



A conceptual framework on antecedents of corporate reputation

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Abstract

This paper reviewed major related issues to corporate reputation like corporate social responsibility initiatives (philanthropic and legal) and organisational commitment. Corporate social responsibility entails all forms of philanthropic activities performed by an organisation towards its stakeholders having legitimate claims to get legitimacy and increase in corporate reputation. Corporate reputation is formed by financial performance, stakeholder's satisfaction, trust in the sight of all stakeholders, fulfilment of all social responsibilities, and proper stakeholder engagement. Organisational commitment shows the level of dedication given to the organisation by both internal and external stakeholders to achieve attainment of increase in corporate reputation. The overall assessment of organisational achievement given by stakeholders represents the corporate reputation. A research framework has been made on relating csr with organisational commitment, then the effects of the relationship leads to increase in corporate reputation. Major studies were reviewed to show how all the two forms of csr influences organisational commitment. Therefore, when there is organisational commitment, corporate reputation is expected to increase.

Keywords: Corporate reputation; Organisational Commitment; Corporate social responsibility; Philanthropic Dimension; Legal Dimension; CSR initiatives

1.0 Introduction

Corporate social responsibility, corporate reputation, and organizational commitment, and the relationship among the three variables have been the subject of discussion among practitioners and researchers for a long time. This is mainly due to vital nature of these constructs in studies related with corporate social responsibility to different stakeholders. Presently, stakeholder expectations and level of organisational

commitment are increasing over time and organizations are pressurized to carry out socially responsible acts. It is also important to establish better objectives and plans related to CSR because it transcribes good corporate reputation into financial and non-financial benefits (Lewis, 2003). Corporate social responsibility as a researchable concept dwells on having organisations adopting different ways to satisfy different stakeholders.



Previous studies on corporate reputation in relation to corporate social responsibility initiatives are mostly focusing on direct relationship between variables, therefore there is need for a review that ends up with introducing an intervening variable like organisational commitment. Doing this ensures a study on antecedents of corporate reputation with consideration on the mediating effects of organisational commitment. A conceptual framework showing organisational commitment in between CSR initiatives and corporate reputation after systematic review contributes to the existing literature on antecedents of corporate reputation. The methodology used for this study is a combination of scholarly papers on all the three variables of the study with addition of systematic approach in reviewing the relationship between CSR initiatives, organisational commitment and corporate reputation. The objectives of this study are enumerated as follows; 1) To review literature on antecedents of corporate reputation 2) To show literatures that support relationship between variables in the conceptual framework 3) To finally bring up a conceptual framework of study at the end of the systematic review.

2.1 Review of Conceptual Issues

2.1.1 Corporate Reputation

There is a consensus among scholars and practitioners alike that the way in which public perceives a company influences the corporate success (Fombrun, 1996). A positive reputation for CSR can reduce the damage from negative publicity during a crisis (Vanhamme and Grobbs, 2009). A positive reputation also enhances corporate branding, enabling a company to use its brand equity to launch new products and enter new markets (Dowling, 2006). Banks also need positive reputations to have

qualified employees, a large customer base, and many solid investors (Achua, 2008). Due to its multidisciplinary richness, the CR concept has been defined in various disciplines depending on its relation to the overall discipline (Maden et al, 2012). In the field of sociology, Corporate Reputation is seen as a social fact which comprises “collective agreement about what the relevant public knows about an actor” (Shamma and Hassan, 2009). In strategic management, CR is viewed as a unique, hard to imitate intangible asset (Smaiziene and Jucevicius, 2009). Corporate reputation is the immediate mental picture of a company that evolves over time as a result of consistent performance, reinforced by effective communication (Fombrun, 1996). Corporate reputation is defined as ‘the overall impression reflecting the perception of a collective stakeholder group’ (Lai et al., 2010). According to Van der Merwe and Puth (2014), corporate reputation is viewed as “the subjective and collective opinion and assessment that stakeholders make of an organization”. Corporate reputation is a collective representation of a firm’s past actions and results that describes the firm’s ability to deliver valued outcomes to multiple stakeholders (Gardberg and Fombrun 2002). According to Gotsi and Wilson (2001) a corporate reputation is a stakeholder's overall evaluation of a company over time. This evaluation is based on the stakeholder's direct experiences with the company, any other form of communication and symbolism that provides information about the firm's actions and/or a comparison with the actions of other leading rivals. Barnett, Jermier, and Lafferty (2006) grouped an ‘inventory’ of definitions into three distinct clusters, namely reputation defined as awareness (they found 15 definitions in this cluster), reputation as an



