



Journal of Global Responsibility

Exploring consumer support for CSR from the perspective of moral legitimacy:
Evidence from Malaysia
Sham Abdulrazak, Azlan Amran,

Article information:

To cite this document:

Sham Abdulrazak, Azlan Amran, (2017) "Exploring consumer support for CSR from the perspective of moral legitimacy: Evidence from Malaysia", Journal of Global Responsibility, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JGR-04-2017-0023>

Permanent link to this document:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/JGR-04-2017-0023>

Downloaded on: 28 November 2017, At: 01:44 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 78 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 6 times since 2017*

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:416658 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

Exploring consumer support for CSR from the perspective of moral legitimacy

Evidence from Malaysia

Sham Abdulrazak

Faculty of Business and Management, AIMST University, Bedong, Malaysia, and

Azlan Amran

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

Exploring
consumer
support for
CSR

Received 7 April 2017
Revised 26 July 2017
Accepted 10 October 2017

Abstract

Purpose – The primary purpose of this paper is to explore and interpret the perceptions of Malaysian consumers regarding the factors that facilitate their market support for corporate social responsibility (CSR) through the lens of moral legitimacy.

Design/methodology/approach – This paper interprets qualitative data gathered from in-depth interviews with Malaysian consumers. The findings are then mapped to four forms of evaluations for moral legitimacy identified in the literature, towards establishing a conceptual model of consumer support for CSR.

Findings – Overall, six factors were identified as facilitating consumer market support for CSR. Of these, consumers were found to perceive strategic alignment between a firm's business and its CSR as the most fundamental. In the absence of which, all other considerations are rendered irrelevant. Upon the requirement for alignment being met, the consumers then place emphasis on the manner by which a CSR activity is executed, for deciding whether to support or otherwise.

Practical implications – In contrast to previous reports in the literature concerning Malaysian consumers and CSR, the findings suggest that Malaysian consumers now have increased levels of awareness and maturity with regard to CSR, not unlike that of consumers in the West. Therefore, Malaysian firms will have to stop treating their CSR activities as an add-on, as has been reported previously, and they should endeavour to integrate their CSR into their overall business strategy.

Originality value – This paper offers an important insight about the consumers' market support for CSR in the context of a developing nation.

Keywords Malaysia, Corporate social responsibility, Consumer behaviour, Organizational legitimacy

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Several firms/brands have a strong consumer following, primarily by reason of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) engagement (Sheth *et al.*, 2010). In this respect, Ben and Jerry's, The Body Shop and Starbucks are some of the brands that are usually mentioned in academic literature and the popular press. However, such firms appear to be the exception. As in general, consumers' actual market response to CSR has been poor (Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Claudy *et al.*, 2012; Devinney, 2009). There is an expanding body of literature that seeks to understand this problem and thereafter recommend theoretical and practical solutions (Bray *et al.*, 2011; Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010; Öberseder *et al.*, 2011; Freestone and McGoldrick, 2008). Nevertheless, these research have been predominantly in the context of consumers from the developed world. Although



insightful, the findings and recommendations may not necessarily be transferable to consumers in developing countries (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). In any case, research on CSR and consumers in the developing world, especially pertaining to consumers' market support, remains largely unexhausted (Jamali and Karam, 2016; Fatma and Rahman, 2015). This raises an urgent need for research that draws on context-specific insights, that may prove useful in understanding CSR and consumer behaviour in developing countries (Jamali and Mirshak, 2006).

In view of that, this article aims to contribute to the literature on CSR and consumers in developing countries. Specifically, in identifying the factors that facilitate consumers' market support for CSR, in transactional and/or relational terms. To that end, this article uses qualitative data from in-depth interviews conducted on consumers in Malaysia – a developing country located in South East Asia. Drawing from organisational legitimacy as its theoretical basis, this study found that there are six factors which serve to facilitate consumer support for CSR from the perspective of moral legitimacy. This article proceeds as follows. First, the relevant literature on CSR and consumer behaviour is presented, and the differences in approach between previous studies and this study are highlighted and discussed. Next, the concept of organisational legitimacy is introduced and discussed. Subsequently, the research method of this study is explained, and thereafter the findings are presented. This is followed by a discussion of the findings and their practical implications. Finally, this article concludes with limitations and avenues for future research.

Corporate social responsibility and consumers

There is a significant body of research on CSR and its influence on consumer behaviour. In general consumers have been reported to articulate positive preferences to CSR, both transactional and relational in nature. For instance, from a transactional perspective, CSR has been found to positively influence consumers' purchase intention (Creyer and Ross, 1997; Mohr and Webb, 2005). Similarly, CSR is reported to increase consumers' satisfaction (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Walsh and Bartikowski, 2012). Meanwhile, from a relational perspective, CSR is reported to "humanise" a firm, and in so doing, earn the admiration and respect of consumers (Du *et al.*, 2007). CSR has also been found to contribute to a more positive evaluation of a firm (Brown and Dacin, 1997). In this regard, Marin and Ruiz (2007) suggest that CSR makes a firm more "attractive" to consumers and enables them to seek out and match their values and beliefs with that of a firm.

Given consumers' positive articulations, it could be surmised that firms with high CSR engagement are receiving overwhelmingly positive market response from consumers. That however does not appear to be the case. In general, the market response from consumers has been poor. In other words, consumers' articulated preferences for CSR have not translated into their actual purchase behaviour (Claudy *et al.*, 2012; Carrigan and Attalla, 2001; Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Öberseder *et al.*, 2011). Scholars have sought to understand and explain the cause (or causes) for consumers' poor market response to CSR. Several studies have identified the factors that impede consumers' market support for CSR (Bray *et al.*, 2011; Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010; Carrington *et al.*, 2016). Meanwhile, other studies have proposed frameworks and models that serve to improve CSR-related consumer outcomes in the market (Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Freestone and McGoldrick, 2008; Öberseder *et al.*, 2011). Likewise, this study sets out to contribute to the expanding body of literature concerning consumers' market poor response to CSR.

