CSR2.0 - A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

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Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility, Creating Shared Value, CSR, CSR2.0, Strategic CSR.

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How to cite: Camilleri, M.A. (2017). CSR2.0: A Conceptual Framework for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility. Department of Corporate Communication, University of Malta Working Paper: 201704

Abstract

This paper deliberates on the business case for CSR. It contends that corporations could implement responsible behaviours as they pursue their profit-making activities. A thorough literature review suggests that there is a link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) or corporate social performance (CSP) and financial performance. In addition, there are relevant theoretical underpinnings and empirical studies that have often used other concepts, including corporate citizenship, stakeholder management and business ethics. In this light, this contribution reports on how CSR is continuously evolving to reflect contemporary societal realities. Therefore, it raises awareness of key latest constructs representing strategic CSR, creating shared value and corporate sustainability and responsibility (CSR2.0) perspectives. This conceptual paper posits that responsible business practices (corporate responsibility) could be re-aligned with improvements in corporate sustainability (in terms of economic performance, operational efficiency, higher quality, innovation and competitiveness).

Introduction

This research builds on the previous theoretical underpinnings of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) agenda, including corporate social performance[1,2,3], stakeholder management[4,5,6], corporate citizenship[7,8,9,10], strategic CSR[11,12,13,14] and creating shared value[15,16,17,18,19,20,21]. Moreover, it presents one of the latest corporate sustainability and responsibility (CSR2.0) perspectives[22,23,24,25,26]. The contemporary subject of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has continuously been challenged by those who want corporations to move beyond transparency, ethical behaviour and stakeholder engagement. Today, responsible behaviours are increasingly being embedded into new sustainable business models that are designed to meet environmental, societal and governance deficits. Therefore, this contribution contends that strategic approaches to CSR could differentiate firms from their competitors. CSR2.0 is increasingly being recognised as a concept that offers ways of thinking and behaving as it has potential to deliver significant benefits to both business and society.

This paper posits that there is a business case for CSR, as corporations could engage in socially-responsible and environmentally-sound behaviours as they pursue their profit-making activities. Arguably, firms could leverage themselves through CSR2.0 practices, as there are challenging opportunities that could result in economic benefits. For instance, CSR2.0 outcomes may include improved operational efficiencies and cost saving that may arise from sustainable environmental investments that are aimed at adding value to the firm itself. Notwithstanding, CSR2.0 practices could translate to improved relationships with internal and external stakeholders; as it is in the businesses' interest to forge closer ties with the regulatory authorities and with their neighbouring communities.

In this light, the underlying objective of this research is to present a critical review of CSR concepts that may have emerged from different disciplines in academic literature. At the same time, it provides a logical link between constructs. Therefore, this contribution elaborates on the conceptualisation that is advancing the business case for CSR.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility

The discussion about CSR grew in popularity and took shape during the 60s. Many authors have indicated that the CSR notion was a fertile ground for theory development and empirical analysis[13]. However, the businesses' way of thinking has changed dramatically since Levitt in 1958 (and Friedman in 1962) held that the companies' only responsibility was to maximise their owners' and shareholders' wealth; rather than looking after societal (and environmental protection) issues. At the time, these corporations had considerable bargaining power; and their power called for responsibility[27.] Arguably, these businesses had responsibilities towards society beyond their economic and legal duties. In the 60s and 70s, the most important social movements included civil rights, women's rights, consumers' rights as well as the environmental movements. The period was characterised as an issue era, where companies began noticing specific societal problems arising from social, environmental and community issues. There was a focus on philanthropy and a noticeable manifestation in charitable donations. The gifts in kind have expanded to the groups representing the health and social services, culture, arts, and the community at large. In a book entitled, 'Corporate Social Responsibilities', Walton (1967) addressed many facets of CSR in society. He came up with several models for social responsibility as he underlined that CSR involved a degree of voluntarism, as opposed to coercion. Moreover, back then, the corporations were incurring discretionary costs for their CSR engagement[28].

