

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Consumer Perceptions of Corporate Firms in Manzini Based on their Corporate Social
Responsibility Initiatives

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Declaration

I, Ncamsile Dlamini, declare that this research work is my own; original work except where otherwise indicated. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Graduate School of Business & Leadership. It has not been previously submitted for any qualification in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Over recent times, more and more profit making entities have chosen to adopt and apply Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles as part of their active business models. The reasons for this move have varied from business to business. Despite the fact that the business world has striven to package CSR activities as proactive acts of nobility, some observers have perceived it in less enthused terms. Consequently, the general sentiment toward CSR policies amongst scholars, observers and corporates has varied significantly. While some quarters have tended to demonize and label CSR as a threat to profit maximization, others have professed its supposed contribution towards financial performance. CSR as a study area is wide, complex and especially multifaceted. For this reason, the focus of this research paper will centre on the influence of organizational CSR on consumer perceptions, (i.e. consumer perception of socially responsible organizations). An assessment of literature on CSR topics such as corporate reputation, CSR benefits, consumer perceptions and CSR influence on buying decisions was conducted. This literature has helped contextualize the research objectives and has also paved way for data analysis. The research was based on questionnaire data collected directly from consumers. The study revealed a link between socially responsible companies and consumers' inclination to consciously choose products produced by those companies.

This study found that while consumers still tend to favourably regard the products of socially responsible companies, this preferentiality is subject to expectations of acceptable quality standards. The key recommendation is for companies to: provide the best quality products and services, create awareness and get feedback from consumers on the effectiveness of their CSR initiatives.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

Taghian, D'Souza and Polonsky (2015) argue that CSR activities impact on corporate image and reputation when they are communicated to stakeholders. In the light of this, this research was planned and conducted so that companies which practice CSR in Manzini – Swaziland, would gain feedback on whether or not their CSR initiatives impact on image. Focusing on Manzini consumers, this study sought to investigate the connection between CSR activity and corporate image with the intention to discover the degree to which this specific link translates – or fails to translate, to actual sales and client loyalty.

This chapter presents an overview of the study consisting of the following elements: the problem statement, the significance of the study, the objectives of the research, a brief research methodology overview, a literature review and the limitations of the study.

1.2 Problem Statement

Swaziland based companies are taking the need to invest in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives seriously so as to improve the standard of living in the country ([Shtraus, 2014](#)). The expectation is that while giving back to society (through CSR), companies should be in a position to simultaneously realize the return on investment and maximize profits. Whilst well planned CSR initiatives have a positive impact on the image and output of business, poorly executed initiatives on the other hand can ruin a company's reputation in society. This is especially true because in the minds of consumers, the company's policies, including – amongst other things, CSR initiatives - define the company and its products.

This research considers how Manzini consumers perceive the CSR initiatives in general. The main mission is to assess how this perception impacts on consumers' views of CSR conscious firms in terms of reputation, sales and client loyalty.

1.3 Significance of the Research

The study of consumer perception in regard to CSR may help companies understand social responsibility from the consumer's point of view. Similarly, the study may also help firms to make sound CSR choices that will ultimately result in observable enhancement of their reputation and image. Through reflection on the findings of the study, companies will be able to make improvements to their CSR plans and improve consumer perceptions of firms in the process. Companies may learn to use CSR to build good reputations by implementing initiatives that are of value to consumers and society. Ultimately, companies will be able to adopt successful CSR policies, enhance the image of business and boost the bottom line.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective was to study consumer perception on CSR actions by companies in Manzini. The study researched the following specific objectives – all based on consumer opinions:

Objective 1:

- To determine the impact of CSR on the reputation of an organization (based on consumer feedback).

Objective 2:

- To explore consumer perceptions on CSR initiatives.

Objective 3:

- To explore the kind of CSR initiatives that the consumer prefer.

Objective 4:

- To determine the impact of CSR on the consumer's decision to associate with a product/ firm/brand.

1.5 Research Questions

- RQ1. Does CSR have an influence on an organization's reputation?
- RQ2. What dynamics influence consumer's perceptions regarding CSR initiatives?
- RQ3. How do consumers perceive certain CSR initiatives?
- RQ4. Do consumers consider a company's involvement in CSR before they make a purchase?

1.6 Research Methodology Overview

The study adopted a mixed research methodology - a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A questionnaire consisting of 20 questions was used as a tool to collect data. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that it addressed the objectives of the study. This design was based on appropriate literature. The questionnaire consisted of 18 closed questions and two open ended questions.

At the initial stage of the research, only 50 questionnaires were distributed. A further 120 were disseminated at a later point. A convenience sampling method was used. A response rate of 44% was obtained. Quantitative data was analyzed using Excel data analysis while qualitative questions were thematically analyzed.

1.7 Literature Review

For the literature review, information was sourced from academic journals, textbooks, media publications and internet sources. The scope of covered literature tallies with the objectives of the study. Each objective has been addressed by drawing attention to the problem statement. The theory of corporate identity and reputation was utilized in a similar way as used by Abdullah and Aziz (2013) in the

Malaysian study of the effects of CSR on corporate reputation, culture and legitimacy. The theory indicates that corporate identity is transmitted to various stakeholders who then formulate images that in turn form the basis of a company's reputation. It proposes that CSR as a strategic action has a direct impact on reputation.

This theoretical framework would provide a background on CSR which will help to explain some of the actions and reactions of consumers where CSR is concerned.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

A pilot study which was done through the random sampling method revealed that some respondents needed clarity when asked to complete the questionnaire. As a result the purposive sampling method was later adopted.

The questions in the questionnaire were mostly quantitative, limiting the participants from expressing their views freely yet the topic is on perceptions and the objective was to explore consumer perceptions. This was however mitigated to a small extent by the two open ended questions.

Another limitation was the poor response rate which was 44% affected by time constraints. The poor response rate rendered the results unreliable as they were not representative of the population of consumers in Manzini.

1.9 Chapter Outline

Chapter One introduces the topic and gives an overview of the research study. The problem statement and objectives of the study are clearly defined in this chapter. An overview of the research methodology, literature review and limitations of the study have also been included in chapter one.

Chapter Two touches on relevant literature obtained from published books, journals, periodicals and newspapers.

Chapter Three covers the research methodology used in the study. It includes data collection fieldwork.

Chapter Four is a presentation and analysis of the findings that is in line with the objectives of the study.

Chapter Five is mainly a discussion of the findings with reference to the objectives of the study. This chapter also includes a conclusion and recommendations.

1.10 Summary

Business consciously seeks to receive value for its investment - understandably so, since management is answerable to shareholders. CSR investment is undertaken by a number of businesses operating in Manzini. This CSR drive is mainly intended to help achieve a positive public image from which to grow and cement business. There is evidence that the consumer's views with regard to this kind of activity does indeed matter. This is especially so because good CSR helps build loyal client support. This observation has therefore justified the need for this study. The goal is to capture consumer perceptions on CSR in order to recommend the best approaches companies need to adopt for optimal CSR practices.

This chapter has introduced the problem statement and has touched on the objectives of the study. Problems that could not be mitigated have been highlighted as limitations of the study. The next chapter explores various literature on the subject.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature that is relevant to the objectives of the research and to the title. The concept of CSR is a popular one amongst businesses and their stakeholders. As a result, there exists a vast amount of literature that covers various topics on the subject. Worth noting – and relevant to this study, is the emphasis on how CSR impacts on the success of business that is in alignment with its practice. With reference to available literature, the focus of this research was aimed at four tasks: defining CSR, giving examples, demonstrating how CSR links with corporate reputation and finally getting to examine the overall CSR impact on consumer decisions.

As already mentioned in chapter one, consumers want to know about the company behind the product they buy. Whatever public image the company portrays will ultimately speak to its reputation. This chapter has been essentially informed by this observation hence the concept of corporate reputation and its impact on consumer perception will be explored.

The chapter also explores literature on the following aspects of CSR initiatives: the benefits of CSR in general, CSR from the stakeholder point of view and lastly consumer perception on CSR (whether or not it influences buying decisions).

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility Defined

For purposes of proper perspective, it is imperative to extensively define CSR. According to Hinson and Ndhlovu (2011), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as those responsibilities that organisations pursue in a manner that serves the interests of both businesses and the community. The end goal is to harmonize business goals with societal needs.

As stated by Anadol, Youssef and Thiruvattal (2015), CSR involves incorporating ethical values and taking care of people, communities and the natural environment while

operating a business. This is similar to the definition provided by The World Business Council for Sustainable Development which states that “CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large” (Anadol *et al.*, 2015). Vlachos (2012) simply defined it as those activities that a business performs over and above what they are officially required to perform. A more specific definition by Taghian, D’Souza and Polonsky (2015) is that Corporate Social Responsibility refers to those actions voluntarily taken by a firm and communicated to its stakeholders with the intention to benefit social and environmental causes.

Research conducted in the area of CSR has looked at many different aspects. Amongst these is the economic view of maximizing profits to shareholders. Others include CSR in relation to business performance (Taghian *et.al.*, 2015) and CSR in relation to culture (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013).

A broader definition of CSR according to Valmohammadi (2014) is how companies relate with their stakeholders in terms of the quality of products and services they provide and as well as the kinds of charitable activities they associate with.

The range of CSR activities is of various categories: programs on youth empowerment and development, food aid to communities, health services and educational projects, water projects and other efforts focused in providing support to communities such as providing education assistance (Hinson and Ndhlovu, 2011).

The European Commission (2001) as quoted by Odriozola, Martín and Luna, (2015) categorized CSR into two dimensions; the internal and the external. They further described the internal as that which relates to responsible management of human resources, i.e. issues of health and safety of employees and management of natural resources from operations. The external aspect on the other hand relates to practices relevant to such stakeholders as customers, suppliers, consumers, public authorities, NGOs, community and the environment.

CSR is internal to a corporation, it spells out the way in which a corporation has to plan the courses of action it needs to carry out with regards to the civil society (Nalband and Al-Amri, 2013).

In their study, Hinson and Ndhlovu (2011) highlight the three ways that portray CSR trends as cited by Sahlin-Anderson (2006):

- As a governing framework that places new demands on corporations
- As a deployment of corporate players to assist development
- As an executive trend.

It has been widely agreed among many institutions that CSR seeks to align stakeholder interests with business objectives (Hinson and Ndhlovu, 2011). It is worth noting that the growing dilemma whether - in light of escalating environmental challenges, social responsibility should come voluntarily or should be mandatory.

According to Hinson and Ndhlovu (2011), the responsibility to take care of the environment falls squarely on the government and should be enforceable through government policy. This would ensure that private companies are left to focus on their main role which is to maximize profits for the benefit of shareholders.

2.2.1 Preferred CSR Initiatives

Liu, Wong, Rongwei and Tseng (2014) suggested that companies should invest in CSR programs that display business ethics commitment, increase customers' interest and contribute to sustainable development of communities.

According to Valmohammadi (2014), the following CSR activities can boost a firm's overall performance. These are: community involvement and development, fair operating practices, labor practices and human rights.

Another study by Minnee, Shanka, Taylor and Handley (2013) identified six important attributes of CSR namely: "safe products/services", appropriate "treatment of employees", provision of "reliable products/services", "environmental protection", "ethically responsible" and committed to "social responsibility".

A study by Arli and Tjiptono (2014) found that following the regulatory system is critical for companies operating in Indonesia because of the high expectations of legal and philanthropic responsibility from business. According to Dragos (2014), companies' CSR initiatives can take two routes. These include mitigating negative effects of operations and doing charity work for society.

- Environment

Businesses of all sizes have a significant carbon footprint. The effort of companies towards the reduction of the carbon footprint is considered a good thing to do for the environment and for society as a whole. Taking good care of the environment is expected of companies whose activities leave a high carbon footprint. According to Shtraus, (2014), all companies, big or small - have a responsibility for their surroundings.

- Philanthropy

In light of the growing interest in sustainability in the business world ,some companies are taking the initiative to invest in such social responsibility initiatives as charities and philanthropy (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013). According to Blagov and Petrova-Savchenko (2012) purposes of philanthropic activities in law are defined as the support of individuals and social activities in areas of education, culture and psychic development.

In a study conducted by Blagov and Petrova-Savchenko (2012) in Russia, forms of corporate philanthropy were collapsed into: corporate donations in money; corporate donations in kind (natural form); rendering services; employees' donations; and corporate sponsorship. A study conducted by Minnee *et al.*, (2013) in Oman concluded that corporations in Oman work together with the government to express their concerns for matters relating to the economy and the environment by engaging in philanthropy. Even though they are occasionally involved in socio economic initiatives their main focus is on corporate sustainability in the areas in which they operate.

Turner and Gates were identified as philanthropists who have set up establishments that support the notion that personal gains should be contributed towards betterment of

societies. It was further highlighted how the practice of philanthropy in Oman is regarded during Ramadan where businesses make donations towards the less privileged children (Minnee *et al.*, 2013). According to Nalband and Al-Amri (2013) it is easier for businesses to be philanthropic because it involves donations unlike stewardship which emphasizes extension to consumers, employees, the public and government over and above the shareholders.

In essence the practice of philanthropy involves businesses donating either in the form of money or any other resources to charities and local communities. Companies proactively engage in CSR activities so as to impact on the social climate and to partake in bringing solutions for plights of the region as opposed to responding to specific requests. As such, philanthropy plays a vital role in the sustainable development of the company (Blagov and Petrova-Savchenko, 2012).

Reasons for philanthropic activities were highlighted by Blagov and Petrova-Savchenko (2012) and they all boil down to creating a positive reputation for the company as it earns a status of partnering in solving problems affecting the local community. They are as follows:

- Firstly philanthropic activities can be a procession from internal and external stakeholders in relation to the business.
- Secondly they can be a response to a specific appeal.
- Thirdly, philanthropy comes about on the basis of morality when a need to behave in a socially responsible manner is acknowledged and brings forth competitiveness.

An online survey by Hinson and Ndhlovu (2011) on diverse backgrounds in South Africa found that there is a positive impact on CSR support by customers arising from expectations of ethical-philanthropic CSR. Respondents suggested that the competitive advantage achieved through ethical-philanthropic responsibilities comes as a result of desired customer response and reward. This, in essence, is in agreement with what CSR intends to do; meeting the expectations and needs of stakeholders and society.

- Ethical Labour Practices

Corporate Social Responsibility is also demonstrated by a company that treats its employees ethically and with high regard. This is especially true of businesses that operate in international locations with unique labor laws.

A company's responsibility to its employees was further discussed by Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011). This study argues that banks should be transparent with their employees and should treat them with respect. This responsibility is interpreted as doing what is right, just and ethical. The promotion of positive employee attitude carries huge benefits for business in terms of output and turnover.

Shareef, Arunachalam, Sodique and Davey (2014) observed that economic responsibilities should be the base on which all other aspects of CSR are established. As part of CSR, Shareef *et al.*, (2014) further highlighted legal and ethical conduct such as fighting corruption, good corporate governance and adoption of professional code of ethics.

Aksaka, Fergusonb and Duman (2016) cited Snider, Hill and Martin (2003) who corroborate the observation that companies have an obligation that goes beyond stakeholder expectation. Business has the moral obligation to behave as ethical as possible to the society in which they operate.

2.2.2 CSR Initiatives in Manzini

Manzini is situated at the hub of Swaziland, a country with a population of less than 1.1 million people. As cited in Kabir and Akinnusi (2012), Thompson (2009) described Swaziland as a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa and Mozambique.