In so doing however, this study departs from previous studies in two ways. First, it focusses strictly on consumers' real market experiences with regard to CSR. By this, it attempts to address the shortcomings in the research frameworks of past studies. Most of

these research have used one type of survey or another. These surveys are said to be imprecise, if not defective, resulting in consumers overstating their preferences (Auger and Devinney, 2007). In addition, most of the researches were experimental in nature, where the respondents were presented with contrived scenarios (Singh *et al.*, 2007). Alternatively, other studies have relied on one specific CSR activity of a firm to measure consumers' responses, instead of its entire CSR portfolio (Peloza and Shang, 2011). Either way, it has been suggested that these research frameworks are ill-suited in capturing the complex nature of how consumers perceive or respond to CSR in the market (Öberseder *et al.*, 2011). Second, this study focusses on identifying the factors that actually facilitate, rather than inhibit, consumers' transactional and relational support for CSR. CSR is not entirely a market failure. Many firms have a loyal consumer following in the market primarily by reason of their CSR engagement (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Du *et al.*, 2007). This is not restricted to firms/brands from developed countries alone. In Malaysia for instance, "Faiza" – a firm that sells food products – has a loyal consumer base, by reason of its strong CSR engagement. As such the identification of the factors that underpin consumers' support for CSR, could provide a better understanding of how to improve the current state of CSR-related consumer outcomes.

Furthermore, this study expands the research context and provides contrast to previous studies by focussing on consumers in Malaysia. Past researches on CSR and consumers have mostly been conducted in developed countries, particularly in North America and Western Europe (Fatma and Rahman, 2015). As CSR is largely context-dependant, these findings may not necessarily be applicable in the context of developing countries (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005). Accordingly, there have been calls for researchers to "globalise" the discussion on CSR. That is, by incorporating the perspectives of developing nations into the overall discourse on CSR (Prieto-carrón *et al.*, 2006). Although research on CSR in the context of developing nations has intensified lately, much remains unexplored in relation to consumer support for CSR (Fatma and Rahman, 2015). In view of the aforementioned, this study adopts an exploratory approach, by way of in-depth interviews conducted on real consumers in Malaysia.

Theoretical framework

Over the years, scholars have proposed various theoretical frameworks pertaining to consumer support for CSR (Peloza and Shang, 2011). Several key theoretical frameworks and their selected citations are presented in Table I, followed by a brief discussion of each (Table I).

The stakeholder theory posits that firms exist for the benefit of many beneficiaries, not merely its shareholders (Clifton, 2010). Accordingly, firms have a duty to maximise the value that it creates for all its stakeholders. Of the many stakeholders, consumers have been

Theoretical framework	Selected citations
Stakeholder theory	Clifton (2010), Brown and Forster (2012), Bhattacharya <i>et al.</i> (2009)
Resource-based view	McWilliams and Siegel (2011), Branco and Rodrigues (2006), Hart (1995)
Value creation/shared value	Burke and Logsdon (1996), Husted and Allen (2007), Porter and Kramer (2011)
Consumer–company identification	Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), Marin <i>et al.</i> (2008), Currás-pérez <i>et al.</i> (2015)
Organisational legitimacy	Du and Vieira (2012), Dart (2004), Barkemeyer (2007)
Institutional theory	Brammer <i>et al.</i> (2011), Aguilera <i>et al.</i> (2007), Matten and Moon (2008)

Table I.
Theoretical
frameworks of
consumer support for
CSR

identified as one key group (Freeman and Moutchnik, 2013). In this respect, CSR is said to be critical to a firm's long-term business sustainability, as it improves and enhances the overall consumer experience (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009; Brown and Forster, 2012). Meanwhile, the resource-based view suggests that CSR is a way of off-setting the negative externalities of a firm's operations by introducing social benefits to the society (Hart, 1995; McWilliams and Siegel, 2011). This will serve as a positive signal to consumers and position the firm's products to be more attractive (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006). Consequently, consumers could be expected to be willing to pay more or display loyalty. From the perspective of value creation, CSR is said to yield business-related benefits and support core business activities (Burke and Logsdon, 1996; Husted and Allen, 2007). Porter and Kramer (2011) contend that long-term value creation by way of CSR will drive consumers to embrace a firm's products and engender loyalty and repeat purchases. On the other hand, consumer-company identification (CCI) explores CSR from a relationship marketing perspective. CCI's main premise is that CSR helps satisfy consumers' self-definitional needs (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). An increased sense of identification between consumers and firms, is said to serve as positive driver of consumer behaviour (Currás-pérez *et al.*, 2015; Marin *et al.*, 2008). The focus of organisational legitimacy is on the social context. Basically, it holds that firms require social support to succeed. This is achieved by activities and outcomes that fit with society's values and expectations, of which CSR has been identified as key (Dart, 2004). Especially in ensuring continued support from consumers (Barkemeyer, 2007; Du and Vieira, 2012). Finally, the institutional theory emphasises the role of a firm in creating socially desirable change. To that end, firms must seek to align their activities with demand from their consumers in socially responsible initiatives (Aguilera *et al.*, 2007; Brammer *et al.*, 2011). Otherwise consumers will punish firms for not doing good enough by not responding favourably to the firms' products and services.

Although discussed from diverse perspectives, the basic premise of all of these theoretical frameworks is not dissimilar. Essentially, all of them underscore the significance of CSR in providing competitive advantage to firms from the perspective of their consumers. However, for the purposes of this study, organisational legitimacy was adopted as the theoretical framework. This is primarily because of the rich literature on consumer support for CSR – which is the core inquiry of this study – interpreted from the perspective of organisational legitimacy (Barkemeyer, 2007; Dart, 2004; Jamali and Karam, 2016; Palazzo and Scherer, 2006).

Organisational legitimacy

Organisational legitimacy is an umbrella concept that encompasses several sociological theories of organisation, most notably the institutional theory (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Barkemeyer, 2007). In contrast to instrumental and rational based theories, organisational legitimacy looks beyond a firm's operational and technical efficiencies to its social context as a key component to a firm's success (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Suchman, 1995). Specifically, towards conforming to society's values and expectations, which is said to confer "legitimacy" on a firm and its activities (Dart, 2004) and consequently ensure the continuous support from its stakeholders (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006). Conversely, firms those lack legitimacy are expected to face difficulties in meeting their organisational objectives.

