The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Information Richness on Trust

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept that describes the relationship between company and society. The way a company portrays corporate ethics and social initiatives can evoke strong positive reactions among consumers. The emergence of Internet creates a new communicating culture and gives an idea for a company to deliver their CSR message. Applying Media Richness Theory (MRT) in CSR message is believed could facilitate trust among consumer. Thus, this study aims to examine the impact of different level of CSR information richness with consumers trust towards the company. This study divides trust into three components that are competence, benevolence and integrity. An experimental design consisting of different levels of CSR information is selected (rich CSR information, lean CSR information and no CSR information as a control condition). The finding shows that rich CSR information has impacted on competence and integrity but not on benevolence. Result from this study is believed can assist companies in setting up their CSR communicating strategy in engaging consumers' trust.

Keywords: *corporate social responsibility, trust, media richness theory, competence, benevolence, integrity*

Introduction

The consumers become skeptical on company motives when they aggressively promote their CSR efforts (Fassin, 2008; Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). It is because the company is seen as attempting to increase its profits and not really mean for consumers' benefit. Furthermore, there is pervasive perception on CSR communication among consumers that a company only makes noise about the issue of responsibility but fails to show any action on that (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). This scenario showed that the

key challenge of CSR is consumers's trust (Morsing, Schultz, & Nielsen, 2008) and there is a need for the companies to overcome these issues by communicating their CSR with the right choice of communication strategy.

Jahdi and Acikdilli (2009) suggested that the companies should use marketing communications to communicate, publicize and highlight CSR policies to the consumers by using press advertisement, to evaluate its impact on a company's reputation and brand image. Morsing (2006) suggested that communicating corporate CSR efforts via external stakeholders is one of the most powerful communication strategies currently available to improve member identification. But, empirical results showed that using CSR as selling propositions has contributed to consumers' skepticism especially to 'sin industries' like tobacco manufacture, oil companies and fast-food restaurants (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009). Some researchers claimed that the advertisement (marketing approach) is not a good means to disclose social information because its effectiveness has been quite controversial and some companies are spending more on the advertisement rather than CSR actions itself (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2012). Following this, marketing CSR information is often ended with suspicion and cynicism (Jahdi & Acikdilli, 2009; Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009). Moreover, the element of trustworthiness of CSR communication needs the involvement and commitment from all parties in the company. Without this commitment, CSR communication is perceived as top management rhetoric which can lead to consumers' skepticism (Morsing et al., 2008; Morsing & Schultz, 2006). The existence of inconsistent CSR information could invite consumers' perceptions that the companies are hypocrite and thus jeopardize the image of company (Wagner et al., 2009). This study is motivated largely by the above phenomenon and more studies are needed using various means of communication strategy to understand how to create consumers' positive perceptions towards the company.

Accordingly, this study proposes the utilization of MRT to conduct the experiment to determine whether the richness of CSR information appears to impact consumers' trust with CSR activities. This study makes several contributions. First, the element of richness, highlighted in MRT has been successfully obtained consumers' engagement in e-commerce field of study (Jahng, Jain, & Ramamurthy, 2007; Simon & Peppas, 2004). However, there is lack of study that incorporates MRT in CSR communication particularly using website medium. The use of rich media applications in communicating messages online is considered as giving more insight into trustworthiness (Aljukhadar, Senecal, & Ouellette, 2010; Burgoon et al., 2002; Lockwood & Massey, 2012; Riegelsberger, Sasse, & McCarthy, 2006). Second, studies on CSR communication mostly focuses on the concept of CSR communication and on how to use CSR communication in enhancing business image and reputation among the customers, employees and other stakeholders (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2012). As far as researchers concern, only one study that examines the impact of media richness on CSR's trust behavior among consumers that is (Cho, Phillips, Hageman, & Patten, 2009). They examined whether the richness of the presentation of corporate social and environmental information on the web site had a positive effect on the level of trust. Their findings indicate that, overall the richness of the presentation of social and environmental information on the website positively influenced the level of trust. But, this

study details their finding on trust into three components of trust that are competence, benevolence and integrity that associate with CSR richness in fast-food industry. This study has chosen fast-food industry because CSR in this industry faces many significant risks, especially that are related to health and safety. The outbreaks of food safety could cause the company loss of customer trust (Maloni & Brown, 2006). Based on these discussions, the research question; what is the effect of a different level of CSR information richness on trust variables is developed.

