RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONSUMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES: EFFECT ON BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract: *Researchers have concluded over the years, a significant relationship between consumer and corporate social responsibility and recommended the need for corporate interests to be aligned with consumer interests in order to increase social benefits. For Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) focussed businesses to thrive and be sustainable, there is an anticipation for the support and approval of consumers in purchasing products that promote the social good, which is very crucial for sustainable business growth. However, literature concludes an ethical purchase behaviour gap. This study evaluates the relationship between Organisational/Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR) from literature with a view to drawing conclusions on the significant relationship and benefits for business sustainability, looking at the intervening role of education and culture. Analysis, focussing on extant literature and empirical evidence in the form of survey findings, case studies and findings from journal articles and views of business professionals, were considered to arrive at a conclusion that consumer social responsibility is a driver of organisational/corporate social responsibility and very crucial for business growth and sustainability. This is relevant for organisations poised to be socially responsible in their production with the anticipation that their efforts will be rewarded by consumers, willing to purchase products that promote the social good. Organisations need to recognise also the complexities of the consumer's decision-making processes with respect to social purchasing and take appropriate actions to guide and educate consumers, not forgetting the cultural dimensions which also play an intervening role in purchase behaviour.*

Keywords: *Consumer Social Responsibility, Corporate/Organisational Social Responsibility, Sustainable business growth, Education and Culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

There is increasing public consciousness of environmental and social issues, with resulting changes in consumer behaviour, investment and policy regulatory adjustments. (Neil, 2009; Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014). There is also continued pressure on corporate entities to demonstrate that economic growth and sustainability are compatible, hence the need for corporate social

responsibility (CSR) which is a pillar of sustainable development (Brinkmann, 2004; Brinkmann & Peattie, 2008; World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2008; Middlemiss, 2010).

Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) define CSR as a company's commitment to minimizing or eliminating harmful effects and maximizing long-run beneficial impact on society. It has been widely argued that businesses can achieve economic success by doing 'good' to society (Falck & Heblich, 2007; Laszlo, 2008). However, one vital issue which seems to have been often neglected is that of socially responsible consumers. Consumers are key stakeholders of businesses, and play a significant role in ensuring the success of social initiatives undertaken by businesses leading to economic gains (Neil, 2009). The author points out that the concept of stakeholder advocacy reflects the urgency for consumers to play their roles accordingly in ensuring corporate citizenship.

While consumer related issues have been widely researched, both conceptually and empirically, the issue of Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR) have received limited attention resulting in calls for advancement of research on CnSR, particularly in empirical terms (Quazi, 2013; Vitell, 2014; Quazi & Amran, 2015). The need to broaden the scarcely conceived scope of CnSR has been suggested (Caruana & Chatzidakis, 2014). Consumers have responsibilities to create favourable social impacts by exercising their power in the marketplace (Dickinson & Carsky, 2005). Thus, conceptualizing and considering CnSR is essential, as it can be the catalyst for the success of CSR (Gupta & Singh, 2020).

2. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

An empirical gap is established in literature on the complementary relationship between CnSR and CSR (Manning, 2013). Related literature suggest that consumers are unwilling to pull their own weight when it comes to ethical consumption (Devinney, Eckhardt & Belk, 2006). Devinney, Augar, Eckhardt and Birtchnell (2011), stressed the need for consumers to stick to their side of the social bargain. Consumer certainties are observed to be in direct conflict with CSR (Morrison & Bridwell, 2013). The authors report that consumers pursue convenience and individual self-interest by seeking price efficient products. Economically, the only reason for a corporation to invest in socially progressive behaviour is positive public relations (Morrison & Bridwell, 2013).

Additionally, while the concept of CSR has continued to develop over the past sixty years, very few companies have gone beyond legal obligations

and social norms in their actions (Morrison & Bridwell, 2013). They conclude that social change has mostly been driven through legislative reform. This will continue until a majority of consumers send the signal that they are willing to pay more for products that come from corporations that truly engage in socially responsible behaviour (Morrison & Bridwell, 2013).