As legitimacy is contextual in nature, its source is said to be external to a firm and determined by a firm's stakeholders (Brinkerhoff, 2005). Accordingly, Suchman (1995, p. 574) defined legitimacy as:

Legitimacy is a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions.

As the definition suggests, legitimacy is perceived subjectively and construed socially (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006). It is expected to vary from one sociocultural context to another, in view of the differences in the norms, values and beliefs (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). As such, stakeholders' perceptions of legitimacy may not reflect the reality of the situation (Suchman, 1995). In other words, regardless how a firm may position its activities, stakeholders may still perceive it as being undesirable or inappropriate, if it is perceived as being incompatible with their social value system and practices.

Suchman (1995, p.577) had further proposed a typology of legitimacy, which comprises three subtypes, namely, pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy and cognitive legitimacy. The first, pragmatic legitimacy is said to be the most basic form of legitimacy. It is grounded in the firm's self-interest and entirely assessed from the perspective of the firm. From this aspect, any action that would bring benefit to the firm will be perceived as legitimate. Moral legitimacy reflects a positive normative evaluation of the firm and its activities. Suchman (1995, p. 579) suggests that moral legitimacy is "sociotropic", as it rests on judgments about whether the activity promotes social welfare in the context of a given society. Finally, the third subtype, cognitive legitimacy is based on cognition. Rather than being based on interest or evaluation (as the earlier two subtypes), it refers to activities which are perceived by the society as being absolutely essential to a firm, or that which only makes sense for firm to undertake (Suchman, 1995, p. 582). To illustrate, Brinkerhoff (2005) points to the entrepreneurial spirit among American firms, which the American society deems as necessary.

Legitimacy is especially significant in connecting with CSR because CSR represents a firm's strategy to improve performance by managing its social environment. (Mellahi *et al.*, 2016). Accordingly, there is a large body of literature that examines the close and interdependent relationship between legitimacy and CSR (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005; Palazzo and Scherer, 2006; Du and Vieira, 2012). Likewise, legitimacy has been widely discussed in the literature in the context of firms in developing countries, as the basis for CSR practices (Jamali and Karam, 2016). Among other things, these studies underscore the role of legitimacy in drawing consumer support for a firm's CSR (Arvidsson, 2014; Vlachos *et al.*, 2009). As without consumer support, CSR will most likely be ineffective (Kießling *et al.*, 2015). However, consumers' perceptions of CSR legitimacy would depend on what they perceive as "desirable, proper or appropriate". In which case, the same type of CSR activity may very well produce conflicting reactions from consumers in different circumstances. Furthermore, CSR is a relatively new practice in developing countries (Jamali and Mirshak, 2006). In such situations, where a firm engages in new activities or uses new structures or processes, Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) suggest that legitimation activities are required to be more intense and proactive. Therefore, a firm would have to strive harder in securing legitimacy of its CSR activities from its consumers, compared to another firm that has a substantial CSR legacy.

Of the three subtypes of legitimacy proposed by Suchman (1995), moral legitimacy is the most closely associated with CSR (Barkemeyer, 2007; Palazzo and Scherer, 2006; Pirsch and Grau, 2007; Du and Vieira, 2012). Unlike pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy, moral legitimacy depends on a firm's actions in promoting social welfare and creating greater good for the society (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Dart, 2004). Suchman (1995, p. 579) had suggested that moral legitimacy can be assessed in one of four forms of evaluations:

- evaluations of outputs and consequences;
- evaluations of techniques and procedures;
- evaluations of categories and structures; and
- evaluations of leaders and representatives.

The first, evaluations of outputs and consequences, involves judging an activity by its accomplishments. The question here is whether the activity achieves socially desired and socially valued results? The second evaluation of moral legitimacy is that of techniques and procedures. Essentially, it is an assessment of whether the activity is being done in the right manner (Brinkerhoff, 2005). For this purpose, the firm has to demonstrate good-faith efforts to achieve valued outcomes by way of socially accepted techniques and procedures (Suchman, 1995). The third, evaluations of categories and structures, is towards assessing whether the firm has the capacity to do it. That is, whether a firm possesses or demonstrates the right or worthy structural characteristics in its operations and business practices to be doing what it does (Du and Vieira, 2012). The fourth and final type of moral legitimacy is evaluations of leaders and representatives. This is an evaluation that is based on the charisma of individuals who lead a firm. This form of evaluation is said to be rare (Suchman, 1995).

While the role of moral legitimacy in drawing consumer support for CSR is clearly established in the literature, the factors or conditions that consumers perceive as necessary when assessing the legitimacy of a given CSR activity remain unclear. Especially in the context of a developing country such as Malaysia, where CSR is relatively new and still evolving (Sharma, 2013).

Research method

The aim of this study was to explore rather than to predict, specifically, understanding the factors that facilitate consumer support for CSR. Therefore, a qualitative research method was deemed more appropriate for two reasons. First, this study is exploratory. The factors that facilitate consumer support for CSR were unknown at the outset (Perez *et al.*, 2010). Second, a qualitative research method provides rich accounts of experiences and understandings (Papista and Dimitriadis, 2012). Especially when the articulation and elaboration of abstract concepts is required, as is the case with CSR (Davis, 2008).

A theoretical sampling strategy was adopted in selecting the participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Accordingly, the participants were selected because they were particularly suitable for this study's objective (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). As it is suggested that consumers in urban settings are generally more attuned to social and environmental concerns (Carroll and Shabana, 2010), the participants selected for this study were adult consumers comprising professionals and executives, residing in Malaysian . The participants were selected using two well-established approaches in consumer research: convenience and snowball sampling (Brunk, 2010). Accordingly, the first two participants were selected by convenience, while the rest were selected based on the recommendations of the earlier participants. In total, the number of participants in this study was twelve – five males and seven females.

