

Positioning of corporate social responsibility in media reporting

The role of media setting

Jamilah Ahmad and Suriati Saad

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been a serious concern over the past three decades in media reports, public forums, academic debates and governmental policies, mainly because of the increasing careless corporate behaviours, poor and failed corporate governance practices together with continually rising social expectations and stakeholder pressures (Sun et al. 2010). However, issues like corporate fraud, greed, selfishness, short-termism, corporate failure and collapse, abuse of management power and the excess of executive remuneration would not have been so exacerbated and exposed

Media have a huge role in broadcasting corporate social responsibility (CSR) messages to the world at large. For corporations, it is not just about performing their effort for social causes but also to inform their stakeholders and publics so that others are inspired and they set an example for others to follow. Other than creating appealing and conscious advertisement, corporations must procure the cooperation and support of media in spreading awareness about CSR helping society look at the corporation beyond profits and hence the media (which is a guardian of public good) has a huge role to play in this endeavor.

The media can be used to seek volunteers from the society or the specific places where the corporations are launching their CSR initiatives. Further, they can be used to publish articles pertaining to the values and the mission of the corporation in promoting CSR. The way in which the social initiatives undertaken by corporations have been covered in the media speaks volumes about how well the corporation has managed its media coverage. Media function as an independent monitor for corporations and acts as a channel for corporations to communicate with public. How media tell their stories impacts public and policy makers' expectations, and influences decision making and business in socially responsible manner.

Apart from this, the media can also act as a conscience keeper by constantly reminding corporations about the need to give back to society and to look beyond profits. Internationally, *The Guardian* newspaper has been at the forefront of demanding accountability and transparency from the corporations. In India, *The Hindu* does a good job of publishing articles and editorials that exhort the corporations to be socially conscious. Finally, the media can also take a critical view of the CSR programs that a corporation claims to run and it can ensure that the corporation is not indulging in "Green Washing" which is the case where a corporation pretends to follow CSR but in reality does not do so.

What is news?

The media play a critical role in influencing the reputation of companies (Einwiller et al. 2010, Jonsson et al. 2009, Kennedy 2009). By not covering negative corporate news or describing such events in a more positive light, editors and journalists can limit the damage caused by corporate scandals. While editors enjoy some discretion when selecting news stories, competition forces the media to provide content in which the audience has an interest (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). A common finding in empirical studies is that audiences want information that is relevant and new (Clayman and Reisner 1998). In our context, relevance implies that larger and more severe spills are more likely to be covered because they have a bigger impact on the natural environment and possibly human health. Similarly, events at larger firms are likely to find greater interest (Godfrey et al. 2009).

The news content of stories is a second dimension that is important to readers (Meyers 1997). There are many reasons why a faction of an audience may be interested in the CSR performance of a given corporation. Consumers, for instance, might prefer to buy products from socially responsible organisations (e.g., Casadesus-Masanell et al. 2009). Some investors enjoy owning firms that perform well on the CSR dimension (Rosen et al. 1991) and some are concerned that companies that disregard the social consequences of their actions will become the target of regulators and groups of activists, influencing their profitability in the future (Baron and Diermeier 2007, Lyon and Maxwell 2011). Because there are many sources of information about CSR programs – corporation reports, evaluations from independent organisations, as well as media coverage – the audience will have a prior assessment of the degree to which firms engage in CSR. An incident constitutes news if it has the potential to move that assessment.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

CSR is defined as a “voluntary corporate commitment to exceed the explicit and implicit obligations imposed on accompany by society’s expectations of conventional corporate behavior” (Falck and Heblich 2007, p. 247). For corporations, the adoption of CSR strategies can enhance their relationships with multiple stakeholders. Therefore, it is necessary to communicate CSR activities and use effective relationship management to satisfy stakeholders’ expectations and achieve the expected goals of CSR initiatives (Clark 2000, Podnar 2008).

The general understanding is that CSR has three principles which represent environmental, social and economic dimensions (Kingston and Wagner 2004). The terminology for CSR also varies; some organisations refer to it as corporate responsibility, social responsibility, corporate citizenship, sustainability, or sustainable development (Overton 2004). Common definition of social responsibility refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue social and sustainable policies to make which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society (Carroll 1999).

In broad terms, CSR includes responsibilities of corporations to the communities and societies within which they are based and operate. Specifically, it involves a business or corporation identifying its stakeholders and incorporating their needs and values in its day-to-day decision-making processes and practices. Therefore,

CSR is the business commitment companies make to act ethically and contribute to the economic development of the community they do business within, while improving the community's well-being beyond what is legally required of them. Corporations should practice CSR engagement on a voluntary basis and involve in behaviours and actions beyond profit making that help improve the quality of life of the community and the individuals within that community to ensure sustainability of both that community and the corporation's long-term survival and well-being (Ahmad 2010).