This article has been structured as follows; first, explaination on trust and CSR, then theoretical discussion on the MRT. Then, the methodology underlying this study is presented. Next, the results from experiments are discussed, and finally some concluding remarks are presented.

Literature Review

Trust

Trust is defined as beliefs about other's reliability, dependability and comprehension of the situation (McAllister, 1995). Trust is crucial when an individual is deciding whether to cooperate or not with others, particularly in online environments (McAllister, 1995; Rockmann & Northcraft, 2008). According to Mayer et al. (1995), the three attributes of trust consists of: (1) competence beliefs that means consumers' have confidence that the company has the necessary skills to perform the job; (2) benevolence beliefs is reflect consumers' confidence that the company has a positive orientation toward them and not only consider their profit goals; and (3) integrity beliefs reflect consumers' confidence that the company following a set of moral principles or professional standards that guide consumer-company relationships. These three attributes of trust have been tested in e-commerce application (McKnight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002; McKnight, Cummings, & Chervany, 1998). McKnight et al. (1998), defined these three elements as follows: (1) competence means consumer believes that the vendor has ability to provide the good and services according to what they offered; (2) benevolent means that vendor care about consumers and will not take advantage of them. Benevolence reflects the specific relationship between vendor and consumers, not consumers' kindness to all; and (3) integrity means that one believes that the other party makes good- faith agreements, tells the truth, acts ethically, and fulfills promises. This study operationalizes trust definition based on McKnight et al. (2002) and from the perspective of CSR.

Although competence, benevolence, and integrity beliefs are acknowledged as conceptually distinct, they are often combined into a single variable of trusting beliefs. Whereas combining these beliefs into a single variable is a parsimonious approach to studying trust, it can make it difficult to identify what action should be taken to build trust (Schlosser, White, & Lloyd, 2006). As this study wants to investigate in detail of the component of trust, each trust attributes have been measured distinctly. The next section will discuss the relationship between CSR and trust in detail.

CSR and Trust

Trust is based on "the expectation of ethically justifiable behavior" (Hosmer 1995, p.399). Companies make all kinds of efforts in order to build long-term and strong relationships with consumers by enhancing company capability in building a social responsible image by implementing CSR (Sen & Bhattachharya, 2001). It is proven that company social responsible behavior can affect consumers' loyalty toward the company (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). Companies that reputable for their high social responsibility are more likely to gain identified relationships with consumers and consumers that hold favorable associations on CSR are more likely to maintain active relationships with this company (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Xie & Peng, 2011). Because of these benefits, researchers introduced a conceptual model to link between CSR with company-consumer relationship strength through trust variable (Castaldo, Perrini, Misani, & Tencati, 2008; Cho et al., 2009; Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, & Avramidis, 2009; Xie & Peng, 2011).

At the same time, socially oriented companies can achieve competitive advantage in those areas where trust is crucial in determining consumer choices, provided that the companies have the social responsible image such as respecting consumers' rights and satisfying what consumers' need (Castaldo et al., 2008). This indicates that investment in CSR must be aligned with strategy and policies where a company's specific kind of CSR is relevant and appreciated by consumers. Failure to do so, consumers will not attach much weight to the company's CSR profile. In this case, the only CSR associations expected to have an impact are negative (Castaldo et al., 2008).

In sum, it is agreed that CSR is associated with consumers' trust. Consumers that hold positive social responsible behavior are more likely to believe the focal company as an amicable, caring, and helpful corporate citizen. Such types of compassionate companies strive to treat others fairly, and consumers as their key stakeholders or partners will be definitely well taken care of (Xie & Peng, 2011). Arguably, as central in evaluating the performance of CSR, trust factor is crucial factor (Vlachos et al., 2009). It is believed that the use of media richness when communicating company's message can diminish uncertainty and sharpen consumers' judgment of its trustworthiness (Aljukhadar, et al., 2010). Next section will discuss about media richness and its association with trust.