Newman and Brucks (2018) observed that little is known about how CSR efforts affect consumer behaviour outcomes that are not ultimately tied back to the firm. The authors found that a brand's more socially responsible behaviour can negatively influence the moral behaviour of consumers while a brand's less socially responsible behaviour can positively influence the moral behaviour of consumers, in the case where such consumers have attachments emotionally to the brand conducting the CSR efforts (Newman & Brucks, 2018).

While researchers have proposed that the increasing prosocial attitude is crucial to encouraging prosocial behaviour (Hines, Hungerford & Tomera, 1987), unfortunately, many studies show that pro-environmental attitudes have very little influence on pro-environmental behaviour, indicating an attitude-behaviour gap (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Again, despite countless number of studies on the attitude-behaviour gap, no definitive explanation is available for why individuals hold positive attitudes towards prosocial behaviour, yet do not consistently conduct those behaviours at the point of sale (Newman & Brucks, 2018). In attempting to answer this question, this paper looks at the relationship between CSR and CnSR and the influence on sustainable business growth.

The paper proposes that aligning CSR and CnSR in a proactive manner by organisations with effective communication and information and exploring cultural dimensions that favour social responsibility, the incidence of the attitude-behaviour gap could be reduced and that consumers will be seen to be rewarding organisations that promote the social good with their production activities. There are and will be many intervening variables but that of culture and education is rarely considered in the literature and hence an additional new dimension to the debate on the congruence of CSR and CnSR and a contribution to business sustainability.

3. OBJECTIVES

In view of the above, the paper proposes the following objectives:

1. To explore from literature, the relationship and congruence between consumer social responsibility and corporate social responsibility.

2. To demonstrate from literature, the contribution of both concepts to sustainable business growth.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The paper explores the relationship between consumer and corporate social responsibility, and its contribution to sustainable business growth. Changing consumer behaviour is a big challenge in sustainable growth of businesses (Vilaram & Ramanathan, 2014). The authors observe that consumer behaviour is complex and very often not considered rational. Thus, changing consumer behaviour is an obstacle in the growth of business because it leads to heavy losses. A further challenge is that consumer personalities differ across borders, also between, and within regions. Because consumers are the rulers of the market, their tastes, behaviour and preferences cannot be ignored (Vilaram & Ramanathan, 2014). DEFRA report (2014) notes that the market for sustainable products have experienced growth, with 42% of adults in the UK claiming to have purchased items for ethical reasons in 2012, in comparison to only 27% in 2000 (Co-operative Bank, 2012). Despite this rise, ethical purchases remained relatively small in that country in the area of product and service consumption, resulting in the market share for sustainable products being described by Eckhardt *et al.* (2010:426) as "abysmally low" indicating the existence of an attitude-behaviour gap.

It has been established that consumers do value ethical products; however, their daily buying behaviour is often inconsistent with the assertion (Thøgersen, 2004; Moisander, 2007). As a result, a number of researchers (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Carrigan & Attala, 2001; De Pelsmacker *et al.*, 2005) are concerned about whether the companies' socially and ethically sound behaviours will pay off and whether the growing ethical and environmental consciousness among consumers will be translated into widespread purchasing behaviour. Albayrak *et al.*, (2011) supports the earlier assertion reporting that many studies do not show consistent results with regard to consumer claims and purchasing behaviours. This has implications for organisational growth, sustainability and performance.

4.1. Consumer Social Responsibility (CnSR)

Consumer Social Responsibility is the moral principles and standards that guide the behaviours of individuals as they obtain, use and dispose of goods and services (Muncy & Vitell, 1992). In the early 1970's, Wood (1971) coined the term noting that everybody in the world is a consumer and have responsibilities,

while Devinney et. al., (2006) conceptualised it stating that it is the other CSR. They define it as the conscious and deliberate choice of a consumer to make certain consumption decisions based on personal and moral beliefs. Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001) earlier, defined a socially responsible consumer as one basing their acquisition, usage and disposition of products on a desire to minimise or eliminate any harmful effects and maximize the long-term beneficial impact on society.