The participants were first contacted to inquire if they would agree to participate in the research. At this point, they were not informed of the purpose of the research, other than that it was about CSR. When they agreed to participate, they were asked to propose a time and place for the interview convenient to them. Before the actual interviews commenced, the participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers. Instead, they were encouraged to answer honestly, according to their opinions, beliefs and experiences

(Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Data collection then proceeded by way of face-to-face in-depth interviews using a semi-structured format. This format was adopted because it is structured to the extent that there will be several core inquiries, yet flexible enough to turn out as “guided conversations” (Khalid, 2009).

The interviews transpired as follows. First, the participants were asked to state briefly what they understood CSR to be. Then they were asked to give their general perceptions of CSR as it is actually practiced by firms in the market. In support, they were requested to provide examples of CSR programmes that they had experienced. Based on the examples they had given, the participants were asked to elaborate on why they perceived that particular CSR programme to be effective or otherwise. When doing so, they were probed further with the objective of identifying the circumstances which had led to them to form their perceptions. The participants were then asked to explain how their perceptions of the CSR examples that they had provided had affected their support for and/or participation in it. To that end, they were asked to describe the factors that they perceived as important in a CSR programme before deciding to participate or support it. Again here, the participants were encouraged to provide real examples of CSR programmes. Finally, the participants were asked to suggest how firms could make their CSR programmes more effective for consumers. During all the interviews, the questions were constantly supplemented by “floating prompts” (Beverland *et al.*, 2010), either to seek for clarification when a participant had made a general statement, or simply, when a participant appeared at a loss for words.

The interviews lasted between 50 to 80 min. With the permission of the participants, all the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and later transcribed. Upon collecting all the data, data analysis ensued. To that end, a general inductive approach was adopted (Thomas, 2006). It began with the iterative process of reading and re-reading all the transcripts. Following which, segments of the interviews that shared similar meanings were identified based on the requirements of this study and subsequently coded into categories. Once the coding process was completed, the categories were combined or linked to common or shared themes among them. Following which the categories were spliced into superordinate categories of broad themes (Creswell, 2013). Finally, the themes were deliberated upon comprehensively to seek out higher-order linkages between them (Cornelissen, 2016), specifically in relation to the forms of evaluation for moral legitimacy suggested by Suchman (1995).

Analysis and findings

Overall, the participants had articulated several factors which they perceived to be important in facilitating their support for and participation in CSR activities, based on their experiences. These factors were categorised into six broad themes and subsequently mapped to the four forms of evaluations for moral legitimacy that were proposed by Suchman (1995). The six themes and their respective descriptions are presented in Table II. The following sections introduce and discuss the said themes in relation to the respective forms of evaluations. In support, examples of typical responses from the interview transcripts are provided to demonstrate the essence of each theme (Table II).

Evaluation of outputs and consequences

The participants perceived an increased level of social desirability and value when a firm’s CSR contributes to “Tangible Outcomes”. That is, when CSR activities produce material results, in contrast to outcomes which they perceived as being abstract. To qualify as tangible, the participants had expressed the need for the outputs and consequences from a CSR activity to be verifiable or visible to them:

Forms of evaluation for moral legitimacy (Suchman, 1995)	Factors	Description
Outputs and consequences	Tangible outcomes	Verifiable or visible CSR outcomes or consequences
Techniques and procedures	Transparency	Transparent and demonstrable process or mechanism
	Publicity	Publicity and promotions for CSR activities
	Continuity	Systematic and continuous engagement in CSR
	Innovation	Innovative or creative modes of CSR execution
Categories and structures	Alignment	Strategic alignment between firm's business and CSR

Table II.
Factors for consumer support for CSR

I don't see too much value when you say recycling or cleaning up and all that. Compared with CSR in the form of charity and sponsorship. That we can see. There's results there.

Coral conservation and all that – consumers can't see the results. I don't know if it's really helping or not.

Conversely, the participants responded favourably to CSR which they perceived as producing concrete results. In this regard, Starbucks Malaysia's community farming programme was mentioned specifically by several participants as a good example:

I found out that the banana is sourced from a place where they [Starbucks] encourage economic activity. That's good CSR you know? I've read about the farmers that they're helping. They've got a steady income now. Their kids even have a computer centre in the village.

It's [Starbucks' CSR] different compared to say donating a certain percentage to charity. We don't know if it's [the donation] helping. But this I can see it. I've seen my friends share stuff about it on Facebook. I know their [farmers] lives have improved a bit.

Several participants also claimed that to be perceived as tangible, consumers must be able to relate personally to the outcomes. As one participant attempted to explain, this is probably why environment-based CSR programmes do not get much support from consumers in Malaysia.

A shelter – that to me is tangible. People can identify with it – 'Oh that shelter is near my home' and all that. But when you do an environmental programme, I don't know, maybe consumers in the US can identify with it because of their high level of awareness. But here we can't.

Evaluation of techniques and procedures

The participants articulated several factors which they perceived as important in ensuring that CSR initiatives are "done in the right manner" (Brinkerhoff, 2005). These factors were categorised into four themes, namely, "transparency", "publicity", "consistency" and "innovation".

Transparency. The participants articulated the need for firms to demonstrate the process (or mechanism) of their CSR activities, from beginning to end. In particular as to how the benefits or outcomes are actually passed on to the selected cause or beneficiary, and equally,

how it has made a positive difference. The following are some typical examples from the interviews:

They say they are contributing to the *Rumah Kasih* [a charity house]. So they ask people to donate. But you can't see the evidence. Who knows really?

What are the good deeds that you have done? You have to show people – don't just tell us.

It's all on TV. But what happens after that? I think they have to show us how those people are better off because of it.

In addition, several participants perceived a CSR programme to be more transparent, when either the mode of participation was without an intermediary, or, when the outcomes were the direct consequences of their involvement.

I supported Maybank's [a bank] flood relief programme. I just had to bank in the money directly to the [relief] organiser. That's better than a donation box. You don't know where that [the donation] goes.

When I use it [environment friendly household cleaning brand], I know that its benefit is immediate. Less pollution and all that. It's in the product itself [the benefits] you know?

