

Corporate Social Responsibility for Consumers at Retail Grocery Stores

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Abstract— There are different views on the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and business: by operating with a CSR perspective, proponents believe that companies are capable of making more long term profit and increasing long term success, while the opponents argue that CSR would only distract firms from the economic role of businesses, namely profit generation Both the proponents as well as the opponents present a list of sound rational reasons do defend their viewpoint. Despite the ongoing debate as to whether or not social responsibilities should be the concern of corporate decision makers, it cannot be denied that corporate social responsibility has been increasingly present in today's world. Research indicates that consumers care about it and that nowadays most consumers expect companies to have fairly high levels of CSR. Consumers are very important stakeholders for companies and the success of a company's CSR policy is to a large extent determined by these consumers. Hence, understanding them is critical, part of understanding these customers relates to trying to find out why they buy from companies which incorporate social responsibilities into their business practices. Consequently companies try to understand consumers through analyzing what kind of value(s) these consumers derive from CSR, which brings us to the research question of this paper "What is the value of corporate social responsibility for consumers?" The results of this study show that consumers associate CSR most often with the environment. It is also discovered that consumers don't always recognize the CSR activities of companies as CSR activities. The CSR activities in the product-related activities category seem to be the ones that the respondents most often recognize, while the activities of the philanthropy category are recognized the least. Consumers indirectly indicate that they find CSR important as the activities they perceive as most important for companies to engage in, are also the ones they indicate as being an expression of CSR. This paper tried to contribute to a better understanding of the complex consumer regarding the value they derive from CSR

I. INTRODUCTION

The fact that corporate social responsibility has been increasingly present in today's society cannot be denied (Carroll, 2008). Despite the continuous debate as to whether or not firms should have social responsibilities, research indicates that consumers seem to care about CSR and therefore it is in the best interest of the company to do so as well (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; D'Astous & Legendre,

2009) they say 'seem to care' because the concept of CSR is characterized by a significant attitude-behavior gap (Roberts, 1996; Simon, 1995). Nevertheless, studies indicate that nowadays most consumers expect companies to have fairly high levels of CSR (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001).

Even though consumers indicate they expect fairly high levels of CSR, this does not clarify what exactly they expect from companies as the concept of CSR is not clearly defined in literature. Despite the significant amount of research, literature has not succeeded in providing one generally accepted definition on CSR (Clarkson, 1995). The lack of a general definition leads to confusion, but also hinders academic debate and corporate implementation. This makes it harder for companies to create effective and efficient CSR programs (McWilliams, Siegel & Wright, 2006). Mohr et al. (2001) and Riddleberger and Hittner (2009) don't believe this to be the only problem. They also point out that there has been little research on what the public expects. "As a result those who run corporations lack a clear understanding of what the public wants from them and how far they are expected to go toward helping their communities" (Mohr et al., 2001, p. 45).

Understanding consumers is crucial for companies as they are considered major stakeholders for the company. The question today is also no longer whether companies should incorporate CSR into their activities, but rather how they should do this. Marketers try to target the consumers who take into account CSR in their purchase decisions and purchase behavior. If companies go through the lengths of incorporating CSR, they want to make sure that the right consumers, the ones that care, are made aware of this and know about it. But to be able to target these consumers they need to understand why consumers buy from companies which engage in CSR. Green and Pelozo (2011) believe that consumers only support firms that engage in CSR, if they receive some kind of value from the exchange. This seems to indicate that consumers are still more motivated by self-interest than by the interest of society (D'Astous & Legendre, 2009).

In this paper a contribution is made to have a better understanding of the complex consumer and consider taking the consumer's point of view and increase understanding what CSR actually means to them, given the definition in literature is unclear, and on the other hand the value they derive from CSR. By formulating an answer to the research question "*What is the value of corporate social responsibility for consumers?*"

II. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives for the research question are:

1. To identify the perception of consumers towards CSR.

2. To identify which activities of companies do consumers really consider CSR
3. To find to what extent are consumers aware of the different CSR activities
4. To investigate which types of value consumers derive from CSR.
5. To find the CSR policy of a company have an influence on a consumer's purchase decision and behavior
6. To identify the perception of people who buy at Retail grocery stores and who don't buy at Retail grocery stores.

objective 3 with the help of an open question in which the participants are asked whether they can give concrete examples of the CSR activities, afterwards the respondents will be given a list of CSR activities to indicate the ones they recognize starting from the assumption that it is always easier to recognize something than to name it yourself. For **objective 4** respondents are asked to give their opinion on several statements, the answers to these statements can provide an indirect indicator of the value people derive from CSR, it will be done by using a five point Likert-style rating scale, ranging from 'completely disagree to 'completely agree'. For **objective 5** three questions in the questionnaire related to this fifth research objective. For **objective 6** an open question is included asking people to complete the sentence.

