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From Corporate Social Responsibility to Consumer Social Responsibility: Evolution, Implications and Future Directions

Hamed M. Shamma, PhD

BP Endowed Chair
Associate Professor of Marketing
Department of Management
School of Business
The American University in Cairo
E-mail: shamma@aucegypt.edu

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Abstract

This paper reviews the concepts, elements and development of the concepts of corporate social responsibility and of consumer social responsibility. Throughout the paper, we present several international and local cases for companies that apply corporate social responsibility. We also present examples of consumer social responsibility throughout the paper. Our interest was in analyzing corporate social responsibility and consumer social responsibility in Egypt. We analyzed the Egyptian case in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, we examine how the pandemic affected corporate social responsibility and consumer social responsibility practices in Egypt.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility, consumer social responsibility, cases, Egypt.

Background and Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the world and global community in a way we have not seen over the past decade or more. It has changed the behavior of some corporations, some consumers, governments and communities. In other cases, it has not changed the behavior. In this paper, we examine how the pandemic has changed the behavior of corporations, consumers and the impact of this pandemic on CSR and CnSR.

In December 2019, an unknown pneumonia accompanied by dry cough, fever, fatigue, and other symptoms started to appear in a wet market in Wuhan, China specifically in a crowded market that sell animals that are trapped and killed to be sold fresh. Although the market was shut down on January, 1st, the new mysterious disease started to spread quickly in many Chinese provinces and that was followed by an epidemiologic alert.. Thousands of people were being infected and the virus started to outbreak in different countries like Thailand, Japan, Korea, United States, Germany and Singapore (Wu et al., 2020).

In March 2020, the WHO announced that the new Corona virus to be a pandemic and countries started to impose major lockdown measure worldwide. The lockdown measures included travel ban, closure of companies and public facilities and school suspension. The number of cases worldwide was surging and fear and uncertainty were taking over. The world economy was hit hard by the lockdowns and the losses were huge. Many companies were unable to sustain businesses closing down branches or premises or laying off workers (Mahmud el al., 2021). This continued until July 2020 when the number of cases started to drop relatively and countries started to open up airports and remove some travel restrictions.

By December 2020, the whole world was waiting to see how this would end but unfortunately, it started all over. Another wave of the virus hit the world even harder than the first wave. The number of deaths was increasing and the health systems all over the world were collapsing. Many countries started to impose lockdowns again to be able to control the spread of the virus. The vaccination was the only hope that the world was waiting for to end this nightmare. In February 2021, pharmaceutical companies started to announce the approval of vaccines and the many countries started vaccination plans for its citizens. As we speak, the number of vaccinated people all around the world is increasing and this crisis will hopefully end soon.

The pandemic crisis brought to attention to many researchers the idea of how companies can support the society through CSR and philanthropy (Gardberg et al., 2019). Researchers argue that during times of crises like the COVID 19 pandemic, people are usually vulnerable and their main concern is their health and safety. This can act as a motive for companies to intervene and help secure people's food, shelter and income (Mahmud et al, 2021). Corporate Social Responsibility is a very good mechanism that can work best during these times to allow companies to sustain business while helping people to overcome the hardship (Bapuji et al., 2020; Guan et al., 2020).

The nature of CSR initiatives can differ from a voluntary manner to a more committed moral responsibility for a company (McLennan & Banks, 2019). The reaction of many organizations to the COVID 19 pandemic shows that CSR has enabled many companies to support internal, external stakeholders and the society. The reaction of consumers to these initiatives is also worth examining because it is now becoming an area of study in itself called Consumer Social Responsibility - CnSR. The following literature review focuses on how literature discussed examined CSR from different perspectives, the role of CSR, the definition and the role of CnSR with a special focus on Egypt.

Literature Review

What is Corporate Social Responsibility?

The corporate world is bombarded by the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)at every corner nowadays. Corporations are motivated to act on a highly socially responsible level on a large variety of issues. Although many definitions of CSR have been suggested; there is ambiguity regarding how CSR should be defined in both the academic and corporate arenas; and there is no consensus on a specific definition. CSR has commonly come to signify business decision making coupled with ethical principles, legal fulfillment and respect for the community, people and environment. The affluence of definitions, which are usually subjective to particular interests, creates a problem by hindering the development and application of this concept.

According to Alexander Dahlsrud (2008), the most used definition based on frequency counts from Google, is the one developed by the Commission of European Communities; it defines Corporate Social Responsibility asa concept where companies care about the environment and the society and voluntarily integrate their interests with their business operations (European Commission, 2001).It perceives CSR as a means that would assist reconcile economic, social and environmental aspirations. Furthermore, according to McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006), CSR is defined as situations when companies participate in doing good for the society regardless the legitimate interests of the firm.

Although there has not been a universal consensus on the definition of CSR, many researchers attempted to conceptualize it in different ways. Definitions have ranged from purely theoretical to more hands-on definitions (Gorski, 2016). Some researchers have focused on the relationship with stakeholders only while others have approached it from a social and environmental perspective. One interesting definition is that CSR is the respect of the interests of different stakeholders while keeping the environment clean and making sure that the society benefits in the end (Holienčinová, 2014). Another similar definition was what Turker defined it to be as the firms' intended behaviors that transcends pure economic interests (Turker, 2009).