Publicity. All the participants were unequivocal about the need for firms to publicise and promote their CSR activities. They pointed out that otherwise, they would not know about it, much less support it. The following are three typical examples from the interviews:

Actually they need to publicise their CSR. How else would I know about it?

Just let people know that you're doing this. It's better than keeping silent.

If they expect people to be interested in it [CSR], they must have solid promotional activities for it.

In some cases, the lack or absence of publicity or promotional activities related to CSR led the participants to question the authenticity of a particular CSR programme. One participant for example, expressed her scepticism to a local brand that positions itself as "the first socially responsible business in Malaysia", as she was not aware of their CSR programmes:

I have this habit of reading when I shop. Even when I walk through the shopping aisles. So I should know stuff like that [CSR]. But I've never heard of it [the brand]. So since they don't really publicise their activities, I have doubts. Whether it's [their CSR] real.

Continuity. The participants had also expressed the need for continuity. That is, for firms to engage in CSR in a systematic and regular manner. In this aspect, several participants had lamented on what they saw as the general situation, where most firms execute their CSR randomly, without an apparent sense of continuity of its benefits.

In my opinion, the issue with CSR these days is that it is mostly one-off. They do it once then that's it!

In that [television] programme they give away stuff. That's it! So you see it's just one-off, they don't do it consistently.

Lack of continuity, according to another participant, also extends to situations where a firm keeps changing the cause or the beneficiaries of its CSR activities:

One of the negative aspects I see is that some companies have different CSR themes every year. This is year it's orphans. Next year, I don't know, something else.

The main reason the participants took exception to this so-called "one-off" CSR activities, is that they believe it only provides superficial benefits. That it does not alleviate or solve the problems which are supposedly being addressed.

As I see it, for CSR, you have to do it continuously. Otherwise, it won't mean anything. They sponsor [school] uniforms for orphans this year. Those kids will be needing new uniforms next year too. But by then you have moved on to some other CSR agenda.

Innovation. Firms that adopt ingenious and creative ways in their CSR were perceived as demonstrating their good faith in bringing positive change. Otherwise, the participants were of the opinion that it is merely a public relations gimmick.

Once in a while someone [firm] thinks of some innovative method [for CSR]. Otherwise it's the same stuff, you know. One company to another, it's the same. If they're really serious about it, I think they should think of new ways to do it. That would impress me. Because I know then that they really mean it.

Similarly, another participant was all praises for a Singaporean brand that she claimed has put a lot of effort to produce innovative products as part of its CSR:

But if you really want to do CSR, I think they have to find innovative ways to do it. Like that Singaporean company I told you. They re-formulated their products to make sure it's pollutant-free and biodegradable. That to me, is very good.

Evaluations of categories and structures

The participants perceive a firm as having the capacity for social responsibility only when its business practices and its CSR practices are aligned or congruent. For that to happen, CSR should not be treated as a stand-alone activity which is separated from the firm's overall operations. The following are two typical examples from the interviews:

They must embed CSR in their overall strategy. Basically from the top to the bottom of the company, they have to show that they are concerned.

You [firms] should integrate it into your operations, products whatever. Your general brand value proposition must reflect your intention to do good to the society.

In this matter, one participant pointed out that now CSR is decoupled, rather than aligned with a firm's strategy and business practices.

Now CSR is set apart. I mean they separate it from their vision and mission. It's just some sort of marketing for them I guess.

In cases where a firm's business practices are not aligned with its CSR, the participants were cynical. They perceived the motives behind the firm's CSR to be more towards generating sales or towards creating a positive image. For instance, when the researcher is referred to a leading Malaysian multinational for being active in CSR, one participant retorted: "On the surface!" When asked why he thought so, he went on to explain:

I just remembered the thing [deforestation] they did in Sarawak [a state in Malaysia]. They were even under investigation for fraud or taking bribes or something. Once you hear about these things, whatever CSR that they do, you still remember the negative aspects. So for me, their CSR efforts will be in vain.

Similarly, another participant questioned the true motives of another local firm's CSR activities, in light of their highly competitive business practices:

They tried to prevent others to sell [a particular type of product]. So for me that's like a conflict too. If you want to help people, why do you restrict others from becoming your competitors?

To a lesser extent, another participant also perceived misalignment when the CSR activity is far removed from the nature of the firm's business:

I see that many companies are into cleaning up the beach. It has no connection with them! If Petronas [an oil and gas company] does a clean-up-a-beach programme, I can see the connection. But if AmBank [a bank] does the same thing, I can't.

Discussion and practical implications

Only three of the four forms of evaluations for moral legitimacy suggested by [Suchman \(1995\)](#) were found to be relevant in facilitating consumer support for CSR activities, namely, evaluations of outputs and consequences, evaluation of techniques and procedures and evaluation of categories and structures. While the fourth – evaluation of leaders and representatives – was not a criterion that the participants used in evaluating their support for CSR activities of a particular firm. None of the participants in this study had made any reference to the personal characteristics of the key people in the firms, as something that they usually consider in relation to their CSR support. More importantly though, the results suggest that consumers do not perceive the three forms of evaluations to be of equal rank, but rather to differ in terms of hierarchy and intensity, conceptualised and presented here as [Figure 1](#).