III. METHODOLOGY

The sample consists of men and women of different ages who shop at grocery retail stores in Hyderabad non-probability sampling is used. The timeframe in which this study is conducted is one month. Since the research is conducted over a short period of time, the exact number of days that will be spent at grocery retail stores will be determined based on the response rate and the fluency of collecting the data and reaching the right number of people. Qualitative and quantitative data is processed and analyzed using the statistical program SPSS and also make use of Excel to construct some tables. For the **objective 1** an open question were structured interview in which people are asked to give the first three words that come to mind when they hear 'corporate social responsibility'. For **objective 2** respondents are given a list of activities and are being asked to indicate which activities they believe to be an expression of CSR. For

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A non-probability sampling and more specifically purposive sampling was used to select the respondents where this method limits the external validity of the research and the results can therefore not be generalized to the whole population.

The second one is the sample size according to some rules of thumb a sample of 290 is not enough to execute a factor analysis and construct t-tests and Anova tables.

During the analysis of the results, some new opportunities for future research regarding the topic were identified; obtaining some in-depth information might expose different elements than quantitative research.

Objective 1

To identify the perception of consumers towards CSR.

Table 1 Perception of consumers on CSR

	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Total
Future	14	18	22	54
Environmental	180	110	94	384
Social	38	32	44	114
Economic	18	40	32	90
Stake holder	4	30	6	40
Voluntariness	4	0	0	4
Total	258	230	198	686

To find out what people consider to be CSR, the respondents were asked to give three words that first come to mind or that they associate with CSR. All of the 290 respondents were able to at least mention one word that came to mind. During the processing of the results, the words were linked to the five dimensions of CSR When summing all the words that were given and that could clearly be classified, 56% of them referring to the environmental dimension, 16.6% to the social dimension, 13.1% to the economic dimension, 7.9% to the future dimension, 5.8% to the stakeholder dimension, and 0.6% to the voluntariness dimension. The results indicate that the environmental dimension is mostly associated with CSR by the respondents. The second dimension that most often comes to mind in association with CSR is the social one. Based on the results of this question the classification of the words given by the respondents under the different dimensions is not an objective process.

Objective 2

To identify which activities of companies do consumers really consider CSR

Table 2 Considering CSR activities by consumers

	Totally not important	Rather not important	Neutral	Rather important	Important	Mean
Less pollution	0	0	6	54	230	3.77
Child labor	0	2	4	54	230	3.77
Less energy	0	0	8	58	224	3.74

Recycle	0	2	2	66	220	3.74
Energy Efficiency	0	2	2	76	210	3.70
Ethical	0	4	18	38	230	3.70
Good quality	0	0	10	68	212	3.70
Good treatment	0	10	28	84	168	3.41
Organic products	0	8	30	86	166	3.41
Work environment	0	6	38	94	152	3.35
No animal testing	8	10	40	74	158	3.26
Recall products	4	22	34	72	158	3.23
Correct information	8	22	36	60	164	3.21
Invest relations	8	18	76	126	62	2.74
Donate products	10	38	78	98	66	2.59
Donating money	30	66	110	60	24	1.94
Volunteering	34	64	120	56	16	1.85
Charity events	48	82	96	52	12	1.65

As stipulated before, all 18 activities in the list are CSR activities, for 12 out of 18 activities, the majority of the respondents indicate that they consider those to be CSR activities. The six activities which are not recognized by the majority of the respondents as CSR activities include: (1) investing in relationships with and between employees, (2) recalling products when there's something wrong with them, (3) donating products to good causes/charity, (4) donating part of the sales proceeds to good causes/charity, (5) employees of the company volunteering during their work hours, and (6) companies organizing charity events. Out of those six, the one that is recognized the least as a CSR activity is companies organizing charity events. 86.2% indicate that this is not a CSR activity according to them.