Media Richness and Trust

Trust is the main construct of media richness theory. The root of the MRT is emphasis on the match between ambiguity and communication medium (Cho et al., 2009). According to MRT, using computer-based communication may eliminate the type of communication cues that consumers use to convey trust, (Jarvenpaa & Leidner, 1999). However, there are studies that claimed computer mediated communication still could develop high levels of trust. In particular, the use of a richer medium may lead consumers to develop a greater degree of trust in the communication exchange (Burgoon et al., 2002). For example, Aljukhadar et al. (2010) examine the effect of the media richness of e-commerce messages (i.e. privacy disclosures) on consumers' cognitive

responses and intentions. In their study, four versions of the e-commerce were developed: three with a privacy disclosure (made available by video, audio, or in text format) and one with no disclosure react as a control variable. The finding showed that the use of media richness applications in delivering messages affects the process of trust formation. It establishes a link between the message's media richness and consumer trust, and behavioral intention. This result extends the finding in that the use of rich media applications in communicating messages on-line can favorably affect trust performance.

Another study that investigates the relationship between media richness and online trust is Lockwood and Massey (2012). They study on geographically dispersed teams that rely heavily on information and communication technologies to communicate and collaborate. Trust perceptions towards the other team are important because they are only meeting virtually. In their study, the three mediums of interest (audio-conferencing, video conferencing, and three dimensional virtual environments-3D) are examined to determine consumers impact on perceptions of ability, benevolence, and trust. As claimed by other studies, lean communication media can inhibit or slow the development of trust in teams and its consistent with the result that the relatively leanest medium (i.e., audio conferencing) led to lower perceptions of ability, benevolence, and trust compared to the richest medium (i.e., video conferencing). Whereas, richer presentations considered as giving more insight into trustworthiness (Aljukhadar et al., 2010; Burgoon et al., 2002; Riegelsberger et al., 2006).

Because "trust" is an important tenet of MRT, it is necessary to explore how this construct may be applied to website disclosures. Most of the studies (as above) had measured trust into a single variable, thus it can be difficult to identify which aspect of trust that impact trust building. A multifaceted view of trust in rich media environments thus seems to be vital to an understanding of the process of trust formation on-line (Aljukhadar et al., 2010). As concern, only one study that similar to this study which examine the impact of media richness on CSR's trust behavior among consumers. Cho et al. (2009) used multidimensional trust model. Their study was to examine whether the richness of the presentation medium of corporate social and environmental website disclosures had a positive effect on the levels of trust in such disclosures. Their findings indicate that, overall, the richness of the presentation medium of social and environmental website disclosures positively influenced the levels of trust. However, their finding did not specify the details of each component of trust that impact the consumers' belief.

Based on the above literature review, the following hypotheses are developed;

H1: Competence belief will be higher when CSR information is rich rather than when CSR information is lean.
H2: Benevolence belief will be higher when CSR information is rich rather than when CSR information is lean.
H3: Integrity belief will be higher when CSR information is rich rather than when CSR information is lean.

Methodology

Design and Measures

To test the hypotheses, this study creates three websites. The two sites present details of CSR message with different level of richness that are lean website and rich website (refer Table 1). One website is a control website discloses the company's background, products and do not implement CSR. The use of fictional website is created to control for any predisposition participants may have related to real companies (Cho et al., 2009). Website of "Company A", a fictional fast food restaurant created by the researcher where most of the website appearance is similar to popular fast-food restaurants website with the content of CSR message is originally adopted from the real websites.