Tsoutsoura (2004) described CSR as policies, practices and programs that are integrated into business operations, supply chains and decision-making processes throughout the organisation. These policies and practices usually emphasised on issues related to business ethics, community investment, environmental concerns, governance, human rights, the marketplace as well as the workplace. CSR is essentially a holistic concept whereby organisations decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and cleaner environment (Vuontisjarvi 2006). CSR is a medium to integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations.

The notion of CSR is an important concept and tool for corporations when responding to various concerns raised about their business or other practices in the globalised world they operate in today (Rampton 2004). Corporations and their public relations practitioners have tried to respond to criticisms aimed at them for not being good global citizens by conveying CSR messages to inform the world-at-large that they are in fact positively contributing to or giving back to society in various ways, both locally and globally (Prabu et al. 2005).

Meanwhile, corporate social responsibility reporting is referred to the provision of information about particular mass media (Kent and Monem 2008). Media are a major stakeholder in defining and promoting CSR, and media coverage of CSR sets the agendas for the public and to some extent, for corporations, by raising awareness about CSR issues and selectively emphasising certain aspects of CSR (Luo, 2012). Corporate social reporting or disclosure is, "the process of communicating the social and environmental effects of organisations' economic actions to particular interest groups within society and to society at large" (Gray et al. 1988). It is not a new trend. It has been traced back to 1880s practices of social disclosure by organisations (Guthrie and Parker 1990, Neu et al. 1998).

CSR development in Malaysia

CSR as a common business practice has only recently established a foothold and is now an emerging trend in developing countries such as Malaysia (Ahamed et al. 2014). The degree of awareness and engagement in CSR is not at an ignorance stage (Lo and Yap 2011) due to the increasing number of companies which are actively practicing CSR (Azlan et al. 2013). According to Williams (2008), Malaysia is one of the leading countries in CSR among Southeast Asian countries due to the fact that CSR is part of the National Integrity Plan and the Government Linked Companies transformation programme. Based on research conducted on Malaysia companies, 97.5% of the 198 respondents agreed that Malaysian companies are involved in CSR activities (Lo and Yap 2011). Therefore, Khanifar et al. (2012) suggest that corporations have responsibilities to society that extend making profit.

CSR Malaysia is a network of corporate and academic organisations dedicated to improving responsible business practices (Jamilah and Suriati 2013). The goal of CSR Malaysia is to raise the level of CSR consciousness among corporations in Malaysia and to increase capability to tackle social issues aimed to promote responsible business. However, CSR in Malaysia is often perceived as philanthropic responsibility compared to legal obligation (Jamilah and Suriati 2011).

The origin of CSR can be traced back to developed countries and reflects the concerns of stakeholders in high income countries. It is reported that stakeholders in these parts of the world, including communities, are powerful and able to exert pressure on firms to behave appropriately, and they obtain more attention from firms (Kapelus 2002). It is well understood that CSR concepts were brought to Malaysia mainly through the practices of multinational companies.

Media and corporate social responsibility

According to Zhang and Swanson (2006), media play an indispensable role in the dialogues round CSR. Tench et al. (2007) found that the media view organisations' engagement with CSR through one or more of five possible orientations which are Conformist, Cynic, Realist, Optimist and Strategic Idealist. CSR reporting in general and corporate environmental reporting in particular are in their infancy in Malaysia (Thompson and Zakaria 2004).

The reasons for the apparent low level of corporate environmental reporting in Malaysia is the referred to the lack of government and public pressure, lack of perceived benefits and the widely held view that companies do not significantly impact on the environment. Meanwhile, Bursa Malaysia has launched the CSR Framework for Malaysian public limited companies (PLCs) to adopt the practice of reporting their CSR initiatives. The guidelines for CSR framework and practices are developed based on the four important pillars pertaining: the environment, the community, the marketplace and the workplace as illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Methodology

A study was conducted in two highest circulation newspaper publication in Malaysia for each language; Bahasa Malaysia (*Utusan Malaysia*) and English (*The Star*) for the period of one year starting from January 2013 to December 2013. A content analysis method was used in this study where news articles classified as an act of corporate social behaviour being analysed. The analysis includes types of coverage and how it was presented in the newspaper.

Findings and discussion

Findings of the study indicate that CSR news are getting more attention by the news media. Figure 7.2 shows the number of CSR news coverage throughout the year by both newspapers. There is no significant pattern in the amount of coverage except it was lower in February and September. However, in terms of the type of news coverage, it was clear that social engagement and philanthropy initiatives dominate the type of news reported and indirectly relates to the kind of CSR initiatives taken up by most corporations. Figure 7.3 shows the different news associated to the four pillars of CSR initiatives.