Later, Some definitions came out to focus on external stakeholders, while others emphasize the fact that it is a tool that the company can use internally (Gorski, 2016). Researchers have even stated that the concept of CSR is confusing and ambiguous because the context that defines it may vary (Lantos, 2001) although it went through different phases of explanations (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004) that plays a key role in the studies that research has reached so far.

In 1950s, scholars started to conceptualize CSR mainly through considering the common interests of stakeholders and society that are expected from companies (Podnar, 2007). The term “expectations” was the key here because it was all about what stakeholders expected when a company performs and how this company’s practices affect the society in general. Thus, CSR came to be associated to a balance of all obligations and policies which stakeholders and society at large expect according to its norms and values (Podnar, 2007).

More efforts to define CSR were attempted later. Scholars gave CSR a general definition to be activities that extend beyond firms’ pure economic interests to embrace actions intended to yield social benefits (Freeman & Hasnaoui, 2011; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Swanson, 1999). This definition places emphasis on CSR initiatives towards the society, which focuses on the broader notion of sustainability (Homburg et al., 2013). Other scholars broadly defined it to bea commitment to enhance societal well-being through utilizing the firms resources through flexible business operation practices (Shuili Du, 2009).

Author	Definition	Focus
European Commission (2001)	“a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis”	Reuniting economic, social and environmental aspiration
McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006)	“situations where the firm goes beyond compliance and engages in ‘actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law”	Involving the support of the government
Podnar, 2007	“a balance of all responsibilities and policies which meet or exceed expectations, values and norms of stakeholders and society at large”	Expectations of stakeholders
Turker, 2009	“voluntary behaviors that go beyond purely economic interests”	The element of “voluntary” behavior
Shuili Du, 2009	“a commitment to improve societal well-being through flexible business practices and contributions of corporate resources”	Flexibility of businesses and readiness to use some companies resources to compensate the effect of business operations
Holienčinová, 2014	“is the respect of the interests of different stakeholders while maintaining the cleanliness of the environment and making sure that the society benefits in the end” (Holienčinová, 2014).	The care about the environment

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Evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is growing in importance to governments and service providers as it focuses on meeting the challenges of social problems within improving welfare environments. Governments comprehend and value the vital role that businesses can play in the welfare of society. The modern governments have progressively been referring to corporate contribution in local services and have also promoted the development of occupational welfare. In addition, CSR is becoming an increasingly important constituent in public affairs program. That's due to various reasons, yet primarily because a need for firms to sustain a good reputation and trust amongst stakeholders. Regardless of the growing significance of CSR, it is still considered an under-researched field, even though business corporations have confronted fresh demands for rising levels of occupational provision and participation in local partnerships with public services.

Over the last decade, an escalating number of business firms have taken positive action to the concept of corporate social responsibility. This growing popularity has been in large partially due to the campaigns instigated by nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in the early 90's to educate consumers about the negative effects globalization can have on markets with less severe labour and environmental laws. The consequential consumer boycotts of companies and brands perceived to have profited at the expense of the societies in which they function, has triggered corporate executives to stand up and listen. In other words, companies initiated and presented CSR intelligence and programs as a reaction against impairment imposed on their image, sales and reputation by attacks from activist groups, which are supported by news media, in which corporate misconduct has been particularly emphasized. This lays a remarkable ethical pressure on organizations to return no less than a part to society in exchange to what they have profited from it. Hence, making profits is no longer companies' sole concern, yet how this profit is engendered is profoundly inspected by the activists.

A corporation must not be perceived as disobeying ethics or laws in any area, such as market behavior, trade policies, and employment relations, sourcing of raw materials, human rights, environmental laws. Otherwise, activists would exert incredible pressure on them by means of media or other powerful channels.

Applications of Corporate Social Responsibility

Given the broad conceptualization of CSR, the domains of socially responsible behavior are numerous and diverse. Socrates: the Corporate Social Ratings Monitor, a database that describes and rates more than 600 companies in terms of their CSR records, contains a comprehensive accumulation of the various CSR activities. CSR initiatives undertaken by these companies are summarized into six chief domains:

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1) Community support (Support of health and art programs, educational and housing initiatives for the economically underprivileged, generous/innovative giving)
2) Diversity (Sex-, race-, family-, sexual orientation- and disability- based diversity record and initiatives, within and outside the firm)
3) Employee Support (Concern for safety, profit sharing, job security, employee involvement, union relations)
4) Environment (Hazardous-waste management, environmentally friendly products, use of ozone depleting chemicals, recycling, pollution control, animal testing)
5) Product (Marketing/contracting controversies, product safety, antitrust disputes, Research and Development/innovation)
6) Foreign Operation (Operations in countries with human rights violations, overseas labour practices, e.g. Sweatshops)

The gamut of activities adopted by CSR have high probability of being substantial, as social responsibility necessitates that attention be directed towards numerous stakeholders, counting the company's employees, stockholders, suppliers, customers, and all groups that could be influenced by its decisions. CSR activities involve the deployment of technologies that are friendly to the society, environment and health in the production and manufacturing process and the incorporation of these technologies into the product itself (e.g. aerosol products that don't contain fluorocarbons or utilizing environmentally-friendly technologies), using recycling and the reduction of pollution to achieve high levels of environmental performance (e.g. adopting an insistent firm standpoint towards reducing emissions), applying best practices in human resource management(e.g. endorsing employee empowerment), and upgrading the objectives of community organizations (McWilliams, Wright and Siegel, 2006).