The definitions show that the consumer's responsibility is to society and to the social good. Webb, Mohr and Harris (2008), identified three aspects of socially responsible behaviour. They included the influence of a firms Socially Responsible Consumption (SRC) performance on consumer purchase behaviour; consumer recycling behaviour; and, consumer avoidance and usage reduction of products harmful to the environment. Middlemiss (2010) expanded this debate describing consumer social responsibility as a concept that highlights that consumers are accountable for their consumption behaviour and their impact on the larger social good, pointing to a social and personal factor in consumer responsibility.

Russell and Russell (2010) contend that consumers through their purchases and consumption are the final judges of corporations' behaviour. This definition is extended to include, the conscious and deliberate willingness to make certain consumption choices based on personal and moral beliefs and, the willingness to avoid negative external effects of the individual's consumption (Quazi, 2015). Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) have noted that the more recent treatment of CnSR recognises the need to relocate the consumer from being the sole agent behind the increasing responsibilities of everyday consumption.

4.2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

From the 1950s to the present, the concept of CSR gained considerable acceptance and the meaning have been broadened to include additional components. Bowen (1953) referred to the social responsibility of businessmen as pursuing those policies, making those decisions, or following those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society (Bowen, 1953). In the 1960's, the meaning of CSR expanded to include the economic means of production and distribution employed by businesses to enhance the total economic and social welfare (Frederick, 1960). The meaning of CSR was broadened during the 80's by Freeman (1984) by introducing the stakeholder's theory, defining the following - consumers, competitors, trade

associations, media, environmentalists, suppliers, consumer advocates, media, environmentalists, local communities among others, as stakeholders.

In the present circumstance, different responsibilities have been added for organisations. The Commission of European Communities (CEC, 2001) stressed the need for companies to integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (1999) stressed the commitment of businesses to contributing to sustainable economic development working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve quality of life. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2008) added a responsibility of sustainable development and improvement of quality of life in the list of responsibilities.

Maignan and Ferrel (2004), emphasized obligation and accountability to society to maximize its positive impact and minimize negative impacts on society by organisations. Earlier, Caroll (1979), observed that CSR encompasses economic, legal, ethical and discretionary/voluntary philanthropic expectations that society have of organizations. Newman (2014) stated that the use of CSR is now a mainstream strategic and normative tool that affects how businesses operate. In fact, it is difficult to find a company that does not participate in any type of socially responsible business practice. In India for example, certain companies are forced to spend 2% of their average profit from the prior three years on CSR efforts (Banerjee, 2013).

Many academic and non-academic sources agree that CSR efforts are beneficial, especially when they influence corporate reputation and identification with the firm (Reputation Institute, 2013), Additionally, Lii and Lee (2012) found that CSR reputation moderates the relationship between CSR efforts brand attitude and identification with the company. Specifically, CSR efforts significantly increases brand attitudes and identification with the company for companies with a high vs. low CSR reputation.

Newman and Brucks (2018) observe that there is a large gap in the literature that has not addressed the basic question of whether CSR efforts are good for consumers. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) proposed that CSR efforts might increase consumer well-being, but research has yet to establish this. In fact, a review of CSR literature, based on 588 journal articles and 102 books and book chapters, made no mention of consumer-centric outcomes of CSR efforts such as consumer well-being (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

In addressing the gap, one researcher demonstrated how the corporate social responsibility efforts of a brand influences the moral behavior of

consumers (Newman & Brucks, 2018). Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) stressed that despite considerable debate as to what CSR is, CnSR is an important force for CSR (Vogel, 2005). The emergence of CnSR means that issues of price, convenience, reliability and availability which were the familiar platforms for consumer function, now include issues of social justice, fairness, rights, virtues and sustainability. Accordingly, the nature of CSR is transformed from one based largely on utility maximization, exchange values and product efficiency, to a broader and more intricate socio-moral and political relationship (Crane and Matten, 2005; Caruana and Chatzidakis, 2013).).

4.3. Business Sustainability

Sustainable business growth is dependent on sustainable consumption (Middlemiss, 2010). Sustainable consumption according to Martin and Schouten (2012:238) is as "the use of goods and services that meets people's current needs without compromising the ability of other people to meet their needs, either now or in the future". In line with this ideology, organisations are making efforts to transform gradually, their operations in compatibility with the environment (Gupta & Singh, 2020). They note that consumers are also affecting businesses in terms of inclining their loyalty with the emergence of new class of green consumers.

