# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICES OF HOTEL INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to examine the dimensions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices of the hotel industry in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The paper also aims to explore the main reasons companies have for adopting CSR. In order to identify the dimensions and measure the reasons for involving CSR activities, a quantitative approach was used and a closed-end survey questionnaire was administered as a method for data collection. After the data collection, data analysis was performed by descriptive statistics. 60 General Managers and HR Managers were surveyed, and the result of the study with regards to CSR dimensions of hotel, in which they are involved with, show that community dimension is the most important, followed by workforce, market place, environment and vision and values. This study indicates that all five CSR dimensions have positive effect on customer behavioral intentions. Results also show that, one of the major reasons for adopting CSR is to create/maintain favorable image of the hotel and improve community's quality of life and long term profitability of the hotel are higher than the other reasons for involving CSR practices.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Hotel Industry, Tourism, Corporate Image, GDP, Corporate Citizenship.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The world is going through an era of globalization and economic boom. In order to know the different parts of this world and to make the world know more about Bangladesh, it is very important to survive in the race and ranks of every sector. Tourism or tourism industry works as a wonderful bridge to meet this global need of every nation. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council Report 2014, Tourism industry has been growing for the past few years and the advancement and its contribution to the world Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is very notable in 2014. The total contribution to the world GDP has grown 4.3%. Equally, tourism industry is creating employment opportunities around the world. Total contribution towards employment by the tourism industry has grown 2.5% in 2014.

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Bangladesh is also a part of the revolution of tourism industry and its wonderful prospect. According to the estimation of the World Travel and Tourism Council report on Bangladesh Economic Impact -2012, the total contributions of travel and tourism (e.g., hotels, travel agents, airlines, restaurant, leisure industries and other passenger transportation services industries) to GDP in Bangladesh is expected to be BDT 773.0bn in 2022, which is 5% of the total GDP. The total contribution to employment (i.e., employment generated by hotels, travel agents, airlines, restaurant, leisure industries and other passenger transportation service industries) is expected to be 4,082,000 jobs (4.5% of total employment). The international tourist arrivals are expected to be 531,000 in 2022. Among different components of travel and tourism spending, visitor export, domestic travel, leisure travel and business travel spending are expected to be BDT 11.7bn, BDT 564.4bn, BDT 405.5bn and BDT 173.1bn in 2022 respectively.

Tourism sector is growing rapidly in Bangladesh and hotel sector is the major entity in the tourism industry. Hotel sector of Bangladesh is at a growing stage and making a significant contribution to the economy of Bangladesh (Bangladesh Economic News, 2012). In line with this growing and economic progress, Belal and Owen (2007) said that while there are some growth in the economic sense, it leads to increasing demands for enhancing corporate social responsibility (CSR) in business practices.

In comparison to other service industries, hotel devours huge amount of energy, water, food, and other resources that is used in running the hotel and also produces solid and liquid waste that adversely puts impact on the environment, community and society. Moreover, it is viewed that customers are now increasingly careful about hotel service quality, hotel activities and its impacts on their life, and other concerns relating to employee relations, community relations and diversity issues. Therefore, the effective management of energy and water consumption, using organic and sustainably produced food and other tangible products, the proper disposal of waste water and solid waste, better relations with employee and other stakeholders along with better service quality given to guests are important challenges in the hotel industry in Bangladesh. In line with these challenges, CSR could play an important role for big hotels and chains as CSR initiatives will minimize their impacts on environment, make a significant contribution to community and society and also provide a unique service experience for their guests, which can improve corporate image and influence customer behavior and intention.