Table 1. Different level of information richness of website design

Rich Website	Lean Website	Control Website
CSR disclosure	CSR disclosure	
include details of CSR message (details of nutritional values, halal product, food safety and food quality)	include details of CSR message (details of nutritional values, halal product, food safety and food quality)	No CSR disclosure
Text, images, animation, video	Text and still image only	

In this study, the attention focuses on the type of CSR message that commonly disclose by fast-food restaurants in Malaysia. The researchers had examined eight websites of fast-food companies and found most of them are disclosed nutritional values and 'halal' status of their food as their main priority. Some companies disclose details of their CSR contribution that cover food quality; food safety; details on food nutritional for each item and highlight their halal policy (enclosed the halal certificate). These companies are using two types of richness when discloses their CSR information that are rich and lean elements. From this initial investigation of fast-foods' website, researcher decided to present CSR information richness into two categories that are rich and lean. These categories will be used in the website development.

This study has chosen to disclose the CSR of food companies because of this sector has a strong impact and a high dependence on the economy, environment and society (Hartman, Rubin, & Dhanda, 2007). CSR in food industry faces many significant risks especially about health and safety because food safety outbreaks could tarnish the image of company, loss of customer trust and legal actions (Maloni & Brown, 2006). As this study is implemented in Malaysia, where the population of Muslim is the majority, 'halal or permissible' issues become the main priority for food companies to clearly disclose in their policy. This is important because Muslim customers are not only looking for a product to satisfy their needs, but also that give them a peace of mind (Shafie & Othman, 2006).

Trust is categorized into three variables, namely, benevolence, integrity and competence. These three variables were originated from McKnight et al. (2002) and Schlosser et al. (2006) (refer Table 2). Each of trust items is measured using a five-point Likert scale. Competence, benevolence and integrity had achieved reliability at 0.95, 0.91 and 0.92 respectively. CSR information richness is measured by controlling the element of richness in three different websites (Refer Table 1). The following section discusses on procedure and subject task of this study.

Table 2. Measurement instruments

Variables	Items	Sources
Competence	Company is competent in providing the service	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	Company performs of giving services very well	
	Company is capable and proficient as service provider	
	Company is very knowledgeable about CSR	
Benevolence	I believe that this company would act in my best interest	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	This company seems very consent on my welfare	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)
	My need is important to the company	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)
	This company seems to really look for what is important to me	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)
	The company appears to go out of its way to help me	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	The company would not do anything to hurt me	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)
	This company is interested in my well-being	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
Integrity	This company is honest	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	This company would keep its commitment	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	This company is sincere and genuine	McKnight *et al.* (2002)
	This company actions and behaviors are very consistent	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)
	This company appears to try hard to be fair in dealing with others	Schlosser *et al.* (2006)

Procedures and Respondents

Due to the fact that consumers are major stakeholders and understanding their reactions on CSR is a fundamental issue in CSR communication, they were selected as the target group to apply the study. Convenience sampling of university students is chosen to represent sexes and the group of consumers in fast-food's company. The researcher will contact the instructors of business program in Malaysia local university. The researcher will ask their permission to have students to participate in this study. Upon obtaining the consent, the subject is randomly assigned to one of the three conditions

of corporate website to differentiate the level of richness of CSR disclosure, namely, rich elements, lean elements and control. In this case, the experiment is done in the computer lab and researcher gave a brief explanation about the study. Subjects are given a sufficient time browsing on the assigned corporate website so that they are able to answer the questionnaire. After browsing the website, the subjects are instructed to answer the questionnaire to get feedback on their trust (competence, benevolence and integrity). Finally, the subjects answer demographic questions.

Rich information richness had 121 respondents and the number of respondents is same in lean information richness. However, in control condition the respondents are 128. Of the respondents, 75.1 per cent were women and 24.9 per cent were men. The respondents age groups from 19 to 25 years old, where the highest score is around 21 to 22 years old groups.

Result

A series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted in order to explore the first three hypotheses (Table 1). Regarding the H1, the ANOVA test revealed that there is a significant difference between the three treatment groups (F= 7.136, p = .001). Therefore, the H2 is accepted. Indeed, respondents perceived company is more competent ce in rich CSR condition (M = 16.00) than the lean CSR condition (M = 15.23). The respondents perceived company is less competence if they do not disclose their CSR information on the website (control condition, M= 14.81).