According to Kabir and Akinnusi (2012), the increase of industries in Swaziland has seen CSR become even more important. As occasionally reported in the local media, the most common initiatives that companies in Manzini engage in are youth education, environmental protection, sports sponsorships and small enterprise development.

Kabir and Akinnusi (2012) cited Pappasolomou-Doukakis *et al.*, (2005) have observed that “irrespective of the type of business, there are groups of people who affect or are affected by the organization itself and can therefore be seen as imposing some kind of responsibility on the organization.” As a result, Swazi companies are conscious of the fact that they are expected to act responsibly towards employees, customers and the society.

2.3 Benefits of CSR

Gauging the societal value of corporate initiatives would involve taking into account both the expenses and profits accruing to the business as well as the opportunities and threats accruing to the larger community (Maltz *et al.*, 2011). Ethically, it would be improper if CSR activities would incur more costs without making any additional profits (Taghian *et al.*, 2015).

The fact that companies are vigorously and increasingly investing and reporting on their CSR endeavors is confirmation that it has a positive impact on firms (Malik, 2015). CSR may be used as a means of creating competitive differentiation as demanded by the highly competitive market environment businesses have been subjected. This is in harmony with Manning's (2013) view that over and above being the driving force behind efficient use of assets, CSR creates a competitive advantage in the market through corporate and product differentiation.

Liu, Wong, Shi, Chu and Brock (2016) had a different view that there is no guarantee that a brand perceived to be socially responsible will have a competitive advantage. They further argued that no amount of CSR can possibly override negative factors such as a product perceived to be of low quality by customers. Nalband and Al-Amri (2013) suggested that there should be an effective CSR evaluation system in place.

Liu *et al.*, (2016) confirmed that when CSR programs are properly performed they become a reflection of a strong commitment to business ethics. The advantage of successful CSR is that it improves stakeholder interest and leads to the development and sustainability of communities.

As cited by Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013), Jones *et al.*, (2005) mentioned that in addition to forging a closer relationship with customers and being conscious of their needs, CSR aims to :

- Enhance brand value and reputations
- Increase staff commitment and involvement
- Enhance a firm's capacity to innovate
- Secured long term return on investment
- Improved financial performance
- Reduced operating costs
- Reaching long term sustainability of the company

Chomvilailuk and Butcher (2013) emphasized these same benefits as they further mentioned that some advocates contended that an organisation that is socially responsible is at an advantage because it attains improved business performance, a product that moves from the shelves, firm loyalty and favourable word of mouth.

Malik (2015) echoed the words of Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) as he suggested that CSR enhances a firms performance through increased employee productivity, expanding the product market, improving capital market benefit and ensuring strong relationships with society, regulators and stakeholders. Other non-economic benefits of CSR are corporate visibility, trust and building strong relationships (Aksaka *et al.*, 2016). Conversely according to Rémi and Julien (2014) CSR can be very costly where it entails true commitment, however increased consumer demand plays a vital compensation role.

According to Manning (2013) organisations should match their CSR activities with consumer social responsibility so as to enhance their market share and customer loyalty as CSR is of less value if consumer participation is overlooked.

Bigné, Currás-Pérez and Aldás-Manzano (2012) stated that companies that fail to incorporate CSR into their strategy will be exposed to daily activities that would harm

their credibility should they become public knowledge and render any investment in CSR communication to build image ineffective.

In agreement with this, Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) expressed it like this “While companies have an obligation to promote social welfare and to behave as good corporate citizens, it is important that they spend the resources allocated to CSR initiatives in ways that yield optimum benefits to society as well as to the stakeholders of the company.” This is in line with an assertion made by (Malik, 2015) that firms which perform better with regard to CSR have greater potential to increase shareholder value and the value of other stakeholders.

Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) mentioned that other studies have stated that when CSR initiatives positively impact on consumers attitudes towards a company it translates into a company’s competitive advantage.

Romani and Grappi (2014) described CSR activities as those that play an important role in bringing prosocial change in society. He further gives an illustration of a campaign that was done by Coop, a retail company in Italy which focused on convincing customers to switch to using tap water to substitute bottled water which had a negative environmental impact of polluting the environment with the plastic bottles, by so doing the company hoped to achieve a status of being seen as a green company with a special interest in the environment.

Being a good corporate citizen is one vehicle through which a company could attract consumer loyalty such that they happily become brand ambassadors who stand up to defend the company against negative stories (Valmohammadi, 2014).

Companies which practice CSR enhance their image as they build trust a virtue which is so lacking in companies operating in the corruption and nepotism infected Indonesia (Arli and Tjiptono, 2014).

They can also communicate through their involvement in CSR that their products meet the required standards imposed by the laws and regulations of the country intended to reduce negative economic and social consequences (Arlı and Tjiptono, 2014).

CSR related to human resources has its own benefits. Usman and Amran (2015) cited Branco and Rodrigues, (2006) who mentioned that CSR related to HR is beneficial to a company in that it fosters commitment, motivation and loyalty of employees and subsequent development of employee-related internal resources and capabilities. Usman and Amran (2015) also cited by Skudiene and Auruskeviciene, (2012) stating that employees who are motivated and loyal help the company to achieve its goals and objectives as employee turnover and absenteeism is minimized.

Another CSR view suggested that companies should be only involved in CSR simply because it is the right thing to do without expecting to achieve financial gains from their socially responsible actions (Quazi and Richardson, 2012).

On further exploration of CSR benefits, Tonello (2011), argued “competitive advantage”. This line of reasoning emanates from the thinking that through CSR practice, companies stand to benefit from setting themselves apart from competition. The rationale is that clients have a higher propensity to choose business, brands or products that are provided by socially responsible companies over similar products that are produced by none giving companies. This thinking “competitive advantage” notion is in line with the argument of “image” as corroborated by Arlı and Tjiptono (2014) -amongst others.

2.4 Impact of CSR on Corporate Reputation

CSR is not only a promotional opportunity, however no matter what the reasons could initially be, investing in CSR does improve corporate reputation of an organisation (Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2015). Sánchez, Sotorrió and Díez (2015) also concurred with this assertion and went on to point out that communication of CSR activities is used by firms strategically to build up such intangible assets as reputation.

Reputation as defined by Abdullah and Aziz (2013) is an intangible asset that contributes to the long term sustainability of a company. As Warren Buffet would put it

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it”, reputation is a valuable asset that must be protected and developed.

On a different note Sánchez *et al.*, (2015) raised concerns that due to the prevailing financial crisis the future of CSR and how it impacts on Corporate Reputation is uncertain. They cited Giannarakis and Sariannidis (2012), “the insecure business environment prompts companies to move away from CSR as the cost of initiatives is unaffordable” and further highlighted that this might negatively impact on an organization’s reputation as a consequence of ruined stakeholders’ trust and goodwill.

However findings of the study conducted by Sánchez *et al.*, (2015) indicated that CSR is the very tool that helps companies build their corporate reputation in turbulent environments. Bigné *et al.*, (2012) were in harmony with Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) in defining reputation as a term that relates to the perceptions held about the subject matter, it aggregates overall perceptions of all stakeholders and it links to certain standards. They went on to mention that a trustworthy brand translates into a favourable social responsibility in the eyes of the society. Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) stated that amongst the many positive outcomes of CSR activities is the fact that they can be used by a firm as a valid communication tool used to express quality whilst buyers use it to assess the firm.

It is critical for companies operating locally to protect and promote their reputations in the local environments in which they operate. Companies by demonstrating that they are committed to incorporate promoting social development into their business goals, they improve their attractiveness and image. Results from a study conducted by Pérez and Bosque (2015) suggested that banking institutions should invest in CSR initiatives directed towards customers so as to create an image that produces customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Since CSR and corporate reputation are positively related, stakeholder perceptions of a company are fundamental aspect of corporate reputation, when stakeholders are aware of a company’s CSR activities they are instrumental in ensuring its corporate reputation buildup (Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2015). However, Taghian *et al.*, (2015) argued that the

relationship between social actions for reputation is not the same across all stakeholder groups.

The relationship of CSR degree and change in market share is more distinct. The Corporate reputation as an outcome of CSR activities produces good feelings for employees and the public who may thus pledge their support (Taghian *et al.*, 2015).

As mentioned by Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) a negative correlation exists between corporate reputation and being involved in corrupt business that is to say, being involved in controversial business deals has such a negative effect on corporate reputation that those efforts invested in building a good reputation through positive social performance could be rendered futile in the blink of an eye. This in essence is the impact that CSR has on the perceptions of key stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers and the community at large. According to Abdullah and Aziz (2013) a competitive advantage is attained by a company that acquired great reputation.

Advantages of good reputation as highlighted by Anon (2014), are as follows:

1. Organisations with good reputations are mostly liked by employees, all things equal.
2. Suppliers dealing with reputational companies are less worried about contractual risk
3. It is cheaper to contract an organisation that has a good reputation
4. Organisations that have good reputation enjoy the privilege to charge higher prices since they have loyal customers who view them as providing high value for money.

According to Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) companies engage in CSR for different reasons which all culminate to building corporate reputation. Some of the reasons are:

- Altruistic intentions
- To boost employee motivation
- Retention and recruitment

- Customer inspired motivations

It is imperative for companies to manage CSR programs as this impacts on the fundamental intangible assets such as reputation, identity and image (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013).

Taghian *et al.*, (2015) cited Carroll and Shabana, (2010) in stating that “targeting of consumers’ perceptions through improvements of firm’s corporate reputation might suggest that CSR is a strategic philanthropy tool and is more about corporate profits than social responsibility”. CSR activities that result in poor reputation are those that benefit the company and are viewed with skepticism by stakeholders who are more concerned about the motive behind CSR (Aksaka *et al.*, 2016).

A more negative corporate reputation is created when a company that has a damaged reputation engages in CSR activities (Aksaka *et al.*, 2016). Results of a study conducted by Abdullah and Aziz (2013) indicated that to sustain corporate reputation an organization is required to honor moral obligation demonstrated by treating employees fairly, supporting them and getting them directly involved in charity activities and building relationships with customers and employees.

Abdullah and Aziz (2013) asserted that CSR is a strategic tool through which a company builds its corporate identity as opposed to the public relations agenda in which there is the delusion that giving back to community is a once off event.

2.5 Stakeholder Perspectives

Stakeholders high expectations from corporations to contribute towards meeting social and community issues affecting them has influenced them to become more and more socially responsible (Shareef *et al.*, 2014). As a result businesses restructure their CSR activities such that they are aligned to what stakeholders believe to be the true meaning and significance of CSR.

As quoted by Taghian *et al.*, (2015), Freeman's stakeholder theory proclaims that managers should contemplate the expectations of their key stakeholders, and further defines a stakeholder to be someone who stands to gain when the organization achieves its objectives. Thus managers should have their stakeholders' interest in mind when crafting strategy and CSR actions so as to meet their expectations.

Crisóstomo, Freire and Vasconcellos (2011) mentioned that when firms are concerned with the stakeholders' values they are able to achieve positive productivity, financial outcome and value creation.

In contrast some theorists argued that social responsibility is a waste of a company's resources and it negatively affects the firm economically (Crisóstomo *et al.*, 2011). Friedman, an opponent of the stakeholder theory, argued that recognising a company's stakeholders does not guarantee that CSR will increase firm value; in fact it is not able to do so. This is very much in conflict with the stakeholder theory according to Valmohammadi (2014) which insists shareholders are only one category amongst many others to whom a company should be accountable.

Retail banks in their own capacity strengthen their reputations with stakeholders by spending more in CSR programs (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013) with the understanding that consumers use their power to reward what they perceive to be good companies and punish the bad ones as corporate responsibility is important to them in making purchase decisions.

Stakeholders assess a company's reputation based on its past actions and what is expected of the company in future Odriozola *et al.*, (2015), they share this view with Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) who defined corporate reputation as "a perceptual representation of a company's past actions and future prospects that describes the overall appeal to all its key constituents when compared with other leading rivals."

A study by Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) were of the conclusion that different social actions play different roles in building reputation depending on their strengths. Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) asserted that each stakeholder has different expectations. This would help organisations to be able to make more accurate decisions as to what CSR activities to invest in to achieve a good reputation with the target stakeholder

group. A theory underpinning this belief suggest that reputation buildup involves a process where signals on strategic choices by a firm are communicated to stakeholders out of which stakeholders form impressions (Sanchez, *et al.*, 2015) (Chatzoudes, Papadopoulos and Dimitriadis 2015).

Companies are connected to multiple stakeholders since they are part of extended networks. Stakeholders differ from one another in the demands they make, their beliefs and how they influence course of actions hence companies responsiveness should be well aligned (Biggemann, Williams and Kro 2014).

In a paper examining CSR practices in the Maldives Shareef *et al.*, (2014) noted that most business lack general understanding of CSR as they do not perceive economic activities to be under the broad scope of CSR. It appears that the stakeholders do not believe there is integration between CSR and economic responsibilities of a corporation.

It is imperative for a company to first understand the needs of its stakeholders so that it makes relevant decisions that would not taint its corporate reputation (Moura-Leite and Padgett, 2014).

2.5.1 Public Stakeholders

Public stakeholders comprise of local residents and the community in general.

2.5.1.1 Local Residents:

According to Taghian *et al.*, (2015) local residents are the people to which corporate activities have a direct impact on them because they live in the surroundings of an organization. Such things as emissions for manufacturing companies directly affect them, negatively though. On the positive local residents are given preference in employment and such benefits as improved infrastructure and vital services are enjoyed by the local residents better than any other stakeholder group. When local residents raise their dissatisfaction directly through the media they are able to influence the larger community as well.

2.5.1.2 Community in General:

Taghian *et al.*, (2015) stated that it is the entire population, consumers and special interest groups that make up the community. It is through an organisation's

communications that community groups' perceptions are created .When community groups assume the role of being consumers they can negatively affect corporate reputation and its financial performance when they perceive corporate actions to be inappropriate and unethical.

2.6 Consumers' Perceptions on CSR

“Consumers' responses to 'good' acts done for the right reasons might be assumed to be positive, but those reactions are not as predictable as they might at first seem ”(Anon, 2013).

A study conducted by Srinaruewan, Binney and Higgins (2015) found that Thai consumers only recognize and are loyal to a CSR brand if its competitors are not involved in the same level of CSR. No matter how much stronger corporates may become, their strength does not necessarily have to go beyond that of the consumers.

As key stakeholders, consumers need to be in control and afforded the platform to raise their concerns by keeping them informed of the social responsibility of the company, this would also ensure a sustainable future for the company (Anadol *et al.*, 2015).

According to Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) a customer's perception of CSR has a reflection in the valuation of services of the company as there exists a direct and positive correlation between CSR activities and attitudinal loyalty. Mature consumers value CSR attributes and believe that profit maximization can still be achieved in parallel with social investment.

Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) were of the view that although many studies have confirmed a positive impact of CSR on consumer perceptions of companies and brands exist, on the contrary for many individuals it is not considered as the main determinant of their purchase behavior.

Customers become aware of CSR efforts by companies through communication therefore trust is built and customers become likelier to consider those products for a

purchase as they evaluate them highly (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). The extent of consumers' control is evident in the results of a study conducted by Anadol *et al.*, (2015) which indicated that consumers in Dubai are active in raising their thoughts to the government about companies' products or services.