assessment (17 definitions) and reputation as an asset (six definitions), and a mixed cluster (11 definitions). They proposed the definition of corporate reputation to be ‘observers’ collective judgements of an organisation based on assessments of the financial, social, and environmental impact attributed to the corporation over time. The definitions of corporate reputation were also analysed by Lange, Lee, and Dai (2011) and grouped into three themes: 1) being known (general awareness, visibility, and prominence). 2) Being known for something (predictability of outcomes and behaviour). 3) Generalised favourability (judgements of the organisation as good, attractive and appropriate).

The study of corporate reputation is increasingly gaining attention from scholars and practitioners (Brammer and Pavelin, 2004). It is believed that the intangible attributes of companies such as corporate reputation are more durable and resistant to

competitive pressures than product and service attributes (Illia and Balmer, 2012). Corporate reputation intangible form makes corporate reputation hard to duplicate or imitate by competitors (Surroca, Tribo, and Waddock, 2010). Among intangible corporate assets, corporate reputation has been characterised by managers as being the most relevant, a fact that has aroused growing interest in the research and management of this concept (Gómez-Mejia and Balkin (2002). According to researchers (Hillenbrand and Monreal, 2007; Lloyd, 2007) they identified various sources contributing to the formation of corporate reputation. These include: (i) Identity inputs – internal communication, signals and behaviour from the organisation and external communication coming from outsiders. (ii) Image inputs or brand activities – images formed by stakeholder groups. (iii) Performance inputs – audit data, news reports and investment analyses.

Table 2.1 Studies on Corporate Reputation

AUTHORS	VARIABLES	FINDINGS
Fombrun (1996)	Corporate reputation; CSR initiatives	Various standard-setting initiatives have developed in recent years that are designed to induce companies to adopt more systematic, progressive and visible corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies.
Gotsi and Alan, W. (2001)	Corporate reputation	There is a dynamic, bilateral relationship between a firm's corporate reputations and its projected corporate images.
Dowling (2006)	Corporate Reputation; Financial performance	This paper complements the existing empirical studies by showing that firms with relatively good reputations are better able to sustain superior profit outcomes over time.
Lloyd, S. (2007)	Employees awareness; Corporate reputation	The findings underline effect pride in membership has regarding employees’ awareness of their impact on corporate reputation. It also gives insight into opportunities and risk for managers who wish to use internal reputation building strategies to enhance corporate reputation.
Rashid et al,	Corporate	Customer-based corporate reputation is positively



(2013)		reputation; Customer perspective	correlated with important consumer antecedent and outcome variables.
Brammer Millington (2005)	and	Corporate reputation; Philanthropy	The findings highlight that companies which make higher levels of philanthropic expenditures have better reputations and that this varies significantly across industries.
Melo Garrido-Morgado (2011)	and	Corporate reputation; Social responsibility	The results indicate that the five dimensions of CSR have a significant impact on corporate reputation and this impact is moderated by the firm of the industry.
Barnett, (2007)	M.	Corporate reputation	Corporate reputation is measured by the willingness of stakeholders to maintain corporate values that are outstanding and promising