Although, hotel sector is growing rapidly, it is a general perception that the majority of hotels in Bangladesh are rarely concerned with CSR activities. Moreover, it is surprising to discover that no empirical research has been undertaken so far to examine the dimensions and importance of CSR activities in the hotel sector of Bangladesh.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with 60% of its land being less than five meters above sea level. According to World Risk Report (2012), Bangladesh is fifth in the list of 173 countries throughout the world that are most prone to natural hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, droughts and sea level rise. Specific problems relate to natural hazards, climate change, air pollution, water and energy scarcity, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, land-use change, labor and consumer rights, corruption, bad governance, limited size of domestic market, high unemployment rate, and increased poverty level have made Bangladesh the most vulnerable country in the world (CSR Asia, 2010). Even though, Bangladesh government is trying to mitigate all these problems, but consequences are still limited. In this regard, CSR is considered as one of the most practical ways by which the business conglomerates in Bangladesh would be able to improve corporate governance, labor rights, work place safety and fair treatment of workers, consumer rights, community development, environment management, industrialization, and ensuring global market access (Miyan, 2006; CSR Asia, 2010; CSR Asia, 2009b; CSR Bangladesh).

CSR is well-known by various names such as corporate or business responsibility, social responsibility (SR), corporate or business citizenship, good corporate citizenship, community relations, and in the context of tourism, corporate sustainability (Holcomb et al., 2007; Asongu, 2007). CSR is a broad concept and its definition remains highly fragmented (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). As stated by Argandonaand von WeltzienHoivik (2009) "there are many useful definitions of CSR, but there is not – and probably cannot be – a unique, precise definition of CSR, because its content and application will vary from one country to another, will change over time and also will differ among firms". As a result, different authors have defined CSR in different perspective and conceptual lenses. One common definition of CSR is, "The managerial obligation to take action to protect and improve both the welfare of society as a whole and the interest of organization" (Davis and Blomstrom, 1975). Carroll (1979, 1991) identified four important dimensions of corporation's CSR. The dimensions are economic (economic responsibility to its stakeholders), legal (obligations to pursue the rules and regulations determined by the lawmakers), ethical (to be fair and just in making decisions and conducting performance), and philanthropic (responsibility to engage human welfare or goodwill activities). This is one of the most widely used and cited definitions of CSR (Holcomb et al., 2007)

Many companies in Asia don't have the proper idea about how to adopt and implement CSR. Although CSR is recently being undertaken within their organization, majority of the them are performing only philanthropic activities under the banner of CSR (CSR Asia, 2009a). Even though, CSR is a recent phenomenon, in majority of Asian countries, companies, operating in Asia, need to identify and recognize the newly emerging CSR issues in the context of Asian

challenges. CSR Asia (2009a) disclosed in the survey of 80 CSR managers from 14 countries in Asia: Singapore, Phillipines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Combodia, Japan, Myanmar and Pakistan that business do have different views on a number of CSR agenda and CSR managers in Asia will consider the following CSR agenda (in order) as the key strategic focus areas for the next coming five years: strategy development, community investment projects, health and safety, internal awareness and training, governance, climate change, poverty alleviation, community health, water, policy development, supply chain management, product responsibility, responsible marketing, diversity and bio-diversity. But, it is quite surprising to discover that product responsibility and bio-diversity ranked last five among the fifteen factors for the coming five years as it is more important in the current phenomena in certain Asian countries. As a result, it is debatable whether or not these CSR agenda will be the key focus areas for the next five years. Moreover, in CSR Asia (2009b) report through survey of over 70 experts in respect to CSR issues in the Asia pacific region from business, NGOs, government and academia, disclosed the top ten CSR issues that are likely to be emerging over the coming decade. Climate change ranked first among the ten issues while corporate governance and labor and human resources ranked second and third, respectively. Bribery and corruption ranked last among the ten factors.

Bangladesh is different compared to the Western and other Asian countries. This is due to differences in certain challenges and geographical, cultural and managerial traits. That's why; Western and Asian CSR agenda are not completely pertinent in Bangladesh and needs local versions of CSR initiatives. As with other countries in Asia, CSR in Bangladesh must be shaped by current challenges.

