
The Influence of CSR on UK Consumer Behaviour

What Impact Does CSR Have on UK Consumer Decision-Making?

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Abstract: This dissertation builds on previous studies claiming that it is important for companies to act with ethical responsibility in order to influence consumer purchasing behaviour in a profitable way. Many researchers have investigated the ways companies can be socially responsible although, the lack of awareness and knowledge from the consumers are making it hard for the businesses to convince the customers that they are not only thinking about profit but they also care about societal issues. The data was gathered through people's words, behaviour and attitudes representing the findings from 4 in-depth interviews with UK consumers. The results of this study revealed that the level of consumer interest for CSR and the impact that unethical business decisions have on the consumer decision-making is minimal. The main factor was that the consumers have a great lack of trust towards the companies and the customers do not believe that a company can be fully ethically all through the supply chain. It can therefore be concluded that the customers make their purchasing decisions out of self-interest and prioritising their purchases according to what they can afford.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), Business ethics, Consumer Decision-making, Consumer ethics.*

Introduction

In recent years, organisations worldwide have been facing a rise in the pressure of shareholder's expectations towards the company being able to maintain profitability whilst also operating in a socially responsible manner. Various researchers have investigated the ways in which a company can be responsible, yet little has been contributed to an understanding of the extent to which corporate social responsibility affects the consumer's purchasing decisions. As the focus on social responsibilities has increased the same tendency is happening on the resources spent on doing business in an ethical, transparent and humane way. Although organisations are held accountable by the International law of Human Rights 1948, the view on this is that the law is only applicable and corporations held responsible to a certain extent. There is a growing acceptance of obligations towards human rights (at least indirectly), but the general thought is

that ethical responsibilities only concern/exist in the operating countries. The purpose of this research is therefore to investigate whether corporate social responsibility matters to the UK consumer during the purchasing process.

The advanced technology and the speed of time to get a message across on the social medias have made it easier for companies to promote themselves and to create awareness around their image/brand whilst concomitantly it has never been easier for the consumers to track down information about a company's suitability. Bearing this in mind, the same technology is also making it easier to destroy a company's reputation through communication via social medias as Facebook and Twitter. This demonstrates how much power the consumers have over organisations.

Literature Review

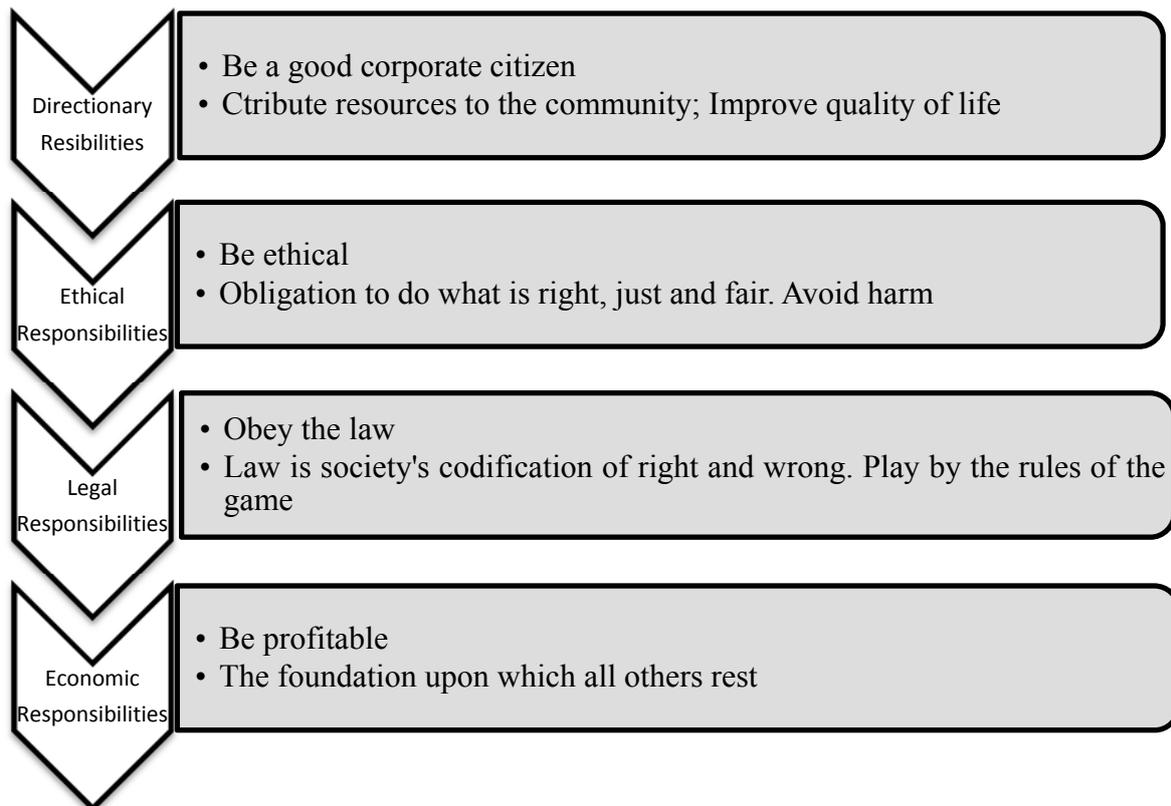
It is a common understanding that consumers are one of the most important stakeholders for an organisation and companies spend millions of pounds every year on being ethically responsible in order to create a positive image for their consumers. (Green & Peloza, 2013). Businesses engage in social responsibilities in the belief of creating the perception of being responsible beyond simply making a profit in the hope of being rewarded with satisfied customers and building a better "brand reputation" (Crane & Matten, 2010). It is therefore essential to have a strategic plan for an organisation's social responsibilities in order to survive. It is the general understanding that if a company is not acting socially responsibly, the competition will muscle their way into the market (Green & Peloza, 2013). A major question for organisations should therefore be, whether corporate leaders ought to be concerned with issues other than profitability. With regard to the above statement by Green & Peloza (2013) this paper will investigate whether CSR has an impact on the UK consumer decision-making as well as examine the level of influence CSR has on the UK consumers' behaviour.