Without doubt, the clarification of CSR's meaning is a significant strand within the research agenda. The CSR notion has developed as a rather vague concept of moral good or normative behaviour[29]. This construct was described as a relativistic measure of 'the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary expectations that society had of organisations at a given point of time'[30]. CSR tackled 'social problem(s)' to engender positive 'economic benefit(s)' to ensure 'well paid jobs, and ... wealth'[31]. This was consistent with academia's relentless call toward the business case for CSR. Evidently, the CSR approach has established a new way of doing business that combined the success and the creation of value[32,33.] with a respectful and proactive attitude towards different stakeholders[4]. Table 1 reports a list of concepts that have emerged from the CSR paradigm:

Table 1. A non-exhaustive list of concepts relating to corporate social responsibility

Corporate Social Performance
Waddock and Graves, 1997; Orlitzky, Schmidt and Rynes, 2003; De Bakker, Groenewegen and Den Hond (2005); Wang and Choi (2013); Jones, Willness and Madey (2014).

Corporate Sustainability
Dyllick and Hockerts (2002); Van Marrewijk and Werre (2003); Salzmann, Ionescu-Somers and Steger, (2005); Steger Ionescu-Somers and Salzmann (2007); Montiel (2008); Visser (2011); Benn, Dunphy and Griffiths (2014).

Creating Shared Value
Porter and Kramer (2006); Porter and Kramer (2011); EU (2011); Camilleri (2014); Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matten (2014).

Stakeholder Engagement
Freeman (1984); Hillman and Keim (2001); Sen, Bhattacharya and Korschun (2006); Morsing and Mette (2006) Bhattacharya, Korschun, and Sen (2009); Camilleri (2015).

Stakeholder Theory / Stakeholder Management
Donaldson and Preston (1995); Colbert, Wheeler and Freeman (2003). Hillman and Keim (2001).

Strategic CSR
Burke and Logsdon (1996); Lantos (2001); McWilliams, Siegel and Wright (2006); Porter and Kramer (2006); Jamali (2007); Husted and Allen (2009); Camilleri (2014)

(Compiled by the author)

The notion of corporate social performance (CSP) theory had evolved from previous theoretical approaches. CSP reconciled the importance of both corporate social responsibility and corporate social responsiveness[30]. It also placed an emphasis on achieving better performance out of the socially-responsible initiatives. Many researchers have used the corporate social performance construct to establish a definitive causal relationship between the firms that were doing good (CSP) and those doing well (Corporate Financial Performance, i.e. CFP)[1,34,35]. There were several unresolved theoretical debates about whether there was a clear link between CSP and financial performance. Despite certain controversies regarding the validity of some empirical findings; most studies have reported a positive relationship between the two[1,36]. The working assumption of CSP research was that corporate social and financial performance were universally related. Yet, it may prove hard for businesses and academia to demonstrate how CSR could lead to tangible improvements in the firms' bottom lines. It may appear that there was no explicit statement that describes how socially responsible practices could possibly translate into specific results that affect the profit and loss account[37]. At times, the empirical research did not yield the desired results as the findings were mixed[38] or possessed inconsistent evidence[39]. Some authors have argued that the CSP-CSF link was pointless; as they were unable to find a positive relationship between the responsible business and the firms' performance. Alternatively, another pertinent research question was to determine whether corporate profitability could be a sufficient motive for the avoidance of irresponsible behaviours[39].

