

Job Seekers Perception on Green Employer Branding and Corporate Social Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

The study analyzes the perception of students in their final semester studying at international higher education destinations on the green employer branding and corporate social responsibility. We believe that these job seekers are influenced by the social actions of potential employers and we will test this hypothesis using a statistical model. Data was gathered using a survey in which students reported demographic data about themselves, their perceptions about employer branding, the importance they placed on corporate social responsibility and other factors such as their views on the free market, their political engagement. The survey instrument combines measures from (Klimkiewicz & Oltra, 2017) and (Jost et al., 2003)

A total of 101 respondents completed the questionnaire. The respondents were graduating or recent graduates from international higher education locations such as EMU and other universities across Europe. The relationship between perception towards CSR was analyzed by gender, work experience and the generation they are part of.

The theoretical framework was established by conducting a thorough literature review using academic articles, books, journals, statistical information and prior studies on green employer branding and job seekers perspective on green employer branding. The data analysis and hypothesis testing was carried out using JAMOVI statistical software.

Promoting a greener environment is a major goal for many businesses today, consequently findings from this study can help companies and managers improve their employer branding in line with this goal. International higher education institutions are faced with the expectation to contribute to the employability of their graduates and they can benefit from understanding the attitudes of students towards employer attractiveness and corporate social responsibility.

Keywords: Employer branding, Employer attractiveness, Corporate social responsibility, Free market

ÖZ

Çalışma uluslararası yüksek öğrenim kurumlarında son döneminde olan veya yeni mezun olmuş olan üniversite öğrencilerinin yeşil işveren markası ve kurumsal sosyal sorumlulukları ile ilgili algılarını incelemektedir. İş arayanların potansiyel iş başvurusu yaparken işverenlerin sosyal davranışlarından etkilendiklerine inanmaktayız ve bu çalışmada bu hipotezi istatistiksel bir model ile test etmekteyiz. Çalışmada kullanılan veriler öğrencilerin demografik bilgileri, işveren markası algıları, kurumsal sorumluluğa verdikleri önem, serbest piyasa sistemi ile ilgili görüşleri, siyasi etkinlikleri ile ilgili cevapladıkları bir anket ile toplanmıştır. Anket sorularının hazırlanmasında literatürde önceden geliştirilmiş ölçeklerden faydalanılmıştır.

Toplam 101 katılımcı anketi cevaplamıştır. Katılımcılar DAÜ ve Avrupa'da çeşitli üniversitelerde mezuniyete yakın veya yeni mezun olmuş öğrencilerden oluşmuştur. Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk ile ilgili görüşler ile cinsiyet, çalışma tecrübesi ve katılımcı yaşı arasında olası ilişkiler incelenmiştir.

Kuramsal çerçeve literatür taraması ile oluşturulmuş ve mevcut akademik makale, kitaplarda yeşil işveren markası, iş arayanların önem verdiği unsurlar ile ilgili daha önce yapılan çalışmaların bulguları ile oluşturulan kuramsal öğretilerden yararlanılmıştır. Veri analizi için JAMOVI istatistik programı kullanılmıştır.

Yeşil bir çevreye katkıda bulunmak günümüzde birçok işletme için önemli bir hedef olarak görülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları kurumların işveren markalarını bu hedef doğrultusunda oluşturmasına katkıda bulunabilecektir. Uluslararası yüksek

öğretim kurumları için mezunlarının iş bulabilmesi önemli bir beklentidir. Yüksek öğretim kurumlarının öğrenci ve mezunlarının işveren markasında neler aradığını ve kurumsal sosyal sorumluluğa verdikleri önemi daha iyi anlaması gereklidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşveren markası, işveren çekiciliği, Kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk, Serbest piyasa felsefesi

*To My Father Who
Made Everything Possible*

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance of the Study

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is when a company engages in sustainable practices by implementing policies and setting goals that benefit the public, having a positive contribution to society, remaining socially accountable, surpassing satisfactory expectations and creating value (Luetkenhorst, 2004).

Corporate social responsibility has been a highly discussed topic in the academic world and very important factor in corporate communication and the employer branding (Amaladoss & Manohar, 2013; McElhaney, 2008; Ziek, 2009). CSR is also very valuable for job seeking individuals, different groups of people value CSR-related activities and view it positively or even as a necessity in potential employers.

The free market is a system in which buyers and sellers self-regulate and control the prices for services and products, no government interference in regards to laws is present and economic equilibrium is obtained by the forces of supply and demand (Popper, 2005). The manner in which people perceive the free market is what will be referred to as the free market ideology (FMI).

There isn't enough research that analyzes how demographic variables affect how job seekers view green employer branding and CSR, therefore its valuable for hiring managers to see the perspective of job seekers and how they perceive CSR.

1.2 Research Gap

Recent studies have primarily focused on the uses of CSR and its benefits, the few that have discussed the challenges that businesses face when implementing CSR have discovered that the high costs of implementing CSR contradicts with firms trying to maximize short-term profit (Jonker & De Witte, 2006). Firms also face challenges due to lack of employee awareness regarding corporate social responsibility (Castka & Balzarova, 2007). Furthermore, in some cases the shareholders show the tendency to show less interest in their employees perception of CSR and even customers show carelessness when it comes to CSR initiatives and the long-term benefits that come with them (Córdoba-Pachón et al., 2014).

The main challenge firms face however is balancing the abilities of their human resource department in order to surpass the satisfactory levels of social responsibility and contribute to society in a positive manner while at the same time maintaining success in business operations and generating profit. Moreover, the stakeholders' theory explains how managers and leaders can have a mutual understanding of the necessary changes in order to plan collectively with all other members as the stakeholders' theory considers the relationship and communicated needed between different parts of the organization such as partners, suppliers, employees, customers, creditors and the government and it could influence the implementation process of CSR and make it more effective (Arenas, 2014).

Given that corporations might overlook CSR-related programs due to their costs or the lack of interest by the shareholders, this could create a negative image in the eyes of potential employees that value CSR-related programs and policies in their potential employers which could create future problems for these corporations when they try to hire new employees. Knowing this we will be looking into whether the new workforce values CSR highly and attempt to gage the value of CSR for specific demographics such as gender, work experience etc., in order to create a clearer image of how the new job seekers view CSR and value it in their potential employers.

1.3 Main Objectives

This study aims to address the perceptions of job seekers towards green employer branding and corporate social responsibility. In order to find out how different groups react to CSR-related measures, factors such as gender, generation, work experience will be analyzed to see how they affect perceptions of the job seekers towards CSR-related measures such as norms on CSR, positive view towards CSR, engagement with CSR, and importance placed on CSR. In addition, factors such as views on the free market, political engagement and education level will also be analyzed in order to see how they affect the CSR-related measures. The further aim of this study is to aid hiring managers at employing individuals that fit the image of the organization.

1.4 Statement of the Research Question

1. How does gender affect views on CSR?
2. Are there any differences between generation Y and generation Z in regards to their views towards CSR?
3. How does work experience influence a job seekers perception towards CSR?
4. How does a job seeker view towards the free market influence their view towards CSR?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Employer Attractiveness and Employer Branding

Employer attractiveness and employer branding are two similar concepts that go hand in hand, they are used by organizations with the goal of gaining competitive advantages, first let's take a look at employer attractiveness.

Potential benefits that an individual perceives when being employed at a specific organization is known as employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005), moreover in today's competitive environment, employer attractiveness can be a vital tool for firms that want to attract brilliant minds and high-quality employees.

Measuring employer attractiveness can be hard, however there are certain factors which give us a grasp on the topic, those factors are as follows: work, corporate culture, knowledge transferability, social contribution, marital status, work and the opportunities to further develop.