A corporation adopting corporate social responsibility is expected to go beyond what is required by law (Matten and Moon, 2008). These expectations include:

- Operating with integrity in all business relations with its different stakeholders; customers, investors, media, suppliers, lenders, etc…
- Considering human rights during operations
- Being an accountable fellow citizen in the community and a respectable corporate citizen
- A fair and respectable treatment of the employees
- Upholding and nourishing the environment for the coming generations

CSR activities mostly aspire to eliminate negative externalities like pollutant emissions or the inconsistency of farmers' income. Nevertheless, positive externalities are also formed. A perfect example for a positive externality is innovation. The private benefits, those that are enjoyed by the company, could be high, but the social benefits

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(through the formation of new or enhanced products and processes) could be even greater. Other examples are the funding the transfers of technology to local farming societies, or school building.

CSR may be perceived as the practice of operating in a way that is costly or burdensome at the present time, but which is certainly regarded to be in one's long-term interests. A quotation by Anita Roddick, founder of the Body Shop, explains it all: "Being good is good for business". Building a reputation as a responsible business gives you a competitive edge. Companies favor suppliers who exhibit responsible policies, which results with a positive influence on how customers perceive them.

CSR can benefit firms in various ways:

- Enhanced financial performance
- CSR helps ensure firms comply with regulatory requirements.
- Increase customer retention
- Enhanced capacity to innovate
- Attract Green and ethical investment
- Attract ethically conscious customers
- Increased staff commitment and involvement
- Better motivated Employees more productivity
- Enhanced brand value and reputation
- Gain access to more funding and investment opportunities
- Long-term return on investments
- Long-term sustainability of the company
- Generating positive press coverage through activities like involvement with the local community
- Development of closer links with local authorities, customers, suppliers and networks, which facilitates doing business
- Being aware of the broader impact of the business can help in the development of **new products and services**.
- Giving the company a competitive advantage against competitors through differentiation.
- Reduce operating costs

Global Examples of Corporate Social Responsibility

Tyson Foods

Tyson Foods is an example of a major company binding its corporate social responsibility practices to its fundamental mission. Tyson has dedicated its brand to extensive work towards the goal of alleviating and ultimately eradicate childhood

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hunger. The company has been recently effectively incorporating social media into its campaign for hunger relief (Crane, Matten and Spence, 2007).

Tyson coupled with the Social Media Club and embarked on a series of astonishingly smart and effective strategies to engage the community. For instance, it launched a campaign in the United States in Austin in which it decided to give away 100 pounds of chicken to the Capital Area Food Bank of Texas against every comment published on its blog. In two hours, they received 658 comments and were ready with two trucks filled with chicken to be donated for the hungry. They succeeded to replicate this in Boston and San Francisco, started a competition for user-generated video in Minnesota and sponsored a service day for its social media team.

Haagen-Dazs

Honeybees are vanishing at a disturbing rate — and that's troubling information for the global food chain. *Haagen-Dazs* took the initiative to launch a micro-site to elevate awareness about the issue: Honey bees pollinate one-third of all the foods we eat. This includes many of the ingredients that Haagen Dazs use in all-natural ice creams, frozen yogurt, sorbets, and bars. Again, cleverly linking it with to the company's core mission.

The company donates a share of profits from its Haagen-Dazs honeybee brand to carry out research on the topic, and it introduced a Twit-cause campaign through the #HelpHoneyBees hash-tag, that raised $7,000 in two days in 2010 ("Bee Buzz generated: 643,748 tweets").

Check the Honeybees microsite: http://www.helpthehoneybees.com/

Greenopolis

Greenopolis was created to function as an educational instrument to help people learn how to be friendlier to the environment in their day-to-day activities. Web site's objectives are summarized in its tagline: "Learn. Act. Reward. Together." Waste Management Recycle America is the entity that established Greenopolis, but it functions separately.

Greenopolis has a vigorous attendance on various social media sites, provides a day after day look at several fascinating metrics (Total tons of WMRA recycled: 5,367,009), owns recycling kiosks on the street and possesses a rewards program (Think Green Rewards earned: 4,074,988) that enables people to exchange points for small items. You can earn points for blogging and they use the community to generate content and they allow qualifying organizations like the Green Housekeeping seal to use their logo after approval.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Egypt

Egypt possesses a powerful tradition of giving practices in both the Christian and Islamic religions. Christians give “ushur” or tithes and Muslims give “zakat” or alms giving. Charity and charitable institutions are deeply engrained in the Egyptian society going back the eleventh century. At that time, the most common and main institutional type of charity known was the endowments known as “waqf” which flourished during the Mamluk period.

The nineteenth century saw the rise of civil society and with the commencement of the twentieth century, the number of actively influential charitable civil society institutions, Islamic practices, social services, advocacy, women rights, and education augmented. The royal family led charity work with their most significant initiatives in the fields of health and education. Up till 1952, the welfare of the underprivileged and social affairs were handled by the benevolence of society’s members.

In 1952, the progress of this vigorous drive was suddenly immobilized due to the enforcement of the agrarian reform system and the nationalization of the private sector, leading the state to act as the chief economic agent and the core provider of social wellbeing. It made numerous changed; education was free, the state was the main health care provider, basic commodities were subsidized and real estate rental costs were decreased, along with bus and train fares. Hence, the state successfully substituted the role that NGOs and waqf played and inflicted limitations on all non-governmental organizations

Moving on to the 1980s, the state launched the Economic Restructuring and Social Adjustment Program (ERSAP) to decrease its responsibility to liberalize the economy allowing the private sector a leading role. Consequently, these economic changes restrained government’s capacity to satisfy the needs of the underprivileged. As a result, this role has turned into a conjunct one that is shared between the state and the private sector. Progressively, firms started to regain the power they had lost decades ago and were required to operate to accomplish the economic growth and the socio-political stability as they used to do.