The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR can be much more than a cost, a constraint, or a charitable deed. It is 'a source of opportunity, innovation and competitive advantage'[33]. However, its successful implementation could be influenced by a variety of factors including the firm's size, diversification, research and development and market conditions[38]. Very often academic research tried to follow and capture trends in the broader societal debate on the businesses' social responsibilities. For instance, CSR's domains often include; commercial responsibility, ethical responsibility and social responsibility[40]. One of the businesses' commercial responsibilities is their continuous development of high quality products or services. They are also expected to be fair and truthful in their marketing communications, whist they promote their offerings to customers[40]. Secondly, the ethical responsibility is concerned with the corporations fulfilling their obligations towards their shareholders, suppliers, distributors and other agents with whom they make their dealings. The corporations' ethical responsibility includes safeguarding the human rights and the norms that are (not necessarily) defined in the law when carrying out business activities. The ethical principles in business relationships could have more priority over achieving superior economic performance for some responsible corporations[40]. Hence, the other social responsibility domain focuses on philanthropic behaviours. In this case, businesses could allocate part of their budget to the natural environment, or toward social issues that favour the most vulnerable in society. This form of social responsibility supports the development of financing stewardship principles including corporate donations to charitable institutions, religious, sports, cultural and heritage activities. This latter perspective is concerned with improving societal well-being.

Other scholars examined innovation and the level of differentiation in the industry as moderators in the relationship between corporate social performance and financial performance[41]. A study reported that corporate social performance strongly affected financial performance in low-innovation firms and in industries with little differentiation[41]. Ideally, social performance ought to be consistent over time and across stakeholder domains[1,42]. For example, job seekers are attracted by CSP and organisational ethics that mirror their own values[43,44]. There is an opportunity that socially-responsible businesses could differentiate themselves from other companies. They may leverage their firm's image relative to other organisations. This suggests that one of the CSP outcomes is to communicate the corporations' commitment to socially-responsible and sustainability values that stakeholders share.

CSR can help to build reputational benefits; it enhances the firms' image among external stakeholders and could lead to a favourable climate of trust and cooperation within the company[45]. Hence, expenditures on CSR activities are typically intended as long-term investments that are likely to yield financial returns[45]. Corporations "give back" to their constituencies because they believe it to be in their best financial interests to do so. Many authors held that CSR is a driver for innovation and economic growth. They believed that it will help the company to achieve a competitive advantage[11,12,47] by deriving positive benefits for both the societal stakeholders and the firm itself. Therefore, companies should devote their attention to CSR strategies which add value to the business and disregard others activities which do not reap value[48]. In this context, the corporate philanthropy should be deeply rooted in the firm's competences and linked to its business environment[15]. Thus, strategic CSR behaviours may lead to the creation of value for both business and society[11,12,13,16]. Strategic CSR could increase the financial performance of businesses; it minimises their costs through better operational efficiencies, boosts the employee morale, creates job satisfaction and reduces the staff turnover, along with other benefits[45].

CSR can bring a competitive advantage if there are appropriate relationships with multiple stakeholders. Therefore, it is in the interest of business to engage in ongoing communications and dialogue with employees, customers, marketplace and societal groups[48,49,50,51]. They may also need to recognise the potential of building fruitful networks with key marketplace stakeholders, including suppliers, regulatory authorities and the community at large. These stakeholder relationships are needed to bring external knowledge sources, which may in turn enhance organisational skills and performance. Acquiring new knowledge must be accompanied by mechanisms for dissemination. Arguably, there is scope in sharing best practices, even with rival firms. It is necessary for the responsible businesses to realise that they need to work in tandem with other organisations to move the CSR agenda forward.

In the past, the stakeholder theory has demonstrated how businesses could develop long-term mutual relationships, with a wide array of stakeholders. The businesses' closer interactions with stakeholders could be based on relational and process-oriented views[52]. Thus, many firms are already forging strategic alliances in their value chain to run their businesses profitably. Many multinational corporations including Nestlé, Google, IBM, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, Unilever, and Wal-Mart have embraced the 'shared value' approach[16,20,21,48]. In many cases they are building partnership and collaborative agreements with external stakeholders (including suppliers) hailing from different markets. The most successful businesses are increasingly promoting the right conditions of employment within their supply chains. They are instrumental in improving the lives of their suppliers[20]. They do this as they would like to enhance the quality and attributes of their products, which are ultimately delivered to customers and consumers.