Characteristics of resources and factors such as being difficult to replicate, rarity, valuable and being non substitutable are what give a firm competitive advantage and allows the organization to be one step ahead over its competitors (Barney, 1991).

The next concept is employer branding, although similar to employer attractiveness, it has its differences, Employer branding is created by the firm investing in human capital and overtime this will give the firm value. In addition, resource-based view indicates that the characteristics of an organizations resources may lead to a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

Various research and recent studies suggest that potential employees compare and consider the image of the organization with their own image, needs, values, personalities, characteristics and interests (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Hewitt Associates, who are human resource consultants state that there are five steps to implementing and developing a good employer brand. The first step is analyzing your organization and understanding it. Next, we have produced a compelling brand promise aimed at the employees similar to the one that exists for the customers. The third step is developing standards with the purpose of measuring and keeping track of the fulfilment you have in regards to your brand promise. The next step is to ensure that all employees are ‘ruthlessly aligned’ in their practices and reinforcing the firms brand promise. The final step is the execution of the plan and measuring it in order to keep track of progress.

The external marketing that the employer establishes creates an image for the firm as a desirable location which will then assist the firm in attracting brilliant minds and high-quality employees, this is done due to the distinctiveness of the brand image that the firm possesses. Employees that get attracted will develop certain assumptions in regards to employment at the organization which will also carry on into the firm, which as a result will support the values of the organization and the overall commitment the

employee will have to the organization. On the other hand, internal marketing assists the firm in developing a hard to imitate workforce. This is done by systematically enforcing and aligning employees with the value proposition of the organization's employer brand. The mentioned workplace culture is built upon corporate goals and objectives which enable the organization to obtain a unique culture which focuses on carrying on business the way of the organization (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

Prospective employees will develop certain associations from the information sources available that aren't employer controlled. In addition, the principle of an effective employer branding is the process of taking a proactive approach by choosing good brand associations and further developing them (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

According to Leekha (2014), employer branding as a whole is a concept that is developing and evolving. The employer image is greatly impacted and affected by the employer brand associations, which as a result will then have an effect on the attractiveness of the firm to the job seeking potential employees (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). Employer attractiveness and employer branding are two concepts that are very similar and closely related, the former is thought of as the predecessor of latter (Berthon et al., 2005).

2.1.1 What Factors Influence Employer Attractiveness

The three main aspects of attractiveness are functional aspects, economic aspects and psychological aspects (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). The functional dimensions are corresponding with the development of beneficial practices, the economic dimension is related to the materialistic and monetary gains, lastly the psychological dimension is associated with the feeling of belonging, having a purpose and a direction.

According to Berthon et al. (2005), who made the employer attractiveness scale by integrating and developing the dimensions and studies of Ambler and Barrow (1996), we can see the five factors that influence employer attractiveness:

1. Interest Value: this dimension measures the extent that an individual is attracted to their employer who is encouraging creativity by providing a pleasant work environment with a challenging and stimulating job (Berthon et al., 2005).
2. Social Value: this factor assesses the extend that an individual is attracted to a firm which provides a pleasant and positive work environment which has attributes such team spirit, happy, fun and opportunities for good relationships (Berthon et al., 2005).
3. Economic Value: this value analyzes aspects such as promotion opportunities, compensation packages, job security and above average wages (Berthon et al., 2005).
4. Development Value: this factor measures the extent of attractiveness of an individual to an organization that provides them with a career enhancing environment, recognition, confidence and self-worth (Berthon et al., 2005).
5. Application Value: this value highlights the opportunity in which an individual is able to apply their knowledge and expertise in a workplace that is considered humanitarian (Berthon et al., 2005).

Job satisfaction is a concept that is closely related to employer attractiveness, some studies indicate that job satisfaction is based on the individual's differences (Clark, 1997, Allen & Van der Velden, 2001). Moreover, another perspective is that satisfaction is only applicable to individuals who have experienced the satisfaction or possessed it (Strong Jr, 1958).

2.1.2 What is Employer Branding Why Does It Matter

The concept of ‘Employer Branding’ is believed to have first been utilized and developed by Ambler and Barrow (1996), in their own words it is defined as “the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (p. 187). Employer branding is similar to other traditional brands, it has to have its own personality and proper positioning. Moreover this concept focuses on analyzing how the labor market works, thinks and acts, and as a result it constructs an image to suit their needs with the goal of creating a pleasant work environment (Ewing et al., 2002). Moreover, it can be summed up to a firm’s attempt to communicate with prospective and existing employees in an attempt to make the workplace a desirable location to work at (Lloyd, 2002).

Numerous authors have differentiated the idea of employer branding into two parts, internal brand and external brand. The internal brand is existing employer brand loyalty within the existing employees, and the external brand is the employer attractiveness for job seeking potential employees (Chhabra & Sharma, 2014).

The functional benefits can be described as elements of employments. Figure 1 displays how potential employees develop the employer brand image based of the brand associations.

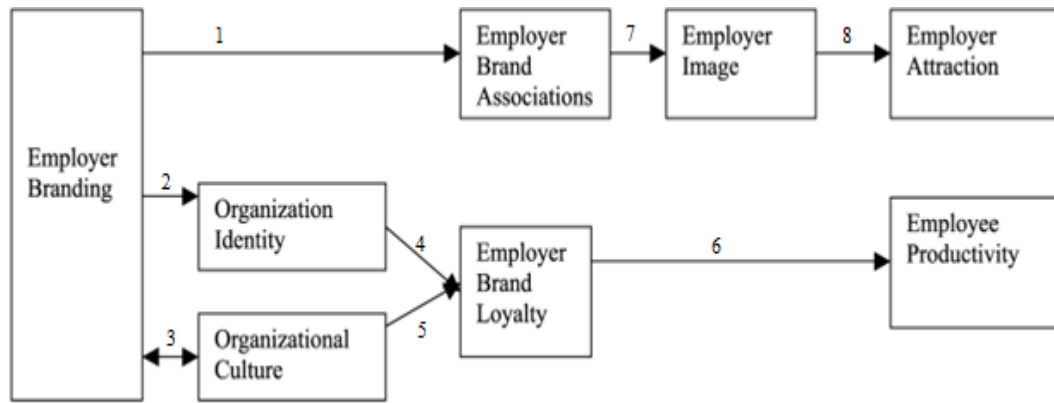


Figure 1. Employer branding framework (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

As shown in Figure 1, Employer branding is directly related to employer brand associations, organizational identity and organizational culture. Furthermore, we can see that a line relationship exists in links 1,7 and 8, this means that employer branding directly leads to employer brand associations, which then lead to employer image and finally employer attraction. Moreover, we can see in link 4 and 5 that organizational identity and organizational culture lead to employer brand loyalty, which then leads to employee productivity.

Employer branding is important because it is the manner of which individuals evaluate and assess the organization as an employer on top of the manner the organization displays itself as an employer (Martin et al., 2005).

Furthermore, if a firm has a good employer branding, it may reduce employer acquisition costs, improve and increase employee retention & reducing turnover, improve employee relations and in some cases can even allow the organization to pay employee's lower salaries due to having a strong brand in comparison to competitors with weaker brands (Ritson, 2002).

2.1.3 Existing Research that Show What Factors Matter for Job Seekers

Job seeking individuals will often compare job opportunities presented to them based on a number of different variables and factors, some of which are basic such as salary, bonuses and other financial opportunity, however more factors exist and here are two studies conducted on what factors matter for job seekers.