Being one of the most densely populated countries in the world and one of the fastest growing countries in South Asia, CSR remains voluntary in Bangladesh and companies operating in Bangladesh are not competent to meet many essential aspects of core CSR activities (Naeem and Welford, 2009). Even though CSR is a recent phenomenon and undertaking in Bangladesh, in notably multinational corporations, the future of CSR will be different. As many Bangladeshi firms are increasingly exposed to global standards and market and are receiving increased pressure from different stakeholder groups, firms both local and multinational would be able to establish their brands, create image and trust and influence consumer buying decisions in favor of the goods and services both in domestic and international market by adopting and implementing CSR programs (Quazi et al., 2012).

CSR is not singular but a multi-dimensional phenomenon, the importance and effective value of these dimensions does not only vary from one country to another but also dependent on nature of the business. Garcia de los Salmones et al. (2005) carried out a market research based on personal survey to investigate the CSR perceptions of users of mobile telephone services in the Spanish market.

The study used three dimensions which were adopted from different studies, named as "economic", "ethical-legal" and "philanthropic". Among these, noneconomic dimensions were the most important dimensions influencing the perceptions of mobile telephone service users. Holcomb et al. (2010) examined CSR activities of the top three theme park companies (i.e., Walt Disney World, Universal Orlando, and SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment) in USA based on content analysis. They examined CSR activities based on 5 dimensions, namely, "environment", "community", "market place", "vision and values" and "workforce". Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) used four CSR dimensions, named as "community support", "employee relations", "product and service oriented" and "environment support" to explore the level of customer's expectations of different CSR activities to be engaged by Thai financial services sector. To examine the effects of CSR on corporate financial performance in tourism-related industries (i.e., airline, casino, hotel, and restaurant)in USA, Inoue and Lee (2011) used five CSR dimensions relating to "employee relations", "product quality", "community relations", "environment" and "diversity". The results revealed that all dimensions have positive financial effects but each dimension varied across the four industries. Another survey was conducted by McDonald and Lai (2011) to investigate the impact of CSR initiatives on Taiwanese banking customers and concluded that customer-centric initiatives have more positive effect on banking customers' attitude and behavioral intentions than environmental or philanthropic initiative. Recently, an empirical study by Matev and Assenova (2012) on 25 Bulgarian hotels used 6 dimensions, named as, "organizational governance", "human rights", "labour practices", "fair operating practices", "consumer issues", and "community involvement and development" to assess the application of CSR to support sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria. The review of service related industry's empirical research during 2005 to 2012 are signaling the diversity of CSR dimensions as shown in table 1

**Table 1: Review of CSR Dimensions in Service Industries** 

Study	Service Industry (Country)	CSR Dimensions
Garcia de los Salmones et al. (2005)	Mobile telephone (Spain)	3 dimensions: economic; ethical-legal; and philanthropic
Holcomb et al. (2007)	Top 10 hotel firms	5 dimensions: community; environment; marketplace; vision and values; and workforce
Holcomb et al. (2010)	Top three theme parks (USA)	5 dimensions: environment; community; market place; vision and values; and workforce

Study	Service Industry (Country)	CSR Dimensions	
Mandhachita ra and Poolthong (2011)	Bank (Thailand)	4 dimensions: community support; employee relations; product and service oriented; and environment support	
Hansen et al. (2011)	Hospital (USA)	4 dimensions: community outreach and charitable giving; diversity, including representation of women and minorities, as well as family benefits and programs; workplace and employee issues (e.g., employee relations), and the natural environment	
McDonald and Lai (2011)	Bank (Taiwan)	3 dimensions: environmental, customer centric, and philanthropic	
Kabir (2011)	Hotel (Swaziland)	6 dimensions: community involvement; human resources; fair business practices; energy saving; environmental; and products and safety	
Inoue and Lee (2011)	Tourism-related industries (airline, casino, hotel, and restaurant) (USA)	5 dimensions: employee relations, product quality, community relations, environment, and diversity	
Lee et al. (2012)	Food service (South Korea)	4 dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic	
Hsieh (2012)	Top 50 hotel firms	1 dimension: environmental	
Selvarajh et al. (2012)	Aviation ( Malaysia )	4 dimensions: environmental, working environment, social, and economical	
Matev and Assenova (2012)	Hotel (Bulgaria)	6 dimensions: organizational governance, human rights; labor practices, fair operating practices, consumer issues, and community involvement and development	

