Examining Relationship among Corporate Social Irresponsibilites, Social Media Communication and Reputation of Indian Real Estate Companies

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Abstract: Communication is one the leading tools for developing and maintaining corporate social responsibilities in any organization and corporate house. In the globalized World, social media created significant space in communication system and potentially influencing human behaviour in relation to determine responsible and irresponsible behaviour. In case of corporate social responsibility (CSR), "Companies must voluntarily conduct their businesses in an economically, socially and environmentally responsible atmosphere and manner to be sustainable over a long period of time in competitive market. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to business practices involving initiatives that benefit society other than mere financial gains" (Freeman, 1984). CSR can be viewed from two perspectives, i.e. internal and external CSR. Jayabalan, (2016) has defined internal CSR "as employee emotional attachment towards the organization" Though the concept of CSR is very popular organizations communicate their efforts of CSR activities to hide irresponsible acts from the stakeholders. Armstrong, Pioneer of the concept of CSI, defines it as an umbrella term for a number of questionable actions taken by the firm. Thus, through this research the researcher tries to analyze the impact that social media communications have in mitigating irresponsible behavior of firms with reference to India. The study was conducted with the help of a self constructed questionnaire which was examined on a sample of 350 employees. The employees from construction industry comprised the sample, which included project managers and engineers, technicians and architect. This data was analyzed using one sample t-test and gap analysis. It is a composite and comprehensive study conducted through quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Moreover, findings of the study suggested that, positive and significant impact has been shown by the social media platforms and communications in mitigating corporate social irresponsibility.

Keywords: social media, Communications, Corporate social Responsibility, Corporate Irresponsibility, Real estate Companies, Impact Assessment

1. Introduction

A number of studies have been conducted on corporate social responsibilities in relation to business ethics, social media communication and its impacts on reputation of the firms, but very few researches have been conducted on corporate social irresponsibility that is growing concern in the present system and business researches. Many companies today fail to communicate and create wealth for customers, shareholders, employees and suppliers through high-quality accountability, considered to be the highest form of social responsibility. The Indian government has made it compulsory for the companies those operate in India need to repay the society by practicing corporate social responsibility. It is well known to the Indian government officials that many trusts run by corrupt and shady businessmen are running in the name of charity and are accepting crores of rupees to clean out the black money where as others create foundations to make grants, giving bribes and scholarships to bureaucrats', bribes by another name.

There have been numerous instances of business leaders making irresponsible decisions. In the year 2013, the Savar building collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh where more than thousand workers died and nearly 2500 injured left the entire world shocked. Despite serious warnings been given, the building owner asked workers to return to the work else the workers would risk thirty days salary. The architectural set up as warned broke down during

the peak hours. This is one of most fatal garment factory accidents in history and is also one of the noxious accidental structural failure in modern history. Similarly in the year 2010, a similar case of blatant incompetence occurred in 2010 with the Deepwater Horizon oil leak, which took almost 5 months to contain and resulted in the release of about 210 million gallons of oil into the Gulf of Mexico. In the history of the petroleum industry, it is regarded as one of the biggest accidental marine oil spills. British Petroleum (BP) was deemed to be principally responsible for the oil leak in September 2014 by a U.S. District court judge due to its egregious negligence and reckless behavior. One of the largest corporate settlements in American history, BP agreed to pay fines of \$ 18.7 billion in July 2015.



Source: https://libcom.org/article/house-cards-savar-building-collapse

Similar to this, if we examine Indian history, the Bhopal tragedy, which occurred in 1984 and exposed over 500,000 people to a fatal gas leak at the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal, India, the Bhopal disaster is an example of irresponsible action. The death toll from this largest industrial disaster in history was 2,259 immediately, and 8,000 people died during a two-week period. In addition, 8,000 more people have already passed away from ailments linked to gas. Seven former employees, including the former head of Union Carbide India Limited, were found guilty of causing death by negligence in Bhopal in 2010.