The last decade experienced various exclusive/individual philanthropic initiatives put into practice by a number of private sector corporations, plus some other large-scale companies’ projects that illustrate socially conscious corporate behavior. The Global Compact (GC) officially launched in Cairo on February 9, 2004, in efforts to arrange and promote the corporate social responsibility concept. Currently 37 companies have joined the GC. These firms are expected to adopt, support and endorse, within their realm of impact, a set of core values in the fields of labor standards, environmental sustainability human rights and anti-corruption. The GC encourages and assists these companies to get involved with other partners in projects that give concrete expression to the Global Compact principles, along with promoting and putting forward the broader development goals of the UN (Center for Development Services).

An apparent invariable factor influencing responsible behavior is freedom. The less the state controls investment actions, the more secure and free to propagate and thrive they are. As discussed earlier, the Mamluk and Ottoman empires produced powerful political figures; nevertheless, the change of power authorities didn't affect acts of responsible behavior. The governments, teaming up with businesses were able to satisfy the necessities of the deprived. Under the populist state in 1952, the situation was altered and the state took charge of the economy and became accountable for the drawbacks. Since this wind of change, step by step the state became incapable of providing the needs of the poor and started searching for a "stabilizer," found in the private investors sense of responsibility towards the society.

Research carried out by the Center for Development Services concluded through extensive surveying and interviewing that a consensus between local companies was unreachable with regards to country development. Half the interviewees believed that the responsibility belonged solely to the government, arguing that since the state collects taxes from the public, then it should use this income to finance construction and upkeep of roads and infrastructure, hospitals, public transportation services and other nationalized industries. While the other half believed that it was a shared liability between the private sector and the government, adding that since the government is unable to fulfill their obligations to the country, then it is up to the private sector to continue where the government left off.

A strong consistency was found in the responses of medium and large local companies, which emphasized their conviction that the private sector must implement CSR practices because the government's capabilities to undertake such activities are too limited (mismanagement, corruption, lack of experience), as are the consequences of those projects. The same applies to multinational companies who undertook a vigorous positive attitude towards CSR and all participants agreed on their responsibility to country development, and that the government and civil society organizations are not capable to handle this task alone. They have major future plans of CSR in Egypt but recognize the lack of cooperation from their own and different sectors. They perceived their role as contributors to country development as crucial since they have access to finances and resources and their awareness that the government is a poor contributor to the process (Fox, Ward and Howard, 2002).

NGOs are viewed by respondents from the private sector as extremely powerful, specialists possessing experience and expertise to implement a wide array of different projects, due to their ability to reach communities otherwise unapproachable because of sensitive cultural issues and the need for specific communication skills that employees of business firms don't acquire. The private sector also seeks their civil society counterparts for understanding the needs of underprivileged and deprived communities as well as what areas of development need higher levels of focus based on budgets and available working skills. Private sector companies are united in their conviction that civil society organizations provide the most effective means of successfully eradicating social problems, rather than just decreasing the symptoms (Center for Development Services, 2006).

One of the most successful CSR projects is mobile operator Vodafone's literacy campaign, which targets 2017 as the year when Egypt will be entirely free of illiteracy. The great thing about this initiative is that it doesn't have a direct return on Vodafone's products and services; however, it's pure brand equity. This idea demonstrates the company's conviction in directing all efforts to help in the development and growth of Egypt, along with leveraging the winnings of this new era the country is living. Moreover, Vodafone is not the only big company that got engaged in CSR during this critical phase; it has been joined by numerous CSR initiatives for reforming and rebuilding Egypt. McDonald's is donating 25 piasters from the price of each Happy Meal sold to develop classes in a disadvantaged region in Cairo called Dar Al Salam. Chipsy launched a program to prevent children from dropping out of school as a result of unfortunate economic and financial conditions. Additionally, a very successful project by Kharafi's EMAK International Academy has been initiated, where they provide 5000 free training opportunities in efforts to better equip the Egyptian youth with up-to-standard qualifications and enhance their chances of landing a decent job. Etisalat is also funding a project to deliver clean water to Egypt's villages. All those campaigns show these multiple brands as responsible players in the Egyptian society and improve brand image and loyalty.

The process is smoother for companies that aim to implement CSR programs if they join hands with NGOs and charities, because they enjoy distinctive field experience and have stronger relations with the people. The partnership of Orange with five other NGOs, which seeks to assist in the creation of 1000 job opportunities, is an example of this. Each party plays a different substantial role, Orange handles and manages funding and publicity of the project in efforts to reach the ultimate exposure and effect possible for the initiative. On the other hand, Dar Al-Orman, Injaz-Egypt, The Ebtessama Foundation, the Development Association for Empowering Special Needs (DAESN), and the Association for Women's Advancement & Development (AWTAD) provide training for the participants, implement projects and submit progress reports.

These companies' involvement in CSR activities helps them defend themselves against accusations that their products are injurious to consumers' wellbeing and healthiness. For example, Coca-Cola is endorsing economic growth at the village level by means of tackling the "three pillars": the individual, the family and the community.