The form of evaluation which consumers consider first, or perceive as the most fundamental, appears to be that of categories and structures. That is, towards evaluating whether the firm is right for the job. In this regard, alignment between a firm's business operations and practices and its CSR activities is crucial. Otherwise, consumers tend to be cynical of its CSR activities, and consequently attribute its true objectives to being a sales or public relations gimmick. As such in the absence of strategic alignment, consumers

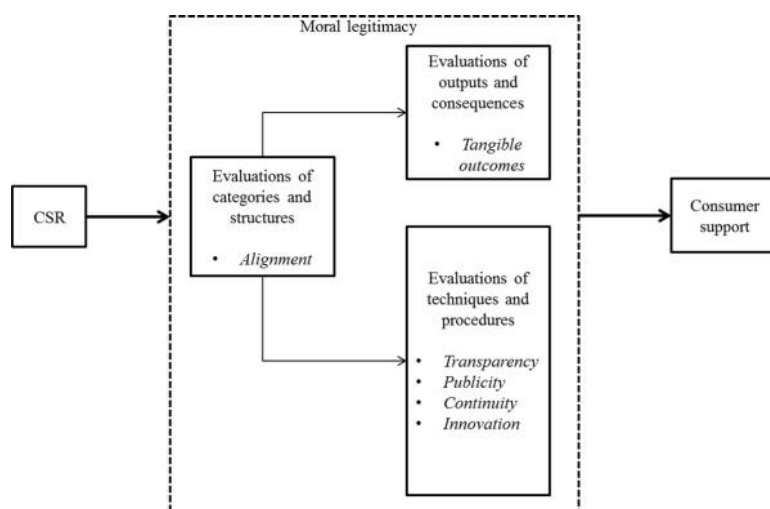


Figure 1.
Conceptual schema of
consumer market
support for CSR

withhold their support for CSR, regardless of the other two forms of evaluations of moral legitimacy. In other words, the evaluation of categories and structures serves as a “deal-breaker” for consumers in establishing moral legitimacy and thereafter their support for CSR activities of a particular firm. This finds support from the interviews, where the participants had expressed their reticence in supporting firms which have not aligned their business operations and practices to their CSR activities. In this regard, a Malaysian multinational firm which actively participates and promotes CSR yet is fraught with scandals and environmental issues was repeatedly mentioned.

Subsequent to a positive evaluation of a firm’s categories and structures, consumers then evaluate the outputs and consequences, as well as the techniques and procedures of its CSR activities. At this stage, the emphasis appears to be on the latter, relating to how a CSR activity is being implemented. As the participants in this study were found to be most concerned about whether the CSR activity is being done in the right manner or otherwise, most of the participants spoke at length on this matter and emphasised the need for a firm to ensure that the techniques and procedures adopted by a firm for its CSR is acceptable to them. Accordingly, four of the six factors that were identified as required to facilitate consumer support for CSR were in relation to the implementation methods of CSR.

Previously, Malaysian consumers were reported to have low levels of CSR awareness (Ramasamy and Ting, 2004). As such, there was relatively little demand from consumers for firms to engage in CSR activities (Amran, 2007). CSR was mostly perceived to be a form of corporate philanthropy that involved donations and charity work, and essentially as an agenda which is separated from a firm’s strategy and practices (Rahim *et al.*, 2011). In contrast, the findings of this study suggest that Malaysian consumers now have higher levels of CSR awareness. During the interviews, the participants were found to be well-informed and familiar with the various forms of CSR activities in the market, as well as the firms that engaged in them. Notably, the findings also suggest an increased level of maturity among the participants in relation to CSR. Their articulations appear to be in line with the expectations of consumers in developed countries, specifically in relation to the strategic purpose of CSR and the adoption of innovative practices in CSR implementation (Porter and Kramer, 2011). This study suggests that the increased levels of CSR awareness and maturity among Malaysian consumers could be attributed to two factors. The first is the institutionalisation of CSR in Malaysia. For over a decade now, CSR (or at least CSR reporting) has been mandatory on larger firms (Darus, 2012). Second, international brands, such as Starbucks, have also intensified their CSR agenda in Malaysia, benchmarked to the expectations of their customers in the west. Together, both these factors have created greater market exposure for CSR and in so doing expanded consumers’ expectations.

Scholars have long used the concept of organisational legitimacy to explain away the gap between consumers’ attitudes and their market behaviour in connection to CSR (Vlachos *et al.*, 2009; Lii *et al.*, 2013; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). When perceived as lacking legitimacy, consumers are reported to be either sceptical or cynical of a particular CSR programme and consequently hold back their support or participation (Skarmees and Leonidou, 2013; Pirsch and Grau, 2007). This is in spite of their generally favourable attitude towards CSR. These reports have been mostly from the context of consumers in developed markets. Accordingly, the findings of this study indicate that similar conditions apply in developing markets such as Malaysia as well. Insofar as suggesting that consumer support for CSR is not by default, but rather subject to consumers’ perceptions of its legitimacy. In view of its significance in engendering consumer support, firms may require guidance in operationalising CSR legitimacy. To that end, the conceptual schema (Figure 1) proposed by this study may be useful, at least in the context of developing countries that share similar socio-economic

conditions with Malaysia. First and foremost in getting firms to align the business practices to their CSR agenda to demonstrate a fit between the firm's overall operations and the objectives of its CSR. Subsequently, in demonstrating its good faith by way of techniques and procedures that are perceived positively by consumers, and, equally, in ensuring that the outcomes of its CSR are valued by its customers.

Limitations and future research

As in any qualitative research, the findings of this study cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, the objective of this study was not to generalise, but rather to explore and identify (Creswell, 2013). The findings of this research, specifically the six factors that were found to increase moral legitimacy for firms in their CSR and thereafter facilitate consumer support, could be used as the basis for further and a more definitive inquiry. These factors could serve as constructs in a quantitative research. The results of such a research could help empirically determine the validity and reliability of these factors in predicting consumers' consumer support for CSR in a more expansive context. Moreover, such a research could also indicate if consumers perceive any one or more of these factors as more significant in influencing their support for a CSR programme. Such a study could also be extended to a cross-national context, where researchers could determine if consumers consider the same set of factors in their support for CSR in their respective countries.

