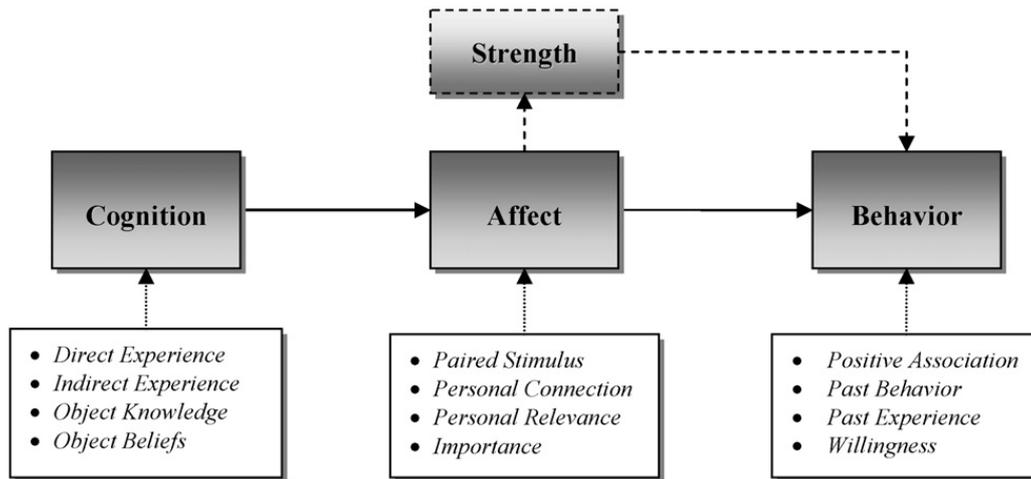


Fig. 1. Attitude continuum model.

variable among the cognitive process and response behavior. As such, affect cannot be triggered automatically without conscious appraisal of an attitude object (i.e., awareness) but also is primary in the sense that it comes into working memory before other thoughts and appraisals enter into judgment (Zajonc, 1980, 2001). In line with the attitude work of Funk and James (2004) and based on the preceding, we propose that CSR attitude formation is conceptualized along a continuum rather than having categorical distinctions (see Fig. 1).

Attitude formation is grounded in the assumption that enduring attitudes lead to increasing strength, based on the extent to which various properties about an object are present. Stemming from the work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), many have argued that strong attitudes will be resistant to change, persistent over time, and highly predictive of behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1995; Funk, Haugtvedt, & Howard, 2000; O'Keefe, 1990; Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995; Krosnick & Petty, 1995). As the process of attitude formation develops through learned activation, cognitive responses should become critical to the creation and fostering of various elements (e.g., importance and personal relevance) necessary for information retrieval. Kumar, Lee, & Kim (2009) noted that cognitive and affective states can influence purchase behavior but most notably, Hirschman (1984) and Zajonc and Markus (1982) posited that cognition and affect both relate to the basic understanding that consumers are both rational and emotional. These points help to clarify and extend the cognitive-affective model of buying intentions, in which both cognitive evaluation (i.e., awareness) and affective evaluation (i.e., importance) influence behavior.

Although the preceding work has found significant links between awareness, affect, and behavior, the predictive validity of the various intention scales (as indicators of behavior) have been challenged (Armitage & Connor, 1999). For the most part, the social purchasing aspect of consumer behavior has been gauged with scales measuring consumer intentions, rather than actual behavior. This research has shown the link between intent and actual behavior to be largely assumed (Bagozzi, 1992; Manski, 1990; Sutton, 1998). Particularly in the context of social responsibility, intent to purchase products or services based on CSR is a statement highly sensitive to social bias (e.g., desirability bias). Thus, measuring awareness, affect, and behavior toward CSR should assist in the understanding of whether an attitudinal approach to measuring the consequences of CSR is indeed valid.

### 3.1. The role of cognition (awareness)

A review of the Marketing Scales Handbook revealed that most attitudinal scales tend to focus on the affective part of the attitude, rather than awareness of social variables. Within these instruments, awareness has been implicitly assumed rather than explicitly examined (Bruner, Hensel, & James, 2005). Interestingly, Meijer and Schuyt (2005) noted how remarkable it was that very few studies existed describing the awareness of consumers toward CSR and (at the time) Mohr et al. (2001) found only two studies in the literature that measured awareness (i.e., Ross, Stutts, & Patterson, 1990–1991; Webb & Mohr, 1998). In two recent studies that discussed awareness of CSR, Sen et al. (2006) and Du et al. (2007) suggested that measuring awareness of social initiatives outside of experimental contexts was a rare occurrence. Therefore, the lack of awareness research is likely then, to be a major inhibitor in interpreting consumer responsiveness to CSR (Mohr et al., 2001; Sen et al., 2006).