Although the ANOVA result was significant (F =3.689, p =.026), H2 was not confirmed because the Tukey HSD post hoc analysis revealed that there is no significant difference between lean CSR information treatment group and the rich CSR information treatment group. Based on mean, respondent perceived company is benevolence in rich CSR information and it is among the highest favorable element (M= 26.61) compared to lean CSR information (M=25.48). The hypothesis H3 was confirmed based on the ANOVA result that was significant (F = 6.153, p = .002). The rich CSR information appeared higher favorable in the case of integrity (M = 19.53), while the lean CSR information lower in the case of integrity (M = 18.42). The control lies between the negative and positive CSR condition, even though the Tukey HSD post hoc analysis revealed that there is no significant difference between the control and negative CSR condition (Mean difference =0.179).

Variables	Mean	F	Sig
Competence		7.136	.001
Rich CSR information	16.00		
Lean CSR information	15.23		
Control condition	14.81		
Benevolence		3.689	.026
Rich CSR information	26.62		
Lean CSR information	25.48		
Control condition	25.26		
Integrity		6.153	.002
Rich CSR information	19.53		
Lean CSR information	18.42		
Control condition	18.24		

Discussion

Based on the results, this study shows that the CSR information richness has a significant relationship with competence-based trust in rich website (accept H1). It means that consumers believe that the company has the ability and necessary skills to perform the services according to what they offered. The result is aligned with Wang and Benbasat (2007) that claimed trust in a company is based primarily on consumer perceptions of the skills and expertise of the company. Demonstration of company expertise would increase its competence in the eyes of its consumers and hence increases the likelihood that they will trust the company. This is consistent with Castaldo et al. (2008) that posited consumers have more trust in the company that implement CSR to deliver on the implicit promise of their products and respecting and caring about them. The finding also illustrates that in order to gain consumers' competence beliefs, the companies would use rich CSR presentation. The reason is maybe when consumers are not familiar with the company because of the new relationship, the perceived risk of communicating with the company is increased. Thus, the company is more likely using communication tool with a higher degree of information richness in order to provide more clues and information, and thereby increase consumers' trust (Lo & Lie, 2008).

The finding of CSR information richness with benevolence belief cannot be confirmed because there is no significant different between rich and lean group (reject H2). The plausible reason is maybe consumers have a doubtful on the motives of fast-food's company to integrate CSR into their business because it is well known that fast-food company have been providing unhealthy food. The motive of fast-food companies being actively involved in CSR to gain consumers trustworthiness has created skepticism among consumers. It is very demanding to engage consumers with trust and the results show that the use of rich CSR presentation did not affect consumers. Consumers will believe in a company that has a sincere motive in implementing CSR in their services and product. It is in-line with a study by Vlachos et al. (2009) that stated consumers are likely to accept attributions of values-driven motives because they recognize the company as acting out sincerely and benevolent. Consumers will believe the company that implement CSR because they care, and view CSR activities as deriving from a company's moral behavior. Such types of compassionate companies strive to treat others fairly, particularly consumers as their key stakeholders will be definitely well taken care of (Xie & Peng, 2011).

This study shows that CSR information richness is significant with company integrity in rich website (accept hypotheses 3). It means that consumers' belief in the integrity of fast-food company in telling the truth, acts ethically, and fulfills promises. This result is surprising because even though consumers have a doubtful towards company's motive, but yet they believe that the company has integrity in their CSR statement. This shows that the use of rich website is succeeding in attracting consumer to engage with company. The plausible reason maybe because companies are more likely to use rich website in an attempt to persuade consumers of their worthiness, and it makes consumers familiar and accept that kind of persuasion approach (Cho et al., 2009). This finding is consistent with prior research findings such as Aljukhadar et al. (2010)

and Lo and Lie (2008) that find rich media has significant influence in developing trust among consumers. They discovered that in rich media environments, trust appears to be strongly affected the consumer's cognitive response to the retailer. A multifaceted view of trust in rich media environments, thus seems to be vital to an understanding of the process of trust formation or depletion on-line. In line with these studies, the present study also demonstrated the importance of richness on CSR disclosure as a basis for increasing integrity beliefs towards fast-food company.