From these instances of negligence one thing that is common in all these instances, i.e the building owner in Bangladesh, the leader of the chemical company in India, and the U.S business leaders from one of the largest oil companies in the world. The common aspect is the irresponsible behavior towards various stakeholders.

Businessmen guilty of corporate irresponsibility towards various stakeholders can nevertheless fulfill CSR quota and win accolades. One such prominent name is Ramanlinga Raju of Satyam computer, who hammered out important documents and puffed up profits to fool shareholders. Yet Ramalingas' Byrraju foundation was appreciated and won numerous rewards. It provided aid to rural areas, by establishing a call centre that enabled villagers to join the global drive. It introduced telemedicine in villages which helped villagers to consult urban doctors. It ran ambulance service, which was praised and replicated by many Indian states. Taking this into consideration is it possible to name Raju a model of social responsibility. In the present times there is an increased awareness due to the ease of access of social media platforms by organizations and all stakeholders. This ease has heightened the discussion of practice of CSR concept that these firms undertake. Under the several studies intersection of upcoming trends have been upcoming policies and planning related to social corporate responsibilities and irresponsibility in India. Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI) is the study of businesses that behave in an unacceptable way in terms of their moral and legal obligations as well as the attention they pay to economic, social, and environmental factors. CSI describes itself as distinct from and connected to CSR at the same time. When a business acts unethically toward the environment, the community, society, business practises, and ethics, it is said to have engaged in corporate social irresponsibility. CSI arises when things go wrong in terms of profitability, the environment, and people (customers, suppliers, or employees). The magnitude at which social media policies facilitate and necessitate demand for effective communication corelated to the contemporary issues and problems being related to CSR.

2. Review of Literature

Armstrong, 1977 defined "Corporate Social Irresponsibility is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered. Generally this involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system". Various studies depict that CSI has been a much practiced and researched topic (Aupperle etc, 1985; Werther & Chandler, 2010; Sen & Cowley, 2013;). Researchers have analyzed the relations amongst various stakeholders' and firms' CSR activities that influence the firm's profits (Peloza & Shang, 2011). Corporate Social Irresponsibility is a theme that is closely related to CSR (Corporate Social responsibility), it is a behavior that firms take part in when they act without considering other stakeholders (i.e. environment, nature, wildlife) (Pearce & Manz, 2011). But the study of Lin-Hi & Muller, 2013 stated that CSI has not gained much academic popularity as done by CSR. In the same article the author states that in a period of around 50 years i.e from 1962 to 2102 only 22 articles had CSI as a topic. Many authors have addressed the same concept of Corporate Social irresponsibility as CSiR, CSIR or even CSI. But still studies on corporate social irresponsibility are a challenge to trace without being compared to Corporate Social responsibility (Armstrong & Green, 2013). However, literature still lacks a clear and precise definition of CSI. The first attempt to define CSI was done by Armstrong (1977); "A CSI action is thought by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative when the effects upon all parties are considered. Generally, this involves a gain by one party at the expense of the total system". Academic interest in this subject began with the study of Armstrong. He referred to CSI as a set of questionable actions undertaken by the firms directors to create shareholders value at the expense of other stakeholders. It took nearly thirty years before the revival of scholarly interest in this idea. Media played a significant role during the global, economic and financial crisis. A number of business scandals were published, that revealed an unprecedented rise in the frequency of such irresponsible behaviors leading to scams. This new scenario stimulated interest in CSIR. On one hand, this is due to the significant repercussions that all incautious behaviors can have at corporate level, and on the other hand, it is due to the realization that the underlying fact behind such incautious, unthoughtful actions can be perceived a lack of ethical and moral principles among the decision makers of the companies. Therefore, when after thirty years scholarly interest grew in this topic, researchers wrote CSI with the focus on manipulation with stakeholders. Grrenwood,2007 defined CSI as, "Corporate irresponsibility occurs when the strategic management of stakeholders does not remain responsibility-neutral practice but becomes an immoral practice based on the deception and manipulation of stakeholders" Further in 2011, Pearce and Manz stated that CSI is, "unethical executive behavior that shows