Perhaps the most widely understood framework to describe the process of awareness in attitude formation is Keller's (1993) *Associative Network Memory Model*. This model views semantic memory (i.e., knowledge/awareness) as consisting of a series of memory links. When information is passed, a spreading activation determines the extent of retrieval in the individual's memory (Anderson, 1983; Collins & Loftus, 1975; Saunders & MacLeod, 2006). When knowledge and importance of an activity (such as CSR) becomes imbedded, these ideas spread to an individual's active memory and trigger a link between an organization and its social practices, possibly manifesting as affect (e.g., enhanced image, positively perceived reputation, etc.) and behavior (e.g., purchase intent, word-of-mouth, etc.).

Hindering this process is the challenge of promoting CSR against a backdrop of savvy consumers who may be cynical toward the credibility of such initiatives (Dawkins, 2005). If the past few years are any indication of the progression of CSR though, consumer knowledge of the social role of business may become one of the ways in which overall organizational quality is judged. Following the attitude model of Funk and James (2004), we therefore advocate that the primary interactive determinant of CSR responsiveness is consumer awareness of the practice. As some of the extant literature has pointed out however, awareness alone may not necessarily lead to favorable outcomes from CSR (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2007; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Consumer beliefs regarding the appropriateness of CSR will likely influence their favorability, which in turn may lead to organization-specific outcomes (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004). Given this assertion, awareness of CSR as an antecedent to consumer attitudes was regarded as the most logical pathway for eliciting consumer responses – particularly when applying an attitude continuum model.

### 3.2. The role of affect

The affective process involves pairing an attitude object with a stimulus thereby eliciting an emotional response and after repeated activation an attitude is formed (Funk & James, 2004; Zajonc, 1980). Previous research suggested that affect has a significant and positive influence on pro-social organizational behavior (Carlson, Charlin, & Miller, 1988; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1991; George, 1991; Kelley & Hoffman, 1997). As well, affective elements of attitudes have been widely examined in the context of subjective attitude theory and are closely intertwined with a large number of source variables (Wilkie, 1994; Solomon, 1994). Although the act of supporting CSR may seem to be a firm-serving action (Ellen et al., 2006), consumer feelings and perceptions toward the act may drive their evaluations of the firm and subsequently impact their behavior. Thus, affective aspects of the consumer's CSR evaluations were treated as perceptual, non-behavioral attitude factors. Based on this idea, we posit that affect among consumers will be triggered by awareness. More specifically (based on our prior discussion), affect will influence the: (1) the desirability of CSR and (2) the willingness of consumers to respond positively to CSR. Predicated on sufficient awareness, we propose the following:

**H1.** Consumer awareness of CSR will positively and significantly influence their affective organizational evaluation.

### 3.3. The role of behavior

Although some researchers have empirically demonstrated that awareness of CSR can predict behavioral intentions (Mohr et al., 2001; Sen et al., 2006), most articles discussing this issue have concluded that awareness alone is a weak antecedent to consumer intent (see Du et al., 2007; Ramasamy & Ting, 2004; Sen et al., 2006). These equivocal findings have prompted CSR researchers to use a number of intervening variables (e.g., corporate ability, beliefs, attributions, trust, etc.) to explain the awareness–intentions link. As a result, a great deal of evidence has amassed which supports the idea that behavior manifests from a subjective calculus of what individuals believe (and how they feel) about an organization (Berens, van Riel, & van Bruggen, 2005; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Rao, Agarwal, & Dahlhoff, 2004). Sen et al. (2006, p. 158) noted that such CSR associations become critical elements to "... stakeholder mind share" because this information has the power to influence patronage, advocacy, and identification behaviors. However, the positive link between CSR and behavior might only exist when two contingent conditions are satisfied: (1) the consumer is aware of CSR and (2) the consumer supports the social initiative. Through this process, future behavior is derived from the multiplicative influences of awareness and emotion, and is likely consistent with behavior as Eagly and Chaiken (1995) suggested.