Conclusion

The results of this study have provided insight into the effect of information richness with consumers' trust. These finding provide additional evidence to the growing body of knowledge concerning the importance of CSR communication that impact users' trust. With regards to the factors influencing consumer's trust, several inferences can be concluded from the findings. The analysis reveals that the rich presentation of CSR information is significantly related to competence and integrity. The present study uncovers that these factors have an important causal effect on trust.

Further analysis also revealed that the use of different level of richness of CSR information did not impact on consumers benevolence trust. Even though consumers believe that company is competent and integral but the nature of business operation (fast-food) creates consumer skepticism on its motive. The company could not stop from being suspected by the consumers. But, by using a rich presentation of CSR information, it gives companies a much stronger basis for recommending CSR communication strategy in a matter to increase consumers' trust.

This study is expected to increase the body of knowledge on CSR web disclosure and media richness.   First, this study attempts to add to the literature by using MRT as the framework and CSR communication as the context. It was agreed that rich presentation on media could gain social strength, status and trust from consumers (Carlson & Zmud, 1999; Daft & Lengel, 1986; Markus, 1994). This study is different compared to many prior CSR communication studies that have used different theories particularly public relations theory and stakeholder theories to develop communication strategies (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Second, result from this study is believed to revalidate the impact of new media on MRT. Even though MRT has been extensively used in previous studies, the results for new media are still inconclusive. Furthermore, this study has primarily focused on the consumer' perceptions and not managerial perception whereby it integrates CSR literatures together to enhance the knowledge about the effect of media richness on the CSR consumers in the context of Malaysia. This is beneficial since CSR is viewed as social accounting and concern with the impact of company's activity on society (Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2006; Golob, Lah, & Jančič, 2008). Third, communicating CSR issues to the public is critical to an organization not only because it is legitimate, but also to gain feedback from consumers. This will make the companies more responsible to the communities. It can be learnt that regulatory bodies like Bursa Malaysia and Bank Negara Malaysia hold a particular interest in the findings of this study since it can be used to develop appropriate communication strategies to protect the right of the stakeholders, particularly consumers.

As with any research, this study has some limitations that should be highlighted in order to warrant a fair interpretation of the results. A limitation of this study is the lack of diversity in industries demographic because this study only focuses single industry that is food industry specifically fast-food's company. While the findings are useful in a preliminary study of the effect of consumers' trust, general scope of industries should also be assessed in order to examine the effect further.

Another limitation is research design. This study focuses on experimental laboratory to control the richness element of website presentation which has a high level of internal validity, which required a certain tradeoff with external validity. However, because the structure and content of the websites design use in this study based on information found on actual corporate websites, it is believed that external validity of this study is strengthened. This study also uses fake fast-food's company in order to control initial perception in the mind of respondents. This is in-line with Cho et al. (2009) that posited the use of fictitious company is to minimize respondent bias, so that prior attitudes would not affect the respondent's response. Moreover, this study has focused on the process of trust formation in the context of no prior knowledge or experience with the company. Studying trust in its early stages is vital because new consumers depend largely on trust in making their decisions not their experience (Aljukhadar et al., 2010; McKnight et al., 2002).

In addition, participants in this study are upper-level undergraduate students. It is believed that these sample members are appropriate subjects for this investigation because of their substantial for presenting of fast-food consumer and as a value added factor that are web reliance. But the limitation is they may not be representative of all fast-food consumers in Malaysia. However, many researchers have found that student samples are appropriate as long as the task is matched to their familiarity level and abilities (Cho et al., 2009; McKnight et al., 2002; Simon & Peppas, 2004). In this aspect, it is believed that using students sample is appropriate for this particular task. Different age groups, education levels, and web usage could be used to further validate the findings in this study.