First, we have Bejtkovský (2018), he conducted a study on the different factors which influence job seeking Generation Y students. The data was collected via a structured questionnaire filled by 625 respondents. The main objective of the research was to determine the different factors that influenced job search and job selection itself based on two things, the respondent's gender and the method of faculty based on the context of employer branding. The results indicate that for both males and females, mean perception of different factors that influence job searching are the same. There was only one factor that caused a difference between males and females, and that is other employee benefits. Generation Y students studying in the faculty of humanities and faculty of management and economics had the same mean perception when it came to factors affecting job searching. However, there were five factors in which there was a difference in: 1) employment certainty, 2) permanent wages/salary, 3) good and positive relationships in the work environment, 4) corporate rules, 5) personal space. Furthermore, potential employees mainly cared about information on the job position which they desired and the working conditions (Bejtkovský, 2018).

Another research conducted by Plchová & Turáková (2016) on "Employer branding of the companies and its impact on university students – trends research in Slovakia and China" indicate that regional difference can also impact the perspective and order of importance in various factors in relation to which factors are most important for job

seekers, 90% of the Slovak students had permanent employment and permanent salary as the most important factors, on the other hand only 41% of Chinese respondents had those variables as most important, instead 78% of Chinese respondents had the opportunity to further develop their career as the most significant variable. In addition, a work environment that is friendly and the existence of positive relationships were deemed important for both Chinese and Slovak students. Moreover, both Chinese and Slovak students perceived that the amount of at work will greatly affect the quality of an individual's personal life, thus making it an important and significant variable (Plchová & Turáková, 2016).

2.1.4 Existing Research on How Employer Brand Works in Employer Attractiveness

As mentioned previously employer branding and employer attractiveness go hand in hand, the potential benefits that current and future employees perceive can be described as employer attractiveness (Berthon et al., 2005). The employers reputation, employee value and culture can be defined as employer branding (Ambler & Barrow, 1996).

Potgieter & Doubell (2020) conducted a study on the influence of employer branding, the data collection was done via a survey, they adapted the survey items from Ponzi et al (2011) and Schwaiger (2004). There was a total of 312 respondents which participated in this survey.

The following are the results of the descriptive statistics that Potgieter & Doubell (2020) found for employer branding: 62.8% of the respondents confirmed that the image of the organization was a factor which attracted them to the firm. This result confirms what Elving et al. (2013) and Cable & Turban (2003) stated, that

organizational attractiveness is a very important element for the decision making of potential employees when they are looking for a job. Moreover, it also confirms the findings of De Goede et al. (2013) who stated that a very important factor in the attractiveness a firm is the organizational image being related to the person-organization fit of the firm. Furthermore, 58% of employers admitted that employer branding was a tool they used to attract high quality employees, which confirms how important and vital employer branding is when a firm is trying to attract talent.

In addition, an interesting subject which the authors crossed upon was that the results of their research indicate that the respondents use corporate websites and traditional job seeking methods as well as social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Facebook when they are seeking employment. This occurrence highlights the importance of employer branding when a firm is trying to practice employer attractiveness. Moreover, the authors themselves suggest that attractiveness of the firm can be increased by using employer branding in the managerial and practical implications section of their research.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is when a firm practice in a sustainable manner while being socially accountable by implementing certain policies and goals that will benefit the public and have a positive contribution to society.

In simple terms, CSR is when a firm maximizes amount of positive impact their actions have on society, even exceeding the satisfactory expectations set when it comes to commercial, legal and ethical expectations. At its core, this ideology is about

corporations swapping from mere compliance and harm minimalization to a state of value creation (Luetkenhorst, 2004).

Historically governments have the ones responsible for the well-being of society and the environment, however as civilization has advanced, the needs of society have surpassed the capabilities of the governments (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007). As a result, CSR has become a common practice among today's corporations and as time passes more and more concepts are introduced with the aim of making business policies more ethical, humane and transparent with the aim of making business operate in a sustainable manner.

The private sector has been a dominant force when it comes to growth, and corporations operating in the private sector have the tools necessary to contribute to society and assist with economic growth, moreover the ideology of CSR is founded on the recognition of the role that a corporation plays in our world of dwindling resources and scarcity (Jamali & Mirshak, 2007).

2.2.1 What are Opposing and Supporting Views of CSR

Corporate social responsibility is a very broad practice with two extreme sides, first we have the skeptics who have opposing views, and then we have those that believe in CSR in a supporting manner.

Let's take a look at some of the drawbacks and opposing views on CSR, although a lot of attention has been given to practicing CSR in developed countries, there is very little known when it comes to CSR in developing countries, and most of the existing research and literature that we have are all studies conducted on developed countries such as Australia, European countries and the US. As a result, we do not have the data

to prove that CSR can be successfully implemented in very underdeveloped countries that are struggling to develop.

In addition, skeptics believe that the ideology of CSR directly opposes what it is meant to be, and instead it's just a tool that corporations use to create wealth (Clement-Jones, 2005).

As for the supporting views, people on the positive side of the extreme scale believe that CSR is indeed a practice that is used by corporations in order to not only meet the minimum requirements imposed by law but also go the extra mile and have a positive impact on society (Luetkenhorst, 2004).

2.2.2 Why do Companies Engage in CSR

There are numerous reasons for corporations to engage in CSR, multiple academics gave their perspective on CSR engagement. Matten & Moon (2008) discuss the pressure of CSR, Idowu & Pappasolomou (2007) talk about the motivations of using CSR, Matten (2006) discusses the drivers of CSR engagement and Werther & Chandler (2006) discuss the arguments for CSR.

Employee attraction: As mentioned previously, the existence of corporate social responsibility is a very important aspect for job seeking individuals, CSR enables the firm to attract high quality employees, gives the firm a competitive advantage and even may lower personnel costs due to the employees settling at lower salary rates because their firm is contributing in a positive manner to society as a whole, and they are part of it (Vogel, 2005).

Consumer satisfaction: The satisfaction of consumers is very crucial for corporations due to the nature of how the economic theory operates, consumers demand a product or service and a company meets the demand by supplying the product or service. However, due to the existence of competitors the satisfaction of consumers becomes very important because they can simply just purchase their products from another firm. Consumers purchase goods based on their preferences, needs and budget, however various research shows us that consumers value CSR and in most cases they think about the ethical side of how a firm operates before purchasing their products (Vogel, 2005). Thus, ensuring that consumers are satisfied is always a top priority for firms and engaging in CSR provides them with that.

Economic benefits: CSR is a tool that corporations use in order to gain competitive advantages while contributing to society in a positive manner. In addition, firms which engage in CSR may also use it as a tool in order to maximize profits using the basic economic principles. In most cases the costs of engaging in CSR are less than the returns, as a result making it a profitable practice (Kurucz et al., 2008).

CSR policies may directly impact a firm in a positive manner when it comes to profit, this is done by cost reduction or increasing revenues. Moreover, a firm may invest in efficient and cleaner technology and machinery and as a result have lower production costs, leading to direct economic profits (Österman, 2014). Furthermore, with the increase of eco-friendly and sustainable activities it is more likely that the government deems the firm eligible for eco-subsidaries, such as firms that operate in the renewable energy sector (Visser et al., 2007).

Finally as Österman (2014) describes the “bottom of the pyramid” concept, the firm may target and supply poor and underdeveloped markets, as a result creating a new market for the firm and increasing revenue. Overall it is a very good model because the firm maximizes profit and simultaneously consumers in poorer areas have the opportunity to engage in consumption, which is especially helpful in poorer parts of society (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).