Regarding consumers, this aspect of the CSR thought structure has been most clearly evidenced in the articles by Du et al. (2007), Sen et al. (2006) and Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) who demonstrated that (contingent on awareness) CSR initiatives were associated with an increased desire on the part of consumers to buy a company's products. And in cases in which the corporate and product-level brands are distinct, this relationship could clearly hinge, on consumers' affective evaluation of the social initiative. Thus, an increase in consumption likelihood should be evident only among those who believe in the CSR efforts of the organization (Sen et al., 2006). Despite these claims, a clear linkage between emotion, CSR, and actual consumer behavior has yet to be established. As such, we propose the following:

**H2.** Consumers affective evaluation of CSR will have a positive and significant effect on actual behavior.

## 4. Research design

Three data collections were undertaken (presented as Study's 1 and 2). Based on the results, we consulted the literature to assist in interpreting the data which helped in the design of the subsequent data collection. The first two data collections were aimed at developing a reliable and valid scale for the consumers' attitude of CSR, following the steps proposed by Churchill. As validity is a process that can only be evaluated over time, the dominant recommendation is to perform multiple data collections for scale testing (Spector, 1994). To assess reliability, each scale's internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha scores, inter-item correlations, and item-to-total scores (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Construct validity was examined by implementing the appropriate strategies of validity testing proposed by the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999).

Of particular concern was the appropriateness of developing a scale that contained both affective and behavioral dimensions (Armitage & Connor, 1999). Since both dimensions were constructed from existing items, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was deemed more appropriate than exploratory factor analysis (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995). Researchers have been somewhat apprehensive to accept behavioral intentions as a discriminate construct from the affective element of attitude formation (Armitage & Connor, 1999; Rundle-Thiele, 2005; Soderlund, 2006). Thus in order to test comparative model fits, CFA's were performed for both the two-dimensional (i.e., behavioral intention as part of the affective dimension) and the three-dimensional scale (i.e., behavioral intentions as a discriminate dimension). Once a reliable and valid scale was accepted, a third data collection was undertaken to examine the relationship between the different CSR dimensions and find support for our proposed hypotheses.

## 5. Study 1. Developing the Consumer Attitudes toward Responsible Entities in Sport (CARES) scale

### 5.1. Methods for data collection 1

The first step of scale development is to define the boundaries of the construct being examined. Following our review of the extant literature, we propose that (even though CSR can be viewed in varying ways) the processes that are present in attitudes (i.e., cognition, affect, and behavior) toward social responsibility are universally similar (see Maignan, 2001). Hence, we treated CSR as a generic concept measured through the traditional attitudinal dimensions previously discussed.

Following the scale development procedures outlined by Newell and Goldsmith (2001) an initial pool of items hypothesized to be indicators of the three attitude dimensions of CSR (e.g., cognitive, affective, and behavior) were gathered and evaluated for content validity. For each dimension, we relied on established items adapted from existing research (Boal & Perry, 1985; Ellen et al., 2006; Meijer & Schuyt, 2005; Mohr & Webb, 2005; Paul, Downes, Perry, & Friday, 1997; Webb & Mohr, 1998; Zalka, Downes, & Paul, 1997). Making use of these items allowed us to gain initial content validity, as most have been previously tested for internal consistency and validity. An initial 21-item pool was compiled to reflect the logical and semantic content of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral concepts based on relevant past source and CSR-related research (Newell & Goldsmith, 2001). As recommended by Hardesty and Bearden (2004), five academicians were recruited and asked to determine the content validity of the items. The panel used the construct to evaluate the relevancy of each item in relation to the construct it was intended to measure (DeVillis's, 1991). If an item was deemed appropriate, it was included in the CFA. From the initial 21-item pool, 12 items were retained for use in Study 1 (see Table 2).

The first data collection was conducted among attendees of the National Hockey League (NHL) All Star game in Atlanta, GA. Event attendees were approached outside the arena (i.e., intercept technique) and the researcher was able to obtain 92 complete and usable questionnaires prior to the start of the event. Since the purpose of this data collection was to gain insight on the reliability and validity of the items, no demographic information was obtained. While relatively small, Bryant

**Table 2**  
Data collection 1 means, standards deviation, and internal consistency measures.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	( $\alpha$ )/range of inter-item correlation	Item-to-total score
Cognitive awareness <sup>a</sup>			(.92)	
I am aware of the social programs of my favorite NHL team	4.74	1.71	.70 - .87	.87
I know of the good things my favorite NHL team does for the community	5.43	1.56	.65-.70	.72
I am aware of the programs of my favorite NHL team that benefit the community	4.70	1.75	.65-.87	.85
I believe my NHL team to be a socially responsible organization	5.15	1.68	.66-.76	.79
Affective evaluation <sup>a</sup>			(.95)	
Part of the reason I like my favorite NHL team is because of what they do for the community	4.26	1.72	.72-.90	.87
The fact I feel positive about my favorite NHL team has partly to do with the social programs they developed	4.30	1.75	.78-.90	.93
I feel good about my favorite NHL team partly because of all the things they do to benefit the community	4.40	1.71	.80-.90	.90
My favorite NHL team is a good organization because of all the good things they do for the community	4.76	1.67	.72-.80	.80
Behavioral intentions <sup>a</sup>			(.94)	
Part of the reason I go out of my way to support my favorite NHL team is because of their social programs	3.92	1.54	.65-.81	.77
One of the reasons I speak positively about my favorite NHL team is because of what they do for the community	3.98	1.67	.73-.88	.90
I buy merchandise from my favorite NHL team partly because I believe they are a socially responsible organization	3.61	1.55	.65-.87	.84
Part of the reason I make sure other people know how I feel about my favorite NHL team is because of the good things they do for the community	3.91	1.55	.81-.88	.92