The literature review will investigate some of the arguments that have been discussed over the past decades on how a business can be ethical. In the first part of the literature review the arguments, theories and models are based on the companies and how they can give the perception of having ethical standards. The second part will examine consumers as stakeholders and the third part will involve an investigation of theories based on the consumer's social responsibilities and awareness of CSR. Marketers, salesmen and other agents have developed the term: CnSR (Consumer Social Responsibilities). The term refers to the social responses to the way the organisation is being ethically responsible (Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga 2013). CnSR covers concepts such as Consumer Reactions towards CSR, Consumer Awareness of CSR, Consumer Focus on CSR, Consumer Power and Consumer Understanding of CSR. The CnSR's are not only interested in purchasing a quality brand, top fashion or products that give them an image, they are equally interested in social causes such as social welfare, communities, suppliers, employees, customers and environmental interest (Feldman & Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). The consumers are called socially responsible consumers (Mohr et al., 2001; Webster, 1975) socially conscious consumers (Anderson & Cunningham, 1972; Auger et al., 2006; Mayer, 1976) or ethical consumers (Crane & Matten, 2004). UK consumers have become more aware of ethical shopping and the money spent on consumer goods has risen from £36 billion in 2008 to £54 billion in 2013. Although this is valuable growth, the

ethical market still only covers 6 per cent of the total UK consumer market (Ethical consumer 2014). From this information it can be concluded that there are a large number of consumers who do not have a great knowledge and awareness of company social responsibilities.

Carroll (1991) was the first researcher who divided a company's responsibilities into different kinds of organisational responsibilities (see fig.1) which is why his pyramid has got more attention than any other model on this subject. He differentiated his concept into four aspects: Legal, Economic, Ethical and Philanthropic.

Fig. 1 – Carroll's Pyramid of Social Responsibility



The pyramid was developed in such way that it combined what was believed to be the entire range of corporate responsibilities (Legal, Economic, Ethical and Philanthropic). Carroll (1991) argued that true social responsibility requires all four dimensions of the pyramid to be fulfilled. Each layer in his model examines the relation to a corporation's stakeholders (Employees, Customers, Owners, communities and the public at large). Carroll's pyramid has become more necessary in today's changing environment where the business structures are changing in how it operates. The pyramid is a framework for organisations to focus on the four dimensions as a unified whole and balance the decisions, actions and programs into a substantial business (Carroll, 1991).

Kotler (1991) believed that the societal marketing concept was built to deliver a desired message to the consumers in a way so it enhances the society's and the consumer's well-being. He argued that the businesses should build social and ethical practices into their marketing concepts in order to create awareness, boost the image and to give the perception of a company

who care. Petkus and Woodruff (1992) agree in this concept but they extend it further by including the avoidance of doing harm and the effort of doing good. Dowling (2001) shared the opinion with Kotler (1991) that the awareness is important but Dowling argued that CSR should be categorized in three dimensions; Image, Reputation and Credibility and therefore focus on aspects from a consumers prospective. These dimensions are divided into different intervals that will tell a company how the consumers perceive the values.