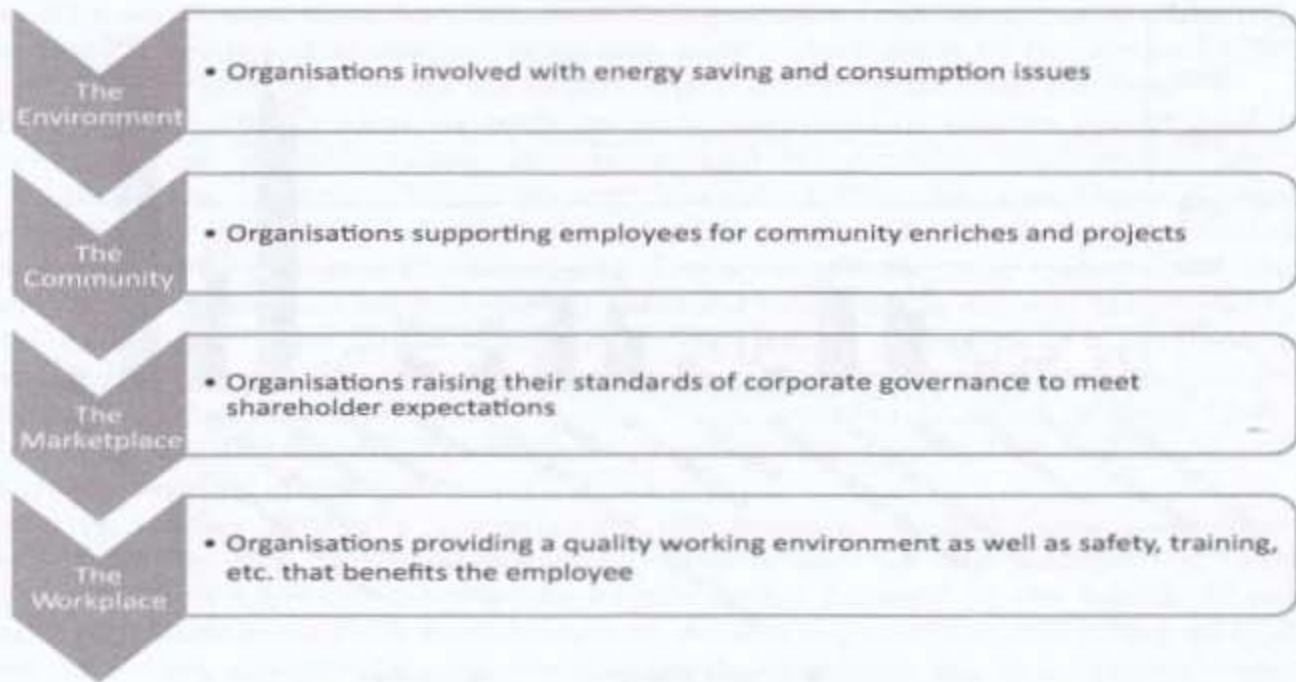


Figure 7.1 The Pillars of Corporate Social Responsibility

Source: Adapted from Bursa Malaysia 2006.

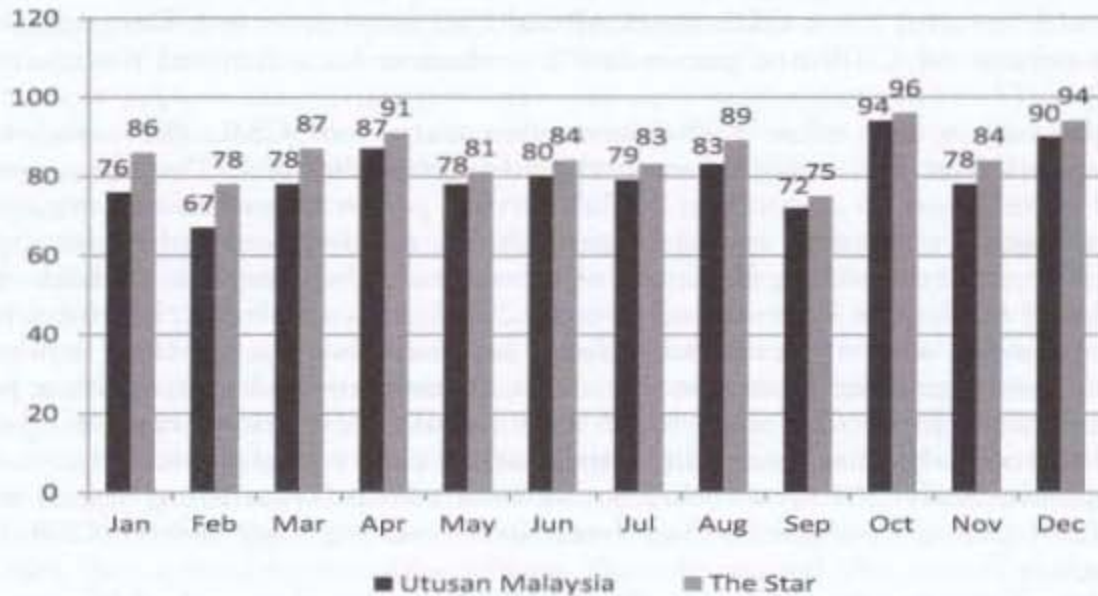


Figure 7.2 CSR News Coverage by Month (Jan–Dec 2013)