First, concerning the community pillar, Coca-Cola partnered with the Egypt Food Bank with the aim of renovating infrastructure and hooking up families with sources of clean water. With regards to the family pillar, Coca-Cola is cooperating with micro-finance establishments granting families micro-loans that shall allow them to invest and start their own small businesses to better support their families and improve their financial wellbeing. As for the individual pillar, it is collaborating with several associates to offer scholarships to students, aid university students in terms of entrepreneurship, and set up learning centers in 100 schools in collaboration with the Discovery Channel.

Criticism and Limitations of Corporate Social Responsibility

Despite the growing interest to study CRM, researchers have not been able to clearly identify the meaning of it and debates about the real meaning of CSR have been going on universally (Sanclemente-Téllez, 2017).Troubles with measurement of the expenses and returns of CSR activities continue to blur researchers' comprehension of the strategic implications of CSR. A main obstruction to empirical research is the enduring confusion over definition. It is no possible to measure what can't be defined and, as long as different definitions are used, we will get empirical results that cannot dependably and consistently be compared (McWilliam, A.et al, 2006).

Another challenge came from the fact that it was so difficult to identify a list of all the causes that comes under CSR (Podnar, 2007). Some scholars broadly defined it to be 'a commitment to improve societal well-being through flexible business practices and contribution of firms' resources (Shuili Du, 2009). Researchers have even stated that the concept of CSR is ''fuzzy and confusing'' (Lantos, 2001) although it went through different phases of explanations (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004) that plays a key role in the studies that research has reached so far.

Some of the main reasons why CSR has been criticized are; first defining CSR from the marketing point of view makes CSR limited within certain dimensions (Vaaland, 2007). The unclear definition of CSR within the marketing discipline makes it open for a debate which creates a lot of confusion if CSR is addressed from the perspective of another discipline. Defining a concept from a certain discipline's perspective does not entail that it is not affected or interrelated with other disciplines. Another reason could be questioning the legitimacy of CSR whenever public organizations engage in CSR. This engagement forces people to question how CSR is measured or achieved by an organization that is supposed to serve the public interest without question (Vaaland, 2007). In other words, public organizations are expected to serve the society while private businesses are the ones whose involvement with CSR could be impressive. Finally, the degree of impact of CSR on the profits of businesses is still ambiguous (Vaaland, 2007). The fact that there is no research evidence to measure

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the exact impact the CSR has on the financial performance of the company made it difficult to prove that it has an impact on profits.

According to P. Baron (2001), Strategic CSR indicates the employment of CSR to capture value, stressing on the notion that 'it is the motivation for the action that identifies socially, as opposed to privately, responsible action' meaning that if the motivation is to benefit society at the expense of earnings, then the act is socially responsible. On the contrary, if the motivation is to increase profits; in that case, the action is privately responsible. Concerning privately motivated actions, social returns that go beyond the cost of the actions to the company may well be realized. Nevertheless, the motivation remains the same, unless these social benefits provide value to the managers. For instance, providing day care might reduce the percentage of youth crimes in a community, yet the firm may provide the day care only for the reason that it raises the availability of workers and decreases the cost of absence. This is suggestive of concerns of externalities related to the results of corporate actions in public economics.

What is Consumer Social Responsibility?

Living in the 21st century blesses us with the power that consumers have in being able to choose from many suppliers and where there are regulations to protect consumer's rights. Thus, we as consumers are free to purchase whatever we desire from whoever we want. Therefore, since we are free to choose and make our own independent decisions, we bear the responsibility to make wise consumer choices. A lot of us hold big corporations responsible for all the ills and tribulations in the world, but that is only because it's a lot easier to blame them instead of confronting ourselves and reflecting on our personal responsibility as consumers. We accuse oil companies for cheating us at the pump, yet none of us even bother to decrease our fuel consumption; each family member has their own car, we drive individually to work, and are unwilling to trade our fancy cars or SUVs for compact cars. Moreover, Americans blame Wal-Mart for promoting an evil consumer culture; however, most of them still do their shopping there since they know that it offers the best prices. Business firms are attacked for being excruciatingly profit-oriented and trying to nickel and dime their operations, nonetheless, our consumer spending habits are no different from the business habits of those firms. We usually buy the cheapest products with complete disregard to the social, economic or environmental consequences and influences of our acquisition. We blabber a lot about corporate social responsibility, yet consumer social responsibility is hardly mentioned.

But then again, as consumers, the bottom line is largely determined by us, so our spending behavior is reflected in the business practices of firms- their decisions are affected by our actions. For instance, numerous companies are going the extra mile and exerting efforts at achieving sustainability as a response to the mounting demand for environmentally-friendly or "green" products by consumers. Social change could also be brought about through consumer boycotts. Therefore, corporations will be willing to change, comply with consumer desires and meet their standards only when consumers themselves decide, and translate that into actions, that they want to change.