Table 1: Dowling's three dimensions

Image	Reputation	Credibility
<p>Appears to be/have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology driven • Customer focused • Well managed • Successful • Expensive products/services • Competitive • Innovative 	<p>Appears to be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected • Honest • An industry leader • A good corporate citizen. 	<p>Appears to be/have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive word of mouth • Trustworthy • Confidence • Supportive

The relationship between Image, Reputation and Credibility are linked to consumer loyalty. All three words are perceptions of a company's success. Through cause-related advertising (will be further discussed in paragraph 2.3) or word-of-mouth new consumers who have not yet had experience with the firm will believe the information given from the perception (Dowling, 2001). By using Dowling's (2001) theory, the company is gaining awareness on how the consumer perceives them. The information gathered in Dowling's theory is measurable through questionnaires, interviews or focus groups and the company can hereafter focus their attention where it is needed.

As mentioned above, numerous studies have attempted to explain the world of CSR (e.g. Carroll 1991; Kotler 1991; Dowling 2001). However new research asserts that focussing on sustainability is not always the best way for an organisation to operate because the consumers might purchase the product or service for other reasons (Arnold 2009). For example, many coffee houses have introduced fair-trade coffee but consumers might be motivated to buy coffee from a certain coffee house simply because the coffee is better there and not because of what the company contributes to society. Regardless of where the motivation comes from companies must be aware of this situation. Green and Peloza (2011) acknowledge the fact and they have expanded the argument by saying that there are different perceptions on what is good and responsible but most consumers do not experience CSR similarly. The values that comes from CSR is a variety of several values and the behaviour must be the same as the value the consumer receives in order to support the organisation that engage in social responsibilities

(Green and Peloza 2011). Starbucks, for example gives the consumers the impression of being ethically responsible by having a lot of social response programs worldwide (e.g. helping the coffee farmers to a better world, helping the environment and so on) but Starbucks is not helping the countries they operate in when they cheat their operating country for corporate tax money (Bergin 2012; Macalister 2013).

Does Corporate Social Responsibility affect purchasing decisions?

As far back as 1776, Adam Smith believed that an entrepreneur's effort to make and maximise profit would in some way help society by generating free market trade and capitalism and because of the invisible hand (The invisible hand is a phenomenon that is created to explain the forces of the free market) the market would not need governmental interference (Smith, 1776). In other words, Smith believed that an individual who pursued their own interests often promoted the good of society and according to the invisible hand theory, every individual, who acts in their own self-interests, generates a demand for products that enforce others to deliver those products in the most efficient manner so that they may be able to receive compensation from others and make a profit in doing so (Smith, 1776). Nevertheless Petkus and Woodruff (1992) and Smith (1995) argue that there are conditions counteracting the effectiveness of the invisible hand such as flawed rivalry and lack of communication with the consumers. Thus, there is a development in the attempt for researchers to define what it implies for an organisation to be social responsible.

Business ethics has been claimed to be an oxymoron (Collins, 1994), His assertion is that there cannot be ethics when doing business. Some previous studies disagree and they reported that business ethics is an important factor to an organisation's survival (Green & Peloza, 2013; Ferrell et al., 2013; Arnold, 2009). Having good business ethic is just as important as being successful in areas such as Finance, Human Resources (HR) or Marketing. Organisations that have a transparent strategic plan for their CSR will gain trust from the consumers (Ferrell et al., 2013). On the other hand, it is not surprising that Collins and others believe that there is no such thing as Business ethics. Many companies state that they are ethically responsible in every part of their organisation, yet scandals of non-ethical substance keep finding the surface to the public. In order to keep an organisation running and successful there has to be trust, willingness, honesty and co-operation between the stakeholders (Collins, 1994; Watson, 1994).

Willingness to pay

Scandals or no scandals, organisations continue to make bad decisions. From a utilitarian point of view these decisions will look bad in one situation but it will be the right decision in other situations. The companies try to do what is best for the greatest number (Crane & Matten, 2010). For example Nike was in 2011 accused of having Indonesian contractors that abused the labour by slapping, scratching, verbally abusing and by throwing sneakers at them (Daily Mail, 2011). The financial statement of Nike's for fourth quarter in 2011 shows an increase of 14 per cent (\$5.8 billion), this clearly states that the consumer social responses have not been affected by the accusations towards Nike and it further shows that the social image of wearing Nike products appears to be stronger than the customers social responsibilities (Nike 2011). In this case, the consumer decision-making has been of egoistic dimensions and not principles (Ferrell et al. 2013; Crane & Matten, 2010). This example argues against the importance of good corporate social responsibility and indicates that CSR have no impact on the purchasing

decision. When an organisation as large as Nike can keep suppliers/workers under such mentioned conditions without any consequences the consumer social responsibilities (meaning that the consumers have reacted in self-interest and convenience instead of thinking collectively by boycotting Nike) have failed its basic principles. Arnold's (2009) theory on why consumers purchase as they do, says it is because the consumers use emotions in their decision-making process. Arnold argues that consumers buy with their hearts instead of their head in most purchases and if the communication of the product is difficult to see through by knowing what is right or wrong; most consumers will switch to the logic purchasing approach. An example would be as the saying: "*If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is*". However, Green and Peloza (2011) agree with Arnold but they have expanded that theory by addressing the consumer's decision-making in relation to CSR, by categorising the consumer values into three groups;

Social values meaning that the consumers make their purchasing decision based on the status or the signal the product or service reflects (e.g. Bike instead of car, fair-trade products, eco-friendly kids clothing).