<sup>a</sup> 1 "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree".

and Yarnold (1995) argued that as long as there are at least five cases for each variable (5:1 ratio), a confirmatory analysis is appropriate (see also Hatcher, 1994). However, the small sample size was viewed with caution as it could negatively affect the results (Gorsuch, 1983).

### 5.2. Results of data collection 1

All internal consistency indicators for the three-dimensional model were strong, with alpha scores well above .90, and item-to-total scores all above .70 (see Table 2). The somewhat inflated correlations between items indicated some initial collinearity issues within the scale.

Since alpha score computations assume one-dimensionality, they provided little insight on our main research question of whether the CARES scale should be two- or three-dimensional. Hence, following the preliminary analyses two CFA's were performed in order to examine which model would better fit the data. The first model (Model 1) reflected a traditional attitudinal model and treated behavioral intentions as an indicator of actual behavior. The second model (Model 2) acknowledged the criticisms of Model 1 and combined both the affective and behavioral intention items as part of the same dimension. The results for Model 1 suggested a poor fit, with a  $\chi^2/df$  ratio well above 3.0 (172.98/34; 5.09), a RMSEA score of above .08 (.092), and fit indices below .90 (CFI = .88; NFI = .87; RFI = .86). Comparatively, Model 2 demonstrated a better fit to the data by approaching acceptable fit levels ( $\chi^2/df = 3.863$ , RMSEA = .083, CFI = .91, NFI = .91, RFI = .90).

### 5.3. Discussion of data collection 1

The findings from the first data collection revealed that the traditional three-dimensional attitude model was not supported. While the fit indices for the two-dimensional scale were improved, the results nevertheless failed to yield a scale that would allow for hypothesis testing. Researchers interested in attitudes have long recognized the problematic nature of behavioral intention items, as "... most reported research lacks objective measures of real behavior" (De Cannière, De Pelsmacker, & Geuens, 2009, p. 82). By collapsing the affective and behavioral dimensions our work aligns with other literature in this area (Armitage & Connor, 1999; Rundle-Thiele, 2005; Soderlund, 2006) and bolsters support for future research. Specifically, Rundle-Thiele (2005) and Soderlund (2006) both separated behavioral intentions from actual behavior, stating that behavioral intentions are more representative of attitudinal loyalty than actual purchasing. Therefore, the logical next step was to refine the two-dimensional CARES scale (i.e., cognitive and affective dimensions). Once a valid two-dimensional scale was accepted, the attitudinal continuum model presented in Fig. 1 could be tested. Based on the findings from the first data collection, the number of items in the affective dimension was reduced by retaining the most appropriate items from both the affective and behavioral intention.

Two affective items were deleted to eliminate redundancy (i.e., "I feel positive about my favorite team"; "My favorite team is a good organization because of all the good things they do for society"). These items also warranted deletion because they are increasingly sensitive to social biasing (Nederhof, 2006) especially in the CSR domain. This decision was supported by the results of the CFA, which suggested the deletion of these items would yield a better fit. Thus, a two-dimensional 10-item scale was retained for further testing (see Table 3). To provide evidence of validity, two additional attitudinal constructs were used to test the concurrent validity of the scale. While this second data collection did not allow us to test the hypotheses, this second data collection was necessary in order to refine and validate the CARES scale.

### 5.4. Methods of data collection 2

The second data collection was done to validate the initial scale structure from Study 1 and further assess its reliability. This data collection (similar technique to Study 1) was performed among National Association for Stock Car Automobile Racing (NASCAR) event attendees in Daytona Beach, FL ( $n = 146$ ). Of the respondents, 77.4% ( $n = 113$ ) were male and 22.6% ( $n = 33$ ) were female. Respondent ages ranged from 18 to 75 years ( $M = 47.97$ ;  $SD = 12.69$ ). The majority of respondents were Caucasian (80.8%), followed by Native American (6.2%), "Other" ethnic backgrounds (4.8%), African-American (3.4%), Asian (2.7%), and Hispanic (2.1%). In terms of income, those with an annual household income between \$85,000 and \$130,000 comprised the largest group (49.4%).