Investors: Society as a whole has seen an increase in awareness with regards to CSR related issues and ethical practices, as a result a large proportion of stakeholders are heavily considering ethical aspects before making decisions when it comes to investing (Matten, 2006). Corporations may engage in CSR in order to attract these investors and also comply with the requirements of obtaining social funds, over time the firms which are operating in a socially acceptable manner will see an increase in stock demand and their stock prices go up, giving them an edge over their competitors who are less socially responsible (Vogel, 2005).

2.2.3 What Research Findings Exist About the Use of CSR

CSR as a whole has different applications and approaches in different countries, in this section I will be going over how companies in various cultures adopt CSR and the reasons for it.

According to Papasolomou-Doukakis et al. (2005), businesses in *Cyprus* have managerial incentives as a key part of their CSR approach, in addition financial gain is a big motivating factor for CSR adoption, as well as receiving tax deduction benefits. In *Italy*, research shows us that there is a lack of public backing and publicity with CSR, however the private sector and the Italian companies seem to have a generally positive attitude and engagement with CSR (Tencati et al., 2004). Moreover, if we

consider the stakeholders approach then approximately 60 % of Italian companies are deemed socially responsible (Longo et al., 2005). Juholin (2004) conducted a study on the main driving force of CSR in *Finland* and discovered that top management initiative, long term profitability and the limited attention given to philanthropy are the main driving forces. A study by Déniz & Suárez (2005) displays a variation of CSR usage among companies in *Spain*, some engaging in CSR due to the conception of responsibility and for philanthropical purposes, while others engage in CSR purely for profit maximization. Finally we have a study conducted by Fülöp et al. (2000) on the differences of CSR orientation between small and large companies in *Hungary*, he discovered that managers in smaller firms are more like to pay attention to the profitability aspect of CSR.

2.3 How Perception of CSR Can Influence Attitudes Towards Organizations & Literature Findings

Activities and practices done by corporations in order to maintain social values, achieve sustainable growth and benefit society in a positive manner is known as CSR (Lichtenstein et al., 2004). Over the years corporations have been actively trying to adjust the different aspects of CSR and have made changes to their policies and practices. Here are a few examples of different CSR based approaches:

Environment based CSR: Incorporating environment friendly policies, pursuing an environmentally sustainable growth plan and supporting and backing environment-based practices (Wu & Wang, 2014).

Customer based CSR: Prioritizing customers, fulfilling customer demands and need and always providing products and services with the highest possible quality (Wu & Wang, 2014).

Employee based CSR: Treating employees respectfully, fairly, providing opportunities for promotions and growth in their career and compensating them fairly (Wu & Wang, 2014).

Community based CSR: Improving and aiding communities, sponsoring charity events and assisting institutions that promote educational and sporting activities (Wu & Wang, 2014).

Economic CSR: Matching social needs by providing services and products which have reasonable and fair prices and sharing profits with the investors (Wu & Wang, 2014). Consumers attitudes and decision making has positively changed over the years as the corporations CSR approaches have gained recognition and ultimately the consumers' willingness to purchase goods has also changed (M. Mejri & De Wolf, 2012). A study conducted by Rodrigo & Arenas (2008) discovered that there are two main groups of employee attitudes when it comes to the implementation of CSR, attitudes towards society and attitudes regarding the organization. Moreover, they found that employees look toward the attitudes towards their organization from a citizen's perspective and towards society from the perspective of an employee.

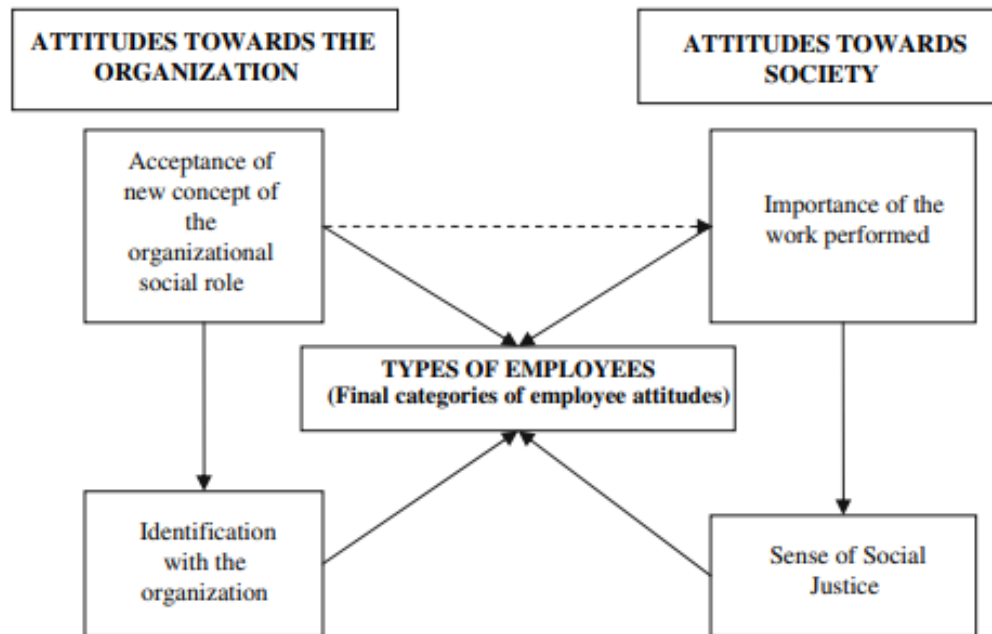


Figure 2. Employee reaction post CSR implementation (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008)

The primary reaction among employees was what their perception towards the organizational social role will be. The introduction of the CSR practices leads to a change in the employee's attitudes, behaviors and emotions in regard to their firm pursuing a social goal that pushes beyond the basic goal of producing high quality products and services for consumers. Furthermore, previously a large number of employees did not show any concern or interest in social issues or thought that it was the government's responsibility to take care of the social issues or were not aware. However, with the introduction of CSR practices and policies these issues became clearer and the employees' attitudes changed and they perceived that it is the responsibility of the firm to concern itself with social issues and take responsibility of their actions affecting the environment and society. In addition, employees felt that their firm was being a good citizen and were proud and happy to be a part of it. On the other hand, there were some employees which didn't agree with the idea that the firm should be socially responsible and the old business way is the way to go.

2.4 How does Free Market Ideology Influence How We See Businesses

The system in which buyers and sellers self-regulate the prices for products and services is known as the free market. Moreover, there is no government interference with regards to laws and forces of demand and supply and are allowed to reach economic equilibrium on their own (Popper, 2005). Free markets are often associated with capitalism and sometimes with socialism (Bockman, n.d.).

Tyler & Lind (2002) conducted a study on the overall perception of the free market in the US, they had 502 respondents and the majority believed that the economic system of the US is fair with favorable responses and opinions towards congress and were happy with government intervention. The authors were very surprised at this finding due to the fact that if individuals have faith in the market forces, then they should want less government control and intervention.

Moreover, social scientists are often confused with the fact that even though the general public is aware of the inequality issues related to the American economic system, they still perceive it as intrinsically fair (Fong, 2001). To understand this paradox, researchers and academics have revised the Marxian concepts of ideology and the false consciousness associated with them. Scholars explain the rigid adherences due to the nature of system justification and self-deception (Jost & Banaji, 1994). Most studies conclude that paradox of the consensual endorsement of the FMI (Free market ideology) can be psychologically analyzed as the fact that individuals tend to believe that they are affected in a justified, fair and legitimate manner by the system (Jost et al., 2003).