Functional value is when the consumer thinks of the product's functionality before anything else (e.g. electric lawn mower, electric drill with re-chargeable batteries).

Emotional value is when the consumer is thinking of how it will affect e.g. the environment (e.g. solar systems, wind turbines, electric cars).

There are cases where all three values can merge into one purchase as Green and Peloza (2011) point out in their research. When buying a hybrid car the three emotions can be connected; Social consumer values (meeting social norms and expectations), Functional consumer values (Provide good mileage, idle less, batteries is rechargeable etc.) Emotional consumer value (Help the environment).

Methodology

Corporate social responsibility is a well-recognised concept in the academic world as well as the world of business (Carroll 1991; Kotler 1991; Smith 1995; Dowling 2001; Green & Peloza 2011). International, multinational and transnational organisations spend millions of pounds every year to appear socially responsible. In order to understand what the consumers are thinking in the purchasing situation research has been designed to investigate this matter. Many researchers have investigated the term CSR and what it includes but less has included the concept of knowledge and awareness amongst consumers. It has been a common belief among researchers that consumers have the knowledge of the company's strategic plan for social responsibility (see literature review). It is therefore intended to collect data that will focus specifically on the level of consumer expectations as well as their interest in and knowledge about companies' social responsibility. The paper will determine if CSR have an impact on UK consumer decision-making in order to clarify the level of interest in the CSR, to determine how much knowledge the consumers have to CSR and to understand the level of expectation towards helping the society.

The study uses qualitative analysis to gain insights into human behaviour and to understand why individuals behave, think and react as they do. This type of research strategy emphasises

words rather than quantifications in both data collection and the analysis (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research can include features such as inductive, constructionist and interpretive but all three features are not always applied and this paper is based on interpretive methods. In contrast to qualitative research, quantitative research is based on numbers and statistics, the main terms used in a quantitative research is following; causality, generalization, measurement and replication (Bryman, 2012). “*Quantitative research is neither appropriate nor cost effective for learning why people act or think as they do*” (Bryman, 2012). Hence that not all questions in this study will be quantifiable and the research is to investigate a deeper meaning of how and why consumers behave in different purchasing situations a qualitative research method will be the correct approach (Bryman, 2012)

Interview Guide

The data gathered from qualitative research is usually preferred through in-depth interviews to investigate the inner experience of the consumer (also known as the participants) so the researcher can determine how opinions are formed in and through a culture and it will be based on observations and intuitive understanding experienced in the field. Therefore, by using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions the pieces of information will be part of the findings to this research. The questions addressed a topic that might be socially undesirable and sensible for some consumers to talk about in a larger group. A personal semi-structured interview would give the participants a facilitating affect to evoke circumstances and motivations behind their actions. When placing the respondents in a situation where no judgement can be found often creates a legitimized discussion which cannot be found in anonymous surveys or focus groups (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015).

Sample Selection

In the actual sampling process was coordinated with 4 different one-to-one interviews with four UK consumers with different professional backgrounds and ethnic backgrounds. This method was chosen to ensure that there is a great deal of variety in the participants background, history, age, income etc. (Bryman, 2012) and that each of these key factors will be relevant to the research question.

Data Collection

The Conditional/Consequential Matrix is a framework that provides information to identify and narrate structure to a certain process. This framework is an analytic tool of a set of ideas created as a conceptual guide to help the interviewer capture (through observation and clarifying questions) the actions, emotional and interactive responses from the participants during certain events in their lives (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The researcher can therefore understand the complexity of life and clarify the responses in a deeper manner. Although the behaviour during the events is often triggered by previous situations, McMaster (1997) argues that the conditions and subsequent actions are more likely to bounce of each other since one cannot always predict the consequences of an action. Although observation is an important part of an interview, it has its drawbacks; the interviewer might observe a certain action/interaction without clarifying the meaning of the gesture with the participant (Patton, 2002).

The information gathered through the interviews was written into a summary in a digital form and analysed by the use of interpretation. Since the interviews was voice recorded and the

interviewer noted down relevant body-language-behaviour, the interpretation will communicate what it all means (Merriam, 2009). The researcher aims to discover the significant interaction between the participants and to find a link between interest, awareness and behaviour.