Business should consider different CSR strategic outcomes to its core business activities for both business benefits as well as for positive social returns. But measuring CSR outcomes are not easy as compared to measuring outcomes of other business efforts (e.g., advertisements, marketing communication). Chomvilailuk and Butcher (2010), Luo and Bhattacharya (2006), and Becker-

Olsen et al. (2006) stated the positive influence of CSR initiatives on consumers' perceptions, responses to the organization and differentiate product offerings. A study by Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) on the retail banking sector in Thailand found that consumer expectations of CSR behavior have direct impact for their perceptions of service quality and attitudinal loyalty. In empirical examination of the role of CSR in explaining consumer reactions in a service context, Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) found that corporations with poor CSR records experience large scale consumer boycotts, reductions in brand images, or temporary drop in sales. Moreover, a survey conducted by Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) in US found that greater than 80% of respondents agreed that firms should involve in CSR activities, 76% felt those activities reward firm for their effort through purchase behavior and 52% stated they would boycott firms if firm acted irresponsibly. Ferguson (2009) in review of research, explained the business benefits of CSR activities both from risk-oriented and opportunity-related perspectives. Risk-oriented factors can be: risk portfolio management; retaining the best people; maintain employee motivation and productivity; protecting the corporate brand; maintaining quality in oppressive market conditions/ supplychains; protecting license to operate; reducing cost of remedial works; maintaining operational efficiency; reduced exposure to litigation and fines; reducing exposure to further regulation; and managing insurance premiums. On the other hand, opportunity-related factors can be: increased access to capital; attracting the best skilled people; increasing employee satisfaction and loyalty; providing staff development opportunities; building the local and/or international brand; peer positioning; market development; supporting new business development/innovation; improved customer loyalty and organizational learning; and improved investor relations. Recently, the CSR literature review was conducted by Aguinis and Glavas (2012) based on 588 journals and 102 books and book chapters and found the following outcomes of CSR initiatives in the institutional-level as shown in Table 2

**Table 2: Outcomes of CSR Initiatives** 

Authors	Outcomes of CSR
Brammer and Pavelin, 2006; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Turban and Greening, 1997; Verschoor,1998; Waddock and Graves, 1997	Reputation of firm
Brown and Dacin, 1997; Ellen et al.,2000; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001	Consumer evaluation of product/company
Arora and Henderson, 2007; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001	Consumer choice of company/product
Maignan et al., 1999	Customer loyalty

Source: Aguinis and Glavas (2012)

#### **OBJECTIVES**

Therefore, the major objective of this study is to find out the dimensions of CSR activities which the hotels should involve and to have an understanding of customers' behavioral intentions from the viewpoint of hotel industry in Dhaka, Bangladesh. This study also attempts to investigate the major reasons for involving CSR practices in the hotel industry.

#### HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

With a view of fulfilling the objectives some relevant hypothesis have been formulated for this study:

- 1. H<sub>0</sub>: Community dimension of CSR has no positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
  - H<sub>1</sub>: Community dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
- 2. H<sub>0</sub>: Market Place dimension of CSR has no positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
  - H<sub>1</sub>: Market Place dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
- 3. H<sub>0</sub>: Workforce dimension of CSR has no positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
  - H<sub>1</sub>: Workforce dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
- 4. H<sub>0</sub>: Environment dimension of CSR has no positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
  - H<sub>1</sub>: Environment dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
- 5. H<sub>0</sub>: Vision and values dimension of CSR has no positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions
  - H<sub>1</sub>: Vision and values dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions

# **METHODOLOGY**

This study is a combination of qualitative and quantitative in nature. Primary data were collected from survey method and secondary data were collected from annual reports and, other relevant documents from the selected hotels while conducting the research. The selection of the sample of the study has been done from the hotel industry of Dhaka city of Bangladesh. Dhaka has been selected

due to some pragmatic reasons. Dhaka, as the capital of Bangladesh, is expanding and growing, with many new hotels being built. The current population of Dhaka is 7,001,000 (World Population Statistics, 2013).