It may be argued that CSR has progressed from its apparent shallow considerations of 'window dressing' as it can be considered as strategic in its intent and purposes. Businesses can implement socially responsible behaviours as they pursue their profit-making activities. They have economic responsibilities toward their owners and shareholders[53,54]. Many businesses do not always pay their fair share of taxes to government. Alternatively, they may be accused of not providing the right conditions of employment, or they may even pay lousy wages to their employees[55, 56].

Some commentators on the subject of CSR often suggested that the factors that should contribute towards creating value in business and society are often qualitative in nature; and that there are variables that may prove very difficult to measure and quantify, such as; employee morale, corporate image, reputation, public relations, goodwill, and popular opinion[8,9,45,48]. Therefore, any discretionary expenditure on altruistic or strategic CSR activities may be regarded as long-term investments that are likely to yield financial returns[12,13]. Hence, corporate philanthropy, stewardship and cause related marketing could be re-aligned with the businesses' profit motives[48]. This perspective resonates very well with the agency theory[57]. In the past, scholars argued that the companies' only responsibility was to maximise their owners' and shareholders' wealth[58,59]. Yet, CSR has developed as the recognition of all stakeholders, rather than just shareholders being the legitimate concern for the businesses[4,32].

Many theoretical underpinnings suggest that CSR had potential to derive positive benefits for both the societal stakeholders and to the firm itself. Corporations "give back" to their constituencies because they thought that it is in their best financial interests to do so[12]. Hence, companies were often encouraged to undertake CSR strategies which add value to their business and to disregard other activities which were fruitless. Moreover, the fulfilment of philanthropic responsibilities could simultaneously benefit the bottom line[60]. Although, it could be difficult to quantify the returns of responsible behaviours, relevant research has shown that those companies that practiced social and environmental responsibility did well by doing good, in the long run[13,14]. However, other research has shown that it was also possible to over-spend on CSR activities[48,61].

The corporate social responsibility, environmental and ethical behaviours could be triggered by genuine altruism and self-preservation[62,63]. Some of the contributions on this topic suggest that corporate philanthropy should be deeply rooted in the firms' competences and linked to its business environment[15,52]. Many authors often referred to CSR's core domains (economic, legal and ethical responsibilities) that were compatible and consistent with the relentless call for the business case of CSR[23,29,30,39]. The ethical responsibilities demand that businesses ought to abide by moral rules that define appropriate behaviours within a particular society. Another category of corporate responsibility is related to discretionary, voluntary or philanthropic issues. Corporate philanthropy is a direct contribution by a corporation to a charity or cause, most often in the form of cash grants, donations and/or in-kind services[64]. This category of social responsibility is totally dictated at the "discretion" of the organisation as there are no laws or codified expectations that guide the corporations' activities[65]. Discretionary responsibilities include those business activities that are not mandated by law, and they are not expected from businesses in an ethical sense[30]. Practically, some examples where organisations meet their discretionary responsibilities, include; when they provide day-care centres for working mothers, by committing themselves to philanthropic donations, or by creating pleasant work place aesthetics[30].

Evidently, the CSR approach had established a new way of doing business that has led to the creation of value[16,32] with a respectful and proactive attitude towards stakeholders[4,61]. The stakeholder theory provides opportunities to align business practices with societal expectations and sustainable environmental needs. The stakeholder relationships support the principle of inclusivity, as the business practitioners ought to strike a balance between the conflicting demands of different stakeholders. Inevitably, businesses need to reconcile disparate stakeholders' wants and needs (e.g. employees, customers, investors, government, suppliers et cetera).