In their study Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) established that consumers are willing to pay extra for CSR products that are both of high quality and manufactured by a company that has a concern for the environment. Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) asserted that even though a favourable attitude of customers is produced by banks involvement in CSR activities, it does not warranty that they should spend on CSR activities and then simply expect the repeat patronage intentions to happen. Banks should consistently offer high quality services to their customers as their primary focus. A study carried out in China by Kolk, Dolen and Ma (2015) indicated that Chinese consumers have higher expectations for CSR from local firms compared to foreign firms.

Chinese consumer place more emphasis on economic stability, predictability and legal compliance because of their high uncertainty avoidance orientation. As a result their focus is mainly on required CSR as opposed to expected CSR aspect. (Kolk *et al.*, 2015). According to Anon (2013), a firm's good deeds done with good intentions does not always earn positive responses from consumers as one would expect.

Customers are looking to gain value from the exchange before they can pledge their support for CSR firms. This is because some customers are of the belief that socially responsible goods are associated with poor quality products, however some consumers do associate CSR with good quality product "(Anon, 2013).

According to Green and Peloza (2011) in times of economic meltdown consumers give lower priority to CSR initiatives that have to appeal to their emotional or social value to gain their responses. Although most consumers naturally link CSR to providing products of better quality other consumers believe lower quality products are actually socially responsible goods (Green and Peloza, 2011).

More CSR actions need to be directed towards improving stakeholders interest since CSR to stakeholders has a stronger contribution where it concerns increasing the level of loyalty intention. That is, while enjoying their profits, business should not forget to plough a portion of the profits back to the society and the stakeholders to make the society a better place. This also ensures long term success for businesses operating in China (Liu *et al.*, 2014). Findings of a study conducted by Liu *et al.*, (2014) indicated that casinos that engage in CSR are able to alleviate negative corporate images and improve their brand liking.

Customer perceptions of a firm's CSR endeavors influences their evaluations and behavioral intents notwithstanding that such efforts may be a means for propaganda much like a marketing campaign they still do have a bearing on customers (Liu *et al.*, 2014). Though consumers are subjected to many stimuli produced by sellers to which they respond. Consumer social responsibility refers to their reaction to such social causes as care for the environment, societal welfare and ethical responsibility on either side of the transaction (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013).

Usman and Amran (2015) quoted Joshi and Gao (2009) asserting that consumers respond well to products and services of a company that conducts CSR in a way that appeals to their values, if not, the company's corporate image, products and services would be jeopardized as it would receive negative response from these consumers. Customers' attitudes are strongly influenced by how positively they respond to CSR initiatives. Thus providing customer oriented initiative could be a working strategy for banking managers to win customers and therefore achieve an improved financial performance (McDonald and Lai, 2011) because customers place their own needs above those of other stakeholders.

Research has shown that customers react positively towards strategies that benefit them as compared to those which benefit the community, in the likes of philanthropic initiatives or those that favour the environment (McDonald and Lai, 2011).

2.7 Impact of CSR on Consumer Buying Decision

Consumers respond positively to CSR initiatives in more ways than one, which include satisfaction, product appraisals, purchase intents, social benefits, perceived corporate benefits and brand equity (Chomvilailuk and Butcher, 2013).

How CSR influences consumption is summarized by Anon (2013) as “when CSR is delivered through product features the consumer is repeatedly reminded of the functional CSR benefit, creating a higher level of involvement and awareness of the impacts of consumption” and further stated that “through the effect of positive cueing, this can lead to greater emphasis on environmental attributes in other consumption experiences for that same consumer.”

Purchasing behavior of customers is a reflection of a company’s involvement in CSR. Companies that seize the reputation advantage of good CSR may increase their customer base and ultimately their sales and profitability (Aksaka *et al.*, 2016).

For many companies CSR has developed to become a public relations strategy by which they define themselves to win consumers since a company’s involvement in CSR has an influence in consumers purchasing decisions (Aksaka *et al.*, 2016).

In agreement McDonald and Lai (2011) cited Wagner *et al.*, (2009) as they mentioned that consumers are increasingly making their buying decisions based on a firm’s participation in social responsibility.

According to Rodrigues and Borges (2015), although at first consumers do not appear to be persuaded about CSR practices, a conclusion has been made that they prefer socially responsible brands. This conclusion is similar to that drawn by Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) that consumers do not mind paying extra for products manufactured by a company that cares for the environment. Actually a company that does well in the CSR attribute may not need to compete on price, they added. In contradiction Green and Pelozo (2011) established that customers view such CSR activities as philanthropy as being expendable in times of economic uncertainty as they make their choices based on the price and quality attributes. However firms are

expected to still meet the minimum brinks in spite of the economic condition as failure to do so can have negative results.

According to Green and Peloza (2011) consumers respond well to initiatives that incorporate functional benefit for them such as recycling, as such are more of the traditional form of CSR. Rodrigues and Borges (2015) argued that consumers' buying decisions are mostly influenced by the practices of CSR rather than merely their understanding of what social responsibility is.

High consumer switching barriers can only be overcome by offering them some considerable value as an alternative. CSR initiatives combined with price and Corporate Attributes (CA) form a powerful value proposal when a company is attempting to overcome the complex consumer switching barriers (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013).

In their decision making to buy concerning CSR, consumers go with product performance while giving lower priority to CSR initiatives that generate emotional value and social value, (Green and Peloza, 2011). This is in harmony with the findings of a study done by Gupta and Hodges (2012) indicating that consumers would not pay high prices and even disregard quality all in the name of social responsibility. Therefore the business not the consumer should bear the costs of CSR. However in the same study another finding indicated that consumers do not mind paying more if it is within their affordability and is in support of a good cause.

Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) suggested that the mature consumers who pay attention to CSR should be targeted with high quality products. This should send a message that the firm is committed to CSR issues such as fair labour practices and care for the environment. Results of a study conducted by Chatzoudes *et al.*, (2015) in Greece indicated that a positive interest to buy is established when consumers believe that a company authentically takes care of the community and its employees and makes a positive contribution towards the economic development of the country.

Consumers according to Schmeltz (2012) assess companies' CSR efforts as being self-centered as opposed to being moral oriented which is typical in the present narcissistic generation that focus much on what they stand to gain.

According to Chatzoudes *et al.*, (2015) their findings revealed that consumers had a negative attitude towards buying products from companies that contributed towards developing a country's economy because they believed they did so at the expense of product quality and efficiency. The general expectations of consumers were that they favour companies with social responsibility policies.

According to the stakeholder theory as cited by Aksaka *et al.*, (2016) in their buying decisions consumers do consider a company's CSR contributions towards the community other than the price charged. Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) alluded to these, suggesting that in order for banks to achieve repeat patronage intentions they need to make sure that the performance of service is of the best quality. As highlighted by Liu *et al.*, (2014) their study showed that perceived CSR to stakeholders plays a significant part in both customer brand preference and loyalty intention than the same to society. According to Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) CSR programs and practices influence the way consumers respond to companies' products and they are able to prompt consumer purchase intentions. Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) further quoted Guchait *et al.*, (2011) who proclaimed that customers' attitudes and behavioral intentions are greatly influenced by consumers' perceptions of CSR.

Consumers also stand a chance to gain approval in their communities for engaging with a particular company and its products (Schmeltz, 2012). When handling CSR and working with young consumers it is imperative to heed that responsibility is another issue for them in addition to the egoistic characteristics (Schmeltz, 2012).

According to Schmeltz (2012) consumers evaluate companies on CSR based on their competences as opposed to moral values. Consumers express their opinions about a company's products or services in different ways. In the Emirates, for instance a study

revealed that Dubai customers expressively raise their views about a company's products or services as compared with consumers from Sharjah (Anadol *et al.*, 2015).

2.8 Summary

The literature review chapter provided a broad definition of the CSR concept as found from various literature. Benefits of CSR were also highlighted after giving brief explanations for some of the basic CSR initiatives. The literature also looked into the influence of CSR on corporate reputation, and further looked at the stakeholder perspective with regards to CSR and lastly the influence CSR has on a consumer's buying decision. The next chapter presents the research methodology used to obtain results of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined business research as “an organised, systematic, data-based, critical, objective, inquiry or investigation into a specific problem undertaken with the purpose of finding answers or solutions to it.”

Research methodology, as the word implies, is about the methods used in collecting data. The research methodology is made up of a series of stages from the philosophy, the research approach, research strategy and the data collection methods. Depending on the objectives of the research data can either be quantitative or qualitative or even a mixed method. Quantitative data is numerical and gathered through structured questions and qualitative data is expressed in words collected through interviews or questionnaires with open ended questions and through observations (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). The mixed methods approach is a combination of both the quantitative and the qualitative methods (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.2 Problem Statement and Research Objectives

Many companies from around the world conduct CSR and aim to reap some benefits over time. Companies that practice CSR in Manzini need to determine the level of consumer awareness of CSR initiatives conducted and the views they have regarding these initiatives.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To determine the impact CSR has on an organisation’s reputation.
- To explore the perceptions that consumers have about CSR initiatives.
- To explore the kind of CSR initiatives that the consumer prefer.
- To determine the impact CSR has on a consumer’s decision to purchase a product/support a firm/brand.

3.3 Research Design

Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined research design as “a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data based on the research questions of the study”

3.3.1 Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research is used to obtain meaning and interpretation of issues or to do exploration and discovery of unfamiliar subjects. It mainly applies to poorly understood topics, and it usually gathers in-depth data from a few participants (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

To allow for further probing and expression of views data collection is not standardized in a qualitative approach. The subjectivist approach which is based on realities which change with individual interpretation is used for a qualitative study (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

3.3.2 Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative approach involves cause and effect and testing of theories using a hypothesis or questions. Attitudes are assessed using an experimental design. The instrument used to collect data measures attitudes and information gathered is analyzed by making use of statistical procedures (Creswell, 2002). Objectivity is mainly an essential aspect therefore testing of reliability and validity is important in a quantitative research to avoid bias (Creswell, 2002). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) deductive reasoning in which a general theory is applied to a specific case is more applicable to causal and quantitative studies. However this approach can also be used to investigate feeling and views. As in the case of this study , quantitative aspect was used to investigate the feelings and views of the consumers.

3.3.3 Mixed Methods

The research approach involved mixed methods designs: a combination and integration of the qualitative and quantitative research philosophy (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). This is important for a comparative study as qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as one found on questionnaires.

The advantage of this approach is that it assists with ways of combining quantitative and qualitative data, such as one database, it could be used to check accuracy (validity) of the other database. The database could help to explain the other database, and one database could explore different types of questions than the other database (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

The use of mixed method is supported in practice by most researchers as it allows for information to be more relevant and all possible questions to be answered fully (Saunders and Lewis, 2012).

3.3.4 Adopted Methodology

The research adopted the mixed methods; using both quantitative and qualitative questions in different proportions. This methodology presented an opportunity to reflect on the need to identify and assess the causes that influence the outcomes that could be typical topics for future research.

Through the use of this methodology, the study could quantify and rank the extent of the problem while addressing the objectives of the study and at the same time perceptions and interpretations of consumers on the subject matter were derived using the mixed methods.

3.4 Research Instrument

How a researcher plans to carry out the work is referred to as the research strategy. A survey method in the form of questionnaires was used as an instrument for this study. Fink (2003) as cited by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) mentioned that surveys assist with collection of information that is useful in doing comparisons, or explain behaviours and attitudes of people.

The study was exploratory in nature. Saunders and Lewis (2012) defined an exploratory study as one which provides a clearer and deeper understanding of the problem. Typically in this study the researcher sought to understand the consumers' perceptions of CSR initiatives by corporate firms in Manzini.

The questionnaire contained closed questions and it included a few open ended questions to gather the consumers' perceptions about the subject matter. This gave the

respondents the freedom to express their views outside the confinement of closed ended questions and with no influence from the interviewer.

3.5 Population and Sampling

3.5.1 Population

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) is ‘the entire group of people, events, or things that the researcher desires to investigate’. The target population for this study consisted was consumers in Manzini.

3.5.2 Sampling Unit

The sample unit used was 170 consumers selected using the purposive sampling method. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as cited by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) the sample size in relation to the population of Manzini should have been 382. However due to time constraints and limited resources a lesser sample size was involved.

3.5.3 Sampling Method and Size

A sample is defined as a representation of the entire population. Sampling can be divided into two types according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013): probability (whereby the elements have known chances of being selected and non-probability (the chances of elements being selected are not predetermined). They further mentioned that in determining the choice of sampling procedure to use the following is critical:

- Defining the target population
- The parameters being investigated
- The available sampling frame
- Costs of the sampling design
- Amount of time available to collect data from the sample

However due to the lack of understanding of the subject by some respondents the convenience sampling method was adopted as the most suitable for this study. For this study not every consumer was in a position to provide information on CSR as it requires

one to be knowledgeable about the subject. Hence a purposive selection was made so as to engage learned consumers only since they understand the topic better.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) factors that affect a decision on the sample size include the research objectives, the extent of precision required, the acceptable confidence level, population size and constraints in terms of time and cost. They advised that though not representative a sample as low as 30 is adequate for quantitative research; though such findings should not be generalized.

Since this study was a mixed a sample of 170 respondents was selected, however the most suitable sample size based on the 100000 population size would be 382 according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Quantitative studies are associated with larger sample sizes compared with qualitative studies where the size of the sample is not very important as the validity of the research is not guided by the representativeness. Unlike in the case of a quantitative study where the sample size plays a critical role in determining the reliability of the results of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.6 Validity and Reliability

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) validity relates to testing how well an instrument measures what it is designed to measure and reliability shows how an instrument is able to measure with stability and consistency a concept, it assists with testing the goodness of measure. Validity was ensured using the face validity test whereby two experts (a supervisor at work and an MBA graduate colleague) were requested to validate the questionnaire and highlight areas of improvements on the design and presentation.

The questionnaire was initially structured such that demographic questions were presented at the end and the experts' advice was that they should be at the start. Corrections were done accordingly to increase the validity.

To ensure reliability of data a pilot test was done. The pilot test was done by way of distributing questionnaires to 20 individuals to test for flaws in the design of the measuring instrument. The results came out with a 0.82 reliability coefficient.

Analysis of data was done using both the inductive and deductive methods. As the study adopted the positivist approach the deductive approach was used to test theories and the inductive approach addressed the qualitative aspect of the study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.7 Questionnaire Design

Questions included in the questionnaire addressed the objectives of the study. Closed questions dominated the questionnaire. These are questions that require the respondent to pick the most suitable answer from a set of alternatives; this results in fast response because they do not require more time to answer (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

Two open-ended questions were included to allow the respondents to freely express their views on the questions asked and to add on what was not addressed by the multiple choice questions. Two questions requiring yes or no answer were also included and the respondents were required to explain their answers further whichever answer they chose.

3.8 Data Collection and Analysis

Primary data as opposed to secondary data was gathered particularly for this study, that is, this research did not use any data from previous studies. Primary data as defined by Sekaran and Bougie (2013) is “Data collected first hand for subsequent analysis to find solutions to the problem researched.” Secondary data on the other hand is “data that already exist and do not have to be collected by the researcher”

Primary data is obtained from first-hand sources. For this study data was collected from respondents via a survey. The choice of the data collection method depends on the objectives of the study.

As a data collection tool, a paper based questionnaire was distributed though a few questionnaires were distributed via email. The questionnaire was designed following the guidelines for questionnaire design and it contained twenty questions twelve of which were closed questions two open-ended questions and six demographic questions. The questionnaire addressed all the objectives of the study.