A recent report claimed that Fortune 500 companies pay more than US$15bn on CSR (Financial Times, 2014). However, most of the CSR initiatives have not been very fruitful (Dans, 2015). The reason is that for CSR practices to succeed, they should be coupled with an alignment with consumer interests (Vitell, 2014). For example, if a company is offering environment friendly packaging, there should be enough consumers who actually demand this kind of packaging. A recent study supported this where the results suggested that ''green'' advertising is very successful at reaching those who are already practicing green behaviors (Haytko and Matulich 2009).This is what research has identified to be the consumers' side of CSR or known as Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR)

Consumer social responsibility can be identified as socially conscious individual consumers driven by their morals act and buy ethical products that match their ethical concerns (Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2014). A similar definition was discussed in literature by Devinney et al (2006, p. 32) who stated that CnSR indicates "the conscious and intentional choice to make certain consumption preferences based on personal and moral beliefs and on a willingness to avoid negative external effects the individual`s consumption has towards the society and the environment" (Percy, 2007). It comprises of two main elements:

1) An ethical element: concerning the fundamental significance of the social facets of a company's products and business procedures;

2) A consumerism element: denotes that the preferences and wishes of consumer sectors are partly responsible for the growing impact of ethical or social issues (Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt, and Birtchnell, 2007).

However, confining CnSR into only buying ethical products is a very limited perspective (Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2014). A refined and broader scope of CnSR was suggested by Caruana and Chatzidakis (2014, p. 578) as "the application of instrumental, relational, and moral logics by individual, group, corporate and institutional agents seeking to influence a broad range of consumer-oriented responsibilities".

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Author	Definition	Focus
Devinney et al, 2006	the conscious and deliberate choice to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs and on a willingness to avoid negative external effects the individual`s consumption has toward society and the environment	Avoid external impact on the society.
Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2014	socially conscious individual consumers motivated by their morals act and buy ethical products that match their ethical concerns	Ethical concerns
Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2014 (refined)	the application of instrumental, relational, and moral logics by individual, group, corporate and institutional agents seeking to influence a broad range of consumer-oriented responsibilities	Ethical concerns as well as the concern for the society

Evolution of Consumer Social Responsibility

The importance of the responsibility of consumers in the success of CSR initiatives has been receiving a growing attention in the past few years (Vitell, 2014). Responsible consumers drive business growth because consumers support responsible business behavior and also play an important role in sustainability of businesses (Siperstein et al., 2006; Chen et al., 2012) because they reward businesses by their repeated purchases (Lee et al., 2014). The responsible consumer now can criticize, appraise and direct businesses, as well as use his buying power to influence behaviors of firms (Quazi et al., 2016).

The social and environmental impacts are also important outcomes of consumer social responsibility. Research shows that consumers are aware of the social impacts of their actions and are willing to reward socially responsible businesses who, for example, hire staffs with disabilities (Kuo and Kalargyrou, 2014). Moreover, responsible consumers always want to ensure that their actions will not have adverse effects on the environment (Quazi et al., 2016)

Global Examples of Consumer Social Responsibility

An ethical consumer seeks products which, above all, can benefit both the environment and the people who produce them. Hence, an ethical consumer is aware of the results of production, consumption and divestment. They have lucid anticipations of how they expect a company to operate and expect firms to conform to ethical standards and guidelines (Griffin, 1993). Ethical consumers encourage ethical companies by both remaining loyal in the face of different brand alternatives, and willingness to pay more for their products or services. They penalize unethical companies by avoiding their offerings, and through public boycotts and mass action.

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There are a variety of examples of socially responsible behavior that can range from projects that collect money for research on diseases, donating money for the needy, volunteer work for the community, withdrawing products that may be dangerous, encouraging recycling, and offering help to the disadvantaged. In particular, ethically or socially conscious consumers buy products that are regarded more ethical than other options, the boycott of companies that are engaged in unethical practices, post consumption behaviors such as encouraging recycling and the reducing of consumption itself.

Global Examples of Consumer Social Responsibility

Recyclable and Edible Cutlery

There has been a growing trend of replacing plastic cutlery with recyclable cutlery that is made out of recycled or plan based material. Edible cutleries are tableware that can substitute plastic cutleries. These cutleries that are made from plants constitute health alternative to plastic utensils. The most popular of these cutleries are spoons, forks, knives, and chopsticks, which are gaining acceptances worldwide. The growing interest in edible cutlery has been rising due to the increase in health awareness and the rise in the number of vegan people in mature and emerging markets (Kadam & Deshmukh, 2020). In addition, there has been a variety of new flavors that were introduced encouraging consumers to buy more. According to a recent published report, the value of the recyclable cutlery market was estimated to be $24,860 thousand in 2018, and is estimated to reach $56,970.4 thousand in 2026, with a growth of 11.1 % from 2019 to 2026 (Kadam & Deshmukh, 2020). Pappco Greenware, a company based in India offers many alternatives for plastic utensils made out of 100% plant fibres (pappcoindia.com). They have been a primary supplier for bug chains like Starbucks, Nandos Chicken and Marriott hotels.

Hybrid Vehicles

Another interesting example for CnSR is hybrid cars. The value of the hybrid vehicle marked amounted to USD 252.06 billion in 2020 and is forecasted to reach USD 1166.65 billion by 2026 with a growth rate of 29.13%.[2]

With the pandemic of COVID 19, the market faced difficulties with the economic crisis worldwide. However, in June 2020, the sales of hybrid cars improved where Toyota sold 337,000 hybrid vehicles in the United States, accounting for 16% of the United States sales with serious plans of new launches of hybrid electric vehicles in 2022.The increase in sales reflect that consumers are now more into alternatives that are better for the environment.

[2] https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/hybrid-vehicle-market

The cost of production and the expensive price can impede the growth of this market. In addition, many countries still lack the infrastructure and the prevalence of the gas-fueled engine can be a factor that discourages people from buying. However, responsible consumers are now taking into consideration the long-term effect of fuel on the environment and are now demanding other options that can be good to the society.