In spite of limitations, several future study inherent in this study. The use of corporate website as a platform for consumers to understand about CSR is not enough. Based on previous study, there was a claim that consumers do not proactively seek CSR information, even with regard issues they consider to be particularly important. Some of them become aware of CSR activities through independent channel such as on media coverage, word-of-mouth or advertising campaign (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010). Information from these media sometimes is lack of credibility (Wagner et al., 2009). Therefore, companies should use a variety of communication channels and not been limited to corporate website only. It is recommended for companies to channel their CSR information to others relevant media. One of them is social media. Company should proactive in using social media to make consumers become their CSR advocate. Future studies may look at this angle.

Other than that, this study only covered consumer perceptions on CSR. There are other categories of stakeholders such as employees, investors, NGOs and many more.

These different stakeholders vary in terms of their expectations of businesses, and in information needs, and may thus respond differently to the various communication channels of CSR. Accordingly, it is imperative for company to tailor its CSR communication to the specific needs of different stakeholder groups. Future studies may investigate how companies can best communicate its CSR initiatives to these respective target groups.

The contribution of this study can be classified into theoretical and practical. For the theoretical contribution, this study extended beyond the thrust of MRT (Daft et al., 1987) that has existed for quite some time. MRT focused primarily on communication media richness (face-to-face, telephone, telecommunication medium, etc.) and was developed in a time period prior to the advent of the internet. This study merely focuses on specific communication medium that is the corporate website. Trust model is adapted within the foundation of the theory of media richness to provide the basic logical of the variables included in this study. From a theoretical standpoint, few empirical studies, especially in e-commerce have made a distinction results in benevolence, competence and integrity. But, the result varies according to the specific subject matter of their study. And to our knowledge, this is the first study that has tested the impacts on consumer's trust if CSR information presented in different level of richness. By using a methodology of experimental, its provides comprehensive insights and evidence regarding consumer's decision-making process, especially on early perceptions of trust including competence, integrity and benevolence. Results showed a different level of richness does matter in presenting CSR information to engage with consumers' trust particularly in the competence and integrity elements.

Beside theoretical contributions, several managerial implications are advanced from the results of this study. This study provides business managers with additional insights regarding potential investment, particularly in CSR communication. The motivation for engaging and communicate CSR at the companies level is ethical obligation (O'Connor & Shumate, 2010). The questions on what to communicate, where to communicate and understanding the factor that impact the effectiveness of CSR communication between company and consumers become a key issues in CSR communication (Du et al., 2010). However, study on CSR communication strategy in the food industry, particularly fast-food's companies have not drawn the researchers attention. This study provides a foundation for fast-food industry to develop CSR communication strategies. This study also highlights the importance of investments in website design as worthwhile efforts. The well-designed websites together with appropriate richness levels created by considering trust characteristics could enhance consumer positive perceptions towards the companies. These results support the idea that the best approach in communicating business social activities is to gain a deep understanding of how consumers perceive CSR information. This knowledge will allow companies to efficiently adapt the way they use their website and how they deploy their communication strategies in order to better meet consumers' need. This study also demonstrates to the fast-food industry the importance of encouraging consumers to view the information gained from their websites as valuable and useful. The information provided to consumers through websites should be interactive to help consumers in decision mak-

ing. At the end the outcome creates a better perception in the eye of consumers towards the company.

Understanding consumer behavior will also assist companies to improve planning and coordinating their resources in terms of implementing their technological capabilities to increase the operational goals. The findings show that effective website design contributes in building consumer trust. Companies that communicate their social activities through website could positively influence consumers' perception towards them. From the findings, it is believed that if consumers have trust towards corporate website, they are more likely to have a positive impression about a company. Eventually, this will help the management to improve their position in the market.

This study's finding opens up a new way of explaining the consumers' perception of the richness of CSR information will have to be considered when analyzing their trust behavior. While an increase in rich media use is immersed in the world of online communication, companies find that the use of rich website improves consumer perceptions towards them. Thus, a company should offer the kind of information in a way that best corresponds to what consumers need.

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