Results, Analysis & Discussion of findings

The findings were based on the sample selection where it was decided to have 4 individual interviews to gain an in-depth discussion on the UK consumer decision-making process. The findings were results of the participant’s experiences, opinions and attitudes towards CSR when the consumers were in their decision-making process. To understand the participant’s consumer behaviour one must understand the background of the consumer.

Subject 1: 46 year old male. He works as a carpenter on a building site in London. His inheritance is Irish and has an 8 year old daughter. He likes being sociable and does not “fuss” over his eating habits.

Subject 2: 38 year old, male. He has two daughters and he works in management on a building site in London. His inheritance is half Scottish - half British and his interests are sports and healthy eating.

Subject 3: 33 year old female. She is Greek and studies in the UK. She is interested in socializing and beach volley.

Subject 4: 33 year old Greek male. He works as a web-designer at a firm in London and he too likes to be sociable.

Results

The participants were given an explanation of how a semi-structured interview is being carried out and that they were encouraged to speak their true opinion in order to gain a complete image of the real-life situation. The interviews were held in a relaxed environment and the meeting began with an introduction and some small talk to loosen up any discomfort the participants might have.

Table 2: Overview of answers from participants

Subjects/Questions	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3	Subject 4
Q1: Do you know what corporate social responsibilities involve/imply?	Had some knowledge	No knowledge	No Knowledge	Full knowledge
Q2: Would you say that organisations have a responsibility to society?	Generally yes	Generally yes	Generally yes	Generally yes

Q3: Do you feel you have enough information on the level of the good the individual companies do?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not enough
Q4: Does your view of the company change, whether they are helping society or not?	No, not at all	No	In some extent	Depends
Q5: Does your purchasing decision change if a company has a huge scandal around it?	No	No, every firm has scandals	It has happened once	Yes if the scandal affected him
Q6: Are your purchasing decisions affected by the “good” or “bad” things the companies do?	No	No	Depends	No
Q7: Do you believe that the companies are taking action towards helping the society out of self-interest, humanitarianism or both?	Self-interest	Self-interest	Self-interest	Self-interest
Q8: Do you shop out of convenience, by quality, helping the environment (Fair-	Convenience/Price	Quality	Fair-Trade/Price	Price/Quality

trade, neutral products and so on) or where it is cheap?				
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Q1: The level of knowledge was widely spread amongst the participants. 25 per cent of the participants had a great knowledge, 50 per cent did not have any knowledge and 25 per cent of the participants thought they knew what CSR imply. The following comments will highlight the discussion made on this topic: S2 and S4 said that they did not know what CSR implies however, when both members got the definition told they both knew more about the actions behind the words than the actual sentence “CSR”. S1 was going in the right direction but needed some extra questions to get the exact meaning right. S3 knew the definition and could therefore put a more focussed light on the interview. When S4 explained the term as it was understood by looking at the three words the definition was that most companies try to do something good just for the eyes of it but he argued that the companies do not really care.

Q2: There was a general understanding that the participants believed that the companies should help the society in the many they are able to, but they also knew that the companies have to think of profitability and following comments was made: S4 believed that the companies do have a responsibility to society but he argued that the bigger the company becomes the worse they will get, regarding attitudes, materials, ingredients and so on. S3 was disagreeing with S4 by saying that the bigger the company gets, the larger is the expectations to their responsibilities because consumers will not expect much help to the society from a small shop. S2 agreed with S3 by saying that the small companies are just trying to make it instead of pleasing everybody. S1 says that in the end of the day, the people who control the large companies (top management) still buy yachts, massive houses, and expensive cars and so on so it does not matter whether the consumers believe that the company is doing good or not because the top management will always look after themselves first. In the same breath, S1 stated that it is expected that the organisations work within the law in the operating country and everybody agreed on that being an obvious expectation to have as a customer.

Q3: S4 did not think that there was enough information and he believed that a lot of companies are trying to do good otherwise there is no balance since companies tend to do a lot of bad too. S1 claimed that there is a lot of information but it is difficult to find the truth among the information, because for example fair-trade products should be a much better choice because regular products do not help the society as much but he states that the products are made the same way or/and the same places. S3 questioned why we should pay more for the fair-trade products. S1's respond to the question by asking why we should pay more since “the rain is going down on both fields (of beans) and it is the same fertilizer that goes down in the ground which both fields benefit from, the farmer might get some more money but where as one of the fields of beans go to the consumer as a fair-trade beans the other ones goes to the supermarkets as normal beans”. S2 shared the opinion about the information level but as S1 and S3 he was also sceptic of how much of the information that was true.