While small, the sample size was within recommended limits for a CFA as recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1995) and well over the 5:1 rule suggested by Bryant and Yarnold (1995). For validity testing, CFA factor loadings were used to assess the internal structure of the constructs. Convergent validity was evaluated by calculating the average variance extracted values (AVE) for each construct, and comparing these values with the squared correlation between the constructs provided insight on discriminant validity. External validity was assessed by concurrently testing the two-factor model with the dimensions of *team identity* (Heere & James, 2007) and *willingness to pay extra* (Walker & Kent, 2009). Both constructs were chosen as they are both considered desired outcomes of implementing CSR strategies (Auger, Burke, Devinney, & Louviere, 2003). We reasoned that a more positive attitude toward the CSR strategy of the organization would relate to higher levels of identification and an increased willingness on the part of the consumer to pay extra for their products and/or services. The six-dimensional team identity scale yielded an acceptable fit [ $\chi^2(df) = 2.57$ , RMSEA = .065, SRMR = .07, GFI = .92, AGFI = .89, NFI = .94, CFI = .97] and the internal consistency scores for both constructs were well above .80, indicating that both scales were reliable (see Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006).

**Table 3**  
Data collection 2 means, standard deviations, and internal consistency measures.

	M	SD	( $\alpha$ )/range of inter-item correlation	Item-to-total score
Cognitive awareness			(.93)	
I am aware of the social programs of my favorite NASCAR race team	4.68	1.86	.70–.91	.88
I know of the good things my favorite NASCAR race team does for the community	4.99	1.79	.76–.78	.83
I believe my NASCAR race team to be a socially responsible organization	5.29	1.65	.70–.76	.77
<i>I am aware of the programs of my favorite NASCAR race team that benefit the community</i>	4.61	1.85	.72–.91	.88
Affective evaluation			(.95)	
I feel good about my favorite NASCAR race team partly because of all the things they do to benefit the community	4.49	1.85	.70–.85	.89
Part of the reason I like my favorite NASCAR race team is because of what they do for the community	4.35	1.81	.66–.85	.85
One of the reasons I speak positively about my favorite NASCAR race team is because of what they do for the community	4.26	1.75	.66–.85	.88
I buy merchandise from my favorite NASCAR race team partly because I believe they are a socially responsible organization	4.45	1.85	.66–.75	.76
<i>Part of the reason I go out of my way to support my favorite NASCAR race team is because of their social programs</i>	4.12	1.81	.70–.73	.79
<i>Part of the reason I make sure other people know how I feel about my favorite NASCAR race team is because of the good things they do for the community</i>	4.29	1.85	.70–.86	.88

Note: The italicized items were not retained in the final CARES scale.

5.5. Results of data collection 2

A CFA was performed to verify the proposed two-factor model (see Table 3). All internal consistency scores were strong and all item-to-total scores were above the .50 cutoff. The CFA supported the two-dimensional scale revealing an acceptable fit [ $\chi^2(df) = 2.23$ , RMSEA = .091, SRMR = .035, GFI = .90, AGFI = .88, NFI = .95, CFI = .97]. However, the RMSEA was somewhat inflated and was regarded as problematic since this fit index is relatively insensitive to sample size (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Muller, 2003). Looking at the issue further, the RMSEA penalizes models for lack of parsimony; as such, these findings were not unexpected. To examine internal validity, we analyzed the standardized loadings and calculated both the AVE's for the two dimensions (i.e., convergence validity) and the squared correlations between the two dimensions. All standardized loadings were in an acceptable range (.77 → .96<sub>cognitive</sub>; .76 → .93<sub>affective</sub>). This suggested that the two dimensions demonstrated signs of convergent validity, which was supported by the high AVE scores for both dimensions (.77<sub>cognitive</sub>; .76<sub>affective</sub>). The squared correlation between constructs was .64, indicating a discriminant factor structure. Concurrent validity was examined by how well the CSR dimensions related to two other variables. Specifically, we computed the correlations of the two scale dimensions with *team identity* and *willingness to pay extra*. As depicted in Table 4, the six dimensions of team identity were significantly correlated with both CSR scale dimensions (*r* values ranged from .31<sub>cognitive</sub>, *p* = .001 to .53<sub>affective</sub>, *p* = .001) and willingness to pay (*r* = .41<sub>cognitive</sub>, *p* = .001; *r* = .58<sub>affective</sub>, *p* = .001). Overall, the team identity and willingness to pay constructs correlated in a manner predicted by theory supporting the concurrent validity of the scale.