Businesses are expected to innovate new ideas, reach economic equilibrium, develop new products and services. It is the responsibility of the business to figure out what the public is in need of, this is done by analyzing trends, researching demands and figure out an innovative way to match them. Furthermore, there are less restrictions due to the nature of the no government involved market and this not only grants businesses more freedom but also reduces administrative costs. Finally, the most important aspect is the fact that customers are the ones that decide what products and services succeed or fail, their choices of preference in a competitive market is what makes the difference.

2.5 How does Free Market Ideology Influence Our Job Search and Preferences

Research by Jost et al. (2003) on the fair market ideology found that the majority of individuals living in a market economy share the belief that the outcome of market oriented processes are fair. Moreover, they found that individuals which endorse the ideology of a fair market also support the economic system justification, believe the world is just, are more willing to accept power distance, share more conservative views and in some instances authoritarian views. In addition, employees which believe in the free-market ideology tend to believe that profitable firms are more likely to be ethical due to the fact that the free market rewards firms for ethical behaviors and punishes firms which practice in an unethical manner, these assumptions are due to the fact that they have a system justifying perception towards the free market. Furthermore, the belief in the existence of inherit justice of the market forces and specifically blaming individuals may also result in job seekers to deny any existing corruption within the existing system. The fact that optimism is a driving factor in the free market ideology, individuals are more likely to have optimistic beliefs such as increases in stock prices

and everyone will obtain wealth. However, this may lead to individuals failing to anticipate market-oriented losses.

Chapter 3

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Gender Differences in Their View on CSR

Concern about gender equality has increased over time and it has become a norm in most places compared to the past. According to the gender socialization approach, males and females have different approaches to and perceptions of tendencies, moral values and inclinations due to the way they have been raised from an early age (Rosati et al., 2018). Therefore it is not unlikely to see differences in decision making and perception on CSR activities and engagement levels between the genders (Prasad et al., 1998; Simga-Mugan et al., 2005).

Researchers in CSR related studies have found that when it comes to decision making on ethical matters, females act in a more sustainable and ethical way (del Mar Alonso-Almeida, 2013; Marz et al., 2003; C. A. Mejri & Bhatli, 2014). Which we take as good reason to assume that females will rank higher in CSR related scores.

Other studies found that the attitudes towards corporate social responsibility are different between women and men as for example the former are more in touch with environmental issues than the latter (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003).

In another study, researchers looked into the correlation between employees' perception on their own individual social responsibility and their perception of

corporate social responsibility, and have concluded that for females their perception of their own individual social responsibility has a positive correlation with their perception of corporate social responsibility, a correlation not found in the males in that study (Hatch & Stephen, 2015). As mentioned previously, there are many factors influencing the two genders, we expect to find with this research;

H1a) Perceived importance of CSR and the employer branding differs by the gender of the job seeker.

H1b) Perceived view on free market ideology differs by the gender of the job seeker.

3.2 Generational Similarities with Regards to CSR

Different age groups in life represent different generations, for example people born after 1997 are considered to be Generation Z or Centennials, people born between 1981–1996 are considered Generation Y or Millennials, those born between 1965-1980 are referred to as Generation X, 1946-1964 are known as boomers and finally traditionalists or the silent generation are those born between 1928-1945 (Colby & Ortman, 2014). Different generations have different views on life, politics, hierarchy of importance etc.

According to existing research, attitudes towards CSR and individual perceptions can be affected by age and that it is a determining factor in ethical decision making (Coutinho et al., 2018; Perryer & Jordan, 2002; Quazi, 2003). However, other studies indicate that an individual's age alone is not always a significant factor when it comes to influence (Eweje & Brunton, 2010; Gholipour et al., 2009).

When it comes to work ethics and interpersonal relationships between colleagues and employees, research found that despite the stereotypes about the different generations and their work ethics, generation X and millennials perceive work as very important and central to their lives as opposed to boomers who perceived family to be more important and central to their lives, which is in opposition to the stereotype that generation X and millennials are lazy and lack discipline (Bennett et al., 2017). According to other studies related to CSR and age, the younger generations score higher on average, due to younger people being more satisfied, having more trust and are generally less cynical (Cho & Hu, 2009).

This study is focused on the newly graduated and job seekers as well as individuals experiencing their first jobs, these individuals would fall in the generation Y and Z categories and therefore, we expect;

H2a: There is no difference in the perception of employer branding and CSR between generations Y & Z due to generational differences

H2b: There is no difference in the perception of the free market ideology between generations Y & Z due to generational differences

3.3 Work Experience Influencing Views on CSR

Experience is a very important factor when it comes to decision making, an individual that has never worked will have different thoughts and ideas to work related topics compared to someone that has previously worked, and in many fields, individuals get shocked when they face reality and actually start working, an example of this would be an engineering student who studied theory for all of his university life and then has to work in a large plant with lots of responsibilities.

Researchers found that with an increase in age and tenure (years worked in the same company) there is a negative correlation with involvement in CSR activities, furthermore, they found that there is a significant positive correlation between CSR to employees and technical and managerial experience (Gharleghi et al., 2018).

Research conducted by Peng (2017) on CEO's work experience influencing CSR discovered that individuals with higher work experience are more likely to engage with CSR related activities. In addition, differences in an individual's experience can be linked with differences in cognitive styles and crucial personal values.

Similar research indicates that work experience is one of the major drivers of an individual's behavior in a working environment (Datta et al., 2005; Sturman, 2003). The factor that should be affected is engagement with CSR as job experience could influence this factor highly, as a result we expect;

H3a: Work experience will influence engagement of a job seeker with employer branding and CSR

H3b: Work experience will influence a job seeker view on the free market ideology

Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 The Sample and Methods

The sample used for this study consisted of 101 students studying at higher education destinations in countries such as Cyprus, North Cyprus, Germany and the United Kingdom. In order to achieve the best possible results only universities with global recognition such as Eastern Mediterranean University, Technical University of Berlin, University of Cyprus, Coventry University were selected. Convenience sampling was used in order to create the initial sample and then the snow ball method was used in order to contact other relevant participants. An online questionnaire was used in order to collect data. The items of the questionnaire were taken from studies conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017) and Jost (2003). Microsoft Teams was used in order to contact EMU students in their final year of their study, as for the other universities, emails were sent to students which fit the criteria of this study, the email informed them of the study and their answers were collected online.

4.2 The Measurement Instruments

The main purpose of this study is job seekers perception on green employer branding, corporate social responsibility. The variables of this study are demographic characteristics, Normative Values for CSR, Positive view on CSR, Engagement with CSR, Importance placed on CSR and the Free market Ideology.

4.2.1 Demographic Measures

Demographic information such as gender, age, work experience and political engagement was asked from the respondents in this section.

4.2.2 Scale of Normative Values for CSR

The Norms for CSR questions were taken from a study conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017). The normative CSR perception scale is a semantic differential scale based on the individuals' perception of organizational commitment towards CSR. Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017) report that they base this scale on normative and stakeholder theory. Six items measure six core components of CSR: respect for the environment, compliance with the law, fairness, horizon of profit-making, reliable communication and integration of social and economic goals. All items are measured via a bipolar scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 indicates instrumental perception and 5 indicates normative perception.

4.2.3 Scale of Positive View on CSR

The Positive view on CSR questions were taken from a study conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017). Items measure the affective dimension of CSR. Items assess positive or negative feelings individuals have towards CSR. A five-point Likert-type scale is used, this scale ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The CSRPos3 and CSRPos5 have to be reverse coded when being entered into data analysis because they are negatively worded.