As per Sekaran and Bougie (2013) personally administered questionnaires were used because:

- a) The survey was confined to the Manzini area and the best way to collect data was to administer the questionnaire personally. This was advantageous in that data could be collected within a short time.
- b) The respondents could ask questions that they might have concerning some of the questions and their doubts can be clarified.
- c) An opportunity to introduce the topic is available and respondents can be motivated to be as honest as they can be in answering the questions
- d) Not as much skill was required in administering a questionnaire as compared to interviewing

A portion of the questionnaires were distributed via email and as expected the response rate was poor. This was done for those who could not readily be reached physically because of their busy schedules.

For each question asked in the questionnaires common themes were identified from the responses, tallied and ranked according to frequency. These responses were presented in an Excel spreadsheet. The themes were then grouped and analyzed to determine the consumers' perceptions about companies' CSR initiatives.

3.9 Ethical Clearance

Prior to the start of the research an ethical clearance was obtained from the institution's ethical clearance committee. As cautioned by the committee no incentives were offered to respondents for participating in the survey.

Assurance was given to participants that their responses would be held in confidence as it was indicated in the consent forms which were attached to every questionnaire .They were also advised that they had the option of not taking part in the survey or skipping some questions if they did not feel comfortable. A clear explanation on what the survey was about was provided; participants were encouraged to be as honest as possible when providing responses and that there was no wrong or right answer

3.10 Limitations in the study

The data collection process was not without challenges. Some respondents needed to be educated first on what CSR was about. This was against the general expectation that educated individuals would know about the concept.

Some respondents who took the questionnaires never returned them citing busy schedules resulting in a poor response rate. Time was also a constraint as it would not permit achieving the target sample size. Some participants left the open ended questions blank. Although consent forms were attached to all questionnaires some respondents refused to sign the consent forms for one reason that they wanted to ensure the highest level of anonymity.

3.11 Summary

The research methodology chapter has explained the method that was chosen and the reasons why it was the most suitable in relation to the objectives of the study. The research instrument used and the challenges encountered in data collection have also been captured. Validity and reliability of results justified and the mention that research was conducted with adherence to ethics guidelines. Presentations of findings gathered during data collection are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four is a presentation of the findings as extracted from the responses in the questionnaires. The findings are presented in the sequence they appear in the questionnaire starting with the quantitative findings. Qualitative findings are presented thereafter. The presentation of the quantitative results also includes the profiles of the participants of the survey in the same order they are presented in the questionnaire.

The chapter also includes an interpretation of the findings and observed patterns from the research.

4.2 Response Rate

In total 170 questionnaires were distributed and only 75 responses were completed resulting in a response rate of 44%. This rate is insufficient and the results cannot be generalized to the total study population.

4.3 Analysis Technique

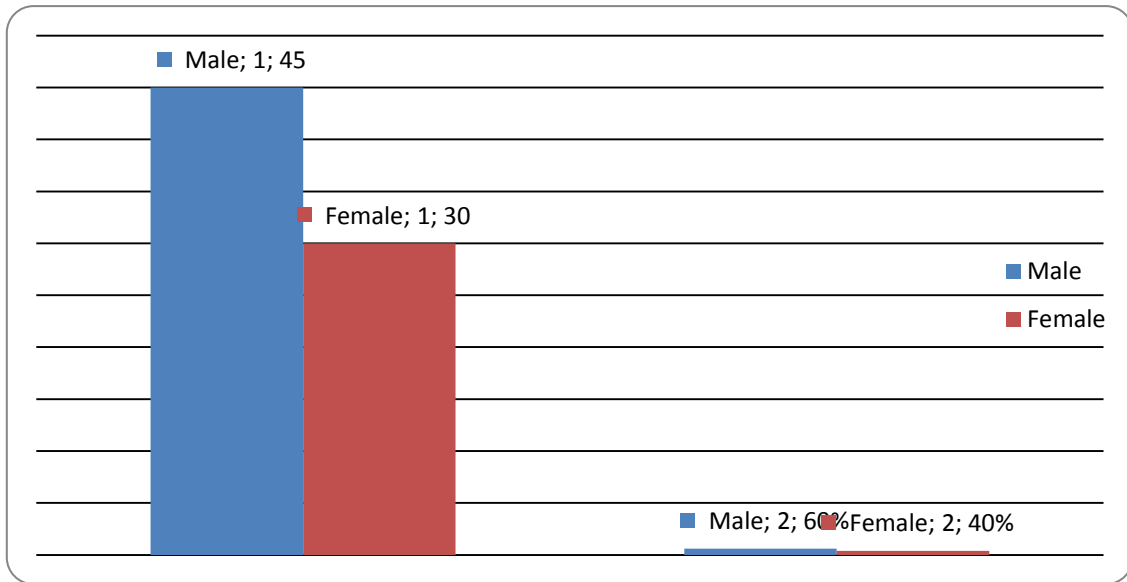
The Microsoft Excel Package was used to analyze the results as they would be meaningless in their raw data format. Thematic analysis was used to assess the qualitative questions; here the responses were categorized according to themes.

4.4 Analysis of Responses

An analysis of the questions as posed in the questionnaires follows.

4.4.1 Analysis by Gender

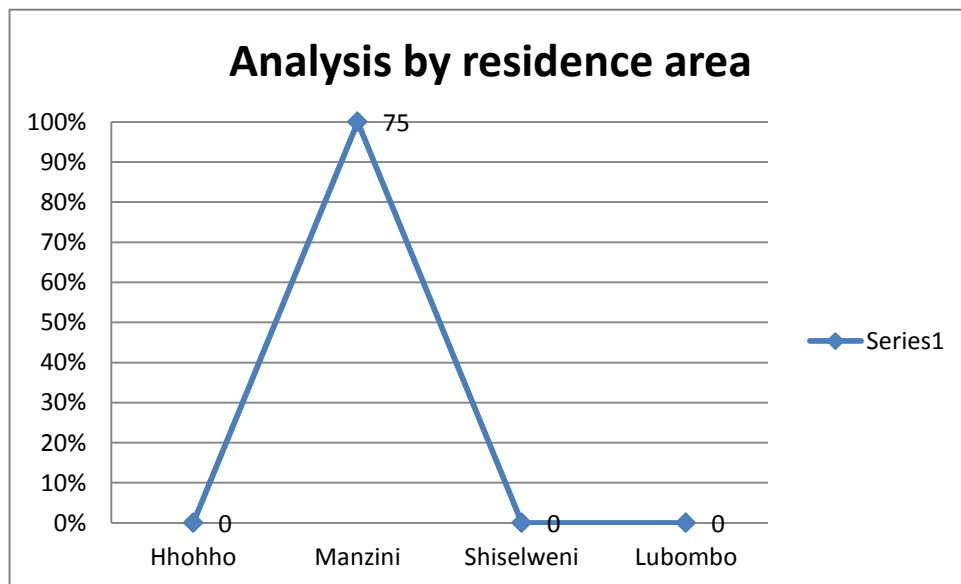
Figure 4.1: Analysis by Gender



Of the total sample of 75 consumers, 45 were males and 30 were females. The ratio of male to females is 0.6:0.4. The study was dominated by views from the male gender.

4.4.2 Analysis by Area of Residence

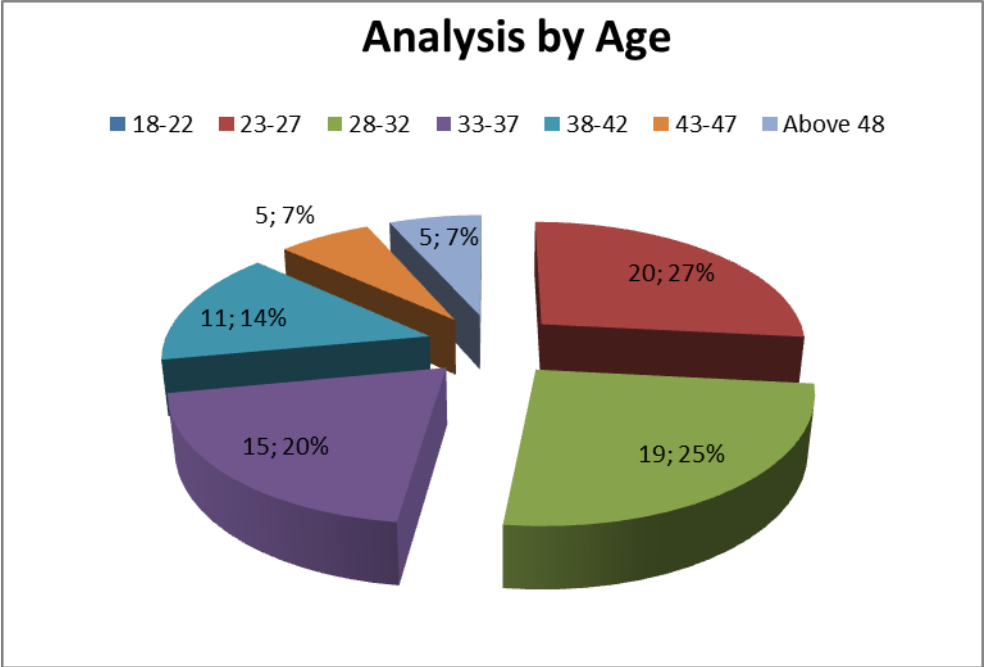
Figure 4.2: Analysis by Area of Residence



The study was conducted on companies in the Manzini city of Swaziland as the topic specifies. The findings also consistently showed that all 75 consumers who participated in the study were from Manzini. This means that findings of the study purely apply to the population of Manzini.

4.4.3 Analysis by Age

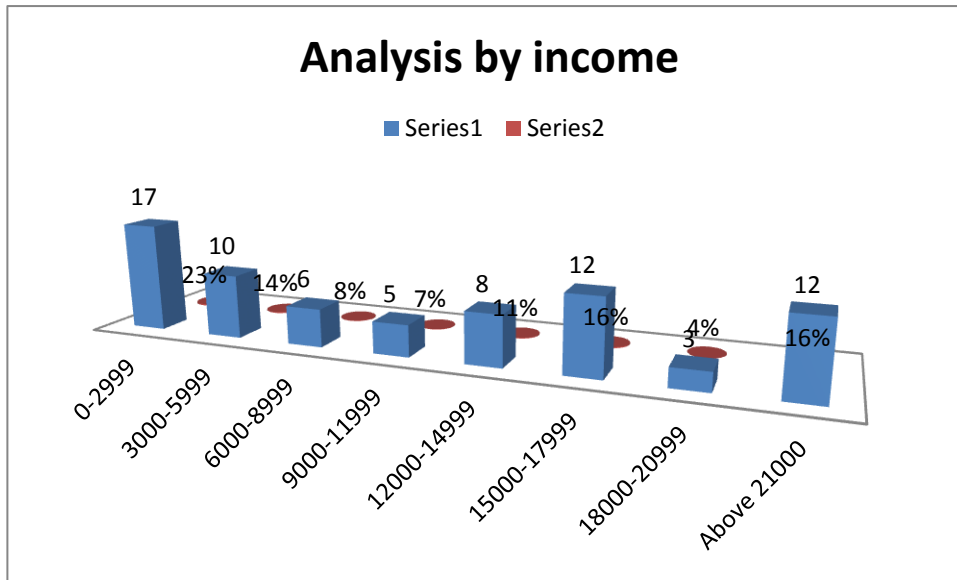
Figure 4.3: Analysis by Age



Of the total sample of 75 consumers, 27% (20) fall in the 23-27 age group, 25%(19) between 28-32 age group, 20%(15) in the 33-37 age group,14% (11) in the 38-42 age group, 7% (5) in the 43-47 age group and another 7% were above 48 years old. The majority of respondents are within the 23-27 age group. A substantial number of the participants were young adults.

4.4.4 Analysis by Income Bracket (Lilangeni – the Swaziland unit of currency)

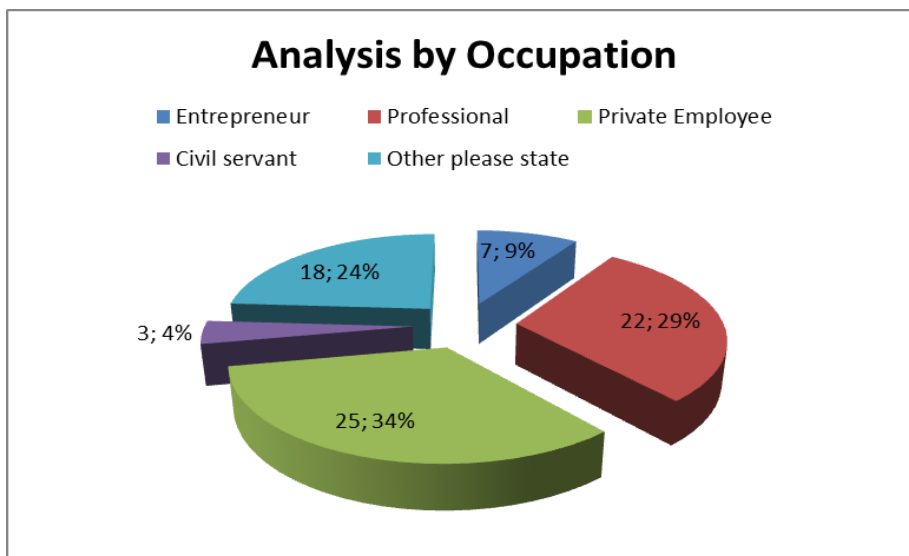
Figure 4.4: Analysis by Income Bracket



It was found that 17 (23%) out of the 75 respondents had a monthly income ranging from 0 to 2999; these were mainly students from the university who are still not employed. Fourteen percent of the respondents earn between 3000-5999, 8%(6) earn between 6000-8999, 7% (5) earn from 9000 to 11999, 11%(8) earn within the 12000-14999 range 16% (12) earn between 15000-17999, 4% (3) earn between 18000-20999 and a further 16% earn above 21000. High income earners were not presented in the study, so as to focus on low income earners whose views are more important in terms of CSR.

4.4.5 Analysis by Occupation

Figure 4.5: Analysis by Occupation

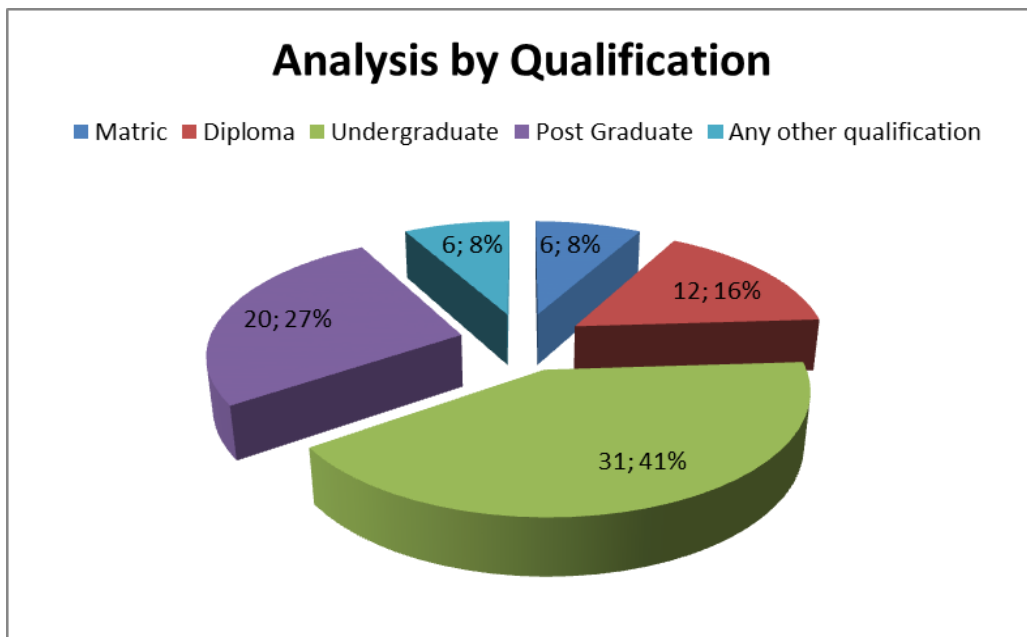


The breakdown as per the occupation of respondents is as follows: 25 private employees, 22 professionals 18 students (other), 7 entrepreneurs and 3 civil servants.

