

THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON MANAGERIAL CAREER ADVANCEMENT WITH MEDIATING EFFECT OF JOB PERFORMANCE: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Dr Lawrence Arokiasamy

Quest International University Perak, Malaysia.

Dr Maran Marimuthu

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia.

Dr Sebastian K. Francis

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia.

Mohd Nizam Bin A. Baharuddin

Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Malaysia.

Dr Huam Hon Tat

Quest International University Perak, Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Over the decades, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is increasingly being viewed as an important and integral part of business operations. As Asian countries are gradually encouraging foreign trade and investment, there is correspondingly increasing research interest in CSR. The purpose of this study is to explore new aspects of CSR related to manager's career advancement and with mediating role of job performance. The theoretical frame consists of Carroll's CSR model, including four dimensions: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic which are related to manager's career advancement. The paper provides complete literature on CSR, managerial career advancement and job performance which brings new interesting aspects to the context of CSR. The study is providing useful information about CSR which highlights on the internal aspect rather than the external aspect that is often discussed in CSR. This paper covers pragmatic arguments in the literature, develops conceptual framework relating to the relationship among CSR, manager's career advancement and job performance.

Keywords: *Corporate social responsibility, managers, career advancement and job performance.*

Introduction:

For the last few decades, the increasing trends of globalization, world business competitiveness, information technology development and new business practices have changed people's viewpoints in defining the way of doing business. In the past, the traditional view of organizations is to maximize profit for shareholders (Stormer, 2003). In the recent years, the social responsibility of a company has been emphasized towards a variety of stakeholder groups including consumers, suppliers, government, investors, shareholders, employees and managers (Brammer, Millington and Rayton, 2007; Kapstein, 2001). Thus, in order to satisfy a diverse group of stakeholders, organizational focus has turned to ethical and socially responsible behavior of organizations.

The recent wave of corporate failures and scandals (e.g., Enron, Parmalat and WorldCom) has heightened attention to the urgent need for corporate social responsibility (Koh and Boo, 2004; Moorthy, Arokiasamy and Chelliah, 2010). In accordance with this, many organizations around the globe have adopted the concept of CSR (Koh and Boo, 2004). CSR has become so important that organizations have re-branded their core values by including social responsibilities. Today's organizations view CSR as a mean of ensuring that they are fulfilling all the obligations towards society and thus gaining competitive advantage and sustainability of organizations.

In recent years, CSR development in Malaysia has grown in line with international trends. One of the significant developments is "The Silver Book", released by Khazanah Nasional Berhad in September 2006, containing CSR

guidelines for Government Linked Companies (GLCs). In relation to this, Bursa Malaysia launched its CSR Framework for the implementation and reporting of CSR activities of Public Listed Companies (PLCs). The CSR Framework focuses on four perspectives for CSR practices which are Community, Environment, Marketplace and Workplace, in no order of priority. The Malaysian Institute of Management (MIM) revealed that, in 2009, 86 per cent to 89 per cent of Multinational Companies (MNCs), Large Local Companies (LLCs) and GLCs engaged in CSR activities while 58 per cent of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) involved in CSR activities. These organizations engaged 29 per cent of their CSR activities in the Community and the Workplace respectively, 26 per cent in the Environment and 15 per cent in the Marketplace.

In order to response to the issue, this study examines the relationship between CSR, job performance and managerial career advancement. It is proposed that CSR significantly influences job performance (Brammer et al., 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2006; Koh and Boo, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Valentine and Barnett, 2003; Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; Weeks et al., 2004). Further, previous studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between job performance and career advancement (Carmeli et al., 2007; Marimuthu, Arokiasamy and Ismail, 2009; Schaubroeck and Lam, 2002; Tharenou, 1997). Thus, it is also proposed that job performance significantly affects managerial career advancement. In short, this study attempts to use job performance as a mediating for investigating the relationship between CSR and managerial career advancement.

This area of study is highly recommended due to the lack of empirical evidence indicating the linkage between CSR, job performance and managerial career advancement. This study is designed to address this gap in CSR literature by examining the impacts of CSR on managers' job performance and career advancement among the organizations in Malaysia. The objective of this study is to conceptualize the effect of CSR on managerial career advancement with mediating effect of job performance.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

Over the decades, the concept of CSR has continued to grow in importance and significance in the workplace. It has been the subject of intense controversy, debate, theory building and research (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). CSR has been defined in various perspectives varying from conceptions of minimal legal and economic obligations and accountability to stockholders to broader responsibilities to the wider social system in which a corporation is embedded (Jamali, 2008).