2.1.2 Philanthropic Dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility

With the advent of CSR, corporate philanthropy is gaining much recognition and is often included within the aims and objectives of corporations (Ali, Nasruddin, and Lin 2010). Discretionary or voluntary responsibilities are desired by society and over time they have come to be expected of business by the public (Carroll, 2015). According to Carroll (1991) Philanthropy encompasses those corporate actions that are in response to society's expectation that businesses be good corporate citizens. This includes actively engaging in acts or programs to promote human welfare or goodwill. Examples of philanthropy include business contributions to financial resources or executive time, such as contributions to the arts, education, of the community. Corporate philanthropy includes all forms of business giving. Corporate philanthropy embraces business's voluntary or discretionary activities. Philanthropy or business giving may not be a responsibility in a literal sense, but it is normally expected by businesses today and is a part of the everyday expectations of the public. Certainly, the quantity and nature of these activities are voluntary or discretionary.

They are guided by business's desire to participate in social activities that are not mandated, not required by law, and not generally expected of business in an ethical sense.

2.1.3 Legal Dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility

Legal dimension of CSR relates to compliance with laws and regulations established by the authorities, which set standards for responsible behaviour – the codification of what society thinks is right or wrong (Dobers and Halme, 2009). Society has not only sanctioned business to operate according to the profit motive; at the same time business is expected to comply with the laws and regulations promulgated by federal, state, and local governments as the ground rules under which business must operate. As a partial fulfillment of the "social contract" between business and society firms are expected to pursue their economic missions within the framework of the law. Legal responsibilities reflect a view of "codified ethics" in the sense that they embody basic notions of fair operations as established by our lawmakers (Carroll, 1991). Scholars argue that legal regulation of businesses leadership is made because the society, including consumers, interest



groups, competitors and legislators, cannot be confident that businesses do what is right in a particular field, such as consumer or environment protection (Brammer et al, 2012). While meeting these legal responsibilities, important expectations of business include their performing in a manner consistent with expectations of

government and law, complying with various federal, state, and local regulations, conducting themselves as law-abiding corporate citizens, fulfilling all their legal obligations to societal stakeholders, and providing goods and services that at least meet minimal legal requirements (Carroll, 2016).

Table 2.2 Studies on corporate social responsibility

AUTHORS	VARIABLES	FINDINGS
Weber (2008)	Corporate social responsibility; measurement approach.	There is a positive relationship between CSR and company competitiveness.
Kim et al, (2017)	Corporate social responsibility; customer satisfaction; trust.	The commitment to CSR is positively influencing customer loyalty and customer satisfaction, trust, and corporate reputation also intervened in their relationships.
Rahizah Abd Rahim et al (2011)	corporate social responsibility; consumer behaviour	The results showed significant positive relationships between all of the variables used in measuring CSR and consumers' buying behaviour.
Okpara, & Wynn (2012)	Effects of CSR; Stakeholder perception, Poverty alleviation	Stakeholder perception about CSR as a source of poverty alleviation is emphasized by all stakeholders
Carroll (2016)	Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility	Highlights the four-dimensional nature of social responsibility, with philanthropic, legal ethical and economic.
Diab and Ajlouni (2015)	Corporate social responsibility; Organizational commitment	The findings suggest that different types of CSR actions influence employees' attitudes differently
Jamaliah M. et al (2015)	Customer Loyalty; CSR Initiatives	Analysis on 257 usable questionnaires found customer centric has the greatest effect on retail banking industry while philanthropic is the least influencing factor on loyalty.
Danish et al. (2013)	Corporate social responsibility; internal marketing; organizational commitment; turnover intention.	The results indicate that both employees' perception on CSR and internal marketing are positively related to their organizational commitment and negatively to their turnover intentions.
Maden C. et al. (2012)	Corporate social responsibility; corporate reputation	The results confirm not only that as an antecedent, CSR has a strong positive effect on CR but also that CR has a