Based on the content analysis CSR presented in the press begins with presenting an understanding of the context in which CSR is dealt with in the articles. This is done by the first analytic theme then classified into dominant themes. Thereafter, the classification of the dominant arguments presented in the articles that support the adoption of CSR. Corporations and the press use media space to express their views on what

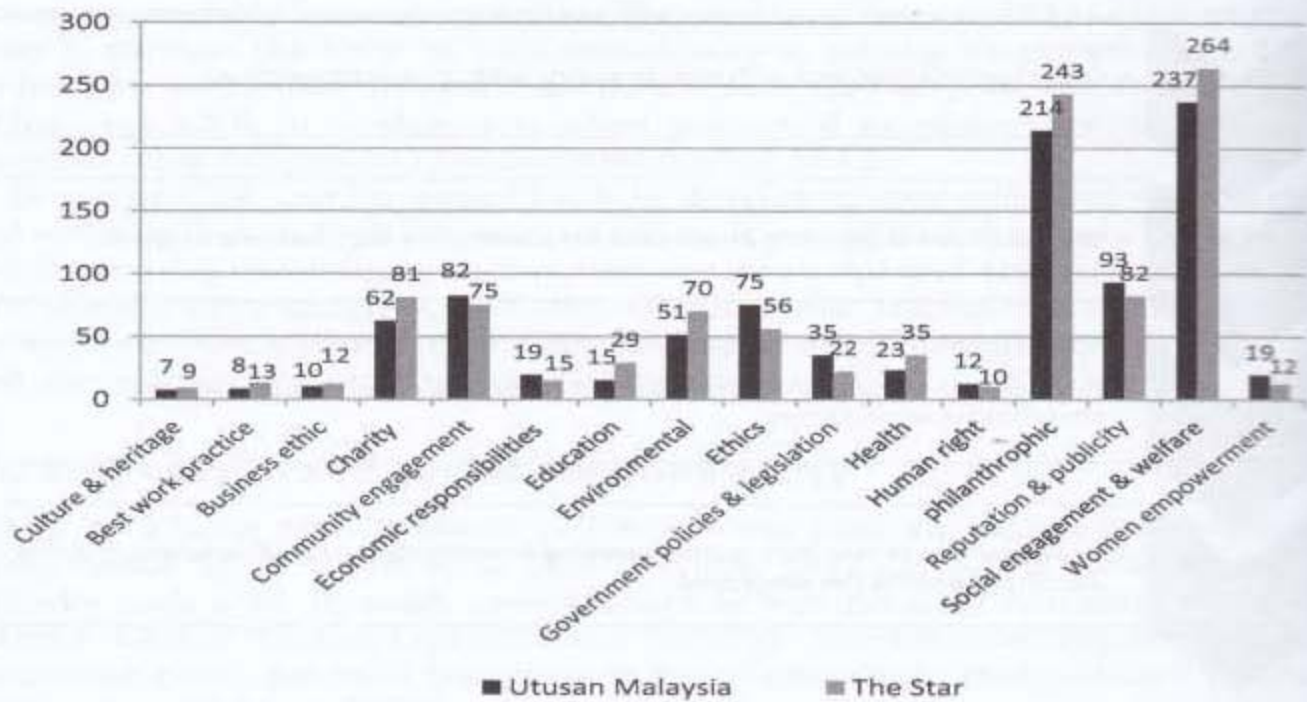


Figure 7.3 CSR News by Category (Jan-Dec 2013)

CSR is, should be, and how CSR work should be implemented. Dominant themes in the news coverage of CSR are presented in relation to a limited number of themes (Figure 7.3).

Despite the vague and often rather complex nature of CSR, the articles report on issues and events that are straightforward and uncomplicated. The most covered issue is discussed in relation to corporate philanthropy projects and social engagement and welfare initiatives. Presenting social responsibility as corporate philanthropy is a traditional way of understanding business and societal relations, which had existed long before the label CSR was introduced (Vogel 2005). Most often, the press frames corporate philanthropy activities as individual, separate events; such as reporting about a local community project by a specific organisation or a donation to a program or project. These activities offer simplified and isolated events to report upon and are therefore also accessible for journalists and rather easy to turn into articles. Reporting on philanthropic activities also reduces the idea of understanding social responsibility as activities that corporations had been involved in, long before CSR has had its breakthrough.