The top three activities that most respondents do rightfully recognize as CSR activities are: reducing energy consumption (93.8%), reducing pollution levels (91.7%), and working in a more energy efficient way (91%). When analyzing the results per category, on average 78.85% of the respondents recognized the product-related activities as CSR activities, for business practices this percentage is 66.90% and for philanthropy this percentage is reduced to only 24.83%. This last percentage is low because for all four philanthropy activities included in the list, the majority of the respondents did not recognize them as CSR activities. In a second question the respondents were given the same list of activities.

The calculated mean is a good indicator of how important people consider the different activities. The closer it is to 0, the less people find it important that companies spend time and money on that particular activity. The closer the mean is to 4, the more people find it important that companies incorporate those activities into their business. The highest mean, of 3.77, can be found for both 'reducing pollution levels' and 'avoiding exploitation and child labor'. This indicates respondents consider these two activities the most important ones for companies to execute. The second highest mean, of 3.74, can be found for both 'recycling' and 'reducing energy consumption'. Only three activities have a mean below 2, which indicates that most people don't care about these activities or consider them less important. These activities are 'donating part of the sales proceeds to good causes/charity', 'companies organizing charity events', and 'employees of the company volunteering during their work hours'. All three of these fall in the category of philanthropy. When taking the average of the means for the different categories, we end up with a 2.01 for philanthropy, 3.60 for product-related activities, and 3.45 for business practices

This indicates that in general the respondents find it most important that companies engage in product-related CSR activities. Towards the importance of philanthropy the respondents are rather neutral oriented. From the analysis of results it is known that product-related activities are recognized the most as CSR activities by respondents and philanthropy the least. It is important to keep in mind however that these results are based on the customers of Retail grocery stores and that they cannot be generalized to the whole population.

Of the top three activities that most respondents do rightfully recognize as CSR activities two have to do with energy and the other one has to do with pollution, in other words, all three of them are related to environmental aspects. This is in line with the results to the previous research objective as it is found that most people associate CSR with the environmental dimension and the results also indicate the activities that respondents find most important for companies to engage in. Of the four most important activities, which we mentioned in our results, three again are related to the environmental dimension. The activities that the respondents indicate as less important are also the ones that the respondents don't recognize as CSR activities. Hence, indirectly the respondents tell that they find CSR important. Because the activities they indicate as important are generally the ones that most people also recognize as CSR activities, whereas the activities that they indicate to be less important are also the ones they don't recognize as CSR activities. However, keep in mind the attitude-behavior gap as it is not because people

indicate they find those CSR activities important, that they will also act on in and finally it find most important for companies to engage in, which might be used as an indicator by Retail grocery stores to decide on which activities they should allocate money to.

Objective 3:

To find to what extent are consumers aware of the different CSR activities

Of the 290 respondents, the majority (62.1%) was not able to give an example of a concrete CSR activity of Retail grocery stores 13.1% was able to give one example, whereas 11.7% was able to give two examples, 11% was able to give three examples and 2.1% was even able to give four concrete examples. When asked to indicate the CSR activities they recognized, the respondents did a lot better. This is in line with the assumption made before that it is easier to recognize activities than to name some yourself. 8.3% (24 people out of 290) didn't recognize any activity. The 266 respondents that did recognize some of the CSR activities, indicated on average 4.9 activities out of the list of 16. The CSR activity that is known the best among the respondents, with 63.4% indicating they know about it, this is the only activity in the list that more than half of the respondents know about. However almost half of the respondents, more specifically 49.7%, know that retail grocery stores tries to burn the least amount possible in its waste processing and that they prefer reusing, recycling and fermentation of organic waste. The awareness of the different CSR activities retail grocery stores works on seems to be rather low among the respondents, 62.1% of the respondents were not able to give a concrete example when being asked, 8.3% of the respondents didn't recognize any of retail grocery stores activities in the list, and the 133 respondents that did recognize activities on the list, only indicated on average 4.9 activities out of the list of 32, The activity that most respondents recognize is the fact that retail grocery stores works with closed freezers to save on energy consumption. However, several people pointed out during the oral part of this question that they remembered retail grocery stores sending them folders with information about their CSR activities, but they admitted not really reading them.

Objective 4

To investigate which types of value consumers derive from CSR.