4.2.4 Scale of Engagement with CSR

The Engagement with CSR questions were taken from a study conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017). Items measure the behavioral side of CSR related attitudes, the determination an individual has towards CSR, the personal interest towards issues related to CSR and the desire to learn more about CSR and ordinary

consumer behavior such as volunteering. A five-point Likert-type scale is used, this scale ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

4.2.5 Scale of Importance Placed on CSR

The Importance placed on CSR questions were taken from a study conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017). Items measure the pursuit of jobs by job seekers at places that are socially responsible and ethical, the importance of CSR for the job seekers is displayed. A five-point Likert-type scale is used, this scale ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

4.2.6 Scale of Free Market Ideology

The items in this section measure the perception that a free-market system is fair on a variety of procedural grounds. A five-point Likert-type scale is used, this scale ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The items were taken from the study conducted by John T. Jost, Sally Blount, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gyorgy Hunyady (2003), they developed the items themselves.

4.2.7 Scale of Political Engagement

The items in the political engagement section measure the level of activity an individual has with politics and how much it interests them, In this scale, high political engagement means that the individual is very aware of political matters and is up to date with everyday political occurrences, medium political engagement means that the individual is aware of some political matters but is only up to date with matters they are interested in, low political engagement means that the individual rarely keeps track with politics and engages in politics very little, and zero political engagement is when an individual never engages in any sort of political activity.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Respondents' Profile

The sample consisted of 101 students from higher education destinations. 50 females (49.5%) and 51 males (50.5%) participated in the questionnaire. The majority of the participants were single (86.3%). The participants education level were 65 undergraduate students (63.7%) and 37 postgraduate students (36.3%). The student's area of study can be categorized into 4 main categories; engineering/computer science (36%), Business/Economics (23%), Arts & Science (22%) and Architecture (10%). The majority of the participants fall in the 18–25-year-old (76.5%) category.

Table 1. Demographics Variables

	Variables	Participants	Percentage
Gender	Female	50	49.5
	Male	51	50.5
Age	18-25	78	76.5
	26-30	12	11.8
	31+	8	7.8
Marital Status	Single	88	86.3
	Married	11	10.8
	Other	3	2.9
Education Level	Undergraduate	65	63.7
	Postgraduate	37	36.3
Area of study	Architecture	10	10
	Arts & Science	22	22
	Business/Economics/Finance	23	23
	Engineering/Computer Science	36	36
	Other	9	6
Work Experience	Full time	38	37.3
	Part time	42	41.2
	Never worked	22	21.6
Political Engagement	High	8	7.8
	Medium	30	29.4
	Low	45	44.1
	Zero	19	18.6

5.2 Hypothesis Test Analysis

In this section we will be discussing the results we obtained by running independent t-tests and one way ANOVA tests using Jamovi. The following tables will be used to help us support our hypotheses. The Cronbach alpha reliability test for the measures gives α values for: norms on CSR as 0.838, positive view on CSR as 0.790, engagement with CSR as 0.841, importance placed on CSR as 0.824 and the free market ideology as 0.845.

5.2.1 Gender Differences Towards CSR and FMI Test Analysis

In order to test whether any significant differences exist between males and females in their views towards CSR and FMI an independent sample t-test was conducted.

Table 2. Independent sample t test, differences towards CSR and FMI between females and males

Gender differences towards CSR	Gender		t	Sig.
	Female	Male		
Norms on CSR	4.56 (0.628)	4.09 (0.696)	3.58	< .001***
Positive View on CSR	4.37 (0.578)	3.81 (0.607)	4.72	< .001***
Engagement with CSR	3.95 (0.749)	3.2 (0.853)	4.75	< .001***
Importance placed on CSR	4.1 (0.678)	3.5 (0.766)	4.19	< .001***
Free Market Ideology (FMI)	3.84 (0.875)	3.18 (0.923)	3.68	< .001***

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$. Standard deviations are located below the mean value.

Table 2 displays the results of the independent sample t-test and that all of our variables have a significant difference for both males and females, females have higher mean scores when it comes to norms on CSR (M=4.56) compared to males (M=4.09), ($t=3.58$, $p<0.001$). Females display a higher mean value for positive views on CSR (M=4.37) compared to males (M=3.81), ($t=4.72$, $p<0.001$). Engagement with CSR also shows that females have a higher mean score (M=3.95) compared to males (M=3.2), ($t=4.75$, $p<0.001$). Females scored higher mean scores (M=4.1) in importance placed on CSR than males (M=3.5), ($t=4.19$, $p<0.001$). The free-market ideology scores show us that females have a higher mean score (M=3.84) compared to males (M=3.18), ($t=3.68$, $p<0.001$). Leading to confirm hypothesis H1a and H1b.

5.2.2 Generational Similarities Towards CSR and FMI Test Analysis

To examine the generational similarities towards CSR and FMI a one-way ANOVA test was done, Table 3 displays the results.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA test, similarities in generation Z & Y towards CSR and FMI

Generational similarities towards CSR and FMI	Age			F	Sig.
	18-25	26-30	31+		
Norms on CSR	4.28 (0.709)	4.58 (0.534)	3.96 (1.075)	2.347	0.164
Positive View on CSR	4.08 (0.649)	4.16 (0.389)	4.04 (0.685)	0.107	0.9
Engagement with CSR	3.53 (0.906)	3.73 (0.821)	3.58 (0.866)	0.422	0.669
Importance placed on CSR	3.74 (0.789)	4.03 (0.738)	3.95 (0.755)	1.2	0.351
Free Market Ideology (FMI)	3.53 (0.894)	3.48 (1.158)	3.25 (1.226)	0.108	0.899

Note: Standard deviations are located below the mean value.

The one-way ANOVA test indicates that all of the p values are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference in between the age groups (p-value for all variables >0.05 and >0.01), which supports our hypothesis since the age groups of this hypothesis all fall into the generation Z and Y categories and we can see the similarities they have towards CSR and FMI.

5.2.3 Work Experience Influencing Engagement with CSR Test Analysis

In order to test whether work experience levels influence job seekers in their views towards CSR and FMI a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. Table 4 displays the results.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA test, Work experience influencing engagement with CSR and FMI

Work experience influencing CSR& FMI	Work Experience			F	Sig.
	Full time	Part time	Never worked		
Norms on CSR	4.23 (0.663)	4.34 (0.701)	4.47 (0.769)	0.751	0.477
Positive View on CSR	3.87 (0.53)	4.11 (0.683)	4.48 (0.633)	7.03	0.002**
Engagement with CSR	3.34 (0.75)	3.55 (0.915)	4.02 (0.915)	4.332	0.018*
Importance placed on CSR	3.62 (0.762)	3.81 (0.741)	4.09 (0.827)	2.38	0.102
Free Market Ideology (FMI)	3.17 (0.949)	3.61 (0.901)	3.91 (0.896)	4.852	0.011*

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$. Standard deviations are located below the mean value.

The one-way ANOVA test indicates that there is a significant difference between people with different work experience, individuals that have never worked have a higher mean score (M=4.02) compared to individuals with full time (M=3.34) and part time (3.55), (F=4.332, $p=0.018$). Likewise, individuals with no work experience displayed a higher positive view on CSR mean score (M=4.48) compared to individuals with full time (M=3.87) and part time (4.11), (F=7.03, $p=0.02$). In addition, when it comes to free market ideology, individuals with no work experience scored a higher mean score (M=3.91) compared to individuals with full time (M=3.17) and part time (3.91), (F=4.852, $p=0.011$). Other CSR-related variables did not differ significantly. Confirming hypothesis H3a and H3b.

5.3 Further Analysis

In addition to the hypotheses that was developed, free market ideology, political engagement and education level were tested to see if there are any significant differences present.