The results of this study correspond with findings from a study on journalists' perception of CSR in the UK (Tench et al. 2007). In Tench et al.'s study, 50% of the responding journalists agree that CSR involves donations to social causes, and as many as 85% of the respondents stress that CSR is about community development. Corporate social responsibility is also frequently referred to and linked to discussions about rules regulating corporate responsibilities. In these articles, CSR is discussed

both in terms of coercive regulations therefore making CSR mandatory for corporations. The news reporting focuses on soft regulation that concerns standards, directives, and guidelines that corporations can choose to follow in the area of CSR. This strengthens the idea of CSR as voluntary and something beyond the law.

The general public's view or opinion of a corporation and its image and reputation is mediated by advertising, the news, and information available in the media that includes the internet (Fombrun and Shanley 1990). Because news is selectively reported due to the process of gatekeeping by the media (Shoemaker et al. 2001) or any content creator at any point in time, and due to time and space constraints, there are always more stories that exist in society than the ones media do and can possibly cover (Carroll and McCombs 2003). Therefore, not all CSR activities of a corporation will be covered in the media at any given time or place. However, a corporation may use a series of strategies such as press releases to increase the chances of their CSR activities being covered in the media and thereby given media exposure and made known to their target publics (Shoemaker et al. 2001).

Previous studies typically investigated the impact of CSR using published news reports (Godfrey et al. 2009, Minor 2011). The results are best understood as describing the effects of CSR conditional on events being covered in the media. If selection is important, however, such media reports do not capture the full effect of CSR programs. To do so, scholars have to investigate the complete set of corporate events of a particular type in a given media market.

According to Einwiller et al. (2010), the media play a critical role in influencing the reputation of companies. By avoiding the coverage of negative corporate news or describing such events in a more positive or neutral light, editors and journalists can limit the damage caused to a corporation. Such practices can influence the process of agenda setting in favour of corporations. Due to media consonance where most leading news outlets report the same news stories and in similar ways (Eilders 2002) and the dependence on the same news wires or press releases by many news organisations, audience interest can be thwarted by the agendas set (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007) by the main media outlets.

While editors enjoy some discretion when selecting news stories, competition can force the media to provide content in which the audience has an interest (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2010). In an era of highly concentrated cross-media ownership patterns seen across the globe, such a diversity of viewpoints, may not always be available to the general public to be well-informed or obtain a holistic view of events.

There are many reasons why a segment of an audience may be interested in CSR performances. For example, consumers might prefer to buy products from socially responsible organisations (Casadesus-Masanell et al. 2009). Some investors enjoy owning shares in firms that perform well on the CSR dimension (Rosen et al. 1991) and some are concerned that corporations that disregard the social consequences of their actions will become the target of regulators and groups of activists, influencing their profitability in the future (Lyon and Maxwell 2011). Generally, extensive media coverage of the financial crisis and the related corporate behaviour are usually associated with issues of business ethics. This would be a good example of CSR concept-coverage without the media employing the generally explicit term of CSR (Pomeroy and Dolnicar 2009).

Role of media

It has been argued that scholarly research needs to pay attention to the role that media play in influencing management practices (Engwall and Sahlin 2007, Mazza and Alvarez 2000). It is also worth taking a look back to see how the often symbiotic business-media relationships came about. According to Argenti (2009), the expanded media, referred to as “the press” in earlier times, has always had a more antagonistic relationship with business, even in the American context. Therefore, it is useful to examine if this phenomenon still exists today especially in Malaysia.

The role of media as a creator and circulator of management ideas and behaviour is further strengthened by the massive development of business media over the past few decades. Business news has gained a prominent position as media are extensively covering corporate, financial and business news (Carroll 2010). Thereby, business media increasingly penetrate and shape corporate activities and vice versa by setting corporate agendas ascribing meaning to corporate events and activities (Hellgren et al. 2002), and creating and circulating management knowledge (Mazza and Alvarez 2000). Given the important role that media play in corporate life, scant attention has been paid to the role of media in the construction and popularisation of CSR – especially to examine if corporate agendas also influence media agendas.

Waddock (2002) indicate that “the main purposes of corporate news releases aimed at the media are to provide society with an accurate understanding of corporate activities and to carry out one’s responsibility to inform the public”. It underlines the notion that publicity is influenced by the power of the media. However, corporate press releases described as “information subsidies” (Griffin and Dunwoody 1995, Sweetser and Brown 2008, Zoch 2006) the media receives from corporations and used in producing news content, allow corporations to set or shape the media agenda and thereby the public agenda. This is more so with smaller news outlets, which depend largely on media releases to subsidise their newsgathering costs. The common argument being that in order for a corporation to proceed with its business, it is important to provide information about the organisation to the public via the media (with information subsidies), is balanced on the other hand by the question that such a dependence on media releases will undermine the independence and objectivity of the news reaching the general public. CSR initiatives are also interpreted as efforts by a corporation to gain free exposure in the media for the benefit of their clients.