There is no agreement upon definition of CSR and the concept of CSR has remained vague and ambiguous (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003). Different researchers have adopted different perspectives in establishing a better understanding of CSR and developing the most robust definition. For instance, Davis and Blomstrom (as cited in

Carroll, 1979) defined CSR as activities that protect and improve both the welfare of society as a whole and the interest of the organization. Manakkalathil and Rudolf (1995) viewed CSR as the duty of the organization to respect individual's rights and promote human welfare in its operations. Maignan and Ferrell (2000) proposed to define CSR as the extent to which businesses meet the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities imposed on them by their stakeholders. Carroll (1979, p. 500) has provided the most comprehensive definition of CSR by stating that "the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time." Carroll's conceptualization of CSR is one of the most widely accepted frameworks to explain the construct of CSR (Burton, Farh and Hegarty, 2000; de los Salmones, Crespo and Bosque, 2005).

In business institutions, economic responsibility is the basic unit in an organization (Carroll, 1979). Organizations have an economic responsibility towards society in producing goods and services that society needs and selling them at reasonable prices. Further, organizations have an economic responsibility towards themselves in making profit, providing a return on investment to their shareholders, creating jobs and fair pay for their employees as well as taking care of the interests of other stakeholders (Carroll, 1979). Carroll's definition of economic responsibility has been supported by Bateman and Snell (2004) who defined economic responsibility as organizations' obligation to produce goods and services that society wants at a price to perpetuate the business and satisfy its obligations to investors. According to McAlister, Ferrell and Ferrell (2003), the economic aspect is influenced by the ways in which organizations relates to their stakeholders such as shareholders, employees, suppliers, competitors, community and environment. Thus, economic responsibility of an organization includes maximizing shareholders' interest and protects other stakeholders' interests.

Legal responsibility entails the expectations of legal compliance by an organization. From this perspective, society expects business to fulfil its economic mission within the framework of legal requirements as established by legislative body and societal legal system (Carroll, 1979). Carroll (1991) highlights that it is important for legal responsibility to be performed in a manner that is consistent within the expectations of governments and laws complying with the various federal, state and local regulations. Conchius (2006) suggested that legal responsibility includes abiding consumer and product laws, environmental laws and employment laws while adhering to laws and regulations governing competition in the marketplace. However, Pratima (2002) argues that although regulations may successfully compel firms to respond to an issue, it is difficult to ensure that they are applied equitably. Further, regulations are reactive in nature, leaving little opportunity for firm to be proactive and hence it limits business tolerable behaviour, they

neither define ethics nor do they “legislate morality” (Solomon, 1994).

In essence, ethical responsibility calls for corporate integrity and ethical behaviour that go beyond the requirements of the laws and regulations. Although economic and legal responsibilities represent ethical standards about fairness and justice, ethical responsibility embraces those activities and practices that are expected or prohibited by members of society that expands beyond the limitations of legal responsibilities (Carroll, 1991). According to Novak (1996), the societal members derive their source of authority from religious convictions, moral traditions, and human principles and human rights commitments. Thus, ethical responsibility encompasses activities that are not necessarily codified into law but nevertheless are expected of business by members of society (Jamali, 2008). Carroll (2000) further explained ethical responsibility comprises a range of norms, standards or expectations of behaviour that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, community and other stakeholders regard as fair, right, just or in keeping with stakeholders’ moral rights or legitimate expectations.

Philanthropic responsibility involves corporate activities that are in response to society’s expectations of good corporate citizens. Philanthropic responsibility includes public’s expectation that business will engage in social activities that are not mandated, not required by law and not generally expected of business in an ethical sense (Carroll, 2000). According to Carroll (1991), it is essential for organizations to get involved in voluntary and charitable activities within their local communities especially activities that are able to improve a community’s quality of life. Although society expects organizations to be philanthropic, it is discretionary or voluntary on the part of organizations (Carroll, 1991). Examples of philanthropic activities include business contributions or programs for the benefits of communities, educations and arts. Ferrell (2004) argues that philanthropy is located at the most voluntary and discretionary dimension of corporate responsibility and has not always been linked to profits or the ethical culture of the firm.