5.3.1 Analysis of the Free-Market Ideology

The free-market ideology was tested via a correlation test to see the relationship FMI has with regards to CSR-related variables. Table 5 displays the results.

Table 5. Correlations; free market ideology and corporate social responsibility

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Norms on CSR	-				
2. Positive View on CSR	0.69***	-			
3. Engagement with CSR	0.623***	0.701***	-		
4. Importance placed on CSR	0.592***	0.733***	0.758***	-	
5. Free Market Ideology	0.446***	0.638***	0.436***	0.455***	-

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$.

As we can see from table 5, job seekers have a moderate positive relationship between free market ideology and norms on CSR ($r = 0.466$), positive view on CSR ($r = 0.638$), engagement with CSR ($r = 0.436$) and importance placed on CSR ($r = 0.758$). This discovery is unique due to the nature of the relationship of FMI and CSR, historically Individuals that score high on the FMI scale believe more in capitalism and the free market and perceive businesses as primarily focused on profit maximization. However, this discovery shows us that the newer generation might have characteristics which enables them to have a capitalistic mind set and simultaneously have an active concern

for social issues and problems, which is a very healthy mind set to have because not only does this mean that younger job seekers are aiming to maximize the amount of profit they are making, they also have the ethical aspect of business on their minds.

5.3.2 Analysis of Political Engagement

A one-way ANOVA test was used to measure political engagement influencing views on CSR and FMI.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA test, Political engagement influencing views on CSR and FMI

Political engagement influencing CSR and FMI	Political Engagement Level				F	Sig.
	High	Medium	Low	Zero		
Norms on CSR	3.98 (1.242)	4.24 (0.601)	4.49 (0.671)	4.22 (0.575)	1.42	0.26
Positive View on CSR	3.88 (0.614)	3.94 (0.684)	4.33 (0.684)	3.87 (0.429)	3.83	0.022*
Engagement with CSR	3.13 (1.038)	3.47 (0.825)	3.87 (0.871)	3.24 (0.756)	3.44	0.031*
Importance placed on CSR	3.75 (0.707)	3.8 (0.745)	3.95 (0.83)	3.47 (0.687)	1.82	0.166
Free Market Ideology (FMI)	3.48 (1.047)	3.28 (0.951)	3.8 (0.954)	3.21 (0.776)	2.76	0.061

Note: * = $p < .05$, *** = $p < .001$. Standard deviations are located below the mean value.

Table 6 shows us that a significant difference exists when it comes to positive view on CSR, low political engagement having the highest mean score (M=4.33) in comparison to high political engagement (M=3.88), medium political engagement (M=3.94) and zero political engagement (M=3.87), (F=3.83, p=0.022). In addition, in terms of engagement with CSR we can see that low political engagement having the highest mean score (M=3.87) in comparison to high political engagement (M=3.13), medium political engagement (M=3.47), and zero political engagement (M=3.24), (F=3.44,

p=0.031. On the other hand, there are no significant differences between different political engagement levels influencing norms on CSR, importance placed on CSR and free market ideology as the p values are greater than 0.05. These results indicate that individuals with low political engagement are generally more inclined to participate in CSR-related activities as well as having a more positive view towards CSR-related topics.

5.3.3 Analysis of Education level

In order to test whether any significant differences exist between individuals with undergraduate and post graduate degrees with regards to their views towards CSR and FMI an independent sample t-test was conducted. Table 7 displays the results.

Table 7. Independent sample t test, Education Level influencing views on CSR and FMI

Education level differences towards CSR and FMI	Education Level		t	Sig.
	Postgraduate	Undergraduate		
Norms on CSR	4.36 (0.7)	4.31 (0.706)	0.412	0.681
Positive View on CSR	4.09 (0.617)	4.09 (0.676)	0.006	0.995
Engagement with CSR	3.69 (0.782)	3.51 (0.936)	1.036	0.303
Importance placed on CSR	3.98 (0.704)	3.7 (0.809)	1.740	0.085
Free Market Ideology (FMI)	3.66 (0.903)	3.42 (0.978)	1.226	0.223

Note: * = p < .05, *** = p < .01. Standard deviations are located below the mean value.

Table 7 shows us that only importance placed on CSR has a significant difference between postgraduate and undergraduate students, postgraduate students show a higher mean score (M=3.98) in comparison to undergraduate students (M=3.7),

($t=1.74$, $p=0.085$). The remainder of the p values for the other 4 variables are greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference in between the two education levels (p-value being >0.05 and >0.01).

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Results and Implications

Corporate social responsibility and green employer branding have become a very important topic in today's corporate world. As a result, we see that many companies are putting a lot of resources and effort in implementing CSR programs and projecting a green employer brand image. When the organization recognizes the employer attractiveness factors as employer branding and employer attractiveness go hand in hand, employer branding will be effective. Furthermore, use of CSR enables firms to present themselves with green employer branding.

This study provides a clearer understanding of the perception of job seekers towards green employer branding and corporate social responsibility. Factors such as gender, generational similarities and work experience were tested in order to see if any significant differences were present when it comes to the job seekers view on CSR, a novel contribution that this study provides is looking at other factors outside of the basic common demographic spectrum, factors such as views on the free market and political engagement of individuals on how they affect.

The CSR-related items used in this study were taken from a study conducted by Klimkiewicz & Oltra (2017), the first set of CSR-related items were measured via a bipolar scale ranging from 1 to 5, 1 indicates instrumental perception and 5 indicates

normative perception, the remainder of the CSR-related items were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale is used, this scale ranges from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. In addition, the FMI-related items used in this study were taken from (Jost et al., 2003)). A five-point Likert-type scale is used ranging from 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The aim of the items being measured in this section was to see the perception of job seekers on the grounds of the free-market system being fair on a number of procedural grounds.

The CSR normative perception scale was used in order to measure the job seekers understanding of CSR commitment by organizations and the items were used to measure the six main components of CSR; compliance with the law, reliable communication, respect for the environment, integration of social and economic goals, horizon of profit making and fairness. The items in the positive view on CSR section were used to assess the negative and positive feelings job seekers have towards CSR. The items in the engagement with CSR section were used to measure the behavioral side of attitudes with regards to CSR, how much CSR-based determination job seekers have, how much desire job seekers have to learn more about CSR and ordinary behaviors such as volunteering. The importance placed on CSR items measure the pursuit of job done by job seekers at organizations that deem themselves ethical and socially responsible.

The hypotheses consisted of three demographic variables being analyzed to see if there is any significant difference in terms of views on CSR and FMI; gender, generational similarities and work experience. In addition, we tested factors such as political engagement, free market ideology and education level.

Firstly, gender differences towards views on CSR and FMI were tested and there was a significant difference between males and females present, with the latter having higher mean scores in all CSR-related variables, meaning that females on average give more weight to a corporation's view and actions in regards to CSR than males do, the research shows that although they both view it positively, females scored higher on average in all the CSR-related items than males did, implying that females are more responsive to CSR initiatives taken by corporations as well as showing more faith in the free market.

This finding shows that women and men do have some differences in their attitudes. When we develop social policies, these need to ensure equal opportunities for men and women. Belief that men and women are equal does not mean that there are no differences between the genders. Men and women do have differences. These differences may be due to the roles that men and women are given by the society, the way that women and men are brought up, the differences in discrimination that particularly women face in the workplace. Thus, the men and women will have different outlooks and their attitudes may be different. Our finding reveals that women are more aware of the need for CSR. The fact that men are less aware of the importance of CSR compared to women may be because men face relatively less challenges as they enter and progress in the workplace. Thus, they may be less aware of the importance of social responsibility of businesses. Through educational programs and awareness campaigns, the society needs to make men more aware of the difficulties that women may be facing. Studies of CSR should not generalize their results by ignoring gender differences. Our results prove that these differences exist and our understanding of the attitudes towards CSR can be enhanced if we gain a better

understanding on what are the factors that influence an individual's perception of CSR. The current study reveals that gender is one of these factors.