The symbiotic relationship between the media and CSR

According to the *CSR Digest* (2009), corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the media go hand in hand, with the media disseminating CSR activities and information to the public. But the question is what CSR really means to the media industry. There are also perceptions that the media reporting on CSR are often related to corporate philanthropy such as organisations donating to the poor, sponsorships for education and charitable activities that benefit the less fortunate, etc. However, some of this philanthropy could be good for entire communities as they can be projects aimed at environmental sustainability. For example corporate sponsorship of a mangrove plantation project by the Fishermen’s Association in Penang helps fishermen to sustain their income because the healthy growth of mangroves increases biodiversity of the

waterways they grow in by increasing the growth of fishes and other aquatic species. This eventually strengthens the livelihoods of the local community and by extension the country's socio-economic well being.

In order to encourage media to cover CSR activities in Malaysia, the prime minister's CSR Awards were launched by the Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development in 2007 (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development 2012). This has encouraged more organisations to recognise the significance and value of integrating CSR into all aspects of their business operations and decision-making processes. As a result, communities should be seen as more than just a market for the roll-out of products and services for a corporation.

One could argue that there should also be a code for compliance in Malaysia, requiring media organisations to fulfill their own CSR obligations. This would ensure that media will disseminate accurate information on behalf of their stakeholders for the sake of good governance by government institutions, corporations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), etc. Media should also be able to play their role as a watchdog by freely critiquing organisations that use CSR simply for gaining free publicity for their organisations. CSR media reporting should be encouraged because CSR initiatives are a long-term engagement needed to maintain the sustainability of both organisations and communities. However, one could also argue that this is a responsibility already and traditionally entrusted to the media and their actual role today would be to make sure they do not get swayed by media subsidies when reporting corporate CSR activities.

Social media on the other hand provide alternative channels for CSR-related news dissemination and communication for corporations, NGOs and even state organisations, which can then bypass the traditional media gatekeepers (Weerakkody and Monaghan 2011). Social media is changing the way organisations report on CSR because it allows organisations to extend their efforts and CSR initiatives to new groups of stakeholders by communicating directly and interactively with them by receiving audience feedback on their activities. By proactively engaging in social media, corporations can gather more insight into the conversations or dialogues that take place on the blogosphere and understand stakeholder concerns and trends to help them better respond to new challenges (Suzanne 2009).

The news is selectively reported, a fuller understanding of the costs and benefits of CSR activities requires corporations to appreciate how investments in CSR influence the likelihood and quality of press coverage. Corporations' CSR records do in fact influence the probability that the media will pick up a story. Both leading corporations and CSR laggards experience increased media scrutiny. From our observation on media reporting throughout 2013, the results are consistent with prior research about news selection, which indicates that editors favor two types of stories: philanthropical and social engagement. An interesting question for future research is whether CSR can work as insurance for corporations in gaining better perception from stakeholders.

In previous studies of the popularisation of ideas about corporate behaviour, stakeholders are identified as pressure groups, thereby, playing significant roles in governing and influencing organisational behaviour and the adoption of ideas (e.g., den Hond et al. 2007, Peng and Lin 2008). In particular, it has been argued that research needs to pay attention to the role that media play in influencing management practice

(e.g., Engwall and Sahlin 2007, Mazza and Alvarez 2000). For example, Alvarez et al. (2005) made inquiries for studies addressing “the issue of how the media legitimatises and delegitimatises management practices”.

This was supported by Deephouse and Heugens (2009) where they emphasise news media as a significant stakeholder when it comes to put pressure on corporations to change behaviour. The role of media as a creator and circulator of management ideas and behavior is further strengthened by the massive development of business media over the past few decades. Business news has gained a prominent position as media are extensively covering corporate life (Carroll 2010, Duval 2005, Grafström 2006, Kjaer and Slaatta 2007). Thereby, business media increasingly penetrate and shape corporate activities by setting corporate agendas (Carroll 2010, Carroll and McCombs 2003), ascribing meaning to corporate events and activities (e.g., Hellgren et al. 2002, Vaara and Tienari 2002), and creating and circulating management knowledge (Abrahamson and Fairchild 1999, Mazza and Alvarez 2000, Westphal et al. 1997). Given the important role that media play in corporate life, scarce attention has been paid to the role of media in the construction and popularisation of CSR (Tench et al. 2007). The article, thereby, contributes with insights on how corporate social behaviour is presented and mediated in the business press during which this idea has gained prominence. From the previous studies, we know that media matters in the business life. Media are not passive distributors of news, but rather they are active carriers that circulate and create knowledge and models (Mazza and Alvarez 2000, Sahlin-Andersson and Engwall 2002), and thereby influence the consumption of management knowledge (Abrahamson and Fairchild 1999, Alvarez et al. 2005). Media and business media in particular, influence corporate practice by distributing images and ideas on how corporations and corporate leaders should behave (Chen and Meindl 1991, Pollock and Rindova 2003). Business news media have an increasingly important role as agenda-setter (Carroll 2010, Carroll and McCombs 2003) and “sensemaker” by ascribing meaning to and legitimising corporate events and activities (e.g., Hellgren et al. 2002, Vaara and Tienari 2002). Findings from these studies have demonstrated how visibility in media influences the circulation and adoption of management ideas and models. Therefore, it is apt to assume that media also influence the adoption of CSR.