The small number of civil servants who participated is due to the fact that in general Manzini is dominated by private companies and not government offices as most are b elsewhere.

4.4.6 Analysis by Qualification

Figure 4.6: Analysis by Qualification



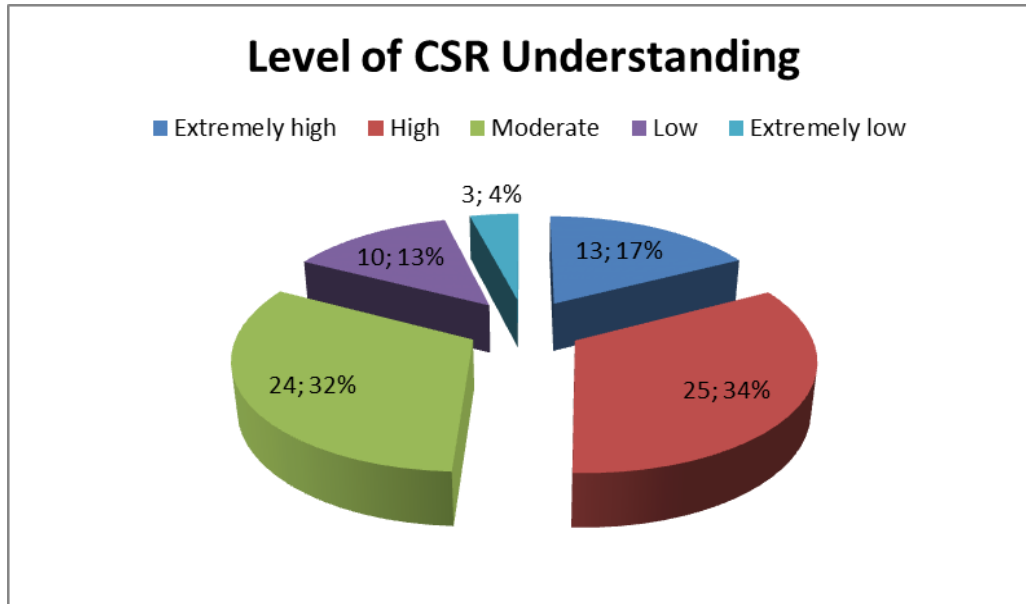
Of the 75 respondents, 6 had SA Matric qualifications, 12 had diplomas, 31 were undergraduates, 20 were post graduates and 6 had unspecified qualifications. The fewer number of respondents with Matric qualification owes to the fact that consumers below the age of 18 were excluded from the study for ethical reasons. The high level of qualifications of respondents is good for reliability.

4.4.7 Analysis by level of understanding for CSR Initiatives

More and more companies are finding it essential to contribute towards the development of CSR as a permanent feature of business models.

The consumers' level of understanding of CSR initiatives as performed by companies in Manzini came in different scales as attributable to varying levels of exposure.

Figure 4.7: Level of CSR Understanding



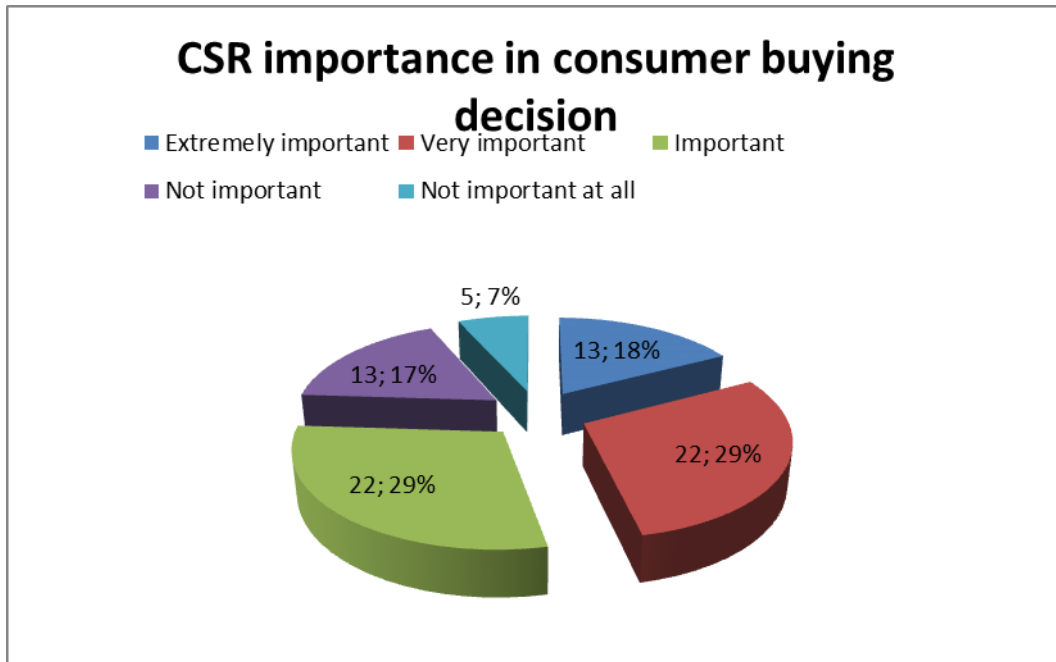
It was found that 17% of the surveyed Manzini consumers had an extremely high level of understanding for Manzini based CSR initiatives. Some 34% consumers had a high level of understanding, 32% ranked their level of understanding as moderate, 13% ranked their level of understanding as low and only 4% disclosed that they had an extremely low level of understanding.

Practically, half of the respondents had a clear understanding of CSR initiatives as conducted by Manzini companies. Some 17% of the respondents had limited understanding for CSR. A follow up was made on this question and the intention was to eliminate those who lacked understanding of the subject from the research. However, when an attempt to give a simpler description of CSR was made, it turned out that many from this group were in fact aware of the practice and had only struggled with the terminology that had been used, a limitation which could not be detected during the pilot phase. Their knowledge was further demonstrated by their ability to answer the rest of the questionnaire afterwards. This is an important observation and needs to be considered in future studies. The 17% whose level of understanding is low seem to give credence to the argument that CSR is a waste of resources (Crisóstomo *et al.*, 2011).

4.4.8 Analysis by Importance of CSR in Consumer Buying Decision

In any decision that has to be made, there are some factors that need to be taken into consideration; consumers do the same before they make a decision to buy. Amongst other factors either they consider a company's involvement in CSR or they do not.

Figure 4.8: CSR Importance in Consumer Buying Decision



It was found that 76% of consumers believe CSR is important in their buying decisions, 24% do not care, 7% also do not know. In analysis 75% of consumers view CSR as important so firms that do not practice it risk losing clients and firms that do are likely to earn consumer respect and increased sales. The high number of consumers who perceive that CSR is important in their buying decision can be closely linked to the theory that CSR and reputation are positively correlated.

4.4.9 Analysis by “I believe all companies should be involved in CSR” And reasons

Table 4.1 Requirement for all Companies to Practice CSR

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>No</i>
No reason mentioned	20	No reason mentioned	0
To give back to the community and the public	34	Providing employment is enough	2
To help the needy and eradicate poverty	10	Some are still developing and do not afford.	2
For the benefit of the company	6	Companies do pay tax and that should be sufficient	1
Total	70	Total	5

The responses to the first part of the question revealed that 70 respondents believed companies should do CSR while only 5 did not think so. This suggests that consumers do expect companies to practice CSR as the majority of respondents indicated so. However when they had to explain their responses, a majority of those who said YES gave the reason that companies were expected to do CSR as a means to give back to the community.

Ten respondents believed that companies should get involved in CSR in order to help the needy and as a means to eradicate poverty in the country. Six mentioned that CSR benefits the company and is linked with growth and sustainability.

The few respondents who did not believe that companies need to engage in CSR gave various reasons. Some indicated that by availing employment opportunities, companies

already gave back to society. Others argued that CSR initiatives are expensive for upcoming companies. It was also mentioned that paying tax is already some form of social responsibility, therefore companies need not need further spend on CSR.

4.4.10 Analysis by “Is it mandatory for all companies to practice CSR?”

Table 4.2 Making it Mandatory for Companies to Practice CSR

<i>Reason for Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Reason for No</i>	<i>No</i>
No reasons stated	18	No reasons stated	7
Yes. To serve the community	25	No. It should be voluntary	12
Yes. For the benefit of the company	10	No. What if the company does not afford	1
Yes. To boost the economy of the nation	2		
Total	55	Total	20

The responses revealed that 55 out of the 75 respondents believed that all companies should be compelled to do CSR while 20 did not believe that it would be proper.

However, on the part of explaining their responses, only 50 provided reasons. The majority (25) of those who said YES argued that companies have the obligation to serve communities. 10 respondents indicated that being socially responsible benefits the company.

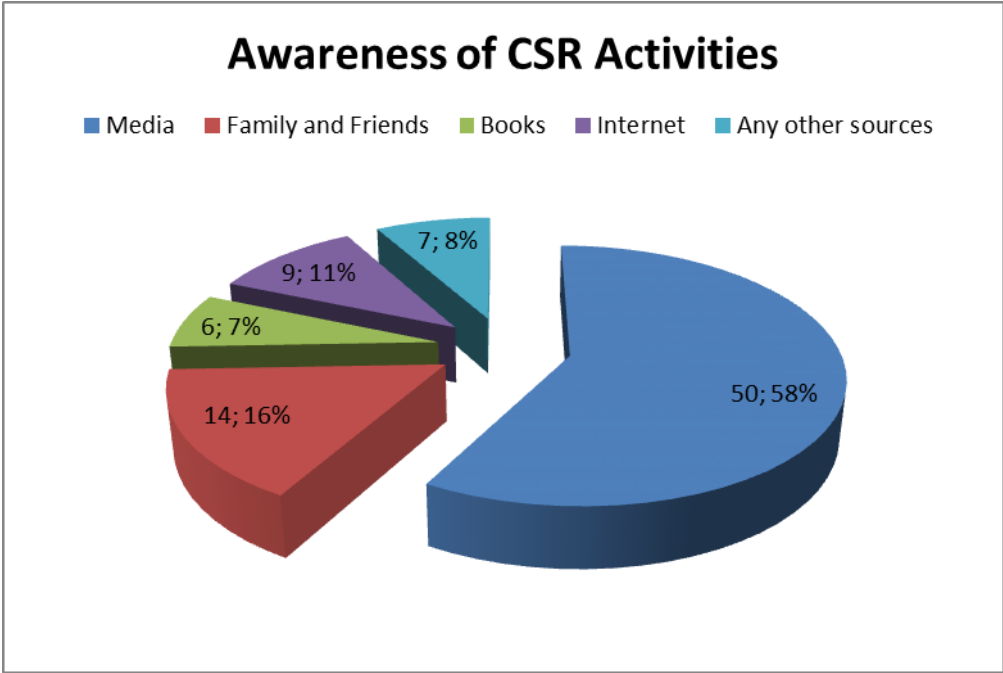
Twelve of the respondents who did not agree that it should be mandatory for companies to do CSR gave the reason that as such companies should be given the freedom to do so voluntarily, only one respondent mentioned that it should not be mandatory for companies to do CSR. This is in line with the stakeholder theory which states that

shareholders are only one category amongst many to whom a company should be accountable (Valmohammadi, 2014)

4.4.11 Analysis by “How I became Aware of CSR Activities by Companies in Manzini”

Communication is vital for survival of a business. Companies need to look at the ways or medium through which they can effectively communicate their CSR initiatives for public awareness. They need to understand that as times evolve some channels become obsolete and out-dated as they are being replaced by more modern channels of communication.

Figure 4.9: Awareness of CSR Activities



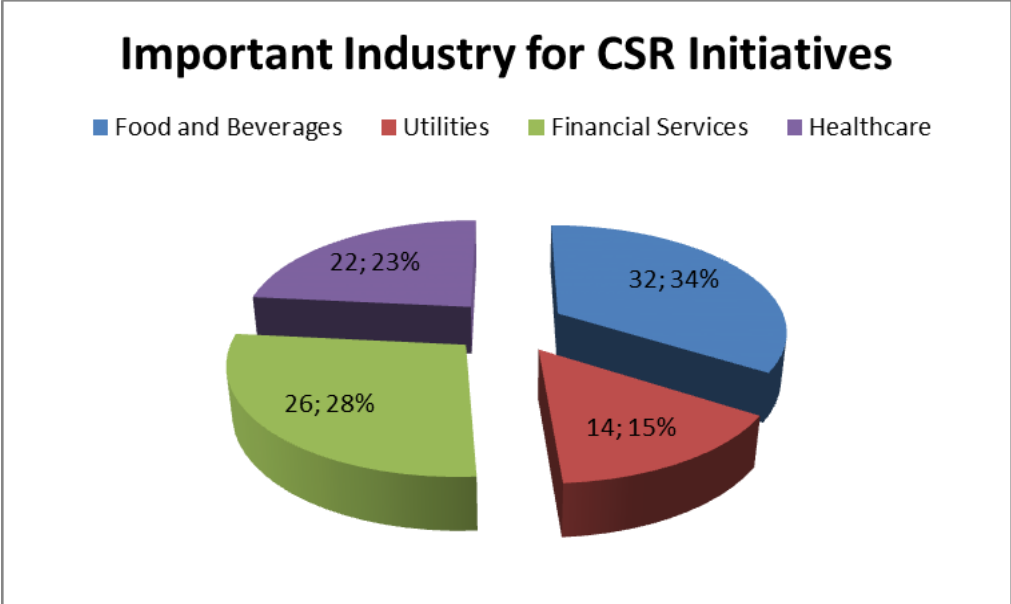
It was found that more than half (58%) consumers became aware of CSR initiatives by companies in Manzini via the Media, after the media 16% indicated that they became aware through family and friends, those who became aware via the internet were 11%, eight percent became aware of the CSR initiatives via any other sources and only 7% of consumers became aware from reading books.

The media is the most effective vehicle for communicating CSR activities by companies in Manzini. The 8% that responded that they became aware through other sources

mentioned that the researcher made them aware of the CSR activities. Companies that use the media to communicate their CSR initiatives are most likely to achieve their target of creating awareness. According to Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) once customers are aware of CSR efforts by customers, trust is built and these customers are more likely to consider those products for a purchase.