All the hotels in Bangladesh are rated with star mark from 1 to 5 according to its facilities and arrangements. This rating is provided by the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation. Currently, there are 65 hotels in Dhaka city, of which 5 are five-star, 3 are four-star and 37 are three-star hotels (Hotelscombined, 2012). For this research, only the three-star, four-star and five-star hotels have been considered. In this study, data were collected from 30 hotels from October to December, 2014. For selecting 30 hotels from the industry, this study used non-probability judgment sampling technique.

The questionnaires were given to General Managers and Human Resource (HR) Managers of each of the companies with the view to collect the information regarding various CSR activities and aspects from various sources within the organization. The questionnaire was prepared which consisted of a few sections to specify the aims of the research. Section 1 deal with the organizational information such as gender, age, job title, length of work experience, education of the respondents, etc. Section 2 of the questionnaire deals with the dimensions of CSR in which the companies should involve and effect on customers' behavioral intentions. For this research, CSR dimensions were based on the five major groups of the social responsibility identified by Holcomb et al. (2007), which are: community, workforce, market place, environment and vision and values. And section 3 deals with specific questions about their main purposes of involving CSR practices.

The study has been carried out in Bangladesh and data were collected from five-star, four-star and three-star hotel categories in Dhaka city. So, the findings will not be generalized for the entire hotel segment in Dhaka or Bangladesh.

#### FINDINGS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Respondent characteristics were as follows: gender (male, 75.9%; 24.1% female); age (between 30-35, 14.3%; between 36 to 40,19.1%; between 41 to 45, 27.9%; between 46 to 50 years, 32.2%, above 50 years old, 6.5%); length of working experience (between 1-5 years, 33%; above 5 years, 67%), job title (General Managers, 41; HR Managers, 19); level of education (Masters/ Post Graduate Diploma, 32%; Bachelor 68%).

Table 3: Dimensions of CSR Involvement by Companies According to Respondents

Dimensions of CSR	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1. Community	53	88.33
2. Workforce	44	73.33
3. Market Place	38	63.33
4. Environment	35	58.33
5. Vision and values	26	43.33
Average number of respondents	39.2	65.33

Notes: Total number of Respondents=60

General Manager and HR Manager of each company were asked to indicate their view about different aspects of CSR and CSR activities that are currently undertaken by their respective hotel and have positive effect on customers' attitude and behavioral intentions. Table 3 shows that greater than 65 percent of respondents indicated that their companies should involve in CSR activity. This involvement is supported by Becker-Olsen et al. (2006) study. According to the amount of response rate, among the dimensions of CSR, 'Community' dimension ranked first (88.33%) while 'Workforce' and 'Market Place' ranked second (73.33%) and third (63.33%), respectively (Table 3). The 'community' dimension was related to charitable donations; community welfare; corporate giving; donations in mind; education; grants; local regeneration; national welfare; volunteerism; and world welfare. 'Workforce' dimension covered the issues of advancement; fair and equitable benefits; career planning; compensation and rewards; daycare and family accommodations; diversity/equal opportunity; employee assistance program; employee communication; health and safety; and recruitment and training. The 'Market place' dimension covered ethical advertising; providing a product of value; relationship with guests; relationship with suppliers; relationship with shareholders; and supplier diversity. The 'Environment' which is the fourth ranked (58.33%) dimension of CSR, covered cultural heritage; energy management; pollution control; recycle; waste management; and water conservation. 'Vision and Values' ranked last (43.33%) among the five dimensions. It covered accountability, clear purpose, code of conduct, enduring values, ethical behavior; fairness, self-regulation, and trust.