Q4: S1 argued that it did not make any difference for him because we are all individuals who have a self-interest so the consumers purchase what they think is nice or what they think they need. S2 shared that point of view but added that if he wants a product he would not think of how sustainable the company was. S4 was looking at it in another way and he argued that as long as the company is trustworthy and not doing any bad things that will hurt him as a consumer, he will buy the product he wants. S4 is further explaining that as long as the process from the seller to the purchaser is acceptable and they are making the products as they say they do (with the right raw materials) which he does not think they do, then he is a happy consumer and he then thinks the company is good. S3 asserted that she has experienced situations where she chose a fair-trade product instead of the product she normally purchased because of company sustainability.

Q5: S3 and S1 said that they stopped shopping at Primark after the 2013 scandal in Bangladesh where a factory building collapsed, but she realised that she could not stop shopping there eternally so she would eventually go back there. S3's statement and claimed that it depends on how long the crises/scandal was going on for. S2 stated that it makes no difference whether the products are made by kids or adults, in rich countries or poor countries and as an example he says that "Nike is evidently using child labour and they last forever, the laces do not break, no wholes, the quality is at its highest level and last for a life time". He did not know if the allegations were true or not regarding child labour but he would keep buying the trainers because they will last him forever. S2, S3 and S4 shared the same point of view however, S3 took it further by stating that she could quit shopping at Tesco's (Horse meat scandal) only because there are so many other options, but she would not stop shopping at for example Nike. Furthermore, S2 argued that a scandal would not change his decision-making because in the end of the day, if he wanted a certain pair of trainers, a shirt or some jeans from a specific brand, he would buy it no matter who made it (child, adult). S1 agreed and added that "we are all consumers and if we need or want something, we really do not care who made it in the developing countries", S3 and S4 also agreed in what S2 and S1 was arguing. But S4 said that his view of some companies has changed a bit and he argued that the more negative information the consumers hear from one particular company the higher is the lack of trust to that company. Furthermore, he knows that most companies are doing the same as the competitors but as a consumer you must believe that they are trying to do well and he would therefore prefer to go to the competitors in case of supermarket scandals for example. In that case, S1 stated that most consumers think like that but it is just like putting the blinkers on a horse. S2 was agreeing but argued further that if you read a newspaper about all the bad stuff about the companies, you think, what bastards but it is all forgotten when you want something from those companies. Bottom line for S1 and S3 was that deep down they believed that every company does the same even when the companies say they don't. S1 argued further that the "good" companies just have not been caught yet because they have better marketers. S4 said that it is all about trust but that trust has disappeared and stating that when a company is doing good in the society the consumers will not react but if the same company is doing "bad" the consumers automatically think, "of course they are doing that" → Consumers are more likely to jump on the negative hence the lack of trust.

Q6: S1 did not believe that it makes any difference because many individuals in the UK used to think that the Comic Relief was a reliable organisation to support but it was found out that the organisation is investing money in companies that sell cigarettes, alcohol and armaments (Lawn, 2013) “Yes they might have a happy face in the front but it is all a con. S3 claimed that it was affected in some purchases as for example food shopping but not if she want a clothing item in a special brand. Furthermore, S3 asked a question with certain scepticism, “Do we really know if they (the companies) are good?” Where to S4 quickly respond; No! Basically what they all agree on is that globalisation has made it impossible to be on the “good” side of CnSR because all the large companies have subsidiaries all over the world and you may like the subsidiary because they are doing good in the society but the main company can be unethically correct. S4 and S2 wanted to be affected but the reality showed that they bought what they wanted no matter any sustainable issues the company might have been part of.

Q7: All participants had the same overall opinion by the companies taking actions out of self-interest because it makes them look good. The arguments for this was that companies think strictly on their profits and no company would give money to charity, fair-trade or the society if they do not think they will get the money back somehow. S4 claimed that his opinion was based on the beliefs that if he gave £1,000 to charity, then most money would go to marketing, administration costs and so on so the actual individual who needed the money would only get £1 (maybe more if they are lucky). S1’s statement was that the organisations who take in clothes people do not need any more is flown to Africa for the Africans to buy from the organisation.

The participants all agreed that it was all smoke and mirrors, which means that the companies take some actions towards the society but they take it away somewhere else. An example would be that FedEx is growing lots of trees (Chicoskie, 2014) to help the environment, someone makes profit on these trees and they will be cut down in 10-20 years because a company needs them for their production, while this is happening, FedEx is flying worldwide every day and creating pollution to the ozone layer. Moreover, all group members believed that every individual in the top management began their career by wanting to have a good corporate social responsibility politic but when they get to the top, they are so “washed out” and corrupt that they do not care anymore.