4.4.12 Analysis by “Which Industry is more Important for CSR Initiatives?”

Figure 4.10

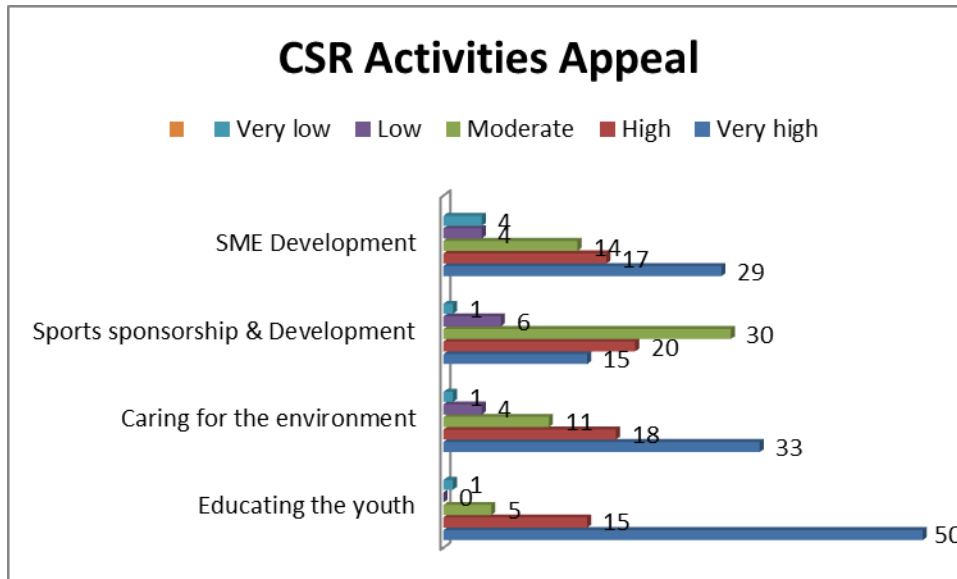


It was found that 34% of the 73 respondents perceive that Food and beverages is the industry which is more important for CSR activities, 28% believe that the financial services industry is more important industry for CSR initiatives, 23% for Healthcare and 15% for utilities. Two participants did not attempt to answer this question. The analysis showed that companies in the food and beverages industry should engage in CSR as it is expected of them to do so lest they lose consumer trust and loyalty. Some respondents picked more than one industry hence the 94 total responses from the 75 consumers who participated in the study.

4.4.13 Analysis by “The Extent CSR Initiatives Appeal to me”

A company’s priority areas of SCR initiatives should be aligned with what appeals the most to the consumers in order to realize the return on investment. Rather than focusing on programs that do not add much value even to the intended beneficiaries.

Figure 4.11 Extent of CSR Initiatives Appeal



In Manzini the most appealing initiatives according to consumers were those which related to educating the youth and caring for the environment as per the results of the survey. Companies that assist in educating the youth provide scholarships for the less privileged from as low as the first grade up to tertiary education. Protection and caring for the environment also appealed to consumers at a higher degree. The environmental protection initiative speaks more to the health and safety issues of consumers, probably the reason why it also appealed at a higher degree as companies are expected to be responsible for the environment which they pollute with their operations.

The results of the survey indicated that the CSR Activity of Educating the youth had 50 respondents who said it appealed to them at a very high degree, for the same programme (educating the youth) 15 respondents said it appealed to them at a high level, 5 moderately and only and it did not appeal that much to only one respondent.

Caring for the environment activity also appealed to many consumers at a very high degree, 18 at a high level, 11 at a moderate degree, 4 at a low and only one at an extremely low level.

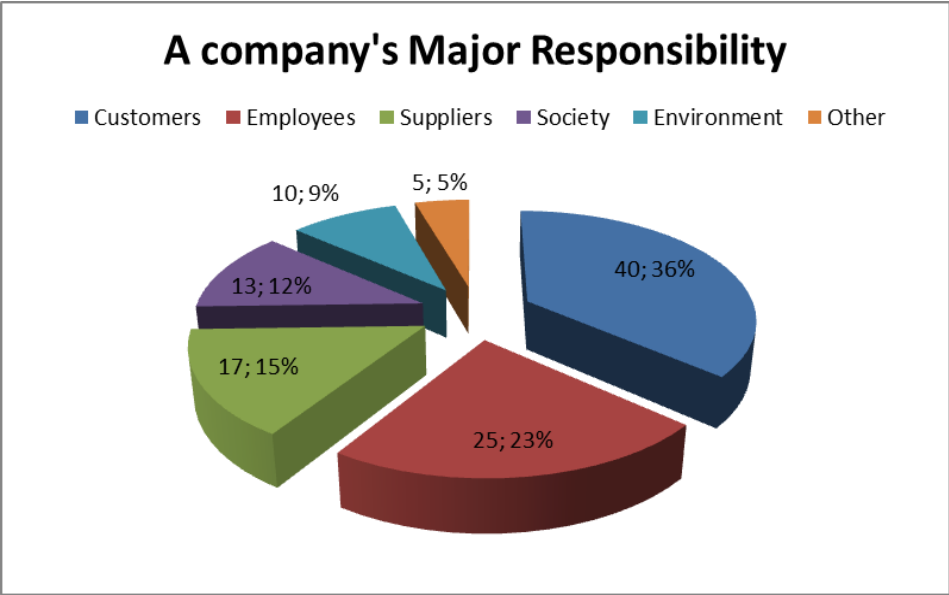
With Sports sponsorship and development 15 respondents confirmed that it appealed to them at a very high extent, 20 responded that it appealed at a high degree, 30 moderately, 6 at low and 1 at a very low level. SME Development appealed to 29 respondents at a very high extent, to 17 at a high extent, to 14 at a moderate extent, to 4 at a low extent and to another four at a very low extent.

In essence an activity that appealed to many consumers at a very high degree is the one that consumers believe companies should invest more in terms of CSR. According to Green and Pelosa (2011) customers are not concerned with initiatives that do not appeal to their emotional or social value.

4.4.14 Analysis by “What is a Company’s Major Responsibility”

When it comes to what is a company’s major responsibility, different stakeholders have differing views. Most of them would conveniently pick the group to which they belong or that which directly affects them as a company’s major responsibility

Figure 4.12: A Company’s Major Responsibility



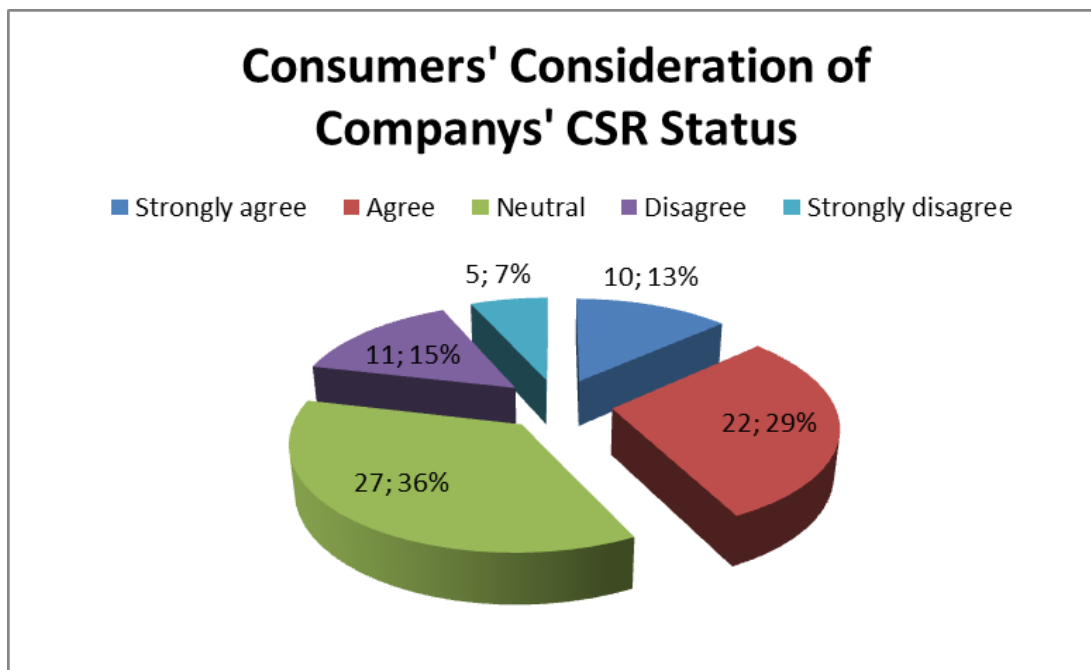
Some 36% of consumers responded that customers are a company’s major responsibility, 23% of the consumers perceived that employees should be a company’s major responsibility, a small percentage of 5% picked suppliers, 12% opted for the

society, 9% believe a company's major responsibility is to take care and protect the environment and only 5% selected other, all of them mentioned that they view shareholders to be every company's major responsibility.

In analysis customers believe that companies exist first to serve them and that their needs come before those of other stakeholders. Companies that master that have a competitive advantage over those that focus on other stakeholders.

4.4.15 Analysis by “I agree Consumers want to know the extent of involvement in CSR of the company behind the product they are buying.”

Figure 4.13: Consumers' Consideration of Company's CSR Status



Some 14% respondents expressed their highest degree of mindfulness of the CSR status of the company behind the product they are buying as they strongly agreed with the statement which says “Consumers want to know the extent of involvement in CSR of the company behind the product they are buying”.

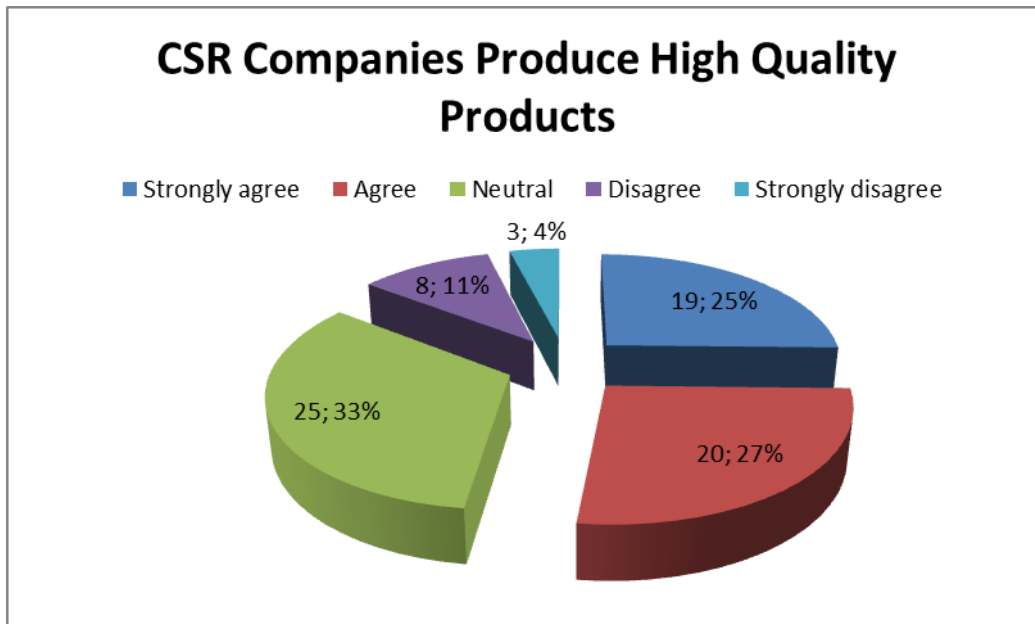
Twenty eight percent agreed with the statement, 36% of the respondents were neutral, 15% disagreed with the statement and 7% were in strong disagreement. Those in agreement outnumbered those in disagreement with the statement. The implication is that CSR companies are at an advantage of achieving higher sales volumes. Aksaka *et*

al., highlighted that customers reflect on a company's CSR status before they make a decision to purchase.

4.4.16 Analysis by “I agree that CSR companies produce high quality products”

One of the inherent benefits of engaging in CSR is that consumers tend to associate all CSR companies with producing high quality products and services. Consumers from Manzini expressed their views concerning the truthfulness of this assumption.

Figure 4.14: CSR Companies Produce High Quality Products



Some 25% respondents strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 33% respondents were neutral, 11%disagreed and only 4% strongly disagreed that CSR companies always produce high quality products.

In essence only 15% of the respondents were not in agreement with the statement and a further 33% could not take a stand. The 33% is the fraction of consumers who are not yet totally convinced that CSR is in anyway associated with the quality of a product, they are still on the borderline.

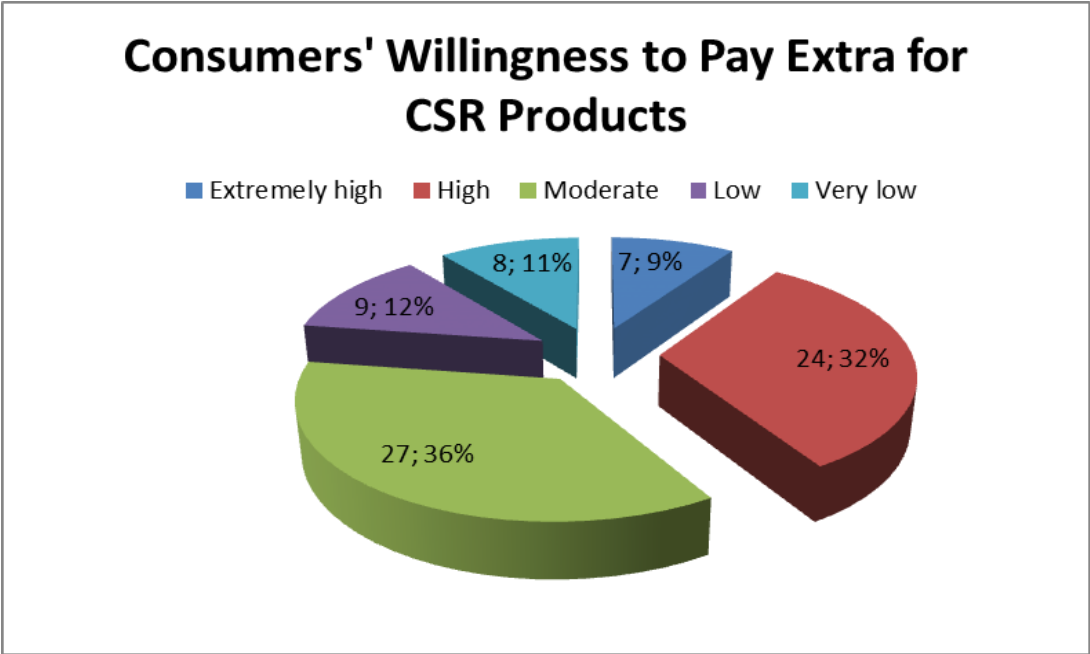
The 15% that does not agree pose a challenge to CSR companies to provide high quality products so that they can also be convinced that CSR products are of the best quality.

4.4.17 Analysis by “How would you rank your willingness to pay an extra price for products offered by a company involved in CSR?”

For consumers to be willing to pay more for a product just because it is being offered by a company involved in CSR; they must really have good perceptions about CSR initiatives and the companies that participate in them.

They have to believe that there is something different and special about the product that is closely linked to the CSR status of the producer.

Figure 4.15: Consumers’ Willingness to Pay Extra for CSR Products



Forty one percent of the respondents were willing to pay extra for products by a CSR company, some 36% were neutral and 23% would not pay any extra for CSR products.