The CSR's responsibilities include the obligations toward customers. The businesses maintain economic growth, and meet the consumption requirements in the market. This economic component of CSR represents the fundamental responsibility of businesses. Many firms produce goods and services and sell them at fair prices to customers (including other businesses). This will in turn allow them to make a legitimate profit and to pursue growth and competitiveness. The legal responsibilities of businesses imply that these entities must fulfil their economic mission within the extant framework of rules and regulatory parameters. This legal component recognises the firms' obligations to obey the relevant laws in the countries where they are trading. Of course, it could prove hard to define and interpret the ethical responsibilities of businesses. This component is often referred to as a "grey area", as it involves activities that are not necessarily mandated by law but may still entail certain organisational behaviours that are expected by society[30].

The economic, legal and ethical responsibilities of corporations are compatible with the business case for CSR[66]; as firms create value to society in the long term with a respectful and proactive attitude towards different stakeholders[29]. Many commentators argued that the CSR agenda had potential to bring a new wave of social benefits as well as gains for the businesses themselves[9,16], rather than merely acting on well-intentioned impulses or by reacting to outside pressures[63]. Thus, proper incentives may encourage managers 'to do well by doing good'[14]. If it is a company's goal to survive and prosper, it can do nothing better than to take a long-term view and understand that if it treats society well, society will return the favour[14]. Companies could direct their discretionary investments to areas (and cost centres) that are relevant to them[67,68]. The reconciliation of shareholder and other stakeholders addresses the perpetual relationship between business and society, at large.

The legitimate businesses' response to the demands of stakeholders allow them to meet and even exceed legal, ethical, and public societal expectations[30]. Therefore, CSR offers prospects for greater credibility and value added as it involves linking altruistic interventions with long-term strategic goals[67].Therefore, corporate philanthropic activities, including stewardship programmes could also create social value to the business practitioners themselves[45,48,66]. Certain CSR variables, including; voluntarism, centrality and visibility could possibly relate to value creation[69]. One would expect that greater voluntarism would lead to greater creation of value, particularly when CSR initiatives arise as the result of industry, tax, or regulatory constraints[11,69]. In a similar vein, the environmental regulation can also stimulate the innovation and competitiveness among firms[72]. When firms develop resources and capabilities through CSR they may be able to leverage the benefits for their core business[69]. Hence, the re-alignment of CSR objectives and operations with the firm's business products, services, and operations may be at the core of corporate strategy (and the firm's responsible behaviours). Notwithstanding, 'visibility' is significantly related to value creation. This is consistent with the expectation that much of CSR is developed in order to improve the firm's image and reputation across media, possibly allowing it to differentiate its products in the market[70].

The incorporation of multiple elements of competitive advantage increases the likelihood that a CSR initiative will succeed and create value for the firm[11]. Clearly, there is an opportunity for firms to differentiate themselves and to move ahead to seek competitive advantage. There could be an optimal level of spending on CSR and environmental responsibility, as businesses are expected to continuously balance conflicting stakeholder interests for long term sustainability[71,72, 73].

Environmental Sustainability and Corporate Sustainability

The term "sustainable development" has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from "Our Common Future", also known as the Brundtland Report; that was published way back in 1988. A central contribution of this report was the intermittent link between human development and actions toward environmental responsibility for the benefit of future generations[73]. Thirty years ago, the sustainable development agenda called for more data and debate; today, it is for more policy and concrete action. Today, the governments as well as businesses are changing their stance on sustainability as they are becoming more proactive rather than reactive on social and environmental issues. We are increasingly witnessing a growing consensus on principles and regulatory guidelines. The initial flurry of codes and guidelines seem to have settled around a few core standards, such as the Global Reporting Initiative's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines, the UN Global Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals, the World Resources Institute's Greenhouse Gas Protocol and the UN Principles for Responsible Investment. This change toward sustainable and responsible business is a long-term process, but the momentum is important to reach the necessary tipping points in public opinion, policy response and business action. As a matter of fact, most of the largest corporations are continuously re-articulating their codes of conduct, certifiable standards, corporate programmes, industry initiatives, green politicians, triple-bottom-line reports and documentaries about sustainability[74]. Nevertheless, many of the global challenges are still present today — be they climate change, water depletion, biodiversity loss, bribery and corruption or income inequality, among others.