Key methods of sustainable consumption are the selection of sustainable products, boycotts of unsustainable products and anti-consumption (Harrison *et al.*, 2005). Despite the availability of these options Yates (2008) describes consumers as typically being hooked on to unsustainable consumption behaviour due to a lack of inducements for more sustainable consumption. Therefore, changing consumer behaviour is a big challenge in sustainable growth of the businesses. Sharma & Lal (2012), called for the need to formulate and successfully implement strategies related to consumer behaviour because there are fewer resources to meet the basic requirements of the business.

Straughan and Roberts (1999) note that social and political pressure, have led organizations to shift from simply addressing pollution and waste disposal to searching for substitute package composition and design, substitute product formulations, and cause-related promotion in an effort to synchronize with the environmental movement. Kaur (2006), reported that much of the burden for socially responsible actions on businesses have come from their customers in the form of product performance, environment protection, safety, and information disclosure. (Chen and Kong 2009). Thus, environmental movement and consumerism both induce green practices. Chan (2001) suggests that if

consumers exhibit a high degree of ecological consciousness and channel it to corresponding eco-friendly or green purchases it is likely that profit-driven enterprises will be strongly motivated to adopt the concept of green marketing in their operations. Consequently, it is an elaborated fact that consumer behaviour has a profound effect on businesses, leading to sustainability.

4.4. Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is multifaceted and very often not rational (Sharma & Lal, 2012; Vikram & Ramanathan, 2016). Due to its complex, dynamic, multidimensional nature, all marketing decisions are based on assumptions about consumer behaviour. However, Assadourian (2010) questions the ability of humankind to thrive without re-orientation of actions towards more sustainable behaviour. Research shows also that change in consumer behaviour affects the sustainable growth of the business (Gupta & Singh, 2020). Sharma and Lal (2012) contend that consumer's taste is also changing as fast as the technology changes. Consumer behaviour provides invaluable clues and guidelines to marketers on new technological frontiers they should explore. Gupta & Singh (2020) stressed that in the market place, while introducing and promoting green products, marketers always have to follow consumers who are normally bounded by their past behaviour which they don't want to change.

4.5. Consumer Social Responsibility as a driver of Corporate Social Responsibility

A number of researchers have studied the inter-relationship between CSR and CnSR (Devinney *et al*, 2006; Becker-Olsen *et al*, 2006; Yates, 2009; Manning, 2013; Morrison & Bridwell, 2013; Cauana & Chatzidakis, 2013 and Newman, 2014). Manning observed that economic drivers have influenced CnSR behaviour with the consumerism component rather than the caring component of CnSR playing a leading role in the interaction between ethical and consumerism elements.

Devinney *et al.*, (2006) opined the need to focus on the consumer side of social responsibility. Using two simple models of decision making to explain consumer social responsibility Devinney *et al.*, (2006), stated that a reactive model of consumer social responsibility requires more than organisations realising consumers' social expectations and reacting to them, but also the need to be proactive, which implies that companies either create opportunities where consumers' expectations can be realized or define specifically what those expectations should be and actively work to drive them into the marketplace.

Devinney *et al.*, (2006) contend that without a rational model of CnSR, the moral foundations of CSR will remain little more than corporate consent to social special interest groups. Although framed in all the right languages corporate social responsibility will be viewed as a necessary cost rather than a corporate opportunity.

Manning (2013) developed an interaction model demonstrating the importance of information flow from the supply chain which can drive added value and product engagement. Manning (2013) found that CSR is however of limited value to the organisation if there is a lack of, or a change in, consumer engagement. Organisations need to recognise that their CSR activities must remain congruent with CnSR in order that they maintain or improve market share and customer loyalty. As CnSR can be reactive such as in the event of a food safety incident. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) had long suggested that there are both company-specific and consumer specific factors involved in the CnSR dynamic and a major factor is consumer perception of the degree of congruence between themselves and the organisation.