Thirty six percent of the respondents ranked their willingness to spend more on a CSR product as moderate. However those who ranked their willingness as extremely high and high combined were more than those who ranked their willingness as low and very low combined at 40% and 24% respectively.

The analysis shows that CSR products would attract more revenue as companies can charge higher prices for them. According to literature even though customers prefer

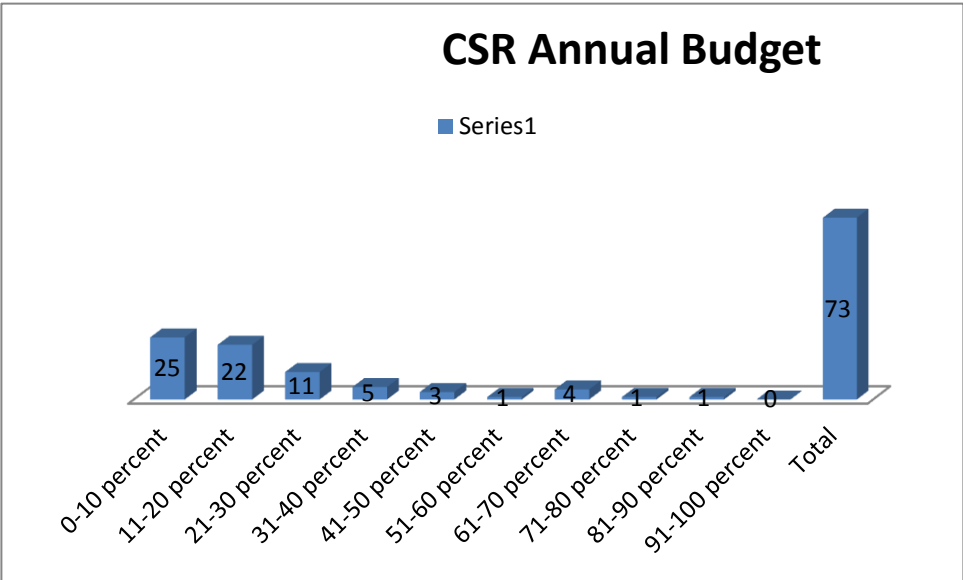
socially responsible brands they make their choices to buy based on price and quality attributes (Green and Peloza, 2011).

4.4.18 Analysis by Percentage of Annual CSR Budget

Allocating a yearly budget is the most common way companies can meet a financial obligation towards CSR initiatives. Different companies allocate varying percentages towards their CSR budgets. Consumers also have differing views in terms of how much is a fair budget allocation for CSR initiatives per annum.

It is not necessarily always accurate as some initiatives may be ad hoc but it does provide a basis for any expenditure on CSR that might accrue.

Figure 4.16: CSR Annual Budget



The study revealed that a majority of the respondents (25) indicated that they perceived that companies should allocate a range of about 0-10% of their yearly budget towards CSR initiatives, 22 between 11% and 20%, 11 were for 21-30 percent and 5 were for 31-40 percent. The other options were each picked by fewer (less than 5) respondents. None of the respondents believed that 91-100 percent of budget allocation should be towards CSR initiatives. Two respondents skipped this question.

This couple also answered no to the question “*Do you believe all companies should be involved CSR?*” When they skipped the question, it was an indication that they maintain that no money should be spent by companies in CSR initiatives.

The two respondents were also a part of the five who believed that a company is only responsible to its shareholders.

4.5 Qualitative Questions

The questionnaire had two open ended questions the results of which are presented having been analyzed by theme and frequency. These were questions 8 and 17 respectively.

For the first question referred to as question 2 in the questionnaire reading as “What mostly influences your perception about a company?” Sixty one respondents out of the 75 attempted to answer this question. For the second question 30 respondents did not attempt the question at all resulting to only 45 responses received for this question.

4.5.1 Findings

4.5.1.1 What Mostly Influences your Perception about a Company?

There were a number of themes that were identified and the key ones have been highlighted in the table below:

Table 4.3 Factors that Influence a Consumer's Perception about a Company

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Its commitment to CSR	20
Product and Quality	13
Pay for employees	9
Customer service	7
Corporate image and reputation	3
Other	9
<i>Non responses</i>	14

The question sought to find out what consumers are looking for in a company that would influence their perceptions towards it. In short the question seeks to know what makes a company according to the consumer.

Consumers identified 5 key factors that they are looking for in a company. The first three being: the company's commitment to CSR, the quality of the product that the company provides and how it pays its employees.

Another factor highlighted was the quality of customer service entrenched in the company; meaning customers should be afforded the best quality service.

Other consumers identified corporate image and reputation as another factor that influences their perceptions about a company. They have favourable perceptions towards good image and reputable companies, which makes it crucial for companies to work on building a good reputation and be on the alert not to do anything that would taint their image because consumers are watching and ever ready to react. This is in

line with the theory that investing in CSR improves a company's corporate reputation (Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2015).

4.5.1.2 Why does the CSR Status of the Company behind the Product Matter, if at all?

Five themes transpired as reasons why CSR status of a company matters as reflected in the table below:

Table 4.4 Consumers' Views on Company's CSR Status Behind the Product

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Customers want to purchase from a CSR company	16
It doesn't matter	11
Companies have to plough back to community	9
It ensures sustainability of the company	5
CSR companies are perceived to produce high quality products	4
<i>Non responses</i>	30

Sixteen of the consumers who attempted the qualitative question thought a company's

CSR status matters mentioned that customers are more interested in buying from a company that practices CSR to be the reason why a CSR status of a company behind a product matters. Eleven of the respondents expressed that it does not matter at all therefore they had no reasons to bring forth.

Other respondents highlighted that companies are expected to plough back to the community and that is why their CSR status matters. Another perceived reason for CSR status of a company behind a product was that it ensures sustainability of the company involved.

A minority of the respondents believe that CSR companies produce high quality products. In fact four respondents pointed out that they associate CSR companies with producing the best quality products and services. The remainder of the participants did not attempt this question. In theory CSR has a positive impact on firms (Malik, 2015). Firms that engage in CSR differentiate themselves from those that do not, competitively.

4.6 Summary

The chapter has presented the findings of the study according to the objectives of the study. The findings have been displayed using different graphs and tables. The findings presented also include profiles of the sample group. Chapter five uses these findings to draw conclusions and make recommendations on the steps to be taken in order for Manzini based companies to deliver meaningful CSR and thus gain mileage for their CSR efforts.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on discussing research findings in detail and how they are linked to findings on literature review in chapter two of this paper. Conclusions are made and presented following each set of findings. This chapter further provides recommendations that will be of value to firms' to ensure sound CSR that will enhance their image. To address the topic, objectives were developed and a questionnaire was designed to include questions that focused on achieving the objectives of the study.

5.2 Objective 1

Research question: To determine the impact CSR has on an organization's reputation.

The desire to improve the company's image and reputation is the main motivation for engaging in CSR. CSR is the tool or a vehicle through which companies gain popularity and become visible to the public and their important stakeholders. This question determined to establish the validity of the theory of corporate identity and reputation which proposes that CSR has a direct impact on corporate reputation (Abdullah and Aziz, 2013).

This research question aimed to establish the consumers' opinions on how they perceive CSR companies in Manzini based on their initiatives. Consumers may have different expectations and if companies fall short of meeting them the reputation of these is negatively affected. The study may help determine whether a company's involvement in CSR initiatives is beneficial in terms of enhancing its reputation and image. It would also be derived from the way consumers responded to some of the questions as to whether CSR companies have captured their interests such that they perceive them to be good and doing the right thing. This would be in line with literature according to Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) who proclaimed that reputation by

definition is a term that relates to the perceptions held about the subject matter, it aggregates overall perceptions of all stakeholders and it links to certain standards.

Findings: Literature

- The literature highlighted benefits of CSR in terms of enhancing a company's reputation. According to literature by Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) investing in CSR does improve corporate reputation of an organization although the act of CSR is not a promotional opportunity.
- The literature goes on to highlight that the Corporate reputation as an outcome of CSR activities produces good feelings for employees and the public who may thus pledge their support (Taghian et al., 2015)
- Literature also points out that findings of a study conducted by Liu et al., (2014) indicated that casinos that engage in CSR are well able to alleviate negative corporate images and improve their brand liking. This implies that even a tarnished company image is restored through engaging in CSR.
- Literature according to Sánchez et al. (2015) also indicated that CSR helps companies build their corporate reputation in turbulent environments which conflicted with Giannarakis and Sariannidis (2012) who said "the insecure business environment prompts companies to move away from CSR as the cost of initiatives is unaffordable"
- In Literature, Moura-Leite and Padgett (2014) highlighted that CSR activities is a valid communication tool through which buyers assess a firm. When buyers need to make judgment about a firm they refer to its CSR status.
- Literature as highlighted by Šontaitė-Petkevičienė (2015) argued that since CSR and corporate reputation are positively correlated, stakeholder groups' perceptions of an organisation's CSR activities is a vital aspect ,their consciousness of an organisation's CSR activities is a guarantee that an organization's corporate reputation will improve.

Findings: Study

- The survey findings are in support of the literature. The qualitative question which sought to understand what mainly influences consumers' perceptions about a company produced positive responses.
The a majority of respondents indicated that a company's commitment to CSR has an influence on how they perceive that company, a few others mentioned a company's image and reputation to be what influences their perception about a company. These two responses are somehow related because CSR is the very tool through which companies attain a positive reputation according to literature above.
- Since this was an open ended question some respondents skipped this question. From the remaining 61 responses CSR was mentioned by at least (20) respondents as a factor that influences their perceptions about a company. Other respondents mentioned other factors like its product (8), quality of product (5), customer care (7) and employee welfare (5). The survey had a majority of the respondents citing a company's commitment to CSR as a determining factor on how they would perceive that company.
- A company needs to effectively communicate its CSR initiatives via the available channels to the public in order to reap the rewards associated with a good reputation which is engrained on having good publicity .The study revealed that a more than half of the surveyed consumers in Manzini became aware of CSR initiatives via the media as opposed to books, the internet, family and friends. Although the option was given to mention any other source none of the respondents mentioned the social media as the source through which they became aware of CSR initiatives, which means companies have not started exploring and utilizing the platform.

Conclusion

Amongst the many reasons that many companies are focusing a larger fraction of their resources towards CSR initiatives, yielding positive business results and a better economy remains the ultimate goal for engaging in CSR. Corporate reputation is one factor that determines the rise and fall of a business. Corporate Social Responsibility is

one of the building blocks towards creating a positive reputation if implemented correctly and strategically.

It is imperative that companies should communicate their CSR involvement to the consumers to create awareness, through such they are able to create a positive and favourable image for themselves in the minds consumers and who are then influenced to pledge with their support. However the CSR initiatives should be for a good cause and must be well intended and undertaken in consultation with communities because they could conversely destroy the company and its reputation if consumers perceive it as being deceitful.

Recommendations

- Consumers do expect companies to engage in CSR initiatives, and companies exist mostly to meet the expectations of consumers. Therefore companies should engage in CSR. It is the right thing to do and has a series of benefits attached to it.
- Companies in the food and beverages industry are encouraged to participate in CSR as the results of the survey indicated that a majority of consumers perceive that it is the most important industry for CSR.
- Companies should learn to commit to a culture of product and service excellence before they can commit to CSR initiatives because being involved in CSR can only build a company's reputation positively when it is accompanied by delivery on promise.
- CSR companies should create a platform or make use of the media as it has transpired that it is the most effective and popular communication tool to communicate all their CSR efforts to create awareness to the consumer who will in turn give their support. This would also encourage those companies who are not yet committed to CSR initiatives to join when they see the benefits that are attached thereto and would want to share in the success that comes with contributing towards making the world a better place for everyone.

5.3 Objective 2

Research Question: To explore the perceptions that consumers have about CSR initiatives.

Engaging in CSR initiatives is not cheap. Millions of Emalangenzi are invested in building community schools, community water projects, Sports sponsorships and educating the youth to mention a few. The question is do consumers as a distinct stakeholder group of the companies have an appreciation of these efforts; how do they view companies that do CSR initiatives? This objective aimed to answer that question with reasons.

The following questions were asked to determine the perceptions of consumers pertaining to CSR initiatives by companies in Manzini:

- Do you believe all companies should be involved in CSR? Please explain your answer.
- In your opinion should it be mandatory for all companies to practice CSR?
- What mostly influences your perception about a company?
- Why does the CSR status of the company behind the product matter, if at all?

The first two questions above are quantitative and the last two are qualitative.

Findings: Literature

- The literature stated clearly that a customer's perception of CSR has a reflection in the valuation of services of the company as there exists a direct and positive correlation between CSR activities and attitudinal loyalty (Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011)
Mature consumers value CSR attributes and believe that profit maximization can still be achieved in parallel with social investment.
- According to Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013, customers' attitudes are strongly influenced by how positively they respond to CSR initiatives.

Thus providing customer oriented initiative could be a working strategy for banking managers to win customers and therefore achieve an improved financial performance (McDonald and Lai, 2011) because customers place their own needs above those of other stakeholders.

- Usman and Amran (2015) in literature quoted Joshi and Gao (2009) asserting that consumers respond well to products and services of a company that conducts CSR in a way that appeals to their values, if not, the company's corporate image, products and services would be jeopardized as it would receive negative response from these consumers.
- The literature highlighted that, while enjoying their profits, business should not forget to plough a portion of the profits back to the society and the stakeholders to make the society a better place. This also ensures long term success for businesses operating in China (Liu *et al.*, 2014).

Findings: Study

- Whilst a majority of the consumers believed that a company's budget towards CSR initiatives should be between 1-10% and 11-20%, interestingly there was one who pointed out that a 51-60 percent range would be good and another one who suggested a 81-90 percent range.
- There are those consumers who still do not believe that companies should be involved in CSR citing that companies are doing enough providing employment and paying taxes to government hence do not need to spend further on CSR initiatives. Making it mandatory was out of the question for some participants who put it clearly that doing CSR should be voluntary. Those on the affirmative believed that it is expected that companies should give back to the same community/people who support them. This would also help alleviate poverty in the country.
- The results of the qualitative question showed that the majority of consumers (who thought a company's CSR status matters mentioned that customers are more interested in buying from a company that practices CSR as the reason why a CSR status of a company behind a product matters.

Eleven of the respondents expressed that it does not matter at all therefore had no reason to mention. Other respondents who believed that CSR status matters highlighted that companies are expected to plough back to the community and as another reason why their CSR status matters. Another perceived reason for CSR status of a company behind a product was that it ensures sustainability of the company involved. Companies that are involved in CSR have a competitive advantage over non CSR companies as their products are marketed and their brands are promoted. Consumers have good perceptions about CSR companies

- Some of the respondents highlighted that it is perceived that CSR companies produce high quality products so in order to live up to that notion companies have to be involved in CSR. This raises another possible research question for the future: Do CSR companies actually produce the best quality products and services?
- On another note when asked as to what influences their perception about a company it transpired that a majority of the surveyed consumers whether or not a company engages in CSR initiatives plays a major role in how they would perceive the company. Others believe that the product and its quality communicate a lot about a company. The third theme established was the group that highlighted that how a company pays and takes care of its employees' welfare has much influence on how they would perceive that company
- As they continued expressing their perceptions the majority of consumers mentioned that they really believe that companies should engage in CSR placing emphasis on that such is required of them as they would be giving back to the community. It would also help eradicate poverty in the nation by giving assistance to the less privileged.