The term "sustainability" can mean different things to a variety of constituencies. While there may be no objection to the sentiments expressed by multiple stakeholders on the respective definitions for sustainable business, most of them are far from holistic. The sustainability systems may be too complex and varied, and their applications could be quite diverse. Some authors have attempted to relate sustainability with the corporations' responsible behaviours: Interestingly, the corporate sustainability construct was also related to a nested system consisting of economic, societal, and ecological systems[24]. These pillars are interconnected to each other where the economy is part of society, which is also a fundamental part of the larger ecological system. Corporate sustainability relies on six criteria eco-efficiency, socio-efficiency, eco-effectiveness, socio-effectiveness, sufficiency and ecological equity[75]. These corporate sustainability imperatives can be structured into value systems that could result in a better financial performance[23,76]. A few researchers have developed (self)-assessment tools, that could be used to audit, analyse and interpret corporate sustainability[76,77]. However, corporate sustainability may be contingent on different parameters (e.g. technology, regime and visibility) that could vary across industries, plants and countries[23]. Corporate sustainability could reduce the downside operational risk as it comprises relevant measures that are intended to increase eco-efficiency, and health and safety performance among other issues[15,16,45,48]. This means that the economic value of sustainable business strategies could be materialised in the long term[78,79]. Notwithstanding, there are the long term effects of corporate sustainability on intangible assets (e.g. brand value, employee loyalty) could be difficult to quantify[23,75].

Although some commentators have voiced their opposition to the normative calls in favour of the "sustainability rhetoric"[23,80], it may appear that we are witnessing a relentless progression from active antagonism, through indifference, to a strong commitment to actively furthering sustainability values; not only within the organisation; but across many industries and in our society as a whole[56]. These recent developments imply that the organisations' commitment to responsible behaviours may represent a transformation of the corporation into a truly sustainable business that is adding value to the business itself, whilst also adding value to society and the environment. Perhaps, there is scope for more collaboration between CSR and corporate sustainability fields. This synergy could help to increase the impact of social and environmental performance research within the field of strategic management. Ultimately, the corporate sustainability's strategic goals are economic development, institutional effectiveness, stakeholder orientation and sustainable ecosystems[75,81].

Creating Shared Value: Seeking Win-Win Outcomes

There are other relevant examples of how efficient processes were aimed at adding value to the firm and to society at large. The creating shared value (CSV) proposition focuses on identifying and expanding the connections between societal and economic progress[17,21,33,48]. This emerging concept suggests that businesses should continuously monitor and evaluate their performance in terms of their economic results. Therefore, the shared value approach is inherently different than CSR. Whilst the traditional school of thought for CSR's had primarily focused on responsibility; CSV is about creating value to both business and society. In 2011, Porter and Kramer anticipated that CSV shall supersede CSR as it improves the bottom line, unlike CSR.

Porter and Kramer perceived CSR as a cost centre, and considered CSV as a profit centre[17]. Hence, they contended that the shared value approach has set out new business opportunities as it creates new markets, it improves profitability and strengthens the corporations' competitive positioning[17]. The reason for this is that the businesses processes in the value chain operate in an environmental setting within their wider community context. Porter and Kramer maintained that the companies could create shared value opportunities by reconceiving products and markets. They argued that this approach redefines productivity in the value chain by enabling local cluster development. They reiterated that the three avenues for creating shared value are mutually reinforcing. For instance, the enhancement of the clusters could enable more local procurement and less dispersed supply chains. Hence, new products and services that meet social needs or serve overlooked markets will require new value chain choices in areas such as production, marketing, and distribution. These revised configurations will create demand for equipment and technology that could save energy, conserve resources, and support employees. Porter and Kramer argued that some companies have begun to track various social and environmental impacts, as they have tied CSR metrics with the corporations' economic interests. They went on to say that shared value creation will necessitate new and heightened forms of collaboration (and stakeholder management).