Job Performance:

According to Campbell (1990), job performance refers to all behaviours involved in accomplishing a given job including effectiveness and outcome of each behaviour. Job performance is used to measure the level of achievement of business and social objectives and responsibilities from the perspective of the judging party (Chen and Silverthorne, 2008; Hersey and Blanchard, 1993). Carmeli et al. (2007) suggested that job performance can be categorized into task performance and contextual performance. This is consistent with the viewpoint of Campbell (1990) and Borman and Motowidlo (1993).

Task performance has long been recognized by researchers as the most important aspect of work behaviours and has

sometimes been regarded as being synonymous with overall job performance (Kahya, 2009). However, MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Fetter (1993) argued that contextual performance has a stronger impact on employees’ job performance. Similar results found in other studies (Borman, White and Dorsey, 1995; Rotundo and Sackett, 2002) have provided ample evidence that contextual performance has substantial effects on employees’ job performance. Further, Kahya (2009) also finds that contextual performance has significant contribution to quality of work and productivity which consistent with the findings by Podsakoff, Ahearne and Mackenzie (1997).

Based on the literature, this study defines job performance as behaviours involved in completing a given job including outcomes of the behaviour that comprise of both quality of work and productivity. In short, job performance can be referred as job quality and productivity of an employee. The definition of job performance is consistent with Singh’s (2000) definition. Job performance will be taken as a mediating variable in this study. The purpose is to examine the extent to which the mediating role of job performance has impact on the relationship between CSR and managerial career advancement.

Managerial Career Advancement:

Career has vast meaning where previous theorists and researchers had defined it in many versions. Greenhaus (as cited in Dwyer, 2006) described a career as “a pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of one’s life”. According to Greenhaus, career includes both objective and subjective events. Objective events are such as a series of job positions, job duties or activities and work-related decisions. Whereas, subjective events include work aspirations, expectations, values, needs and feelings about particular work experiences.

Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989, p. 8) defined a career as “an evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time”. Career success or career advancement is the accumulation of real or perceived achievements from these work experiences (Judge, Cable, Boudreau and Bretz, 1999; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen and Barrick, 1999). Ismail and Arokiasamy (2007) further explained career advancement as a process that an employee experiences improvement and enhancement in terms of job performance, job position, promotions and relationship with management.

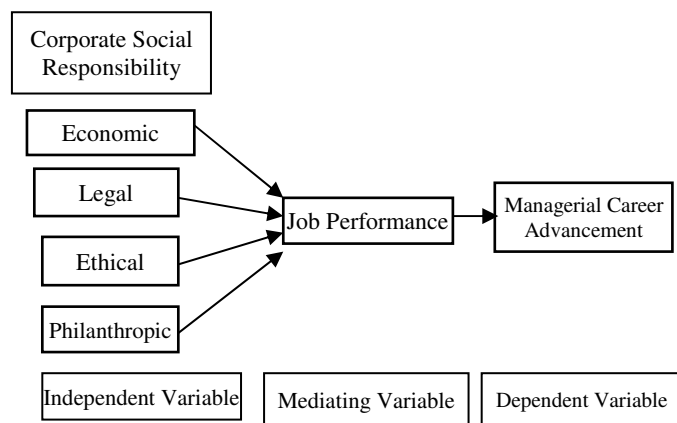
Greenhaus et al. (1990) stated that promotion is the central concept of career advancement. Further, Judge et al. (1999) defined extrinsic success in terms of salary and number of promotions. Judge et al. (1999) expanded the definition of extrinsic career success by encompassing occupational status. Based on the literature review, managerial career advancement can be explained by managerial level, salary and number of promotions in managerial ranks (Judge et al., 1999; Miner, Tharenou, 1999). Thus, in this study, managerial career advancement is defined as managerial success where a manager is

satisfied (intrinsic) with the visible outcomes such as high managerial level, increment in salary and promotion (extrinsic).