The interest of media for CSR influences corporate actors’ interpretation and practice of the same concept. Media is an important stakeholder as media actors intermediate information, and stress that organisations are more likely to adopt social issues when they are paid attention to in the media. Deephouse and Heugens launch the concept infomediaries (information intermediaries) to highlight the role of information in the adoption processes of issues and ideas. Infomediaries, such as media, link organisational actors to societal issues (or ideas), and thereby contribute to the adoption of the same issues. Hence, among the groups of infomediaries, news media play a significant role in “creating linkages between putatively negative or dysfunctional situations in the form of social issues on the one hand, and responsible parties or focal firms whom control resources for issue resolution on the other” (Deephouse and Heugens 2009, p. 549). Media need to be addressed as a force influencing organisational and corporate life, rather than – as often has been the case in the organisational literature – be treated as an independent and unbiased recorder of news events. Media should not only be understood as a mirror of external events

and actions, but as actors that frame and interpret practices, ideals, and events (e.g., Schudson 2003).

According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the agenda setting theory has developed a framework for understanding media content as something that influences public knowledge and opinions. In short, the agenda-setting theory proposes that "the prominence of elements in the news influences the prominence of those elements among the public" (Carroll and McCombs 2003, pp. 36–37). The theory has developed into two levels of agenda-setting: whereas the first level of agenda setting concerns merely the media attention to certain events, issues, or actors, the second level is about how these events, issues, or actors are presented – what attributes are attached to them. Given the vague character of CSR, it is a concept that to a high degree is open for interpretations and reinterpretations in the business press. Schudson (2003) expresses it as "news is not a mirror of reality. It is a representation of the world, and all representations are selective."

Similarly, Chen and Meindl (1991) demonstrate how the popular press created and recreated the image of the corporate leader Donald Burr during his time at People Express. A comprehensive understanding of media must take into account their double roles: Media are both actors – as they construct ideas about CSR – and arenas – as they allow for stakeholders to present their views on CSR. Previous studies demonstrate that news production often takes place in interplay between media and other actor groups such as PR consultants, corporations, non-governmental organisations, and politicians (e.g., Ericson et al. 1989). Media content is hence not constructed in isolation at media organisations; rather, it takes form in constant interplay between various actors. There is a mutual dependence between media and other stakeholders as media are dependent on information from different sources to produce news stories (Deephouse and Heugens 2009), and stakeholders need to access media to further their ends (e.g., Deephouse 2000, Grafström and Pallas 2007).

Stakeholders are not equally visible in media; rather, media tend to rely on certain sources more than others (Danielian and Page 1994, Ericson et al. 1989, Gans 1979/2004). It is, therefore, reasonable to argue that certain actors have higher potential of reaching out with their views and interpretations on CSR than others. Therefore, media have the potential to influence interpretations as well as practices of CSR. By giving media space to CSR and presenting and framing the issue in a particular way, the business media have a potential to influence corporations' attitudes to CSR. Media participate in setting the corporate CSR agenda by deciding what issues become salient, and what attributes are highlighted, and by allowing certain actor groups to express their views on CSR.

Conclusion

As CSR comes in many forms, researchers, practitioners, politicians, and representatives of the civil society have been searching for clarification and definitions of CSR (Carroll 1979, 1999, Garriga and Mele 2004); yet, there is no set definition. Frankental (2001, p. 20) even argues that the vagueness of CSR implies that it "can mean anything to anybody, and therefore is effectively without meaning". Although there are varying definitions and interpretations of the content and meaning of CSR, the adoption of the idea, broadly defined during the last decade, is impressive. It has

become increasingly important for corporations to account for their behaviour, products, brands, and reputation in terms of social responsibility (McMillan 2007, Vanhamme and Grobbsen 2008, Vogel 2005).