It may appear that Porter and Kramer had focused on the value chain activities that could bring opportunities for competitive advantage[17]. They contended that there is shared value when the organisations' social value propositions are integrated into their corporate strategies. They explained that companies could benefit from insights, skills, and resources that cut across profit/non-profit and private/public boundaries. The companies will be less successful if they attempt to tackle societal problems on their own. Porter and Kramer posited that the corporations, their marketplace stakeholders and the governments ought to work in tandem and develop clusters. Major competitors may also need to work together on precompetitive framework conditions, something that may not have been common in reputation-driven CSR initiatives[17]. For example, Nestlé has accessed new products; reconfigured and secured the value chain by tapping into new or better resources (through partners and cluster development) whilst improving the capabilities (in terms of skills, knowledge and productivity) of its suppliers.

Nestlé sources its materials from thousands of farms in developing countries; where it provides training to farmers for sustainable production. This way, the company protects its procurement, raises its standards and maintains a high quality of the raw materials it uses. At the same time, these suppliers run profitable farms; as they offer their children a fairer future through better education. Moreover, both Nestlé and its suppliers are committed to protecting their natural environmental resources for their long-term sustainability. Nestlé's business principles have incorporated ten United Nations Global Compact Principles on human rights, labour, the environment and corruption. The company maintains that it complies with international regulatory laws and acceptable codes of conduct, as it improves its company's operations. Firms don't just need to prepare financial reports. In a lot of countries, they're legally required to report social and environmental information. And they have to build up accounting systems to do so. Very often the companies' responsible management involves designing business processes and activities in a way that they meet certain social and environmental minimum standards.

Some critics have argued that 'shared value' is based on a shallow conception of the corporation's role in society[20]. They suggested that this proposition (which may be relevant for big corporations) ignores the tensions that are inherent within responsible business activities. Of course, this strategic approach cannot cure all of society's ills as not all businesses are good for society, nor would the pursuit of shared value eliminate all injustice[21].

The Way Forward: CSR2.0 - Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility

The contemporary subject of CSR has continuously been challenged by those who want the corporations to move beyond transparency, ethical behaviours and stakeholder engagement. This paper has built on the previous theoretical underpinnings of the corporate social responsibility agenda, including Stakeholder Management, Corporate Citizenship and Creating Shared Value as it presented the latest Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (CSR2.0) perspective. This CSR2.0 notion is increasingly being recognised as a concept that offers ways of thinking and behaving as it holds potential to deliver significant benefits to both business and society. Recently, some international conferences, including Humboldt University's gatherings in 2014 and 2016 have raised awareness on the Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility proposition. This concept is linked to improvements in economic performance, operational efficiency, higher quality, innovation and competitiveness (Corporate Sustainability). At the same time, it raises awareness on the businesses' responsible behaviours (Corporate Responsibility). This conceptual paper has contributed to academic knowledge as it explained the foundations for corporate sustainability and responsibility.

In the past, CSR may have been more associated with corporate citizenship, corporate philanthropy, contributions-in-kind toward social and environmental causes, environmental protection, employees in community works, volunteerism and pro-bono service among other stewardship initiatives. Very often, altruistic CSR activities did not necessarily translate to financial performance to the business per se. On the contrary, certain discretionary expenses in corporate philanthropy could have usurped the businesses' slack resources (including financial assets, labour and time) without adding much value (in terms of corporate reputation and goodwill) to the businesses. Nevertheless, this research reported that the contemporary discourses on corporate social responsibility are opening new opportunities for the businesses themselves. The latest conceptual theorisation and empirical enquiries on CSR suggest that many authors have investigated the business case for CSR by using different methodologies and samplings. Relevant literature reported that numerous academic papers sought to explore the perennial relationship between corporate social responsibility (including corporate social performance or corporate citizenship) and financial performance that have yielded mixed findings. Apparently, the academic discourse about CSR is moving away from 'nice-to-do' to 'doing-well-by-doing-good' mantra. Evidently, this value-based approach could be considered as a guiding principle that will lead tomorrow's business to long term sustainability (in social and economic terms). Debatably, the profit motive (the business case or corporate sustainability concepts) could be linked with the corporate responsibility agenda. This way, the multinational corporations could be better prepared to address their societal and environmental deficits across the globe, whilst adding value to their business. The concept of creating business value is not new to academia. In the past, there were many academic contributions on the so-called value-based models and frameworks[32,38,45,48,54,69,71,79]. Very often, the corporate social responsibility and sustainable development notions were reconciled with a stakeholder approach to reap intangible reputational value for the brand[32,70].

