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GUEST EDITORIAL

Marketing and corporate social responsibility and agenda for future research

Marketing y responsabilidad social corporativa y agenda para futuras investigaciones

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Goals and methods for this special issue

The very meaning of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has transformed, from an interesting ideology to a realistic necessity for modern business. Along with this transformation, CSR has moved to the top of various research agendas (Greenfield, 2004; Maignan & Ralston, 2002; McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Pearce & Doh, 2005), prompted debates about whether ''doing good [is] the right thing to do, but . . . also leads to doing better'' (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2004, p. 9), and led to manifold publications in both books and journals (e.g., Dunphy, Griffiths, & Benn, 2003; Kotler & Lee, 2005; issue 1 of *California Management Review* 2004; issue 1 of *Journal of Management Studies* 2006). If organizations thus face demands that they define their roles and impacts and apply ethical, legal, social, responsible standards to their activities (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004; Lindgreen & Swaen, 2004), this outcome seemingly is a direct result of how CSR has developed, reflecting different scholars' applications of various theories to understand it, from agency and institutional theory to the resource-based view of the firm to stakeholder and stewardship theory (for a review, see McWilliams, Van Fleet, & Cory, 2002; also see Carroll, 1979; Wartick & Cochran, 1985; Windsor, 2006). Yet such broad expectations of CSR also encompass different, underdeveloped conceptualizations of the topic (Pinkston & Carroll, 1994; Snider, Hill, & Martin, 2003), such that a lack of clear proscriptions for how to adopt CSR not only prevents practitioners from adopting it but also limits researchers from advancing theoretical insights into CSR. Noting the unresolved issues that remain, this special issue collects a selection of novel, cutting-edge theories and research on marketing and corporate social responsibility.

The combination is meaningful, because CSR and marketing share several research and practice goals. Consider, for example, that marketing aims to maximize stakeholder value, and CSR demands ongoing dialog with stakeholders to address their needs. Both marketing and CSR literature confirm that stakeholders will reward responsible companies, and they also caution that in certain cases, CSR can prompt problematic consumer behaviors (e.g., skepticism, reduced purchase intentions, greater backlash against unethical actions for companies that claim CSR). But these research streams recognize that CSR has benefits for companies, beyond ties with customers, in that it can establish a good corporate reputation, enhance brand equity, strengthen ties with suppliers or distributors across the supply chain, and increase employees' sense of identification with or pride in their employing firm. Because CSR ultimately represents a dialog with these various stakeholders, a key research need arises in terms of how to communicate about CSR, through

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various media and social networks. That need is the motivation for this special issue.

Contributions to the special issue

This special issue begins with a contribution by Juan Carlos Sanclemente Tellez, ''Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Moving Between Broadening the Concept of Marketing and Social Factors as a Marketing Strategy.'' He notes the pressing need to explain how marketing managers can adopt CSR-related activities to generate value for stakeholders, as well as to expand marketers' understanding of how to implement CSR. Therefore, using a literature review and empirical evidence, he links the CSR concept to marketing according to a newly developed classification of the different theoretical perspectives that have been proposed in prior research to highlight the interrelations between the constructs.

José Víctor García Jiménez, Salvador Ruiz de Maya, and Inés López López also attempt to establish a clearer link in their article, ''The Impact of Congruence Between the CSR Activity and the Company's Core Business on Consumer Response to CSR.'' In this case, they show that the congruence of a CSR campaign with a firm's core business is a critical connection, moderated by consumers' skepticism, that represents a strong determinant of the ultimate effects of a CSR campaign.

To investigate another outcome of CSR, Jesús García-Madariaga and Fernando Rodríguez-Rivera consider market value implications—or what they call the Holy Grail of CSR—in their study, ''Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Satisfaction, Corporate Reputation, and Firms' Market Value: Evidence from the Automobile Industry.'' Whereas most research relies on subjective measures of CSR performance, in multiple sectors and in the short term, they propose using an objective CSR performance rating (Ethical Portfolio Management, owned by EIRIS) and apply it to the automobile industry over eight years. They thus can reveal that CSR issues that relate to the core business and critical stakeholders can induce better financial performance by firms.

Next, to determine how the media used to communicate about socially responsible activities determine perceptions of CSR, in ''The Influence of the Types of Media on the Formation of Perceived CSR,'' Pere Mercadé Melé, Sebastián Molinillo Jiménez, and Antonio Fernández Morales conduct an empirical study with advertisements touting socially responsible activities, inserted in either a newspaper or a social network. The results, reflecting surveys conducted with 623 consumers in Spain, specify that consumers' perceptions of CSR vary with the medium used to communicate it. In newspaper settings, congruence between the company and cause influences CSR directly and indirectly through corporate credibility; in social networks, only the indirect relationship emerges, and corporate credibility reveals a more intense link to CSR. Yet for other outcomes, such as perceived corporate ability, the communication channel seems to matter less.

Inés Küster-Boluda and Isabel Vidal-Capilla note the rise of functional foods as a foundation for healthy habits, leading them to investigate ''The Consumer Attitudes in Functional Food Choice.'' Specifically, they study the influences of consumer attitudes on choices and consumption of functional foods, using a newly proposed model that integrates well-supported theories from prior literature. Their sample of 333 consumers suggests that consumer attitudes have direct influences on willingness to consume functional foods, whereas a healthy lifestyle has no effect on attitudes but reduces willingness to adopt functional foods. In addition to a few positive influences on healthy lifestyles, this study uncovers a moderating role of gender.

Further research

As these articles reveal, issues surrounding CSR represent a rich area of inquiry. The research findings illustrate the myriad ways organizations design and implement their CSR initiatives, measure the performance outcomes of their initiatives, communicate about their engagement in CSR to stakeholders, and attempt to build a business case for CSR. As such, this informative special issue offers insights into conditions for successful CSR; in particular, these collected contributions clearly establish the need for sensitivity to the norms and values of stakeholders and open conversations with representatives from multiple communities. Accordingly, managers can use the insights from this issue to determine which CSR initiatives to undertake, which resources to leverage, how to communicate about their CSR involvement to various stakeholder groups, and how to integrate stakeholders actively in the process. In addition, this special issue should encourage continued, extended research on CSR topics that remain insufficiently researched.

In this regard, it is worth noting that this field of literature and its corresponding applications tend to be based in Anglo-Saxon contexts, without accounting for the specificities of unique countries—or even different continents. The social, political, cultural, and economic variables that define any given environment (e.g., Latin America) could hinder the extrapolation of theories and practices. Therefore, a study of large multinational enterprise campaigns that accounts for the interrelationships across marketing and corporate social responsibility would be invaluable for revealing more refined practices in this regard. Of particular research interest is consumers' trade-off between CSR and price fairness, that is, to which extent a responsible product is more expensive because of the company's implementation of CSR-related practices (Habel, Schons, Alavi, & Wieseke, 2016). Recent studies also are analyzing how perceptions of price fairness are affected by product type, hedonic vs. functional use (Luchs & Kumar, 2017), consumer attributions (Habel et al., 2016; Marín, Cuestas, & Román, 2016) and consumer identification with the company (Deng & Xu, 2017). All of these variables play a central role in the analysis of consumer behavior toward CSR and responsible products.

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