Consumer Social Responsibility in Egypt

As expected, there is little information on the status of Consumer Social Responsibility in Egypt. It is hardly mentioned in any formal publications or academic journal, which is further evidence of its unpopularity in the Egyptian context. Hence, it was essential to develop self-formulated surveys to be distributed; targeting Egyptian consumers to test their level of socially responsible behavior ad their understanding of the social responsibility concept. It was also important to test consumers' attitudes towards the ethical behavior of firms, focusing on the constructs of 1) the consumer's perceived importance of ethicality, 2) consumer expectations of a firm's ethicality, and 3) whether they would reward or 4) punish firms for their ethical or unethical behavior.

The Egyptian Food Bank

In 2006, a group of businessmen established the Egyptian Food Bankaiming at eliminating hunger in the Egyptian society. The EFB is a nonprofit organization that created partnerships with many firms, banks, restaurants and other NGOs to achieve its objectives. These institutions donate up to 100 million Egyptian pounds to sustain the different programs of the bank. During the pandemic, the bank was able to support 12 million Egyptians by giving out 1.5 million food boxes, together with 9 million meals to those who were negatively affected (Al Aees, 2021). The funds that were raised from Individual consumers enabled the EFB to deliver half a million pack of food one week before Ramadan. The CEO of EFB mentioned that the amount of packs that they were able to deliver during that time was greater than all what they achieved in all of 2019 (Behind the Scenes of Egyptian Food Bank, 2020).

Resala

Founded by a group of Egyptian students from Cairo University, Resala was established in 1999 with the aim of helping the Egyptian community in many areas like orphanages, blood donations, literacy and poverty alleviation. Resala now is powered by 1,500,000 volunteers all over Egypt (www.resala.org). Their main objective was to spread the idea of "voluntary work and cooperation in the Egyptian community in different activities that can help those in need. The number of volunteers every year exceeds 200,000 who serve Egyptians in more than 30 different voluntary activities.

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Criticism and limitations of CnSR

Literature suggest that the scope of CnSR remains narrowly defined and the linkage between CnSR and CSR remains confined to the consumer, marketing and management research that defined it on the micro level. CnSR theorizes the ‘‘socially conscious consumer’’ as a rational, individual decision-maker, who prefers to buy ethically produced products (Caruana 2007). This concept limitedly presumes that consumers will act morally and buy ethical products that fit with their ethical beliefs. Literature suggests that the limitation here is that there are many other motives that interfere with ethical ones (e.g., Bray et al. 2010; Carrington et al. 2010; Chatzidakis et al. 2007; De Pelsmacker et al. 2005; Uusitalo and Oksanen 2004). Therefore, this view provides an over simplified version for consumer motivation. In addition, CnSR research is still predominantly focused on the level of the individualistic consumer choice. It largely overlooks the possibility that CnSR can also be viewed as a phenomenon that focuses on diverse groups of interests by actors other than the ethically and socially responsible ‘‘consumer’’ (Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2014)

CSR, CnSR and the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the functioning of the whole world leaving it unplanned, both in terms of the ability to provide proper treatment to the coronavirus affected people or the inability to maintain the current economic status. On a global level, consumers faced lock downs, uncertainty, fear and vulnerability. Businesses on the other hand were at risk of bankruptcy, closure and employee lay off. Although the losses of businesses were unprecedented during the pandemic, many companies acted in a very responsible manner. A study of the top 25 American companies that reacted to the pandemic revealed that General Mills employees were offered paid leaves upon school suspension, quarantine or medical risks (Mahmud el al, 2021). Other companies, like Campbell Soup and General Mills offered their frontline employees, who are at greater risk of catching the virus, premium bonus packages (Mahmud el al, 2021). Intel Foundation donated an amount equal to $2 million as support efforts for every regular full-time and part-time employee and the United States’ retirees around major Intel sites while General Motors is cooperating with “Ventec Life Systems” to speed critically vital respiratory products that are needed for the treatment of COVID patients (Mahmud el al, 2021).

While some companies were able to maintain support to employees by providing medical insurance, lab test coverage and paid sick leaves for those who were impacted by coronavirus, many other companies started new social initiatives towards the society at large. Burger king provided an interesting example for this when they called for supporting their main competitor McDonalds to help those who will lose their jobs.

The published an ad on social media announcing to stop selling their best seller product “Whopper” for one day to encourage people to buy from McDonalds to save those who can lose their jobs. Fashion houses from Louis Vuitton to Prada shifted their manufacturing premises into production hubs for masks, medical suits and gowns. These inspired other industries to follow to release the burden that COVID 19 inflicted all over the world.

On the consumer level, many people are also trying to fulfill their duties towards their country as responsible citizens by engaging in various community service projects that can help support those who were unprivileged by the pandemic. Others are supporting NGOs, which serve to help the underprivileged communities, relieve poverty, promote environmentalist concerns, enhance basic healthcare, provide jobs and educational opportunities, and assist in establishing and supporting the conditions and foundations imperative to a functioning liberated society.

On the local level, Egyptian consumers nowadays are trying to help spur economic growth by increasing their purchase of Egyptian-made products in efforts to revitalize Egypt’s economic performance. Many bazaars now advocate selling only “Made in Egypt” products to help support new businesses. A lot of people are disposing of their old possessions in the form of charity or philanthropy. An interesting example for this is the Egyptian Clothing Bank. Many citizens who were as involved in the community and the political process came to terms with the concept of civic engagement especially in this stage. In brief, a newly active Egyptian civil society feels invested with power and in charge of delivering a better tomorrow.