Jenkins, (2005)	R. CSR; Emerging Economies	strong positive effect on the behaviours of customers, employees, and investors. There is a positive relationship between CSR practices and financial performance. This positive relationship is stronger in the less developed capital market than in the more developed one.
Dahlsrud, (2008)	A. Definitions of CSR	The analysis shows that the existing definitions are to a large degree congruent, depending on the area of focus adopted by the definer.
Surroca et al (2010)	CSR; Financial Performance; Stakeholder Perspectives	Traditional CSR can have a negative effect on financial performance factors and organizational learning for R&D capacity, whereas the technologic strategy plan of the technology commercialization capacity could have a positive effect.
Obalola, M. & Adelopo, I. (2012)	CSR; Financial service	The results revealed that averagely banks sampled spend less than 3% of their profit after tax on CSR initiatives. The results revealed that most of the banks CRS is based on financial/economic, social, community health and environment.
Ehie, I.C. (2016)	CSR orientation; Carroll's CSR pyramid	The findings empirically validate Visser's (2006) proposition that the philanthropic component weighs heavier than both the legal and ethical components of the CSR pyramid. The results provide a basis for the reliance on corporate philanthropy and guide CSR managers in sub-Saharan Africa in understanding the orientation that would lead to a more effective CSR implementation.

2.2 Organisational Commitment

Organizational commitment has been widely accepted to be advantageous for both the organization and its employees as it can reinforce the feelings of belongingness,

security of the job, career development, improved compensation, and higher intrinsic rewards (Azeem and Akhtar, 2014). An employee who is committed to his or her job and career has less intention to take leave or



quit, tend to feel satisfied about the job, and has higher intrinsic motivation and moreover, employees with greater level organisational commitments are likely to recommend others to their organization and

towards their work, and possess higher responsibility and job satisfaction (Kunda et al, 2019). There is mission and vision in every organization and employees want to achieve it. An employee who nurtures the

Table 2.3 Studies on Organisational Commitment

AUTHORS	VARIABLES	FINDINGS
Roudaki J. & Arslan M. (2017)	CSR; Organizational Commitment; Service Employees	The findings of the study reveal that perceived CSR has a significant and positive correlation with organizational commitment. The results of correlation and regression analysis also reveal that not all dimensions of CSR have the same effect on organizational commitment.
Ching-Sing You et al (2013)	Corporate responsibility; satisfaction; organizational commitment	social business investment in social responsibility had a significant impact on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of the employees. staff job satisfaction had a significant impact on organizational commitment.
Ebeid, A.H. (2010)	Corporate responsibility; Organizational commitment	social Study found that practicing social activities, especially those which are presented to the employees as one of the most important stakeholders affect positively the employees` organizational commitment.
Ali et al. (2010)	Corporate responsibility; employee commitment;	social The study found significantly positive relationship between CSR actions and employee organizational commitment, CSR and organizational performance and employee organizational commitment and organizational performance.
Brammer et al (2007)	Corporate responsibility; Organizational commitment	social The results provide evidence of a positive relationship between all three measures of CSR and affective commitment. CSR in the community has positive implications therefore not only to external stakeholders but also to the commitment of employees within the organisation.

become part of its members (Nejati and Ghasemi, 2013). Organizational commitment refers to the connectivity and dedication of employees with their organizations. Employees with higher degree of commitment toward the organization are perceived to be more productive, harmonious, have better loyalty

feeling of “like working here” is believed to develop a predisposition or emotional attachment that creates a favourable psychological alignment with the organization (Berman et al, 2006). According to Lok and Crawford (2004), organizational commitment is a work attitude that is directly related to employees’



intention to stay with the organization or to actively participate in their tasks, which is partly linked with job performance. Rae (2013) sees organizational commitment as a desire to maintain the affiliation with an organisation and is reflected through the willingness to exert high level of effort to achieve organizational goals.