Manning (2013) again refers to the work of Yates (2009) which stated that 58 per cent of consumers thought that companies pretended to be green just to charge higher prices and that to gain customer confidence green claims required clarity, credibility and comparability elements. Becker-Olsen *et al.* (2006) observed that consumers differentiate between an organisation doing ethical things and an organisation acting ethically.

Morrison and Bridwell (2013) argue that consumers through marketplace decisions are the final determinant of CSR success and that CnSR is a more accurate description of the realities of CSR. They argue that consumers now pursue convenience and individual self-interest by seeking price efficient products; economically, the only reason for a corporation to invest in socially progressive behaviours is positive public relations. This is in direct conflict with the concept of CSR (Manning & Bridwell, 2013). They believe that the customer is the most powerful determinant of corporate behaviour, and hence, the need for CSR focus to be on the consumer.

Manning and Bridwell (2013) posit that social transformation has usually been compelled through legislative reform with only a few organisations going beyond legal obligations and social norms in their actions. This, they believe, will continue until a majority of consumers send the signal that they are willing to pay more for products that come from corporations that truly engage in socially responsible behaviour.

Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) stressed that despite considerable debate as to what constitutes CSR, the consumer factor is key. To better conceive the role consumers play in activating CSR, Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) provided a multi-level, multi-agent conceptualization of CnSR, integrating needs-based models of decision making with justice theory. There is an extension from issues of price, suitability, consistency and obtainability which formed consumer utility, to issues of social justice, fairness, privileges, virtue and sustainability (Caruana & Chatzidakis, 2013). This has transformed the nature of corporate–consumer relations, from utility maximization, exchange value, and product efficiency, to a broader and more intricate socio-moral and political relationship (Crane & Matten. 2005).

The main contribution of Caruana and Chatzidakis (2013) is in unlocking the explanatory capacity of models that integrate key agents and critically synthesize their potential influence on CnSR. They found that consumers pay attention to different environmental, health, cultural-national, legal, and ethical dimensions, each of which entails several components. Therefore, the managers at macro and micro levels of organisations must develop strategies in line with the identified factors in order to align their activities with social desires of customers and promote the social responsibility, regionally, nationally, and globally. Their study represents an attempt to develop a more holistic and multi-level conceptualization of CnSR than has been previously advanced in the literature.

Newman and Brucks (2018) maintained that research has focussed less on justifying the use of CSR to how firms can strategically benefit from its use. Most of the CSR research that address consumers, use firm centred outcomes of CSR efforts including consumer evaluations toward the organisation (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), brand attitudes (Lii & Lee, 2012), customer loyalty to the firm (Maignan et. al., 1999), a customer's identification with the firm (Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001), and consumer trust and recommendation intentions toward the firm (Vlachos et. al., 2009). This research is clearly important, but it does not fully address the entire relationship between CSR efforts and consumers. Newman and Brucks (2018) concludes that research on CSR normally focuses on organisation level benefits. However, little is known about how CSR efforts influence the well-being of consumers.

5. FRAMEWORK TO ALIGN CSR AND CNSR, LOOKING AT CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Available literature in the area of consumers' social responsibility points to the western world; specifically, the developed countries while limited theoretical

and applied researches conducted in developing countries (Chen & Kong, 2009). It should be also noted that the developing countries face different issues and concerns compared with the developed countries. Numerous scales have also been designed to measure socially responsible purchasing but they do not cover a wide range of social issues at various stages of before, during, and after the purchase (Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014), in spite of their multi-dimensional nature. In addition, differences in economic, social, legal, and cultural development of each country can result in different dimensions in the area of social responsibility which requires the identification of factors involved.