References

- Aguilera, R.V., Rupp, D.E., Williams, C.A. and Ganapathi, J. (2007), "Putting the S back in corporate social responsibility: a multilevel theory of social change in organizations", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 32 No. 3, pp. 836-863.
- Amran, A. (2007), "Corporate social reporting in Malaysia: a political theory perspective", *Malaysian Accounting Review*, Vol. 3 No. 1.
- Arvidsson, S. (2014), "Corporate social responsibility and stock market actors: a comprehensive study", *Social Responsibility Journal*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 210-225.
- Ashforth, B.E. and Gibbs, B.W. (1990), "The double-edge of organizational legitimation", *Organization Science*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 177-194.
- Auger, P. and Devinney, T.M. (2007), "Do what consumers say matter? The misalignment of preferences with unconstrained ethical intentions", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 76 No. 4, pp. 361-383.
- Barkemeyer, R. (2007), "Legitimacy as a key driver and determinant of CSR in developing countries" *Paper presented at the Marie Curie Summer School on Earth System Governance*, Amsterdam, 28 May-June.
- Beverland, M.B., Napoli, J. and Farrelly, F. (2010), "Can all brands innovate in the same way? A typology of brand position and innovation effort", *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, Vol. 27 No. 1, pp. 33-48.
- Bhattacharya, C. and Sen, S. (2003), "Consumer-company identification: a framework for understanding consumers' relationships with companies", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 67 No. 2, pp. 76-88.
- Bhattacharya, C.B., Korschun, D. and Sen, S. (2009), "Strengthening stakeholder-company relationship through mutually beneficial corporate social responsibility initiatives", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 85 No. S2, pp. 257-272.
- Blowfield, M. and Frynas, J.G. (2005), "Setting new agendas: critical perspectives on corporate social responsibility in the developing world", *International Affairs*, Vol. 81 No. 3, pp. 499-513.

- Boulstridge, E. and Carrigan, M. (2000), "Do consumers really care about corporate responsibility? Highlighting the attitude—behaviour gap", *Journal of Communication Management*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 355-368.
- Brammer, S., Jackson, G. and Matten, D. (2011), "Corporate social responsibility and institutional theory: new perspectives on private governance", *Socio-Economic Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 3-28.
- Branco, M.C. and Rodrigues, L.L. (2006), "Corporate social responsibility and resource-based perspectives", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 69 No. 2, pp. 111-132.
- Bray, J., Johns, N. and Kilburn, D. (2011), "An exploratory study into the factors impeding ethical consumption", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 98 No. 4, pp. 597-608.
- Brinkerhoff, D.W. (2005), "Organisational legitimacy, capacity and capacity development" *Public Management Research Association 8th Research Conference University of Southern California School of Policy, Planning, and Development*, Los Angeles, CA, September.
- Brown, J.A. and Forster, W.R. (2012), "CSR and stakeholder theory: a tale of Adam Smith", *Journal of Business Ethics*, February.
- Brown, T. and Dacin, P. (1997), "The company and the product: corporate associations and consumer product responses", *The Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 61 No. 1, pp. 68-84.
- Brunk, K. (2010), "Reputation building: beyond our control? Inferences in consumers' ethical perception formation", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 275-292.
- Burke, L. and Logsdon, J.M. (1996), "How corporate social responsibility pays off", *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 29 No. 4, pp. 495-502.
- Carrigan, M. and Attalla, A. (2001), "The myth of the ethical consumer – do ethics matter in purchase behaviour?", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 18 No. 7, pp. 560-578.
- Carrington, M.J., Neville, B. and Whitwell, G.J. (2010), "Why ethical consumers don't walk their talk: towards a framework for understanding the gap between the ethical purchase intentions and actual buying behaviour of ethically minded consumers", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 97 No. 1, pp. 139-158.
- Carrington, M.J., Zwick, D. and Neville, B. (2016), "The ideology of the ethical consumption gap", *Marketing Theory*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 21-38.
- Carroll, A.B. and Shabana, K.M. (2010), "The business case for corporate social responsibility: a review of concepts, research and practice", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 85-105.
- Claudy, M.C., Peterson, M. and O'Driscoll, A. (2012), "I like it, but I won't buy it: exploring the attitude behaviour gap for renewable energy adoption", in Haase, M. and Kleinaltenkamp, M. (Eds), *Proceedings of the 37th Macromarketing Conference, The Macromarketing Society, Berlin*, pp. 401-422.
- Clifton, D. (2010), "The stakeholder approach, CSR, and the sustaining-corporation" *GIRA 2010: Corporate Governance, Innovation, Social and Environmental Responsibility*, Lisbon, 9-10 September.
- Cornelissen, J.P. (2016), "Preserving theoretical divergence in management research: why the explanatory potential of qualitative research should be harnessed rather than suppressed", *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 54 No. 3.
- Creyer, E.H. and Ross, W.T. (1997), "The influence of firm behaviour on purchase intention: do consumers really care about business ethics?", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 14 No. 6, pp. 421-432.
- Currás-pérez, A.R., Bigne, E. and Herrera, A.A. (2015), "The role in consumer of self-definitional identification responsible company", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 89 No. 4, pp. 547-564.
- Dart, R. (2004), "The legitimacy of social enterprise", *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 411-424.
- Darus, F. (2012), "Embracing corporate social responsibility in Malaysia: towards sustaining value creation", *Malaysian Accounting Review*, Vol. 11 No. 2, pp. 1-13.