disregard for the welfare of others that at its extreme is manifested when executives seek personal gain at the expense of employees, shareholders and other organization stakeholder, and even society at large". This definition incorporated the intentional harm with other stakeholders done to benefit a few people. Freeman, 1984, in stakeholder theory sustained that CSI is based on the idea of damaging environment due to harmful operations or behavior of the directors of the firm. Thus, further definitions of CSI were developed from the perspective of the stakeholder affected. (Strike, Gao & Bansal, 2006). Clark & Grantham,2012 stated that CSI actions are unlawful and unjustified as they misuse negative externalities. They are those corporate actions that are not accepted by the society as they are usually unethical and unsustainable. Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013 stated that irresponsible actions can be reprimanded by society members even if the actions are legally justified. Sweetin, Knowles, Summey and McQueen, 2012 pointed out that it need not necessarily be the case that violation of law takes place when irresponsible behavior is undertaken by firm. Therefore, a firm may act legally but at the same time their actions may be irresponsible.

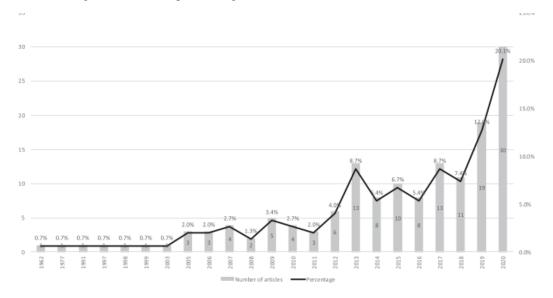
Murphy & Schlegelmilch, 2013, stated that environmental harm, such as pollution, deceiving buyers with gaudy goods, and showing disregard for human rights by mistreating suppliers and employees are few examples that comprise CSI. There has always been criticism of socially irresponsible actions of corporations. The question of whether a corporation should have complete responsibility or if responsibility should increase in proportion to the corporate power, is being argued. According to a few researchers, CSR and CSI can occur simultaneously in organisations. CSR initiatives undertaken by a firm do not ensure absence of CSI. For instance, when a corporation is accused of taking environmentally irresponsible acts, it undertakes more CSR activities to improve its environmental performance. Although there are evidences that CSR with respect to environmental is positively correlated with irresponsible actions related to CSI, there are also evidences that a firm that practices CSR is more likely to irresponsibly (Ormiston & Wong, 2013).

Business should try to steer clear of CSI. CSI, which is the contrary of CSR and concentrates on organizations that act irresponsibly by failing to give back to the community or conduct their operations ethically. Corporate social irresponsibility events in Corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) events like human rights abuses (child labor), corruption (price fixing), and environmental scandals (oil leaks) are becoming more and more prominent in society, and media coverage plays a critical role in determining the negative effects of such events. Recent study, by Fischer and S Stabler, show that unethical corporate behavior only affects financial stock markets negatively if it is extensively reported in the media. A study in five countries for a period of 6 years from 2014-2018, investigated 1054 companies. It found that impact on brand is more if four more media outlets report about the CSI event. The authors further pointed out" that abnormal returns existence is the result of unanticipated CSI event that are primarily directed by variables used to select news and for media coverage. They observed that enormous advertising has positive implications on the image of the companies, as the excessive advertising considerably reduces the possibility of negative reporting about the company social media plays a vital role in this process". (Fischer, 2020) Thus, Corciolani M. tried to verify whether, firms change their CSR communication, after they are seen to be involved in an irresponsible event. The author is of opinion that, "despite organizations having similar CSR content, their styles of writing are not necessarily similar. In fact, these differences in grammatical choices may be an indicator of how firms relate to their social and environmental policies". (Corciolani Matteo, 2020). Moreover, there are several other studies are also been conducted related to corporate social responsibilities, irresponsibility and both having impacts of social media communications, platforms and modern innovation in social media resonances. When using various social media applications, one should comply with all relevant laws and specified policies, and take reasonable steps to protect basic human rights, personal connections, privacy concerns, personal choices and handling of details, etc. considerations and opportunities ought to be considered. Sumitomo Rubber Group, Social Media Policy (Financial Times Global 500, 2013).

