

The Relative Salience of CSR Issues in International Media Coverage

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Research Problem

The meaning of corporate social responsibility (CSR) is inherently society-specific, as it is based on the norms and values which vary across cultures. Understanding the multiplicity of meanings attached to CSR in different countries as well as the underlying values that shape those interpretations is crucial for public relations practitioners working for multinational corporations.

Practitioners' ability to anticipate and predict audience's expectations regarding the constituents of socially responsible corporate behavior can result in better-tailored and, thus, more effective CSR strategies, which, in turn, may potentially improve the relationships between multinational organizations and their audiences in host countries.

Multidimensionality of CSR

In this study, five different dimensions of corporate responsibility were identified (Dahlsrud, 2008). These include:

- Stakeholder responsibility concerns a company's behavior toward its stakeholders, including customers, market partners, suppliers, investors, employees and activist groups;
- Environmental responsibility concerns how an organization handle environmental and ecological issues related to its operations;
- Economic responsibility is a company's ability to generate revenues;
- The social dimension concerns a company's willingness to take actions in regard to social problems of a community, such as gender inequality, human rights, child labor, and others.
- The voluntariness dimension refers to charity-related activities.

Research Specifics

To understand which CSR dimensions are more relevant than others to the audiences in different countries of the world, a content analysis of newspaper articles published in 17 countries was conducted.

In addition, cultural value dimensions identified by Hofstede (2010) were explored as possible predictors of audience expectations regarding socially responsible corporate behavior.

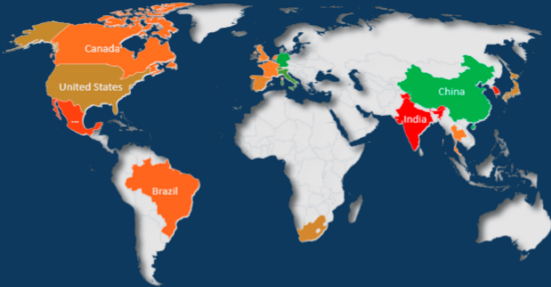
Findings: Relative Salience of CSR Aspects in International Media Coverage

Stakeholder Responsibility



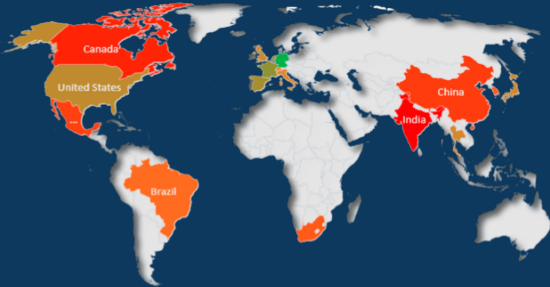
Stakeholder responsibility received the greatest media attention in Canada, Mexico, and India, whereas German and Chinese media paid relatively little attention to this aspect of CSR.

Environmental Responsibility



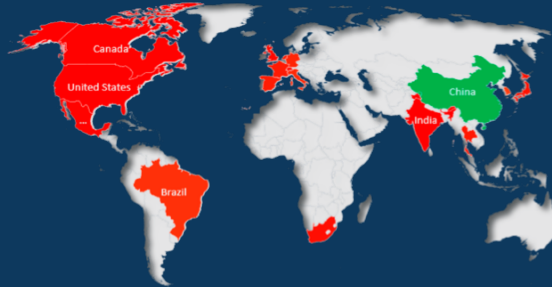
Environmental responsibility was the most prominent in China, followed by Germany, and Italy. This dimension got the least coverage from Indian, South Korean, and Mexican media.

Economic Responsibility



Economic responsibility was prominently covered in all European countries in this study, as well as in the United States and Thailand. India, Canada, China, and Mexico, on contrary, seemed to be less concerned about corporate economic performance.

Voluntariness and Social Dimension



The social and voluntariness dimensions received relatively little media attention in all countries in the study, except for China and South Korea.



Findings: Hofstede's Value Dimensions as Predictors of CSR Aspects' Salience in a Country's Media

Stakeholder responsibility

Stakeholder responsibility was positively associated with Power Distance (PDI), meaning that in societies where power inequality is accepted and expected, there is a tendency to discuss companies in the context of their behavior toward stakeholders.

Environmental responsibility

Environmental responsibility was positively associated with Masculinity (MAS). This is a somewhat counterintuitive finding that implies that more competitive cultures oriented to material success are more likely to place greater emphasis on organizations' environmental responsibility than on their economic performance, which served as a baseline for comparisons.