An implication of females scoring higher in CSR-related measures can be, when hiring managers are trying to attract prospective female employees in order to diversify their workforce, they can emphasize the CSR aspect of the corporation they represent. In addition, in the case of a company struggling with high female employee turnover rates, they can attempt to strengthen their CSR activities to increase their attractiveness to these individuals

Next, generational similarities between generation Y and Z were tested and as expected both generations displayed no significant difference with regards to any of the CSR-related variables. Meaning that there are no apparent differences in generation Y and generation Z perceive and understand corporate social responsibility. This finding was expected due to the fact that the age groups used in this study had a very small age gap in between each other. An implication of these findings can be that hiring managers will find that to the same CSR policies and activities done to attract generation Y employers will also work on generation Z job seekers due to the new generation (generation Z) being very similar to the previous generation (generation Y).

Finally, the job seekers engagement with CSR based on work experience was tested and it was found that individuals with no work experience had a higher mean score on all CSR-related variables meaning that people that have never worked before are more up for engaging with CSR related activities and it was also discovered that they have a more positive view towards CSR. This is likely showing that once individuals start working, they have less time than they would have liked to spend on CSR-related

activities, this conclusion is supported by the fact that individuals with part time work experience have scored lower than individuals that have never worked yet higher than individuals with full time work experience leading us to believe that the difference lies in the varying time constraints between the different groups. The implication of this is when companies implement their CSR programs in a way that can allow prospective employees be part of those programs and give more CSR related work to part time workers and less to full time workers in order to match the engagement and enthusiasm these groups have for CSR and not interfere with the employees working hours.

In addition to the hypotheses testing that was conducted, our research also analyzed job seekers views on the free-market ideology and how political engagement and education level affected CSR-related variables. Although there isn't any literature supporting these findings, our research found:

The free-market ideology results show that there is a moderate positive relationship between the job seekers belief in the free market and their perception and understanding of CSR and CSR-related activities, we assume that this is due to the mindset of the younger individuals and the younger generations have towards political ideologies while being aware of ethical, moral and social issues present, which leads us to believe that contrary to popular belief, it is possible to have a capitalistic approach towards the economy while also having a positive outlook on social responsibility and its importance in society. As a result, hiring managers can implement CSR-related policies without worrying about negative implications from prospective employees with a strong belief in the free market.

We also found that when it comes to political engagement, the lower the political engagement of the individual from our study the more they were likely to positively view and engage with CSR-related activities and those with no political engagement only scored higher on average than those with high political engagement, the reason for this is uncertain.

As expected, with regards to education level we found that there is no significant difference between individuals with undergraduate or postgraduate degrees indicating that when it comes to CSR and FMI these two groups are likely to act in the same way, an implication of this is that a hiring manager can include CSR in the same degree regardless of them trying to attract postgraduate or undergraduate degree holding applicants.

6.2 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

In this section the inevitable limitations that came with the study will be discussed. Firstly, due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown laws it was difficult to amass a larger number of participants to produce more robust results.

Next, the age groups used were very similar and comparisons with distant age groups such as generation Z and boomers were not possible, other factors such as marital status and education level were heavily dominated by a single category so it was difficult to compare these variables. In addition, short measurement scale was used in our questionnaire in order to avoid lengthy questions and that might have caused it to not be as adequately thorough as it could have been thus causing weaknesses for this study.

Furthermore, this study only analyzed the perception of job seekers in their final year of their study, individuals with more work experience may have different views towards CSR-related variables and the free market, it would be very interesting for studies to be done with a broader perspective in order to see how individuals that are not in an academic environment perceive CSR-related activities and policies.

Moreover, a general procedure was used when identifying and determining different factors affecting CSR and employer branding, where as in reality results may differ from industry to industry, advanced research is necessary to determine factors and identify them in a more specific manner that is suitable for the respective industry.

On the other hand, it may be interesting and useful to add variables that measure tenure and citizenship behavior and how they affect CSR-related variables and vice versa, as well as applying other forms of analysis such as regression analysis to develop an empirical analysis of how these factors interact and create a measuring formula of their respective contribution, in order to see how these factors will interact with their perception of CSR and the free market.

Moreover, a similar study can be applied over a longer period of time in order to measure the change in job seekers views towards CSR and the free market to the witness the change in pattern from year to year in order to make more appropriate decisions in regards to CSR-related activities and policies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Questionnaire Used in the Study

Part A: Demographic Questions

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Age

- 18-25
- 26-30
- 31+

3. Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Other

4. Education Level

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate

5. Area of study

- Architecture
- Arts & Science
- Business/Economics/Finance
- Engineering/Computer Science
- Other

6. Number of semesters until graduation

- 1 Semester
- 2 Semesters
- Other

7. Region of University

- Asia
- Europe
- Africa
- North America
- South America
- Oceania

8. Work Experience

- Part time work
- Full time work
- Never worked

9. Currently Employed?

Yes

No

10. Political Engagement Level

High

Medium

Low

Zero political engagement

Part B: Normative Values for CSR

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Companies do not always have to conform to the accepted moral principles, because honesty in business does not always pay off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always operate in a fair and moral way

12. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Companies have the right not to disclose information that could harm their image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always communicate in a true and transparent way about their operations

13. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Companies' environment is changing so fast that they should focus on short-term profits.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always seek long-term profits.

14. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
In some cases, you can accept illegal businesses operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always comply with the law

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Companies should focus on the main economic objective, which is to generate profits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always seek synergies between economic and societal goals

16. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Companies should focus on the main economic objective, which is to generate profits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Companies should always seek to minimize their negative environmental influence

Part C: Positive View Towards CSR

17. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on the positive perception of CSR

	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
Socially responsible companies operate both in their own interest and in the interest of the whole society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CSR brings profits for organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am skeptical toward organizations that define themselves as socially responsible. (R)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If there were more socially responsible firms, people would live better	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Companies should not engage in solving social problems, as it is a state matter. (R)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Including social and environmental issues in corporate policies enhances company competitiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part D: Engagement with CSR

18. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on CSR Engagement

	1 Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
I am interested in business ethics issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking to my friends about work, I often go into ethical issues (e.g. regarding co-workers' or managers' unethical behavior)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When a company fails in ethical issues, I stop buying its products or resign from its services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am an active volunteer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While shopping, I pay attention to the way the product was manufactured and transported	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to know more about CSR	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part E: Importance Placed on CSR

19. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on CSR Importance .

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
It is important for me to find a job in a company that I consider socially responsible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While reviewing job offers, I pay attention to whether the company is socially responsible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I want to get some more information about a concrete employer, it happens that I read social reports or analyze CSR rankings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Generally, socially responsible companies, compared to other employers, offer more attractive working conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Socially responsible companies, in comparison with other firms, are more reliable employers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Part F: Free Market Ideology

20. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on Free Market Index.

	1. Strongly Disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly Agree
The free-market system is a fair system.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Common or "normal" business practices must be fair, or they would not survive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In free market systems, people tend to get the outcomes that they deserve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Profitable businesses tend to be more morally responsible than unprofitable businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic markets do not fairly reward people. (R)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B: Turnitin Similarity Check

7/16/2021

Turnitin Originality Report

Turnitin Originality Report
Masters Thesis by Soheil Rahimi Niaraki
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