- Davis, W.A. (2008), "Expressing, meaning, showing and intending to indicate", *Intercultural Pragmatics*, Vol. 2, pp. 111-129.
- Devinney, T.M. (2009), "Is the socially responsible corporation a myth? The good, the bad, and the ugly of corporate social responsibility", *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 44-56.
- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W.W. (1983), "The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp. 147-160.
- Du, S., Bhattacharya, C.B. and Sen, S. (2007), "Reaping relational rewards from corporate social responsibility: the role of competitive positioning", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 224-241.
- Du, S. and Vieira, E.T. (2012), "Striving for legitimacy through corporate social responsibility: insights from oil companies", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 110 No. 4, pp. 413-427.
- Eckhardt, G.M., Belk, R. and Devinney, T.M. (2010), "Why don't consumers consume ethically?", *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, Vol. 9 No. 6, pp. 426-436.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. and Graebner, M.E. (2007), "Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 50 No. 1, pp. 25-32.
- Fatma, M. and Rahman, Z. (2015), "Consumer perspective on CSR literature review and future research agenda", *Management Research Review*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 195-216.
- Freeman, E. and Moutchnik, A. (2013), "Stakeholder management and CSR: questions and answers", *Uwf Umweltwirtschaftsforum*, Vol. 21 Nos 1/2, pp. 5-9.
- Freestone, O.M. and McGoldrick, P.J. (2008), "Motivations of the ethical consumer", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 79 No. 4, pp. 445-467.
- Gupta, S. and Pirsch, J. (2006), "The company-cause-customer fit decision in cause-related marketing", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 23 No. 6, pp. 314-326.
- Hart, S.L. (1995), "A natural-resource-based view of the firm", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 4, pp. 986-1014.
- Husted, B. and Allen, D. (2007), "Strategic corporate social responsibility and value creation among large firms lessons from the Spanish experience", *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 40 No. 6, pp. 594-610.
- Jamali, D. and Karam, C. (2016), "Corporate social responsibility in developing countries as an emerging field of study", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 1-30.
- Jamali, D. and Mirshak, R. (2006), "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): theory and practice in a developing country context", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 72 No. 3, pp. 243-262.
- Khalid, S.N.A. (2009), "Sensemaking in interpretive management accounting research: constructing a credible account", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 41-53.
- Kiessling, T., Isaksson, L. and Yasar, B. (2015), "Market orientation and CSR: performance implications", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 2.
- Lii, Y., Wu, K. and Ding, M. (2013), "Doing good does good? Sustainable marketing of", *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 15-28.
- Luo, X. and Bhattacharya, C.B. (2006), "Corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction and market value", *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 70 No. 4, pp. 1-18.
- McWilliams, A. and Siegel, D.S. (2011), "Creating and capturing value: strategic corporate social responsibility, resource-based theory, and sustainable competitive advantage", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37 No. 5, pp. 1480-1495.
- Marin, L. and Ruiz, S. (2007), "I need you too!" Corporate attractiveness for consumers identity and the role of social responsibility", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 71 No. 3, pp. 245-260.
- Marin, L., Ruiz, S. and Rubio, A. (2008), "The role of identity salience in the effects of corporate social responsibility on consumer behavior", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 84 No. 1, pp. 65-78.

- Matten, D. and Moon, J. (2008), "Implicit' and 'explicit' CSR: a conceptual framework for understanding CSR in Europe", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 33 No. 2, pp. 404-424.
- Mellahi, K., Frynas, J.G., Sun, P. and Siegel, D. (2016), "A review of the nonmarket strategy literature: toward a multi-theoretical integration", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 143-173.
- Mohr, L. and Webb, D. (2005), "The effects of corporate social responsibility and price on consumer responses", *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 121-147.
- Öberseder, M., Schlegelmilch, B. and Gruber, V. (2011), "Why don't consumers care about CSR?": a qualitative study exploring the role of CSR in consumption decisions", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 104 No. 4, pp. 449-460.
- Palazzo, G. and Scherer, A.G. (2006), "Corporate legitimacy as deliberation: a communicative framework", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 66 No. 1, pp. 71-88.
- Papista, E. and Dimitriadis, S. (2012), "Exploring consumer-brand relationship quality and identification: qualitative evidence from cosmetics brands", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 33-56.
- Pelozo, J. and Shang, J. (2011), "How can corporate social responsibility activities create value for stakeholders? A systematic review", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 117-135.
- Perez, M.E., Castano, R. and Quintanilla, C. (2010), "Constructing identity through the consumption of counterfeit luxury goods", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 219-235.
- Pirsch, J. and Grau, S.L. (2007), "A framework for understanding corporate social responsibility programs as a continuum: an exploratory study", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 70 No. 2, pp. 125-140.
- Podsakoff, P.M., Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B. and Lee, J.Y. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903.
- Porter, M.E. and Kramer, M.R. (2011), "Creating shared value", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 89 Nos 1/2, pp. 62-77.
- Porter, M.E. and Kramer, M.R. (2006), "Strategy and Society: the link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 85 No. 12, pp. 78-90.
- Prieto-carrón, M., Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B. and Lee, J.Y. (2006), "Critical perspectives on CSR and development: what we know, what we don't know, and what we need to know", *International Affairs*, Vol. 82 No. 5, pp. 977-987.
- Rahim, R.A., Jalaludin, F.W. and Tajuddin, K. (2011), "The importance of corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour in Malaysia", *Asian Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 119-139.
- Ramasamy, B. and Ting, H.W. (2004), "A comparative analysis of corporate social responsibility awareness", *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Vol. 2004 No. 13, pp. 109-123.
- Sharma, B. (2013), *Contextualising CSR in Asia: Corporate Social Responsibility in Asian Economies*, SMU, Philippines.
- Sheth, J.N., Sethia, N.K. and Srinivas, S. (2010), "Mindful consumption: a customer-centric approach to sustainability", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 39 No. 1, pp. 21-39.
- Singh, J., de los Salmones Sanchez, M.D.M.G. and del Bosque, I.R. (2007), "Understanding corporate social responsibility and product perceptions in consumer markets: a cross-cultural evaluation", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 80 No. 3, pp. 597-611.
- Skarmeas, D. and Leonidou, C.N. (2013), "When consumers doubt, watch out! The role of CSR skepticism", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 10, pp. 1831-1838.
- Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990), *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

-
- Suchman, M.C. (1995), "Managing legitimacy: strategic and institutional approaches", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 571-610.
- Thomas, D.R. (2006), "A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data", *American Journal of Evaluation*, Vol. 27 No. 2, pp. 237-246.
- Vlachos, P.A., Tsamakos, A., Vrechopoulos, A. and Avramidis, P. (2009), "Corporate social responsibility: attributions, loyalty, and the mediating role of trust", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 37 No. 2, pp. 170-180.
- Walsh, G. and Bartikowski, B. (2012), "Exploring corporate ability and social responsibility associations as antecedents of customer satisfaction cross-culturally", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 66 No. 8, pp. 989-995.

Further reading

- Lindgreen, A. and Swaen, V. (2010), "Corporate social responsibility", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 12 No. 1, pp. 1-7.
- Meyer, K.E. (2006), "Asian management research needs more self-confidence", *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, Vol. 23 No. 2, pp. 119-137.

Corresponding author

Sham Abdulrazak can be contacted at: sr.abdulrazak@gmail.com

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com