Think tank surveys highlighted various issues related to corporate social responsibilities in relation to social media usage and impacts (Pew Internet Research Project 2014) to academic research associations (e.g., Steinfield et al. 2013), corporate initiatives (Proskauer 2012, 2014) to media reports (Bonvanie 2012), the increasing uses of social media applications, opportunities, and communicational issues and challenges of social media while using in corporate contexts have been well discussed and documented. Social media applications such as

"internet-based applications focus on ideological and technological driven determinants and foundations of Web 2.0" (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010, p. 271). Finally taken and discussed together, the five central communicational rights associated with contemporary uses of social media for CSR such as freedom of speech to all; sharing information collectively and mutually; respecting all kind of differences; engagement of employees and stakeholder dialogue; and transparency and purity in basis and foundational principles, practices, sources, and examples of social media applications and corporate social responsibilities.

FIGURE 2 Number and percentage of articles per year (1962–2020)Source: Iborra, M., & Riera, M. (2022). Corporate social irresponsibility: What we know and what we need to know. Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1002/ csr.2428



3. Analysis and Results

The proposed objective "To study the impact of social media in mitigating the corporate irresponsibility" and the designed alternative hypothesis " H_01 There is no significant impact of social media in mitigating the corporate irresponsibility", was tested with the help of one sample t-test. Furthermore, the results of Gap analysis are computed in table 1

Group	N	Hyp othe	Mean	S.D	n Diffe renc	t-ratio	p-value
0	250	25	10.22	05.04	05.67	000 71	0.000**
Overall Impact	350	25	19.33	05.04	05.67	082.71	0.000**
Impact of							
Item (Social media is an							
important part of corporate social							
responsibilities in real estate							
companies)	350	5	03.51	1.221	01.49	48.26	0.000**
Impact of							
Item(Social media activities							
foster corporate social							
responsibilities)	350	5	04.11	0.581	0.89	38.51	0.000**
Impact of							
Item(Corporate irresponsibility's	350	5	03.87	1.412	01.13	51.40	0.000**

Table 1. Results of One sample t-test and Gap analysis

https://jrtdd.com

due to ineffective use of Social Media)							
Impact of							
Item (Social Media helps in							
mitigating corporate social							
irresponsibility's)	350	5	04.22	0.664	0.78	39.91	0.000**
Impact of							
Item (Social media has							
significant impact on social							
corporate responsibilities and							
irresponsibility's)	350	5	03.45	1.322	01.55	50.01	0.000**



The table 1 above clearly validates that there exists a significant mean difference between the sample and population mean as that p value is 0.000, which is less that 0.05 and 0.01. Since all the group have p value as 0.000 towards the impact of each individual item of social media on social corporate responsibilities and corporate social irresponsibility's within the study area, our proposed objective is attained. Also, it's corresponding hypothesis **"Ho1** There is no significant impact of social media in mitigating the corporate irresponsibility" is **rejected**.