Conceptual Framework:

Based on the literature review, the conceptual framework for this study is shown in Figure 2.1. In general, it depicts that CSR comprises of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities and it has an impact upon job performance of managers. Further, it shows that CSR-job performance relationship has a direct influence on managerial career advancement. The model posits that CSR affects managerial career advancement through its effects on job performance. In other words, job performance mediates the relationships between CSR and managerial career advancement.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



CSR and Job Performance:

Previous research has shown that CSR results in higher job performance (Brammer et al., 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2006; Koh and Boo, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Valentine and Barnett, 2003; Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; Weeks et al., 2004). Based on a study of 237 managers in Singapore, Koh and Boo (2001) indicated that CSR significantly improves job satisfaction which in turn, improves job performance. According to Weeks et al. (2004), CSR appears to indirectly influence job performance through organizational commitment. This indicates the potential importance of CSR on job performance. Similarly, Brammer et al. (2007), Jaramillo et al. (2006) and Valentine and Fleischman (2008) suggested that CSR can enhance other individual work attitudes such as improved productivity and reduced turnover which result in higher job performance.

Further, Valentine and Fleischman (2008) also suggested that organizations’ involvement in CSR activities should more directly influence individual work attitudes. Due to demonstrated social responsiveness directly satisfies employees’ social requirements of the organization, Valentine and Fleischman (2008) believed that CSR should more immediately enhance job performance. Based

on these prior findings, it clearly shows that CSR has a significant influence on job performance.

Job Performance and Managerial Career Advancement:

A number of previous studies have highlighted that appraisal of current job performance plays a significant role in an individual’s career advancement potential (Carmeli et al., 2007; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Marimuthu et al., 2009; Schaubroeck and Lam, 2002; Tharenou, 1997). In Carmeli et al.’s (2007) study, the results show that job performance is significantly associated with career success and it is the only major predictor of career success. Schaubroeck and Lam (2002) also found a strong correlation between job performance and career advancement, in terms of promotion, in two different countries: Hong Kong and USA.

Further, Tharenou (1997) proposes that job performance has positive links with managerial career advancement, especially within a single organization. Tharenou (1997) further explains that job performance appears as important to managerial career advancement as other factors such as interpersonal, leadership, personal, strategic and technical skills. Evidence shows that employees or managers, who are high performers as rated by supervisors, enjoy relatively high career advancement. Therefore, managers who perform their job successfully will have better chances for career advancement. Hence, job performance has a significant impact on managerial career advancement.

CSR and Managerial Career Advancement:

Although limited research has been done, there is empirical evidence that CSR is closely associated with career success. These concepts were supported by Moorthy et al. (2010). Moorthy et al. (2010) point out that organizations which practise CSR are more likely to enhance managers’ career success as well as personal development. When organizations are perceived as participating in CSR activities, managers are more optimistic about the existence of the positive link between CSR and career advancement (Moorthy et al., 2010; Viswesvaran and Deshpande, 1996). Further, literature suggests that CSR results in higher job performance (Brammer et al., 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2006; Koh and Boo, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Valentine and Barnett, 2003; Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; Weeks et al., 2004) and job performance leads to greater managerial career advancement (Carmeli et al., 2007; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Marimuthu et al., 2009; Schaubroeck and Lam, 2002; Tharenou, 1997). The literature shows that CSR and career advancement have a significant relationship. Therefore, this study indeed clearly points out that CSR, job performance and managerial career advancement tends to have significant relationships.

Conclusion:

This study explores the influence of CSR on managerial career advancement and the mediating effect of job

performance between CSR and managerial career advancement. Literature suggests that CSR results in higher job performance (Brammer et al., 2007; Jaramillo et al., 2006; Koh and Boo, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Valentine and Barnett, 2003; Valentine and Fleischman, 2008; Weeks et al., 2004). Further, job performance leads to greater managerial career advancement (Carmeli et al., 2007; Greenhaus et al., 1990; Marimuthu et al., 2009; Schaubroeck and Lam, 2002; Tharenou, 1997). Therefore, this study proposes that CSR has a significant impact on managerial career advancement through the mediating role of job performance.

The exploratory work of this study indicates a new finding and suggests that all four independent variables of CSR (economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities) have significant influences with managerial career advancement. Thus, CSR has a significant impact on managerial career advancement. Further, with the mediating effect of job performance, the findings show a stronger relationship between CSR and managerial career advancement. This means that job performance mediates the relationship between CSR and managerial career advancement. Hence, the exploratory of this study are able to validate the proposal of CSR significantly affects managerial career advancement through job performance.

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