2.3 Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Organisational Commitment

Corporate social responsibility in the community has positive implications therefore not only to external stakeholders but also to the commitment of employees within the organisation. (Brammer et al, 2007). Corporate social responsibility contributes positively to the reputation of the organisation, employees are likely to more strongly identify with the organisation (Peterson, 2004). Corporate social performance may therefore contribute positively to affective commitment both because employees are likely to identify with organisations which have the positive values implicit in CSR and because employees benefit from association with organisations with a positive image (Nejati and Ghasemi, 2013). CSR is a method of self-regulating mechanism that entails firms to be socially responsible to all stakeholders and society (Freeman, 2010). Committed employees believe in organization's mission and vision and want to contribute to it. According to the research conducted by Ching-Sing, et al.,2013 there exist a positive correlation between corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment. However, when the employee has conceived more from the involvement of the enterprise on corporate social responsibility, the employee will tend to have stronger organizational commitment to the company (Ching-Sing, et al.,2013).

Peterson (2004), believed that employees will feel proud of the good reputation acquired due to organizational participation in social responsibility, which in turn will bring a positive influence to the work attitude and will enhance the organizational commitment from the employee to the organization too. The relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and organizational commitment has been investigated in various research (Nejati and Ghasemi, 2013).

2.4 Relationship between Organizational Commitment and Corporate Reputation

Building organizational commitment between employees or staffs of an organisation is one of the significant factors for guaranteeing organizational effectiveness and this increase the reputation or image of the organisation. The committed employees can lead to positive organizational outcomes and can affect the reputation of the organisation. Organizational commitment has been widely accepted to be advantageous for both the organization and its employees as it can reinforce the feelings of belongingness, security of the job, career development, improved compensation, and higher intrinsic rewards (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014). Organizational commitment reflects the loyalty of an employee towards his or her organization (Ghorbanhosseini, 2012).

2.7 Relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation

Recent studies have also identified positive relationships between corporate reputation and philanthropy (Brammer and Millington, 2005). CSR is said to enhance the corporate reputation of the firm in the eyes of all stakeholders, not just the shareholders (Oh, Hong, and Hwang, 2017). To date, evidence that CSR impacts on business results –

whether through reputation building, financial performance, or other means – has been labelled as equivocal (Schnietz and Epstein, 2005; Berman, Phillips, and Wicks, 2006). Given the importance of CR as a valuable intangible asset that firms should carefully manage, understanding the potential factors that can enhance CR is of strategic importance (Maden et al., 2012). Corporate reputation is seen as ‘the overall impression reflecting the perception of a collective stakeholder group’ (Lai et al., 2010). CSR is in alignment with achieving organisational objectives by fully committed managers and at the same time not forgetting to voluntarily assist in developing the society (Hamidu, Ibrahim, and Daneji, 2014). Corporate social responsibility is what a company does socially, economically, politically, or developmentally to contribute to a community (Terungwa, 2011). The conceptual closeness between CSR and CR is discussed and researchers generally agree that while these two concepts are different, they are mutually enhancing as two sides of the same coin (Hillenbrand and Monreal, 2007). A research was conducted by Garberg and Fombrun (2006) and finds that enhancing CR may act as an extrinsic motivation for companies to engage in CSR activities and thus, reputation gain should be considered as a relevant outcome of CSR. Melo and Garrido-Morgado (2011) regards Reputation as a consequence of CSR. Branco and Rodrigues (2006) have argued that CSR enables firms to improve reputation with a broad range of stakeholders including customers, suppliers, competitors, bankers, and, investors. Moreover, when CSR programs are communicated to the public, they build corporate reputation and credibility (Pfau et al., 2008).