However, the pandemic didn’t seem to have a remarkable effect on the Egyptian consumers’ socially responsible attitude when it came to purchasing environmentally friendly products, boycotting firms involved in unethical practices or curbing excessive consumption. The initial effect of the pandemic was that people started stocking everything for fear of what is coming next. However, soon life is going back to normal. Everyone still shops at big clothes chains, giant supermarkets, and very few consider the Fair Trade rules. The majority of people who used to lead a luxurious way of living haven’t changed their consumption patterns after the pandemic. There’s no noticeable effect on consumers’ degree of buying local, less, fair or green - Egyptians have not yet come to grips with the concept of socially responsible consumption and that when one considers the ethical value of their shopping, they will eventually turn the world into a better place for themselves as well as others.

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Conclusion & Implications

Literature suggests that the relationship between CSR and the community will always remain very much-interlinked (Idemudia, 2009). Some scholars claim that the firm and the community mutually affect each other where the firm's CSR practices are influenced by societal pressures (Skouloudis, 2015). The society encourages firms to implement their CSR initiatives that can benefit the society to offset the effects of the business operations of the firm (Mahmud et al., 2020). On the other hand, companies try to implement CSR practices that propose win-win situations for the society as well as the companies to get the societal acceptance (Boadi et al., 2019). Moreover, the time of the pandemic revealed that people, government, business leaders, and nonprofit organizations are ready to support each other and help their societies to overcome crises (Mahmud et al, 2021). Further, the CSR practices of different firms have shown that the business and society are linked (McLennan & Banks, 2019), as well as it is the closest neighbor of the society and vice versa (Idemudia & Ite, 2006).

So far Egypt has assigned relatively little importance to corporate social responsibility, but this is changing, especially because of the growing international importance of CSR; certainly, it is now becoming prevalent and fashionable in Egypt. However, not every Egyptian company is demonstrating the required uniformity and seriousness of purpose in its social responsibilities. NGOs are requesting that companies in Egypt boost their CSR efforts in reference to international practice. There is also very little reference of CSR in the Egyptian media (The Role of CSR in Egypt, 2011).

In spite of their dominance, small and micro-size firms are not participating efficiently in Egypt's development. First, they suffer from institutional and financial restraints restricting their ability to execute CSR projects that satisfy communities' needs. Second, these firms employ outdated technologies obstructing them from both protecting the environment where they operate, or even to establish an internally healthy environment for their staff. On the other hand, large-size firms are comparatively well developed, thus they have better ability to play an influential role in the country's development through adopting the CSR concept.

Enterprises and NGOs are more likely to deal with the problem symptoms rather than its causes. This is probably a result of inaccessibility to information and know-how necessary to enlighten them to recognize the adequate programs that tackle roots of the problems and are considered supplementary actions to the country's development. Therefore, initiatives tend to be executed with the purpose of satisfying immediate communities' needs, for instance, projects directed towards the development of education, employment, and the enhancement of health services, instead of developing awareness programs and projects to protect the environment.

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An impediment to the private sector involvement in environmental responsibility is the high cost involved verses the perceived lack of impact. A principal driver for companies to adopt the CSR concept is improving the image of their brands. In order to attain this goal and achieve the aspired impact, they constantly attempt to relate their names to projects directly tackling problems that Egyptians are suffering from, among which the environment remains unmentioned.

We can conclude that there is an even more growing importance of CSR in Egypt; companies are extensively spending funds on social welfare projects and making massive efforts to take part in the remarkable development phase of Egypt, in the race of who can make as positive and strong an impact as possible. We can see that healthcare and education are the top priorities of most of the proposed CSR programs, since those are Egypt's main vital needs. Hence, these projects are all basically motivated by and aiming at the welfare of the Egyptian citizen. The growing importance of CSR is also evident in the frequent occurrence of conferences dedicated to the concept of CSR development. For instance, the noteworthy CARE International conference "Engage Beyond Charity" that was held in Cairo in June 2011 where CSR executives and civil society members got together to converse how to exploit the energy and determination of the private sector together with the proficiency and know-how of civil society, and how they can collaborate in efforts of making modern Egypt stable, flourishing and equitable.

The rise of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Egypt, and the discussions around the commitment of corporations to invest in it, will eventually accentuate the role played by the everyday consumer in adopting consumer responsible behavior. The consumer will no longer be disregarded in the CSR equation. Socially conscious and responsible consumers do exist but they are not as prevalent. The role of organizations here is to recognize the complexity of the role of this consumer in the decision process and educate him about the importance of acting responsibly. A reactive model of consumer social responsibility requires little more than corporations satisfying the consumers' needs and wants by the relevant products and services with some emphasis on social, ethical or environmental issues. Corporations with a proactive model of consumer social responsibility would create opportunities where consumers' latent needs and wants would be satisfied by products and services that require consumer ethical and responsible behavior. Companies will realize that for their CSR initiatives to succeed, they should not only make consumers aware of the product's benefits, but also help them learn about how their choices are more useful for them, independent of the benefit to the society. Future corporations will no longer make consumers concerned about the society but rather encourage them to act and create for them the opportunities to reveal their preferences.

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