

When Corporate Social Responsibilities Deny Humanity of Its Long-Term Sustainability

Yusuf Katono

Institution / Company: Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah, Kangsar, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract: *Society has saluted corporate social responsibility of firms blindly without paying keen interest to the long-term survival of humanity. This has made firms pay insufficient consideration to the need to produce ecologically friendly products, charge sustainable prices, or adopt sustainable marketing strategies. This has subsequently permitted companies to practice CSR as a public relations strategy, a cover up, or as a marketing strategy to attract and retain in the wave of their industry competitiveness.*

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Humanity, Sustainability.*

I. Main Text

Over 2,000 international companies regularly account for their environmental and social impacts as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR).¹ This partly describes how CSR has grown over the past decade²³ as different individuals, associations, and organizations engage in social initiatives to uplift society's plight.⁴⁵ It's often theorized that firms aim at not only profits but also invest in measures for society's betterment.⁶ However, although CSR has yielded progress, it has remained controversial in addressing the world's insistent challenges which leaves doubt as to whether such energies are in society's interests.⁷ This is partly because such efforts always cultivate reciprocal advantages back to the same firms,⁸ irrespective of the core vices of firms towards society.

Surely, firms take time building green myths in the minds of their customers instead of fashioning actual products that tell their environmental commitment⁹ and thus certifying the thesis that there has been a low adoption of green practices.¹⁰ This usually leads to neglect of green production since all resources invested will not be evident in products or services needed by buyers though will lead to environmental sustainability.¹¹ As manufacturers expand production, pollution of both water and air levels go high exponentially contributing to over 940,000 deaths in children where 92% of pollution-related deaths occur in children of low and middle-income countries.¹² Also, despite firms' engagement CSR, the same companies use celebrity endorsements and other promotions encourage addiction across all audiences irrespective of the prevailing social goals like weight loss ambition among adults,¹³ internet addiction among smartphone users especially children,¹⁴ and video game addiction among adolescents.¹⁵ Supplementary to the above, although firms finance CSR initiatives, they incessantly discourage savings culture among customers,¹⁶ which deprives them of their long-term purchasing power and financial sustainability.

Scholars often agree that price discounts and other related promotion strategies prompt impulse purchases by consumers which discourages savings for future consumption and investment perhaps¹⁷ and hence disillusion the actual reason behind CSR. Additionally, firms have failed to adopt socially-driven and sustainable pricing strategies since they customarily aim at increasing sales. These socially irresponsible actions have made majority of consumers of luxury goods shift from wealthy women aged between 40-60 years to those between ages of 20-30 years no matter their gender¹⁸ yet these age brackets are expected to invest at a later age. There is surely no amount of CSR that undo such societal deprivation by firms given that there is clear proof that sustainable pricing can safeguard consumer's long-term interests as well as those of the producer.¹⁹ When it comes to sale of junk foods, its worse and no levels of CSR can justify it. For example over 65% of foods in New Zealand schools are not permitted for children by the World Health Organization²⁰ while Nepal is battling consumption of junk food among adolescents as a serious health challenge as it culminates into obesity, metabolic disorders, and high cholesterol.²¹ Also, consumption of cigarettes has continued to undermine both short-term and long-term health of its active and passive consumers²² which accelerates both government and out-of-pocket expenditures on health to unbearable heights.

In addition, over 9.8% of Ugandans have alcohol-use-related disorders.²³ Indeed, producing such unhealthy products at a global level continue camouflaging and portray acts of empathy by giving back to society through

CSR, their actions might be assumed as mere cover up strategies rather than societal sustainability endeavors. Further, though multinational organizations like Coca-Cola pledge to do not market their products to audiences where more than 35% are children, they have failed to effectively implement such statements and thus catalyzing rates of childhood obesity rates and addiction among millions of children.²⁴ If nothing is done to ensure societal long-term sustainability, marketers and their firms are ready to utilize the rapid enhancement in communication technologies and other marketing tools at their disposal to promote consumer irrationality.^{25,26} Lastly, the hype around CSR and other philanthropic initiatives by firms has been welcomed by wider smiles in every section of society given its exterior value as a saving grace of humanity. However, little effort has been taken to caution firms against producing and sale of products and services that create such societal anarchy in the first place before such mitigation efforts.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge the guidance accorded to me by PhD Researcher supervisor (Assoc. Prof. Dr. ZATUL KARAMAH BINTI AHMAD BAHARUL ULUM) in helping me actualize this concept.

Conflict of Interest

There was no conflict of interest.