According to Samavatyan, Akhoondi and Zareie (2014), although organisation's commercial and information focuses increasingly on the role of purchase and consumption on the environment, the customers' trust on the influence of acquisition is not well identified in terms of the legal, national, cultural, and health dimensions. In this regard, Samavatyan, Akhoondi and Zareie (2014) notes that consumers must believe that their individual efforts and purchases can contribute to the reduction of potential social and environmental problems and this requires a proactive effort to align CSR activities to CnSR in order to achieve the aim of sustainable growth. This paper therefore proposes a framework on the alignment of CSR and CnSR with education and culture playing the role of mediator and moderator of this congruence, looking at how these effect sustainable business growth.
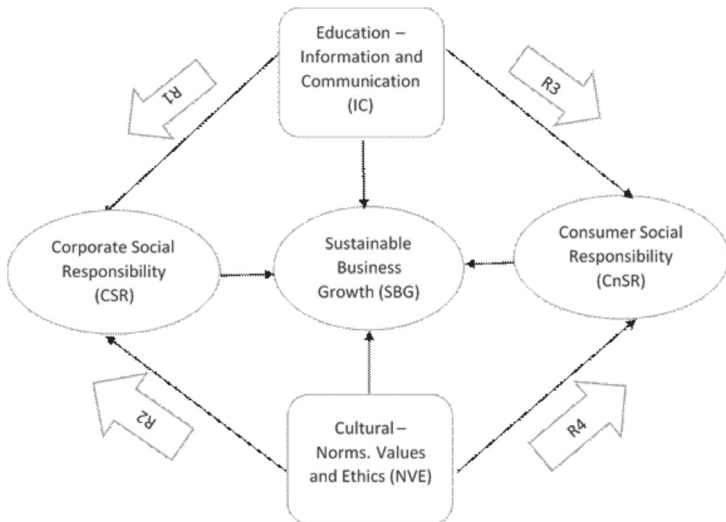

Figure 1: A framework model of the congruence between CSR and CnSR and the effect on SBG. (Researchers model, 2020)

The figure represents the framework of the interaction between CSR and CnSR taking into consideration the intervening roles of information and communication (IC) and culture – norms, values and ethics (NVE). R1 and R3 stand for role and influence of IC on CSR and CnSR, while R2 and R4 stand for the role and influence of NVE on CSR and CnSR respectively.

5.1. The role and influence of Education (Information and Communication – IC) in the relationship between CSR and CnSR

Lack of information has been identified as one of the constraints businesses and consumers encounter in adopting green practices (Gupta & Singh, 2020). Ineffective communication systems according to Zaman *et al*, (2010) have resulted in the difficulty of consumers perceiving green and eco-friendly labels, thus there is the need to invest in effective communication systems. Organisations also lack knowledge on general consumer expectations of organisations in terms of what constitutes green (Mohr *et al*, 2001). Public consensus on what is green is also ambiguous because what constitutes environmental friendly, recycled, recyclable and biodegradable have different meanings to different consumers.

Thus, education here represents information and communication on CSR and CnSR for the benefit of stakeholders including the consumer. Moreover, other factors, such as unawareness and a lack of information, a lack of transparency, a lack of trust, the presence of legal voids, a lack of proper observance of the rules, a lack of other alternatives for selection, the problems of availability, unequal prices, and non-competitive quality also contribute to the lack of consumers' social responsibility mostly in developing countries (Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014).

5.2. The role and influence of Culture (Norms, Values and Ethics – NVE) in the relationship between CSR and CnSR

Culture represents the norms and values of consumers that impinge on their purchase behaviour. Culture, a set of beliefs, values, and visions in every society, affects individual behaviour and is the basis for the selection, use, and in general dealing with goods and services per individuals (Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014). Individuals are the members of different subcultures; each sub-culture differs according to the variety of emphases on different issues associated with consumption. The authors (Samavatyan, Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014) found that cultural context can contribute positively or negatively to increase social responsibility and thus it must not be regarded

as a concept independent from cultural context. Due to cultural differences in conceptualization and dimensions of social responsibility and differences in developing and developed countries on the concept, it is theoretically and practically important to identify the dimensions and elements involved in social responsibility especially in developing countries and to develop a scale in this regard (Samavatyan (Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014).

Norms are standards or rules that tell members of a group or society how they should behave (Schwartz, 2012). The Business Dictionary (2020) defines norms as informal guidelines about what is considered normal (correct or incorrect) social behaviour in a particular group or social unit. Norms form the basis of collective explanations that members of a community have from each other (Schwartz, 2012), and play a key part in social control and social order by exerting a pressure on the individual to conform.