In a nutshell, this contribution has clarified how contemporary strategies and public policies on corporate sustainable and responsible behaviours have helped businesses to create value for themselves and for society. CSR2.0 focuses on exploiting opportunities that reconcile differing stakeholder demands as many corporations out there that are investing in corporate sustainability and responsible business practices. It suggested that their active engagement with multiple stakeholders (both internal and external stakeholders) will ultimately create synergistic value for all[48]. This theoretical paper commended that successful businesses are increasingly improving their supplier and distributor relationships in order to improve their operational efficiencies and productivities in their value chain activities. This approach is consonant with Porter and Kramer's very own share value proposition. It may appear that several corporations are looking beyond their short-term profits. This contribution reported that many businesses are already supporting their marketplace stakeholders including suppliers that may be hailing from developing countries. From the outset, it may appear that these companies have redefined their value chain as they enable local cluster developments and forge collaborative agreements with governments to mitigate risks, boost productivity and competitiveness. However, there are some hard components to successful engagement of corporate sustainability and responsibility. In fact, many legitimate businesses are helping those suppliers from the poorer rural regions of the world. Curiously, multinational organisations are under increased pressures from stakeholders (particularly customers and consumer associations) to revisit their numerous processes in their value chain activities. Each stage of the company's production process, from the supply chain to the transformation of resources could add value to businesses' operational costs as they produce end-products. However, the businesses are also expected to be responsible toward to their employees and toward their suppliers' labour force. Therefore, corporate sustainability and responsibility demands that businesses create economic and societal value by re-aligning their corporate objectives with stakeholder management and environmental responsibility. In sum, corporate sustainability and responsibility happens when a company adds a social (and environmentally) responsible dimension to its value proposition. This occurs when businesses make laudable social and environmental impacts that are integral to their overall corporate strategy. At the same time, they improve the well-being of internal and external stakeholders, reduce or eliminate negative externalities on the environment, and create value (in terms of corporate reputation and image) to the business.

The rationale behind corporate sustainability and responsibility lies in creating value and finding win-win outcomes for both business and society. Corporate sustainability and responsibility is about embedding sustainability and responsibility by seeking out and connecting with the stakeholders' varied interests. As firms reap profits and grow, there is a possibility that they generate virtuous circles of positive multiplier effects[45,48]. Therefore, CSR2.0 can be considered as strategic in its intents and purposes. Indeed, the businesses are capable of being socially and environmentally responsible 'citizens' as they pursue their profit-making activities.

Limitations and Future Research Avenues

The value-driven notion of CSR2.0 offers new ways of thinking and behaving as today's 'CSR' has transformed and adapted itself to reflect today's realities. CSR2.0 could appeal to the business practitioners themselves; as sustainable and responsible behaviours, could bring significant improvements to the firms' bottom lines. Of course, there are diverse contexts across different industry sectors (and jurisdictions) that will surely influence the successful implementation of corporate sustainability and responsibility policies and practices. Notwithstanding, it may prove difficult to quantify the tangible and intangible benefits of CSR2.0. Future theoretical and empirical research may address these challenging issues. Further studies could clarify how stakeholder engagement, social innovation, environmental sustainability and regulatory intervention could lead to corporate sustainability and responsibility. Indeed, there is potential for more conceptual development in this promising area of strategic management.

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