References

-
- [1]. Grayson D, Hodges A. Corporate social opportunity! Seven steps to make corporate social responsibility work for your business. Routledge; 2017 Dec 4.
 - [2]. Tekleab AG, Reagan PM, Do B, Levi A, Lichtman C. Translating Corporate Social Responsibility into Action: A Social Learning Perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 2020 Feb 6:1-6.
 - [3]. Herrera J, de las Heras-Rosas C. Corporate social responsibility and human resource management: Towards sustainable business organizations. *Sustainability*. 2020 Jan;12(3):841.
 - [4]. Jäger J, Fifka M. A comparative study of corporate social responsibility in English and German professional football. *Soccer & Society*. 2020 Apr 9:1-9.
 - [5]. Chen T, Dong H, Lin C. Institutional shareholders and corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Financial Economics*. 2020 Feb 1;135(2):483-504.
 - [6]. Pereira R, Bhat V, Hans V. Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility Reciprocity—A Study of Selected Companies. *Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility Reciprocity—A Study of Selected Companies*. 2020.
 - [7]. Wang H, Gibson C, Zander U. Editors' Comments: Is Research on Corporate Social Responsibility Undertheorized? *Academy of Management Review*, 2020; 45(1): 1.
 - [8]. Newman C, Rand J, Tarp F, Trifkovic N. Corporate social responsibility in a competitive business environment. *The Journal of Development Studies*. 2020 Jan 10:1-8.
 - [9]. Tiwari S, Tripathi DM, Srivastava U, Yadav PK. Green marketing-emerging dimensions. *Journal of Business Excellence*. 2011 Jan 1;2(1):18.
 - [10]. Jozef E, Kumar KM, Iranmanesh M, Foroughi B. The effect of green shipping practices on multinational companies' loyalty in Malaysia. *The International Journal of Logistics Management*. 2019 Nov 14.
 - [11]. Deng WM, Zhu WW, Lu ZF. Green Total Factor Productivity during the 12th Five-Year Plan Period in China: A Network Malmquist Productivity Index Analysis. *DEStech Transactions on Environment, Energy and Earth Sciences*. 2019(eece).
 - [12]. Landrigan PJ, Fuller R, Fisher S, Suk WA, Sly P, Chiles TC, Bose-O'Reilly S. Pollution and children's health. *Science of the Total Environment*. 2019 Feb 10;650:2389-94.
 - [13]. Farah MF, Shahzad MF. Fast-food addiction and anti-consumption behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*. 2020; 00: 1– 14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12574>
 - [14]. Nam SJ, Hwang H. Consumers' Needs for Public Education and Corporate Participation Regarding Child Internet Addiction: Based on the Risk Perception Attitude Framework. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*. 2019 Sep;53(3):1220-33.
 - [15]. King DL, Delfabbro PH. Video game addiction. In *Adolescent Addiction 2020* Jan 1 (pp. 185-213). Academic Press.
 - [16]. Chen X. Globalization and household saving: is there a link?. *Applied Economics*. 2017 Jun 21;49(29):2797-816.

- [17]. Ismail A, Siddiqui DA. Impact of Sales Promotion on Consumer Impulse Purchases in Karachi, Pakistan. *Pakistan* (May 7, 2019). 2019 May 7.
- [18]. Cha Y, Kwon Y. Why Korean young women consumers buy luxury goods? The influence of cultural orientation and media use. *The Journal of Business, Economics, and Environmental Studies (JBEEES)*. 2018 Apr 30;8(2):23-32.
- [19]. Nau C, Kumanyika S, Gittelsohn J, Adam A, Wong MS, Mui Y, Lee BY. Identifying Financially Sustainable Pricing Interventions to Promote Healthier Beverage Purchases in Small Neighborhood Stores. *Preventing chronic disease*. 2018 Jan;15:E12-.
- [20]. Vandevijvere S, Molloy J, de Medeiros NH, Swinburn B. Unhealthy food marketing around New Zealand schools: a national study. *International journal of public health*. 2018 Dec 1;63(9):1099-107.
- [21]. Singh UK, Gautam N, Bhandari TR, Sapkota N. Educational Intervention of Intention Change for Consumption of Junk Food among School Adolescents in Birgunj Metropolitan City, Nepal, Based on Theory of Planned Behaviors. *Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism*. 2020;2020. Article ID 7932324. Available on <https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/7932324>
- [22]. Hackshaw A, Morris JK, Boniface S, Tang JL, Milenković D. Low cigarette consumption and risk of coronary heart disease and stroke: meta-analysis of 141 cohort studies in 55 study reports. *Bmj*. 2018 Jan 24;360:j5855.
- [23]. Kabwama SN, Ndyabangi S, Mutungi G, Wesonga R, Bahendeka SK, Guwatudde D. Alcohol use among adults in Uganda: findings from the countrywide non-communicable diseases risk factor cross-sectional survey. *Global health action*. 2016 Dec 1;9(1):31302.
- [24]. Wood B, Ruskin G, Sacks G. Targeting Children and Their Mothers, Building Allies and Marginalising Opposition: An Analysis of Two Coca-Cola Public Relations Requests for Proposals. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 2020 Jan;17(1):12.
- [25]. Radzevičė J, Banytė J. Driving Factors of Consumer Irrationality in Omnichannel Consumer Behaviour. In *Marketing and Smart Technologies 2020* (pp. 146-155). Springer, Singapore.
- [26]. Shen N. Consumer rationality/irrationality and financial literacy in the credit card market: Implications from an integrative review. In *Financial Literacy and the Limits of Financial Decision-Making 2016* (pp. 155-176). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.