**Table 4**  
Concurrent validity check.

	Cognitive awareness	Affective evaluation
Team identity <sup>a</sup>		
Private evaluation	.503**	.487**
Public evaluation	.478**	.433**
Interconnection of self with team	.437**	.532**
Sense of interdependence	.311**	.342**
Behavioral involvement	.502**	.512**
Cognitive awareness of team	.482**	.423**
Willingness to pay extra <sup>a</sup>	.417**	.584**

<sup>a</sup> 1 “strongly disagree” and 7 “strongly agree”.  
\*\* *p* < .001.

## 5.6. Discussion of data collection 2

The results supported those from the first data collection by providing additional evidence of validity for the two-dimensional CARES scale. The elimination of two items improved the fit of the model and supported its structural validity. In addition, we relied on two attitudinal scales (i.e., team identity and willingness to pay) to support our external validity proposition. Although we reasoned that the correlations between the two attitude dimensions and willingness to pay would be significant, the strength of these correlations might indicate some level of respondent bias rather than a true indication of “willingness”. Nonetheless, these findings supported the idea that behavioral intentions (i.e., willingness to pay) should be regarded as affective statements rather than an estimation of true behavior. Since the two-dimensional CARES scale provided evidence of construct validity, the decision was made to conduct one additional data collection using true behavioral data to test our hypotheses that attitudes lead to actual behavior. Although the primary purpose of our second study was to test our model, we decided to follow the guidelines for scale development by Churchill and make slight improvements to the scale. From the results of the second data collection, we deduced that the CARES scale could be further improved if additional items were eliminated. One of the two, “I am aware” items was deleted (i.e., “I am aware of the programs of my favorite [...] that benefit the community”) since both items were highly correlated (.911). Within the affective dimension, two items were also deleted due to redundancy and low factor loadings.

## 6. Study 2

### 6.1. Method

The purpose of Study 2 was to test the two posited hypotheses and provide further support for the validity of the two-dimensional CARES scale. In a similar fashion to the previous collections, data were obtained from attendees at a PGA TOUR event ( $n = 311$ ) in Northeast Florida. Of the respondents, 69.1% ( $n = 215$ ) were male and 30.9% ( $n = 96$ ) were female. The age of respondents ranged from 21 to 68 years ( $M = 32.84$ ;  $SD = 10.72$ ). Somewhat mirroring the second data collection, a majority of respondents were Caucasian (65.3%), followed by Asian (14.5%), African-American (11.2%), Hispanic (4.1%), Native American (3.2%), and “Other” ethnic backgrounds (1.7%). In terms of income, those with an annual household income between \$100,000 and \$130,000 comprised the largest group (68.4%).

To measure actual patronage, we assessed the respondents’ spending related to: (1) transportation, (2) tickets, (3) food and beverage, and (4) event-related merchandise (e.g., “please tell us how much you spent on . . .”). It is important to note that these items were not part of the CARES scale. Rather, they were used for the expressed purpose of testing our posited hypotheses. These open-ended spending items yielded 153 usable responses and a Cronbach’s Alpha computation revealed that these different spending items could be collapsed within one behavioral construct ( $\alpha = .87$ ) in order to test the proposed model.

Data analyses for Study 2 proceeded by validating the measurement model and testing the hypotheses. First, a CFA was conducted as a final assessment of the validity of the two-dimensional CARES scale. Second, a structural equation model (SEM) was conducted to depict the relationships among the latent variables of cognitive awareness and affective evaluation leading to spending behavior (see Fig. 2). The parameters were estimated with AMOS using the maximum likelihood method.