Today more and more companies appear to be realising that in order to stay productive, competitive, and relevant in a rapidly changing globalised business world, they have to become socially responsible as well as be financially successful. Globalisation has also created fierce competition for skilled employees, investors, and consumer loyalty. Similarly, over the last decade, media have demonstrated a growing interest in CSR (Grasform 2011). The coverage of CSR activities in the media capture the varying forms of CSR and provide an understanding for how these issues are perceived in the corporate world. As the media coverage of CSR increases in a given media outlet or market, it draws attention to CSR and its positive effects on both the corporation and the community it serves. Therefore, it is important to make CSR an important aspect of any corporate agenda.

Ideally, in reporting a CSR-related story, journalists are required to fulfill certain guidelines consisting of some important factors that will vary depending on the industry, the corporation, and general context such as the culture of the location in which the corporation operates and other relevant issues.

Media contribute to the construction of meaning to CSR in corporate practice by creating links between:

- CSR and corporate activities
- CSR and media positioning
- CSR and news value

Each factor has several key elements that keen minds will automatically survey – particularly once within a specific framework. Therefore, CSR should be truly representing corporation's honesty and it has to be more than fulfilling the requirement.

The article consists of an overview of the CSR and media scenario to date as well as an insight to findings of a study analysis on analysed newspaper coverage on CSR in the two Malaysian newspapers. Both newspapers prominently highlight issues that illustrate the philanthropic and environmental concerns the corporation holds within a carefully hidden economic and legal agenda. CSR is being gauged and perceived by society and media as an organisation's activities/role to help the local community and society at large in addition to fulfilling its moral and ethical "duties and obligations" towards society.

CSR activities in Malaysia are merely a means for an organisation to receive publicity via the media attention the activities attract, while engaging in community relations activities. The media however will not distinguish between a corporation's CSR initiatives and community activities and there will be no significant relationship between the language used when reporting on CSR activities and others. Therefore, media is an essential aid to CSR development while becoming an important channel for providing of publicity for an organisation.

Media in Malaysia can be considered as CSR-friendly because any news under the CSR platform is usually taken as an organisation's efforts and initiatives towards society. Most of the time media in Malaysia do not cover any negative aspects of an organisation's CSR initiatives or critique the relevant CSR exercises and activities

which also indicates it is community support, not critical media analysis that follows any CSR initiatives of an organisation.

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FINANCE, GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: CHALLENGES TO THEORY AND PRACTICE

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Doing well by being good

Edited by Güler Aras and Coral Ingley

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'Anyone involved in the development of boardroom functioning will treasure this book because it provides another avenue to help academics and professionals become reflective, observant and introspective. This will be extremely helpful in gaining knowledge for improving business strategy and leading the business of sustainability. True experts on each topic have contributed in achieving this. Impeccable!'

Manoj K. Raut, *CEO and Director, Institute of Directors*

Companies can no longer expect to engage in dubious or unethical corporate behavior without risking their reputation and damaging, perhaps irrevocably, their market position. Irresponsible corporate behavior not only deprives shareholders of long-term returns but also ultimately imposes a cost on society as a whole. Sustainable business is about ensuring that entities contribute toward positive social, environmental, and economic outcomes. Bad business behavior is costly for stakeholders, for markets, for society, and the economy alike.

To ensure that a company behaves well, the buy-in of the leadership team is crucial. The full commitment of the board of directors, in conjunction with the senior managers of the organization, is required if an organization is to be socially responsible. In this sense, leadership does not reside with an individual (the CEO) within the organization but with all of those at the apex of corporate power and control. Effective change management requires enlightened and capable leadership to instigate and drive the process of embedding a sustainable and socially responsible corporate philosophy and culture that supports good business decision-making. A profound understanding of the requirements of such a leadership process will help corporate managers become highly effective change agents.

Governance will be the main driver of this change. For the economy and financial markets to become sustainable and resilient, radical changes in corporate leadership need to take place. Integrated reporting, government regulation, and international standards will all be important factors in bringing about this change.

As well as understanding the effects of corporate behavior on financial markets, such an understanding is also now imperative in relation to the social and environmental contexts.

Güler Aras is a professor of finance and accounting at Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey, and the founding director of The Center for Finance, Governance and Sustainability (CFGs) at YTU. She is the former Dean of the business and economic faculty and Dean of the Graduate School. She has served as a visiting professor at Georgetown University, McDonough School of Business. Her research focus is on financial economy and financial markets with particular emphasis on the relationship between sustainability, corporate governance, corporate social responsibility, and corporate financial performance. She has published more than 20 books, has contributed over 250 articles in academic, business, and professional journals and edited several book collections. She also acts as an independent board member for many organizations.

Coral Ingley is Associate Professor of Management in the faculty of business and law at the Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand. In 2006 she founded and is Director of the Centre for Corporate Governance at the university and is a member of the faculty's Work Research Institute. She has served as a visiting professor at Sorbonne University, Paris, ESC-Troyes, France, Maastricht University, the Netherlands, and Toulouse Business School, Barcelona, Spain. Her research focus is on corporate governance.

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