Q8: S1 was a mix of a convenience shopper and a consumer who likes to save money, he said: “If I can get my groceries cheaper in that shop than this shop, then I will buy it in that shop”. Although he also stated that he had a sore spot for the egg productions so he argued that he would happily spend more money on the expensive eggs because he believed that they had a better life and that the eggs taste better additionally he felt good about it when he bought them, which he believe was the reason why every consumer buys the more ethical friendly products once in a while. Although there are situations where S1 is thinking of the society/ethics because when he meets a homeless person who sold magazines/newspaper, he bought it but he did not take the product home because he would not read it anyway so it was better if the seller could sell it to someone else.

S2 shopped for qualities meaning that he would much rather walk longer to get to for example Tescos or Morrisons than do his shopping in Aldi, Lidl or Iceland. He stated that the quality in

his mind did not have anything to do with fair-trade product and he believed that some shops do have a better quality when it comes to food shopping.

S3's shopping habits were mixed with price and quality, since the gap on prices are so high in London (You can find one product for one price and in another shop the price is doubled for the same product) but if the price for fair-trade products and the “normal” products are closer then she would buy fair-trade products. The reason why she did not buy fair-trade products today was because she was asking herself why she should pay that much more to feel good and to be an ethically responsible consumer, why can the companies not split the price with the consumer and thereby put the prices down. She further argued that even though the companies claim to “split the costs”. If the companies make less profit and make rules about fair-trade on every product then the consumers would buy fair-trade.

S4 did not like to buy fair-trade product because he does not trust that it is what it is. But still, he argued that he would like to spend more money on some fair-trade products (only if the system works and the money goes where the companies says is goes) and save money on other products because it makes him feel good and he would still be saving money but if there was something he really wanted to buy from a specific place because the quality is better, then he would go there. Regarding the purchase of eggs, S4 would go for the middle priced eggs because he do not believe that the most expensive eggs are that much different to the slightly cheaper egg and he adds that it is the same with a glass of wine in a restaurant, where he has the exact same decision-making strategy. This decision-making process is as previous mentioned in order to make S4 feel good and not because of any company's CSR.

Table 3 below will sum up the results measured against Dowling’s three dimensions; Image, Reputation and Credibility. The table is created to demonstrate how the companies could regain trust from the consumers.

Table 3: Dowling’s three dimensions

Image	Reputation	Credibility
<p>Appears to be/have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology driven • Customer focused • Well managed • Successful • Expensive products/services • Competitive • Innovative 	<p>Appears to be...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected • Honest • An industry leader • A good corporate citizen. 	<p>Appears to be/have...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive word of mouth • Trustworthy • Confidence • Supportive

From table 3 it can be concluded that consumers valued trust and honesty to be the significant factors for a change in purchasing habits. If the companies want to regain the trust from consumers, the organisations have to demonstrate that they are trustworthy as the discussion above also indicates.

Analysis and discussion of Findings

The first question in this paper was whether the respondents had any knowledge of the concept CSR and what it entailed the answer was clear. Only one of the respondents was 100 per cent aware of the definition and the actions taken by the companies but this was because the respondent had previous experience in the studies of CSR. Two of the respondents (50 %) had never heard about CSR but after explaining the concept to the group members, they were aware that some companies attempt to create sustainability in the world. The lack of knowledge is not unique so Verandaranjan & Menon's (1988) statement; *"the importance of marketing and that customers need to have knowledge about a corporation's social responsibilities, so through marketing the organisation can generate awareness and thereby establish knowledge"*. However, many researcher (Verandaranjan & Menon, 1988; Kotler, 1991; Petkus & Woodruff, 1992) believed that the awareness and knowledge could only be established through marketing concepts which means that the companies could deliver a desired message to the consumers (Kotler, 1991) and thereby let the consumers believe that the company or themselves are doing good for the society. This marketing perception will be further discussed later in this chapter.

As Adam Smith stated in 1776, the society will automatically be helped if the entrepreneur's (Companies) maximized their profit on the free market. He also stated that by creating wealth the companies are generating new work places and new opportunities for society which states, in Smith's (1776) opinion, that the corporations are already doing good for the society. All participants believed that the companies do have a responsibility towards society but in the same breath they all agreed that the bigger the company the worse attitude they have. The consumer's expect the large organisations to be responsible and they often are to a certain point meaning that the companies would do what was needed to do in order to keep a perception of being a responsible corporation but in the end taking care of the management's own self-interest. The participants did not expect small companies to be social responsible because in that size of business, the company would just be thinking of surviving and maintain the size or create growth. By taking in consideration of Carroll's pyramid (1991), all participants did expect that the organisations no matter size would keep within the law of the operating country and that they would contribute to the local society by offering jobs but the participants did not agree for the organisations to act upon the competitors economic responsibilities as all participants were expecting that all companies are doing harm in some of the operating countries (Under developed countries- Nike, Primark/Bangladesh). The opinion of the participants would therefore suggest that most companies are working from the point of view of Dowling's (2001) theory that the organisations are working to appear to have a strong image, a good reputation and a high credibility but in reality.