On the other hand, values are typically defined as "conceptions of the desirable that guide the way social actors select actions, evaluate people and events, and explain their actions and evaluations" (Schwartz 1999, p. 24). Values are therefore collective representations of what constitutes a good life or a good society. For example, respect, tolerance, freedom among others. Schwartz (1992, 2006), identified six main features of values that are implicit in the writings of many theorists including (Allport, 1961; Feather, 1995 and Rokeach, 1973). They observed that values transcend specific actions and situations, serve as standards or criteria and ordered by importance. For instance, if a person values honesty for instance, then he or she will strive to be honest. Values are important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behaviour and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations (Schwartz, 2012). Ethics on the other hand is the science of morals; it is a branch of philosophy that deals with human character and conduct and it distinguishes between good and bad (Neves, 2016).

Social responsibility of consumption relates to the people's values, goals, and activities that can reflect environmental, health, legal, cultural, and ethical fundamentals (Samavatyan (Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014; Schwartz, 2020). Increased public awareness of health and environmental issues and resource constraints (energy and materials), along with increased demand, particularly in developing countries has caused that health and environmental issues are the main concerns raised by consumers (Samavatyan (Akhoondi & Zareie, 2014). Researchers observe that the current level of consumption is unsustainable and this is one of the main contributors to environmental deterioration

(Ottman, 2011). Taking the route of sustainable development requires a shift from conventional consumption to consumption that integrates both social and environmental considerations (Polonsky, 2011). Relating this to CnSR and CSR, culture can be said to play a moderating role in the congruence between the two variables, in that interacting effect of culture could enhance, buffer or antagonize the relationship between the concepts. In the case of enhancing the relationship, an increase in cultural dimensions, the moderator, could lead to an increase in the effect of CSR on CnSR, for enhancing the relationship.

5.3. Influence of Demographics

Solomon (2016) notes that statistics that gauge observable aspect of a population are demographics. Researchers have reported significant relationships between demographics and environmental behaviours and these include age, gender, education, occupation, income levels among others (Bekhet & Al-alak, 2011; Zhao, Gao, Wu, Wang, & Zhu, 2014; Sang & Bekhet, 2015). Normally, demographics are used to segment the market, therefore marketers are interested in the trends and changes in demographics (Solomon, 2016). Samavatyan, Akhoondi and Zareie (2014) observe that demographic variables also have certainly significant role in social responsibility. Age, gender, social status has been found to affect consumer behaviour (Diehl, Mueller & Terlutter, 2013).

Even though there is a strong relationship between demographics and purchasing green products (Makower & Pike, 2008), opposite beliefs exist that demographics cannot be the only predictor of environmentally friendly behaviours (Roberts, 1996). In a study by Panzone, Hilton, Sale & Cohen (2016), it is confirmed that socio-demographic characteristics are important determinants of actual sustainable consumption. It was also found that education increases environmental concerns and directly influences sustainable consumption. Other demographic measures also were reported to have predicting role in terms of pro environmental attitude; however, their direct influence on sustainable consumption was not found by these measures (Panzone *et al.*, 2016). Hassani (2018), found that demographic factors are associated with consumers' propensity for rewarding or punishing companies; however, these associations were weak.

5.4. The effect of the relationship between CSR and CnSR on Sustainable Business Growth (SBG)

From the above review it is deduced that the relationship between CSR and CnSR could have consequences for sustainable business growth. The work

of most researchers who have studied the congruence between the two concepts, have concluded that there is a strong relationship and that managers of organizations cannot simply ignore the relationship calling for proactive actions to maximize the benefits that may accrue from the relationship (Russell & Russell, 2010; Manning, 2013; Morison and Bridwell, 2013; Caruana and Chatzedakis, 2013). Consumers through their purchase and consumption of products are the final judges of corporations' behaviour (Russell & Russell, 2010). They argue that consumer purchases often transcend product value and reflect how consumers perceive the value to the community of the company producing the product. Manning (2013) found that CSR is of limited value to the organization if there is lack of, or change, in consumer engagement. They posited that organizations need to recognize that their CSR activities must remain congruent with CnSR in order that they maintain or improve market share and customer loyalty.