**Table 4: Hypothesis Test Result** 

H <sub>o</sub>	μ	$\overline{X}$	σ	Zcal $(\overline{X} - \mu) / (\sigma / \sqrt{n})$	$\begin{array}{c} \textbf{Result} \\ Z_{cal.} > Z_{tab} \end{array}$
1	2.5	2.99	1.32	5.44*	Rejected
2	2.5	2.93	1.33	4.72*	Rejected
3	2.5	2.81	1.40	3.32*	Rejected
4	2.5	3.10	1.24	7.07*	Rejected
5	2.5	2.87	1.38	3.96*	Rejected

Notes: \* 5% Level of Significance ( $Z_{0.05} = 1.645$ )

From table 4 we can see that for the first hypothesis since Z cal. > Z tab i.e., 5.44 > 2.5, the null hypothesis is not accepted. So at 5% level of significance, it can be said that community dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions. For the second one, Z cal. is also greater than Z tab i.e., 4.72 > 2.5, therefore the null hypothesis is not accepted. So at 5% level of significance, it can be said that market place dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions. In the third hypothesis since Ztab. < Zcal i.e., 2.5 < 3.32, the null hypothesis is not accepted. It can be said that workforce dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions at 5% level of significance. Since Zcal. > Ztab i.e., 7.07 > 2.5 for the fourth hypothesis, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus at 5% level of significance, it can be said that environment dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions. Finally in the fifth hypothesis Zcal. > Ztab i.e., 3.96 > 2.5 and thus the null hypothesis is not accepted. So at 5% level of significance, it can be said that vision and value dimension of CSR has positive effect on hotel customers' attitude and behavioral intentions.

The major reasons for involving CSR practices by the hotels were asked to the General Managers and HR Managers. They were also asked to specify (as many options as appropriate and applicable) the major reasons. More than 73% of respondents agreed that the hotels should involve in CSR activities to create/maintain a favorable corporate image while 61.54% felt that those activities reward through enhancement of its community's quality of life and profitability. (Table 5). 47.69% of respondents indicated that positive CSR practices by their companies will fulfill environmental laws and regulations while 43.08% said that they want to view their organization as a socially responsible organization. (Table 5). Corporations should bear some sort of social responsibility to justify their existence within the society was considered lower most (32.31%) among the five major reasons. All the reasons for involving CSR

practices in this paper are in line with the earlier studies of Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Ferguson, 2009; Pomering and Johnson, 2009 Kabir, 2011; Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011; Aguinis and Glavas, 2012.

Table 5: Major Reasons for Involving CSR Practices

	Major Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	To create/maintain a favorable corporate image	48 (65)	73.85
2.	To fulfill environmental laws and regulations	31(65)	47.69
3.	Corporations should be viewed as social organizations as long as they do business within society	28(65)	43.08
4.	CSR involvement by business in improving its community's quality of life will also improve long - run profitability	40(65)	61.54
5.	Corporations should bear some sort of social responsibility to justify their existence within the society	21 (65)	32.31

#### **CONCLUSION**

CSR is a location-specific context as it differs from region to region, country to country, even industry to industry over time. That's why; Western and Asian CSR agenda are not completely pertinent in Bangladesh and needs local versions of CSR initiatives. Therefore, companies operating in Bangladesh, particularly in hotel industry need to identify and recognize most important and relevant CSR dimensions in the context of current challenges. In line with these challenges, suitable CSR practices in hotel sectors would play an important role to improve corporate image, enhance society well-being and fulfill environmental laws and regulations. Consequently, the findings of the study should help policy strategy makers of the hotel industry to formulate and implement a hotel's CSR strategic plan relevant to Bangladesh.

Future research on different categories of hotel in a variety of regional settings needs to be carried out to generalize the findings. This research did not consider comprehensively which dimensions of CSR will have more impact on organization and consumer behavior outcomes. Future research maybe focused on this issues in particular.

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