Table 3 Tests and results

Test	Value
Number of items	24
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin	.811
Bartlett's Test	1188.151
Cornbachs Alpha	.842
Cornbachs Alpha based on standardized items	.848

Table 4 Rotated component matrix

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Good feeling	.463	.312	.323	.221	-.001
Help others	.048	.671	.133	-.066	-.097
Future Children	.110	.857	.014	.038	-.019
Example	.392	.600	.009	.069	-.263
Good environment	.303	.593	.284	-.010	-.076
No Chemicals	-.027	.182	.704	.012	-.116
Responsibility	.017	.020	-.049	-.099	.785
Meat Conditions	-.020	.283	.630	-.128	-.038
Larger supply	-.108	.090	.062	.672	-.111
Show concern	.485	.351	.094	.309	-.077
Healthier	.249	.034	.698	.206	.007
Show Myself	.635	.254	.087	.355	.050
Products	.072	-.093	.058	.784	-.002
Telling Others	.605	.044	.157	.224	-.244
Others knowing	.759	.101	.226	.064	-.054
Better quality	.229	.009	.709	.276	.120
Impression	.783	.151	.093	-.087	.112
Important Environment	-.047	.475	.370	-.154	-.221
Production process	.255	.588	.537	-.122	-.052
Advantages	.024	-.341	-.006	-.010	.634
Show others	-.614	.013	-.034	.175	.111
Others See	.668	.108	-.069	.042	.218
Preserve environment	.218	.687	.194	.248	.111
Others don't	.668	-.184	-.015	.270	-.021

**Table 5
Test of Homogeneity Matrix**

Constructs	TEST	Social Value	Emotional Value	Functional Value	Supply
Age	Lavene Test	.761	.802	1.453	1.258
	Sig	.552	.526	.220	.290
Degree	Lavene Test	1.804	1.040	1.123	1.431
	Sig	.091	.406	.353	.198
Marital Status	Lavene Test	.047	.119	.349	1.299
	Sig	.996	.976	.844	.274
Knowledge	Lavene Test	1.331	1.156	.479	3.733
	Sig	.267	.329	.697	.013
Shopping	Lavene Test	1.323	.307	.681	1.337
	Sig	.264	.873	.607	.259
Influence	Lavene Test	.610	1.565	.736	2.576
	Sig	.545	.213	.481	.080
Importance	Lavene Test	.190	1.388	1.781	2.356
	Sig	.827	.253	.173	.098

To try and formulate an answer executed a factor analysis, using the principal component analysis method, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is used to see whether there is enough correlation between the observed variables, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure to compare the sizes of the observed correlation coefficients, Cronbach's alpha coefficient test is used. In a next stage t-tests and Anova tables were constructed to test for significant differences between means. The results are summarized and the discussion of these results

Men and woman don't significantly differ in the social, emotional, functional and supply value they derive from CSR.

People of different age categories don't significantly differ in the social, emotional, functional and supply value they derive from CSR.

People with different educational backgrounds don't significantly differ in the social, emotional, functional and supply value they derive from CSR.

People with children don't significantly differ from people without children social, emotional, functional and supply value they derive from CSR. People with different marital statuses don't significantly differ in the social, emotional, functional and supply value they derive from CSR.

People with different levels of knowledge regarding CSR, based on a question in which they self-assessed their knowledge, don't significantly differ in the social, emotional, and functional value they derive from CSR. For supply value we were not allowed to construct an Anova table due to a lack of homogeneity of variances.

There is a significant difference between the five groups of respondents, classified based on how often they go to retail grocery stores, in how they score on the social value they derive from CSR.

The five factors/categories are social value, emotional value, functional value, supply value and egocentric behavior value. It is important to keep in mind that the supply value and the egocentric behavior value are considered weak and unstable factors as they contain fewer than three items. The three strong factors, being social, emotional and functional value correspond. Egocentric behavior value refers to the value that consumers derive from acting in a selfish manner. This result might just be an indication that people act in an egocentric way when going grocery shopping. Also here it would have been useful to have more statements to come to a better conclusion. Results indicate there to be a significant difference between the different groups of respondents, classified based on how often they go to retail grocery stores, in how they score on the social value they derive from CSR. There is no significant difference in how they score on emotional, functional and supply value. The significant difference regarding social value only therefore it is believed that the social value is not really linked to the frequency of shopping behavior. The results regarding emotional, functional and social value here are in line with the previous assumption we made, where we said that 'if people indicate that the CSR policy of a company influences their decision to go there, it is probably because that person cares about CSR'. And here we indeed see that the more they care or the more important the find CSR, the higher the emotional, social and functional value they derive from it, just as the more the CSR policy influences their decision, the higher the emotional, social and functional value they derive from it. The results to the question in which the respondents were asked to indicate several reasons as to why they buy organic products indicated that 80.1% of our 151 participants answered that 'products being healthy' influences their decision to buy organic products. In a second place, with 64.2%, people said they do it because they are concerned about the environment, which is more related to emotional value. A third most important reason that influences their decision to buy these products is because they taste good, which is again linked to the functional value aspect. However, we need to point out that these results are a little biased.