Rahim, Jalaludin & Tajuddin (2011) note that in pursuing their business objectives, corporations now bear more responsibility towards society and the environment. The awareness level has increased through better education and the increased influence of the media. Corporations also now believe that, to a certain extent, the degree of their involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) does have certain effect on consumers' buying behaviour. Several studies have suggested that there is a positive relationship between a corporation's CSR activities and consumers' attitudes towards that corporation and its products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Creyer Ross, 1997; Ellen, Webb, & Mohr, 2000). Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001) examined the impact of CSR knowledge on consumers' attitudes and purchase decisions and whether or not CSR will affect consumers' decisions.

Pomering and Dolnicar (2008), reported that consumers in a poll, expected corporations to provide information about what they do, and they will support those corporations that pursue CSR initiatives. Rahim, Jalaludin & Tajuddin (2011) also found significant relationship between CSR and consumer responses. Sen and Bhattacharya (2001) reported that CSR directly affect consumers' intentions to purchase corporation's products. Chan (2001) noted that if consumers display high degree of environmental awareness and channel it to corresponding eco-friendly or green purchases, it is likely that profit-driven enterprises will be strongly motivated to adopt the concept of green marketing in their operations.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From the above it is clear that there is a positive relationship between CSR and CnSR and this can have implications for organizations (Devinney *et al.*, 2006, 2011; Morison and Bridwell, 2013; Caruana and Chatzedakis (2013); Manning, 2013; Newman, 2014). Organizations which want to score high on corporate social responsibility need to be proactive to promote consumer social responsibility with regard to sustainable consumption. It is also clear that when the consumer perceives the organization to be socially responsible, it impacts positively on the CnSR (Newman & Brucks,, 2018). Ethically minded consumers feel a responsibility towards the environment and to society. They will seek to express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behaviour (De Palsmacker *et al.*, 2004;). This has implications for organizations with the recent growth in ethical consumers. It is therefore proposed a positive relationship between CSR and CnSR.

Marketplace polls attest to the increasing influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumers' purchase behaviour. Sankar and Bhattacharya (2001) found that both company-specific factors, such as the CSR issues a company chooses to focus on and the quality of its products, and individual-specific factors, such as consumers' personal support for the CSR issues and their general beliefs about CSR, were key moderators of consumers' responses to CSR (Sankar & Bhattacharya, 2001). Their findings also highlighted the mediating role of consumers' perceptions of congruence between their own characters and that of the company in their reactions to its CSR initiatives. More specifically, the authors found that CSR initiatives can, under certain conditions, increase consumers' intentions to buy a company's products (Sankar & Bhattacharya, 2001) leading to business growth and sustainability.

Without consumers no business organization can run. The factors responsible for sustainable business growth according to Sharma and Lal (2012) include capital, raw material according to the demands of consumers, machinery of new technology, new innovative methods and trained and perfect human resources. They conclude that in modern times, prediction of consumer behaviour is much essential for prosperity of the business. Its prediction and strategy formulation is a challenge for the management of any business organization. Only those organizations which formulate and

implement consumer oriented marketing strategies, can survive in global competitive era. Sharma and Lal (2012) again notes that customers, possesses specific beliefs and attitudes towards various products and that since such beliefs and attitudes make up brand image and affect consumer buying behaviour therefore marketers are interested in them. Marketers can change the beliefs and attitudes of customers by launching special campaigns in this regard. CnSR can be used as a catalyst to promote CSR for sustainable business growth.

Influencing consumer behaviour is in fact about targeting the right people with the right message and attracting the fast growing ethical consumer in modern and recent times, there is a need to align corporate activities with consumer activities and hence the importance of the CSR, CnSR congruence and the need for organizations to be proactive to promoting CnSR. There is enough evidence to demonstrate that enlightened consumers will react positively if they perceive the organization to be socially responsible. There is also evidence that ethically minded consumers for instance, have a sense of obligation towards the environment and to society and will express their values through ethical consumption and purchasing (or boycotting) behaviour. This has both practical and theoretical implications for organizations. With the recent growth in ethical consumers, organizations will have to be proactive in aligning their activities to consumers' purchase intentions and behaviour.

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