Social responsibility

Social responsibility was positively linked to Long-Term Orientation (LTO), suggesting that in cultures where long-term goals are more important than short-term benefits greater importance is placed on what firms are doing to help solve social problems rather than in whether they generate profits or not.

Voluntariness

Voluntariness was positively associated with LTO and Indulgence (IVR), meaning that societies that place greater importance on enjoying life and having fun also place greater importance on corporate charity and ethical corporate behavior.

**Economic responsibility served as a baseline*

Methodology

Sample

The sample (N=6,692) was restricted to a) newspaper articles; b) published in 2016; c) in one of the countries listed in Appendix A; c) mentioning one of the following corporations: BMW, GM, Hyundai-Kia, or Toyota Motors Corporation; d) in the context of one of the topics listed in the Appendix B.

Content analysis procedure

For each mention of a corporation (N=17,356), PRIME Research news analysts used the standardized coding protocol developed by PRIME Research to identify a topic in relation to which a company was mentioned. The researcher further selected all CSR-related topics and placed them into five broader CSR categories identified by Dahlsrud (2008).

Intercoder reliability

Two PRIME news analysts were selected (based on their availability) to code 20 articles from the dataset using the standardized coding protocol. After collapsing CSR topics into the five dimensions discussed above, the researcher calculated Krippendorff's alpha. The resulting coefficient of .857 is considered satisfactory for the purposes of academic research (Neuendorf, 2002)

Statistical analyses

To assess the relative salience of CSR dimensions in each country, a multiway chi-square test (CSR dimensions * country * corporation) was conducted in SPSS Statistics 24. Each country's value of adjusted standardized residual represents the salience of a certain CSR dimension in its media coverage. Negative values meant that the country's media mentioned that CSR dimension less frequently than it could be expected based on the sample's average; positive values indicated that a respective CSR dimension was mentioned more frequently based on the sample's average. The differences between the expected and the observed counts were tested for statistical significance by calculating Bonferroni-corrected p-values for adjusted standardized residuals.

To explore the relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the dimensions of CSR, a multinomial logistic regression was used. Countries' scores on the six Hofstede's dimensions were entered as predictor variables, while controlling for the random effects of brands. CSR dimension was a categorical dependent variable, coded as 1 = stakeholder responsibility, 2 = environmental responsibility, 3 = economic responsibility, 4 = social dimension, 5 = voluntariness. Economic responsibility (3) and Toyota (4) served as baselines.

Appendix A

List of countries

Country.....n	
Germany.....	2153
.....	126
Italy.....	123
Spain.....	306
UK.....	1240
Switzerland.....	100
Netherlands.....	117
USA.....	1563
Canada.....	1098
Brazil.....	307
Mexico.....	1750
China.....	1789
India.....	4495
Japan.....	396
South Korea.....	1082
Thailand.....	436
South Africa.....	275

Total 17356

Appendix B

List of topics within each CSR dimension

Stakeholder dimension

- Recalls
- Relation to market partners in general
- Relation to suppliers
- Relation to dealers
- Relation to unions
- Relation to politics (states, municipalities)
- Relation to shareholders
- Relation with major shareholders / investors
- Relation to importers
- Relation to employees
- Attractive employer
- Wages
- Job initiatives
- Training, further education
- Working atmosphere, job safety
- Employee satisfaction

Social dimension

- Equal job opportunities
- Diversity in general
- Relations with non-nationals
- Gender relations
- Inclusivity/accessibility for disabled persons
- Intercultural exchange
- Other diversity
- Forced labor
- Human rights
- Aging staff
- Child labor
- Social activities
- Society in general
- Politics in general

Environmental dimension

- Relation to environmental organizations
- Ecology in general
- Green Building
- Usage of renewable resources / resource saving
- Product development (ecological)
- Fuel Economy Policy (e.g. CAFE)
- Emissions, Clean Air (ecological)
- Production (ecological)
- Renewable energies (wind, water etc.), refuse management
- Logistic (ecological)
- Ecologic actions
- Other ecology

Economic dimension

- Business results
- Sales revenue (gross)
- Profit/earnings (net)
- Annual and monthly sales
- Quarterly financial results
- Shareholder value / company value
- Other economic performance
- Economy in general

Voluntariness

- Charity/Donation
- Educational support / educational promotion (not for employees)
- Sports Activities (not for employees)
- Healthcare Activities (not for employees)
- STEM initiatives
- Cultural activities, sponsoring of cultural activities
- Sports