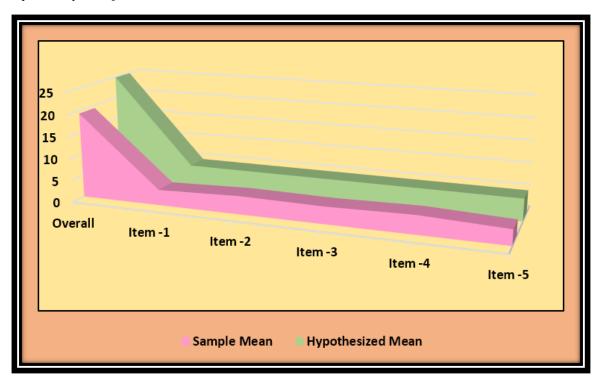


Figure 1 Area graphs depicting impact of social media communications in mitigating irresponsible behavior of firms

From figure 1, it is clearly depicted that overall, each item of social communication platform has extremely significant impact in mitigating the firm's irresponsibility among real estate companies. It is depicted as the employees mean scores fall under high to very high level of awareness category toward overall and each item.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

- 1. Findings suggest that social media play a significant role in mitigating the corporate Irresponsibility in the real estate companies as employees have high level of agreement and perception towards them. As the mean score (19.33) of employees (N=350) perception and awareness is less than hypothesized mean or test value (25) and there is significant mean difference of (05.67) between them.
- 2. Since there is significant mean difference of (05.67) thus, it is concluded that social media plays an important role in mitigating irresponsibility in real estate firms because social media is quite modern and informative these days and help in resolving and mitigating corporate Irresponsibility.
- 3. Findings suggested that in the real estate company's employees have high level of agreement that social media helps in mitigating firms' irresponsible behavior. Thus, it is recommended to real estate companies that they must effectively make use of social communication platforms as it aids in mitigating corporate irresponsibility.
- 4. Having a balance between corporate social responsibilities and irresponsibility is very crucial and important in view of establishing the productive and ethical relationship between wrong and right.
- 5. Due to technological advancement, people are getting friendlier towards innovation, modern applications and technologies, in the same time, it has become more important to understand and maintain the corporate social responsibilities and having sense of humanism and ethical moral groundings.

5. USEFULNESS AND NOVELTY

While it is proved in the above analysis that Corporate Social Irresponsibility (CSI) harms the reputation of the firm and social media is the right forum to address, to minimize the negative implications caused due to such CSI, the above findings and recommendations need to be calibrated through the lens of various of relevant past literature. DeMacarty (2009) wrote in the research article, harping on the few concepts and examples of Criminal Fraud, Price-fixing, Bid rigging, Bribery, Tax-evasion etc., wherein it was stated that the returns on CSR and CSI are equal on average. Further, there are hard hitting findings by Fox (1996) who even said in the article titled "The law says corporations are persons, but psychology knows better", spoke on the various examples of unnecessary worker injuries, environmental degradation, resource waste, contribution to economic inequality etc., expressed a grave concern that in order to prevent CSI, the capitalist ideology and corporate forms have to be abolished. Few more instance, Frooman (1997) on the title of "Socially irresponsible and illegal behavior and Shareholder wealth: A meta-analysis of event studies", spoke on the examples of CSI events such as false advertising, environmental pollution, hazardous products, product recalls, safety violations, price-fixing that socially irresponsible and illegal corporate activities significantly decrease shareholder wealth.

So, all the above instances of past literatures vehemently subscribe to the novelty and usefulness of this current research done. In fact, the findings of this research read with findings of the aforesaid literatures further confirms the fact that more such research are required as CSI seems invincible. There would be minor moderation of course, because of upgradation and evolving of better regulations and governance but CSI would also further become strong and professionals would find their novel ways to beat the regulations.

6. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is already stated under the heading of usefulness and novelty that the research on the topic of CSI, is required more and would continue on the various topics such as Corporate Tax avoidance, Criminal fraud, Price-fixing, Bid-rigging, Briery, Tax evasion, Auto theft, Reckless risk taking, Opportunistic behavior, ruthless pursuit of shareholder value etc. A socially irresponsible act is called a kind of decision which accepts an alternative that is considered by the decision maker to be inferior to another alternative. It involves a gain by one person at the expense of the system. Thus, there should be support by government to do such advanced and proactive research to identify the root cause and develop the system and infrastructure to arrest the future gaps, so as to at least minimize the negative implications of such future crimes, if can not fully remove such evils.

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