The answer to this question could be referred back to Varandaranjan and Menon (1988) (see Q1) as the commercials should be giving the information needed for the customer to make the "ethical" right purchasing decision. Although S4 did not believe that he had enough information of the level of doing ethical business, because he believed that any company was

trying to do good in a way of keeping a balance between all the bad things the organisations was doing. S4 argument was therefore more in favour of Collins (1994) theory that argued that there cannot be ethics when doing business.

The three other participants disagreed with S4 by arguing that there was sometimes too much information and that it was hard for customers to find the truth within all the information given. This way of thinking was not far away from S4 opinion, since both sides of the discussion were leaning towards the data that was found in Shouten's research paper from 2007, regarding the

This information is the reason why consumers and the participants had trust issues on the information given through commercials by the companies.

All participants agreed that their view of a company doing right or wrong did not affect their purchasing decision as long as it did not have an effect of the end product and the relationships between the seller and the customer. This finding demonstrates that the consumers are more forgiving of companies with a strong brand and image than companies who sell product without any significant brand relation. The strongest argument was that they all shopped out of self-interest so if they wanted a specific product, they would buy it no matter what the company did or did not do for the society. This attitude is not surprising since Arnold (2009) and Green & Peloza (2011) both argued against some of the points made by other researchers such as Carroll (1991); Kotler (1991) and Dowling (2001) by claiming that the corporate social responsibility was not the only reason why customers purchase a particular brand or product but that it could be a reason of self-interest or desire to own a specific product that makes the consumers decision-making.

As previously mentioned in this chapter, the companies are using marketing and commercials to boost their image and to give a perception of a company who care about the consumers, the society and the environment (Kotler, 1991) hence cause-related marketing. This phenomenon is well-known to the consumers (see question 3) and the big scandals worldwide every year is not benefitting the fact that the lack of trust from the consumers to the organisations are increasing. Although the participant's response was strong in the general area of purchasing decisions, but when the "horse-meat" scandal was included in the discussion all members agreed that a scandal like that could make their decision-making change but only because there are many other options of buying meat and it would not mean a great deal for the group members money-wise if they had to go to another supermarket.

A study made by Mohr et al. In 2001, showed that the consumers appreciated the company's actions towards the society and that most consumers already do or would reward organisations that make charitable donations. Furthermore, the findings were that the customers expect organisations to behave ethically and to protect the environment which is a factor in their purchasing decisions (Mohr et al., 2001). These results were based on a survey so it is impossible to prove that the respondents were telling the truth because in a survey it does not cost the respondents more if they answer as they would like themselves to be. In the same study by Mohr et al. (2001) they used interviews in order to get more valid results and these results were very close to the results found in this study. This study showed that the customers did not consider the actions taken by companies towards the society nor did they consider the

consequences of the free market (low prices, high competition = child labour, poor work conditions etc.) in the under developed countries. The only way to change the consumers' minds was to prove that it really made a difference if they bought fair-trade products. The globalisation and marketers have made it nearly impossible for businesses to really help so the organisations are as ethical as they can be if they wanted to keep up with competition and the CSnR are as responsible as they can be due to income and self-interest.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates that consumers need to be aware of an organisation's level of CSR before it can be a factor in the purchasing process. The globalisation and strong competition in the free market have developed opportunities for the consumer to purchase what they want, when they want it, which leads to self-interested purchasing decisions.

Consumers are reportedly sceptical of Corporate Social Responsibility claims due to the perception that these firms are often acting in their own self-interest. The many scandals worldwide have changed the level of customer trust in companies. In order to regain that trust, organisations need to show the public that they actually care about ethical issues and are not just creating a façade of caring about society. This study was based on relevant literature and research to investigate a topic that seems to have been discussed for centuries yet it still had some lack of information concerning the consumer awareness of CSR. The leaders of the corporations should therefore be aware of the current situation. The customers have a failure to interest and knowledge in what the organisations do to help society. To change the trust issue, a self-run organisation that monitors the firm's marketing communication to the public would be a way of decreasing the false and misleading commercials. If the consumers are aware that such a group exist in the industry and that they are affective, the customers do not need to have doubt if the information given is true or false. As this study showed, half of the respondents would be more responsible in their purchasing process if they knew that the information given was correct which would give the consumers a reason to trust the perceptions that the marketers develop.

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