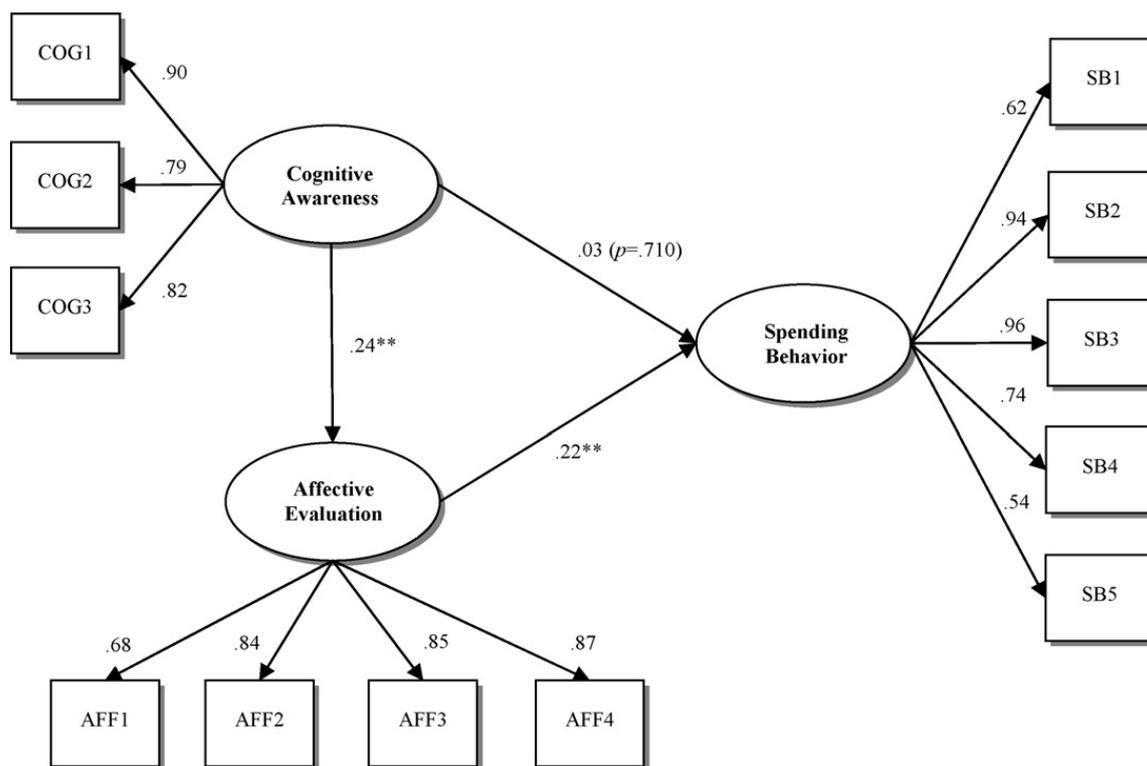
### 6.2. Results

Comparable to Study 1, the CFA revealed an acceptable fit [ $\chi^2(df) = 2.38$ ,  $RMSEA = .070$ ,  $SRMR = .69$ ,  $GFI = .92$ ,  $AGFI = .91$ ,  $NFI = .91$ ,  $GFI = .92$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ], suggesting that the elimination of items was beneficial for the structure of the CARES scale. All standardized loadings for the cognitive and affective dimensions were in the acceptable range and all AVE values were above .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) supporting the construct validity of the two-dimensional scale.

For the SEM computation, the behavioral construct was added and the results (see Fig. 2) indicated an acceptable fit [ $\chi^2(df) = 1.632$ ,  $RMSEA = .065$ ,  $SRMR = .0571$ ,  $GFI = .92$ ,  $AGFI = .90$ ,  $NFI = .93$ ,  $GFI = .93$ ,  $CFI = .97$ ], supporting our decision to collapse the behavior items into a single construct. Based on the model statistics, we concluded that both hypotheses were supported. Awareness of CSR impacted the consumer’s affective evaluation of CSR strategy, which influenced behavior. However, the weak main effect from awareness to affect suggested that CSR is of mild importance to PGA TOUR spectators. Thus, even if the consumer is cognizant of organization-specific CSR, this does not always lead to a higher appreciation of the organization.

## 7. General discussion

If an appropriate and consistent scale is developed to measure an attitude continuum toward CSR, it could then be used to gauge the effectiveness and overall value of various CSR programs. The results of three data collections supported our main contention that the two-dimensional CARES scale offers both valid and reliable measures for researchers interested in grasping sport consumers’ perception of CSR – particularly cognitive and affective organizational perceptions. Eliminating the behavioral intentions dimension resulted in a more reliable and valid model of consumer attitudes toward CSR. Thus for future research, we suggest forgoing the behavioral intentions aspect of consumer behavior. Instead, researchers should



Note.  $\chi^2(df)=1.63$ , RMSEA=.065, SRMR=.057, GFI=.92, AGFI=.90, NFI=.93, GFI=.93, CFI=.97; \*\* $p<.01$

Fig. 2. Three factor model.

develop open-ended behavioral items (e.g., attendance, merchandise sales, parking, etc.) that align with the particular setting of their study.

By eliminating intentions as an indicator of actual behavior we were also able to account for response biasing, thereby providing a more critical perspective on attitude formation toward CSR. Empirical work on Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) linear model of attitude formation has generally relied on Likert-type scales with subjective evaluations along a positive/negative continuum (Krosnick & Petty, 1995), which is highly sensitive to bias and might overestimate true behavior. The paths in our model provide a more realistic view on the impact of CSR strategies on consumer behavior and demonstrated that such strategies have comparatively little impact on the behavioral patterns of consumers. More recently, the attitude paradigm has shifted toward a more holistic approach to measure different psychological concepts (e.g., centrality, importance, intensity, accessibility, and personal relevance) within attitudinal research (Bassili, 1996; Funk et al., 2000; Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Carnot, 1993). The congruence between affective evaluation and actual consumer behavior lends additional support for the use of these constructs (see De Cannière et al., 2009). In addition, Funk and James (2004) noted several antecedents to both awareness and affect in their model. It is important to note that our work did not utilize these constructs but rather was focused only on cognition and affect. Thus, future research should explore each of these antecedents (e.g., experience, beliefs, personal connection, paired stimulus, etc.) and their effect on the CARES scale.