2.8. Theoretical framework

2.8.1. Stakeholder theory

The theory holds that organizational leaders practice CSR because its basis is a social contract and it affects the activities of all involved parties. The purpose of the stakeholder theory is to serve as a blueprint for a corporation’s structure and purpose (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). According to stakeholder theory, company leaders should consider CSR and the way it affects all persons of interest (Bird et al., 2007). Stakeholders consist of individuals who are making decisions on behalf of an organization. These stakeholders can include “creditors, employees, customers, suppliers, and the communities at large” (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007). Stakeholder theorists define appropriate and inappropriate organizational behaviour based on how corporations behave toward their stakeholders (Campbell, 2007). Therefore, there is not an exploratory goal to the stakeholder theory; researchers use it to help organizational leaders provide better care to their constituents (Freeman, 2010). Also, firm leaders and stakeholders need to discuss the best ways to implement CSR in an attempt to protect their constituents. According to Branco and Rodrigues (2007), stakeholder theory is a key process in defining CSR. Supporters of stakeholder theory argue that organizational leaders practice CSR because its basis is a social contract and it affects the activities of all involved parties. Corporate social responsibility success results from stakeholder dialogue because necessary actors have pertinent discussions about how to implement CSR (Blowfield & Frynas, 2005). Adebite and Nakajima (2011) contended that stakeholder theories are influential in determining Nigerian corporate governance because they allow for

discussion and implementation of ways to protect businesses and involved individuals. The stakeholder theory's focus on CSR affords businesses protection and leads to profit increases. Stakeholder theory proposes that organizational leaders will do their best to maximize the wealth of stakeholders and the organization (Jamali, 2008).

2.9 Conceptual Framework

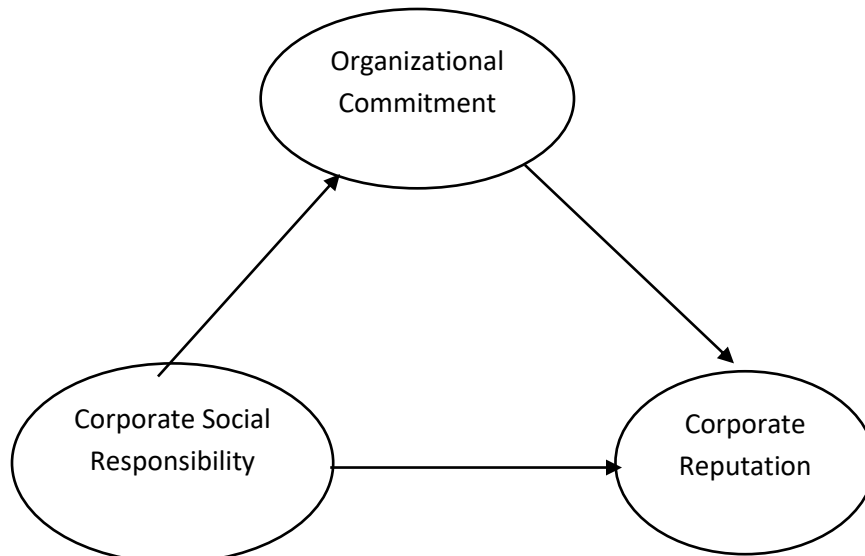


Figure 1: The Research Model

Conclusion

This paper discussed the three variables which is corporate reputation, corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment. The relationships between the variables were also discussed and a research framework is also designed. According to the review of related literature to this paper, all conceptualised relationship are supported by previous studies with positive relationship, i.e. relationship between corporate social responsibility organisational commitment, showing that employees tend to be more committed if the organisational is also paying more attention to its CSR initiatives, this level of commitment can also enhance corporate reputation. The last relationship shows direct influence of

The research framework shows the relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation, corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment, and the mediating role of organizational commitment. Corporate social responsibility and organizational commitment are the predictors, while corporate reputation is the outcome variable.

implementing CSR initiatives both philanthropic and legal on corporate reputation. Further studies are needed to investigate the relationship with other dimensions of CSR like ethical and economic, as well as the mediating effects of organisational commitment on the relationship between CSR initiatives and corporate reputation.

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