Objective 5

To find the CSR policy of a company have an influence on a consumer's purchase decision and behavior

Table 6 Importance and Engaging CSR

Importance of CSR	Frequency	Engaging CSR	Frequency
Not important	36	No	52
Neutral	150	Little Bit	106
Important	104	Yes	132
Total	290	Total	290

Table 7 Purchasing At Retail Grocery Stores

Importance	N
This is not a reason for me	120
This is the most important reason for me	25
This is the second most important reason for me	63
This is the third most important reason for me	40
This is the fourth most important reason for me	24
This is the fifth most important reason for me	12
This is the sixth most important reason for me	6
Total	290

To formulate an answer to this research objective three questions are considered in a first question people were asked how important. A second question was directly asked whether the fact that retail grocery stores actively engages in CSR has an influence on their decision to shop there. 17.9% of the 290 respondents indicated that it does not influence their decision. 36.6% claimed it to influence their decision a little bit, whereas the largest group of people (45.5%) stated that it does influence their decision. A third and last question people were asked why they buy at retail grocery stores. They were given a list of possibilities and were asked to indicate the most important 9.9% of the respondents indicated that the fact that retail grocery stores pays a lot of attention to CSR is for them the most important reason as to why they shop at retail grocery stores . 22.5% stated that it is the second most important reason to them. However, 40.4% admitted that the fact that retail grocery stores pays a lot of attention to CSR is not a reason for them to go to retail grocery stores. So for these 45.5% it looks like the CSR policy of retail grocery stores really has an influence on their purchase decision. 40.4% indicated that the fact that retail grocery stores pays a lot of attention to CSR is not a reason for them to go to retail grocery stores But 72.8% indicated that the most important reason for them to go to retail grocery stores. Offering organic products is also a form of CSR. Consequently those 72.8% should not indicate that the fact that retail grocery stores pays a lot of attention to CSR is not a reason for them to shop there.

Objective 6:

To identify the perception of people who buy at Retail grocery stores and who don't buy at Retail grocery stores.

41.4% out of the 290 respondents to this question mentioned '(more) aware', 20.7% made a reference to the environment when completing the sentence. Health was mentioned by 10.3% of the respondents. 16 people also referred to the fact that people who buy at retail grocery stores are rich or have a lot of money. 10 people believe the customers of retail grocery stores to be very diverse and indicate that people go there because of different reasons. It is remarkable that despite the fact that the respondents could complete the sentence whatever way they wanted, that still 41.4% refers to the '(more) conscious' or '(more) aware' aspect. Hence, 41.4% of the people that buy at retail grocery stores believe

that they and also the other customers at retail grocery stores make the decision to go there consciously. Therefore we believe CSR to be less involved in the reasoning of people linking retail grocery stores to the environmental aspect. In general the respondents are quite positive about the customers of retail grocery stores. They believe them to make their purchase decision more consciously, believe they care more about the environment, and believe to live a healthier life.

CONCLUSION

After carefully analyzing all the research results, it is concluded that the demographics are not a good predictor of the type of value consumers derive from CSR. Also the level of knowledge people have of CSR and the frequency of their shopping at retail grocery stores do not seem to have a significant impact on the value they derive from CSR. The influence of the CSR policy on a consumer's decision to go to retail grocery stores and the importance a consumer attributes to CSR do seem to have a significant impact on the value they derive from CSR. The results indicate that the higher the influence the CSR policy has on the consumer's decision, the higher the social, emotional and functional value they derive from it. The same goes for the importance of CSR: the more important the consumer finds CSR, the higher the emotional, functional and social value they derive from it and the lower the supply value. The influence of the CSR policy on a consumer's decision to go to retail grocery stores and the importance a consumer attributes to CSR are clearly linked, so these results are consistent. We have to be careful with these conclusions though because there was no significant difference found between all the different groups. To conclude, we believe that this research contributed to a better understanding of the complex consumer regarding the value they derive from CSR. Consumers clearly derive social, emotional and functional value from CSR and we believe there to be another type of value which must be considered. This other type can be supply value or egocentric behavior value or something completely else. Future research will have to investigate this.

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