Our findings also provide additional support for the *Associative Network Memory Model* (Keller, 1993) by suggesting that semantic memory does link to purchasing behavior and consequently, the other related attitudes of organizational identity and willingness to pay. Although various organizational associations such as identification, attachment, and loyalty, have an established history in the sport marketing literature, there is a lack of research on how awareness of organizational initiatives (particularly social and philanthropic) might impact sport consumers' behavioral responses. Thus, it was important to understand how sport consumers process CSR information to identify the effect this information had on actual behavior. The findings suggested that awareness of CSR is the first step in forming responses to the initiative; and as conceptually distinct concepts, the cognitive and affective dimensions offer a viable way to accurately assess awareness and affect regarding CSR in sport.

Although researchers (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004; Du et al., 2007) have alluded to the importance of CSR awareness as a precursor to behavior, this link has yet to be empirically validated – particularly in sport. Sen et al. (2006) illustrated that consumer awareness of a philanthropic initiative was a precondition for their attitude that a company was socially responsible. However as we have shown, awareness alone does not lead to CSR favorability or consumer behavior. At least in the current study, favorability is contingent on two conditions that must be satisfied in order to evoke positive outcomes. Specifically, CSR itself was not centrally important to the behavioral process as this process was necessitated by the awareness → affect causal link. While a number of studies (cited at the outset of this article) have stated that being socially

responsible can affect consumer purchase behavior, we now see that the validity of these assertions should be challenged. In fact, a growing body of work has revealed that responses to CSR are likely subject to the attributions (i.e., perceived organizational motives) that consumers ascribe to CSR initiatives. This point is most clearly evident in the works of Klein and Dawar (2004), Lee, Park, Moon, Yang, and Kim (2009), Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, and Avramidis (2009), and Walker, Heere, Parent, and Drane (2010) whose findings point to the role of CSR in consumer behavior that is more complex than previously conceptualized.

## 8. Limitations and conclusion

Using the cognitive-affective model (Johnson & Grayson, 2005) as a framework, the results of the two studies demonstrated the influence of awareness and emotion on actual purchase behavior among sport consumers. This study responded to the existing call for more research assessing CSR awareness among consumers and demonstrated that awareness and affect can indeed act as antecedents to actual consumer behavior. While initially appealing, this study does have its limitations and the results should be viewed with some caution due to the context of the research and the self-report nature of the items (three limitations in particular are offered). First, the sport business industry was used to initially test and further validate the scale. The use of these sample groups could artificially inflate the emotional (i.e., affective) reactions that consumers direct toward CSR. Sport consumers have been characterized as emotionally invested in both the core product (i.e., the team) and the sport itself (i.e., football, hockey, and auto-racing). Thus, researchers should conduct additional studies in other context (both domestic and international) where product and service firms and consumer perceptions of them may differ to provide support for the scale in divergent settings.

Second, since we relied only on self-reported behavior there is the ever-present issue of bias in the results. Donaldson and Grant-Vallone (2002) pointed out that in social science research (often times), participants respond in ways that make them appear as good as possible to the researcher. As a result, there exists the possibility that social bias could have influenced the results. However, since we only asked about spending behavior likely means that the responses given were relatively accurate. More studies across a wider range of industries would obviously allow researchers to more clearly understand if social biasing should be regarded as problematic. As well, future queries would allow CSR researchers to more generally understand when the CSR dimensions could apply as antecedents to consumer behavior and when they do not.

Finally, since all three data collections were conducted with different sport organizations in North America the ability to generalize the findings are somewhat limited. Although the two dimensions in the CARES scale are not necessarily culturally sensitive (i.e., cognition and affect are regarded as universal components present within each individual), each item might be interpreted differently by consumers in other nations. In addition, the items assume that each sport organization has performed CSR or is (at least) involved in their respective communities. This assumption might be correct for sport organizations within the United States but might not necessarily extend to other nations.

Regardless of these limitations, the awareness → affect link was strong and positive despite the (potentially confounding) levels of emotion and social biasing. By validating the CARES scale through actual behavior, behavioral intentions, and identification, we were able to present a valid two-dimensional scale that scholars can connect to specific behavioral items that fit specific research contexts. This scale therefore provides researchers with an instrument that is less sensitive to response bias and accounts for the social desirability that has been continually associated with measuring CSR and its related concepts.

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