Other consumers mentioned that such was good for the sustainability of the company. For instance if a company is involved in CSR initiatives that have got something to do with environmental compliance they would be reducing their compliance costs and operational risks in the process before they can even incur penalties for non- compliance.

- An insignificant number of surveyed consumers expressed that they do not necessarily believe that companies should engage in CSR purely because they

are doing enough when they pay tax and provide employment that is the least they can do.

- A minority perceived that making CSR mandatory was out of the question as they believed that such action should be voluntary as it is dependent on whether the company can afford to make a contribution towards CSR initiatives.
- The majority who perceive that CSR should be compulsory for every company; regardless of industry, financial standing or otherwise mentioned that giving back to the community remains is expected of them.

Conclusion

Consumers have the expectation from all companies to be involved in CSR activities because they believe it is the only way they would show their appreciation for the support they receive from them. That is the reason why they perceive that a CSR status of a company matters and making it mandatory for all companies to be involved in CSR would not only benefit the company but it would also make the country a better place for everyone, including the less privileged. It is also apparent that to a number of consumers the CSR status of a company matters to such an extent that they would never consider buying a product unless it was produced by a company that is committed to CSR initiatives. In short CSR is the right thing to do plus it gives the company that is doing it a competitive advantage over the companies that do not engage in CSR. This is according to the results of the study and other previous studies.

Recommendations

- CSR should be part of companies' core activities such that it is integrated into their budgets and reports since it is evident that it would help in enhancing the bottom line of many companies thus contributing to the growth of the economy of the nation as a whole.

Integration of CSR into budgets and report would help in the tracking of returns on investment something which would encourage a company to continue contributing when the return starts to reflect in their reports

- Rather than making CSR mandatory for all companies, government needs to motivate all companies to participate in CSR by highlighting the benefits to be gained so that they make a conscious decision of their own. Forcing them to do so could yield negative results as it could encourage mushrooming of illegal and unregistered companies
- With the budget allocation recommended by the consumers in the survey it would be a downfall for any of the companies in Manzini not to take heed. Therefore it is recommended that all companies small, medium and large should have a budget allocation of at least 10% towards CSR.

5.4 Objective 3

Research Question: To explore the CSR initiatives which are most preferred by the consumers in Manzini.

The range of activities falling under CSR come in a variety of scopes including amongst many; programs on youth empowerment and development, food aids to communities, health services and educational projects, water projects and other efforts focused in providing support to affected communities and providing education assistance.

The focus of this objective is on finding out what is more appealing to the consumer when it comes to CSR initiatives.

The following questions in the questionnaire were designed to elude that information:

- Which industry is more important for CSR Activities?
- To what extent do the identified CSR activities appeal to you?
- In your view what is a company's major responsibility

Findings: Literature

- Literature, according to Maltz, Thompson, and Ringold (2011) suggested that firms should modify the capital budgeting tool to get an estimate of the shared value per initiative for identified stakeholders so as to estimate the costs and

benefits across all initiatives considered and be able to prioritize them accordingly

- A company's responsibility to its employees was discussed by Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) in their paper as they went on to say that banks should be transparent with their employees and should treat them with respect. This responsibility is interpreted as doing what is right, just and ethical and it turns out to benefit the business as stronger customer loyalty is promoted by positive employee attitude.
- Another literature as highlighted by McDonald and Lai (2011) has it that customers react positively towards strategies that benefit them as compared to those which benefit the community, in the likes of philanthropic initiatives or those that favour the environment.
- McDonald and Lai (2011) further highlighted that customers place their own needs above those of other stakeholders thus it is imperative that firms should provide customer oriented initiatives if they desire to be liked by them.
- Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) mentioned in literature that consumers are willing to pay extra for CSR products that are both of high quality and manufactured by a company that has a concern for the environment. This goes to show how important it is for a company to take care of the environment
- The most popular and common CSR initiatives delivered by companies in Manzini relate to sports and entertainment, education for the youth, health and welfare (HIV/Aids), SME development, community development including water projects and agriculture.

Findings: Study

- The survey showed that a majority of the consumers in Manzini perceive that a company's major responsibility is to its customers. This means companies in Manzini have pressure to align with this expectation by directing their CSR efforts mainly towards upliftment of their customers.

Thirty six percent of the consumers surveyed perceive that a company's major responsibility is to its customers and 23% felt that employees are a company's major responsibility. This is in line with the literature above which highlighted that customers place their own needs first above those of other stakeholders.

- The study revealed that the industry that was considered by the majority to be more important for CSR activities is the Food and Beverage industry (34%). It was followed by the Financial Services with twenty eight percent. The others were Healthcare (23%) and Utilities (15%).
- The study also revealed that the most popular initiative amongst consumers in Manzini was that of Educating the youth.
- Educating the youth is the CSR initiative that appealed to a majority of respondents at an extremely high degree, followed by caring for the environment. Sports and sponsorship did not appeal at a greater extent as one would have expected. Consumers identified the initiative that speaks the most to their pressing need. With the ever increasing level of employment in the country parents in Manzini are struggling to take their children to school. Another contributing factor could be failure by the government of Swaziland to provide scholarships for all students due to poor economic climate in the country.
- The other finding that arose was that a majority of consumers believe that all companies should have a budget allocation for CSR initiatives.

Forty seven out of the seventy five surveyed consumers would recommend for companies to have a budget ranging from 0-20% allocated towards these CSR initiatives.

The amount of money that companies spend in CSR initiatives is a good measure of its commitment towards the fulfillment and implementation of the many flowery statements and declarations made in the media intended to paint a good picture of them.

Conclusion

Amongst the many programmes available that are aimed at assisting the communities, educating the youth has been identified as the most appealing initiative for consumers in Manzini. As Nelson Mandela put it “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

Most of the respondents would prefer to have companies providing education to the youth as the majority ranked it as the initiatives that appealed to them at a very high rate. The belief is that an educated youth is the future of the nation. Low education attainment is one of the major challenges facing the country. Educating the youth would come in as a crucial solution to address the issue of an increase in orphaned and vulnerable children in Swaziland, who cannot afford to pay school fees. The other initiative that was popular with the respondents was that of caring for the environment.

The inference drawn from these findings was in line with what literature highlighted that customers place their own needs above those of other stakeholders. Based on the responses provided by the consumers it is evident that the only CSR initiatives they perceive to be good are those that are closely linked to the betterment of their own lives.

Lack of information and understanding on the part of companies as to what initiatives appeal the most to consumers would be a major hindrance in companies seeking to achieve their CSR goals. The information gathered in this study should help them know where to focus their efforts in terms of CSR initiatives.

Recommendations

- Just so as to support the notion that children are the future leaders of the country, and education is the only tool through which they could be better equipped for such. All companies big or small should take the initiative to fund the education of at least five students; this would make a huge difference in the future economy of the country.
- Companies should engage in CSR initiatives that link with objectives of the company.

- Companies should have at a minimum budget allocation of 10% that is directed towards CSR. This should be utilized wisely taking care to focus on the initiatives that add more value to the nation at large and that put them in good books with their consumers, as literature has indicated that building its image and reputation is a company's major motivation for engaging in CSR.
- Since it is highly likely that what appeals to consumers now would have changed in the next 5 years depending on prevailing circumstances; it is highly recommended that companies should frequently engage with their stakeholders to determine the most profitable and favoured CSR initiatives at any given point in time so that they are up to date and well aligned.
- All investments in CSR in terms of costs incurred must be weighed against benefits so as to justify the investments. Huge amounts of money go into investing in CSR initiatives therefore it is imperative that the return on investment is realized.
- Although it is not advisable at this stage to make it mandatory for all companies in Manzini to engage in CSR initiatives. However regulations should be strengthened to ensure that at least they do not contribute to the erosion of the community's nature given rights, for example minimizing pollution of the environment, reduction of wastage, energy and water saving.
- Since it transpired that after educating the youth, environment protection was the initiative which appealed the most to the surveyed consumers.
- Companies that are in the industries that pollute the environment should primarily engage in CSR initiatives that mitigate the negative effects on the environment.

5.5 Objective 4

Research Question: To determine the impact CSR has on a consumer's decision to purchase a product.

This objective was to derive whether companies in Manzini would benefit or be rewarded for committing their resources on CSR initiatives; by way of repeat purchases and being able to charge higher prices and yet still have their products move off the

shelves. This would depend on attitudes of the consumers and how they perceive the companies' CSR efforts which in turn affect their buying decision making.

To determine the impact CSR has on consumer's decision to purchase a product the questionnaire included these quantitative questions:

- "How important is a company's involvement in CSR in your buying decision"
- "Please state your level of agreement with the statement 'Consumers want to know the extent of involvement in CSR of the company behind the product they are buying.'"
- "Do you agree that the quality of products is much related to the company, such that CSR companies produce high quality products?"
- "How would you rank your willingness to pay an extra price for products offered by a company involved in CSR?"

Findings: Literature

There is a vast amount of literature available that highlighted that CSR has a positive impact on a consumer's decision to buy and is highlighted as follows:

- Rodrigues and Borges (2015), attested that though at first consumers do not appear to be persuaded about CSR practices, a conclusion has been made that they prefer socially responsible brands.
- Consumers do not mind paying extra for products manufactured by a company that cares for the environment. Actually a company that does well in the CSR attribute may not need to compete on price (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013).
- Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) also established that consumers are willing to pay extra for CSR products that are both of high quality and manufactured by a company that has a concern for the environment
- Another literature by Aksaka *et al.* (2016) confirmed that customers reflect on a company's involvement in CSR when they make purchasing decisions and reputation attributions, as a result companies that seize the reputation advantage

of good CSR may increase their customer base and ultimately their sales and profitability.

On the contrary there is some limited amount of literature that is available to shed some light on how consumers disregard CSR in their buying decision as follows:

- Literature according to Green and Peloza (2011) highlighting that consumers, in their decision making to buy, they go with product performance while giving lower priority to CSR initiatives that generate emotional value and social value.
- Literature according to Gupta and Hodges (2012) indicated that consumers would not pay ridiculously high prices and even disregard quality all in the name of social responsibility.

Findings - Study

The study revealed that while there are those few consumers who place no importance at all on a company's CSR status when they decide to make a purchase, a majority of them would really want to spend their money on nothing less than a product produced by a company that gives back to the society. About 18% of the respondents indicated that it is extremely important 28% indicated that it is very important, 29 % said it is important whereas 17% and 7% responded that the level of importance is low and not important at all, respectively. Those who consider it of no importance were outnumbered by those who perceive it as being important.

- There is some truth in the statement that "Consumers want to know the extent of involvement in CSR of the company behind the product they are buying" as the study indicated that a very few of the surveyed consumers expressed their disagreement with the statement. From the study it was established that although there were those few respondents who indicated that they disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement stated above, a majority of consumers indicated that not only do they agree, but strongly agree with the statement. Of the consumers surveyed some 29% agreed and 13% strongly agreed with some 36% being neutral this leaves those who explicitly disagreed to be a minority.

- This is also in line with the responses consumers gave to the question on whether CSR companies always produce high quality products. Some twenty seven percent agreed and 25% strongly agreed on the other hand 11% disagreed and only 4% strongly disagreed .These results are an indication that consumers perceive that the best quality products are produced by companies that are committed to CSR initiatives. This may be because most companies, especially those that engage in CSR have the obvious goals of financial sustainability, survival and growth thus producing quality products and services is a major ingredient to achieving those goals. High quality is always associated with success.
- More than fifty percent of consumers in the total sample indicated that they were willing to pay an extra price for CSR products. These consumers believe that if a company is capable of spending in CSR, then it must have enough resources to invest in producing high quality products. Therefore there is less opportunity for any regrets as they would get the value for money and satisfaction is guaranteed.
- On the other hand there were some consumers who were not so keen on CSR that they ranked as very low their willingness to pay an extra price for products offered by a CSR company. They were represented by a smaller percentage of 23%.
- The qualitative review indicated that many consumers perceive that CSR status of a company matters because customers are more interested in buying from a company that practices CSR.

To some it matters so much that they would even pay a higher price for a CSR product. A company that has invested in CSR initiatives is more appealing to consumers who tend to believe that it has a heart and therefore deserves support so that it can grow and be able to continue giving more back to the community.

Conclusion

To some degree a company's involvement in CSR influences the buying decision of a consumer. Some consumers have an obsession for CSR companies to such an extent that it becomes a determining factor when they have to make a purchase decision. In

fact they prefer to buy products that are produced by CSR companies and they call it an expression of appreciation for the company that takes care of the community.

You get what you give is how the world we are living in operates; people are constantly conscious to do things that matter. The results of the study confirmed that consumers are ready to reward with their support and loyalty companies that take good care of them. Based on the results of the study it is clear that CSR plays a major role in influencing a consumer's buying decision and pattern.

As literature according to (Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013) has stated above that in fact CSR companies do not need to compete on price, the study did provide a positive confirmation to that statement. Consumers in Manzini would support CSR companies because they associate their involvement in CSR with producing high quality products worth spending some extra cents on. Thus Investing in CSR is not in vain as companies stand a better chance to get a return on investment in a form of mutual support from the consumers who consider the status of a company before they can make a purchase. Consumers will continue to support CSR companies because they understand that they are also helping themselves whilst doing so.

Recommendations

- First and foremost consumers need to be educated on the subject of CSR and its significance so that they can be in a better position to reflect on it in their buying decision making. The neutral responses are an indication that some participants either do not clearly understand or have little interest on the significance of CSR such that it would be impossible for it to affect their buying decision making. Unless if it could be established that those neutral responses came from knowledgeable individuals who had other reasons for being neutral.
- Companies that are involved in CSR initiatives should also take the initiative to capture the attention and interest of those whom they serve so as to make their efforts count and meaningful. There should not be too many of consumers with neutral responses, for they represent potential candidates who can be converted and won over to fully agree that CSR has a positive influence in their buying decision. CSR awareness campaigns are recommended.

- Government should start giving incentives like tax cuts to companies that engage in CSR so as to encourage participation from those companies who still believe it is a waste of resources.
- Instead of making it mandatory for companies to commit to CSR, they should be encouraged to commit to producing the best quality products and services. This is some form of CSR on its own.
- The loyal customers who pledge with their support for CSR products should be afforded the best quality products. This is line with Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga (2013) in literature who suggested that the mature consumers who pay attention to CSR should be targeted with high quality products
- To ensure such is implemented, customer feedback surveys should be conducted to get consumers' views on whether they are satisfied with the quality of products and services offered by these CSR companies. Through such feedback companies would be able to make improvements on the negative feedback and maintain on the positive feedback so they can offer the best quality products and services to their consumers. According to literature by Green and Pelozza (2011) improving on the quality of product is some form of CSR on its own and would be viewed by consumers as such and this would definitely translate into a healthy bottom line.

A company should rather not engage in CSR initiatives but focus its resources on improving the quality of its product or service. Therefore it is recommended that companies should start by focusing their resources on improving the quality of the product before engaging in CSR initiatives. It is difficult to acquire a customer and very easy to lose a dissatisfied one. Poor quality products do not attract customers and are a recipe for losing existing loyal customers.

- The use of technology is also recommended in the likes of the internet, websites and email as platforms to get the feedback and communications. It is the most effective tool for communicating with the modern tech-savvy generation.

- Companies that produce high quality products yet they are not involved in CSR initiatives should consider investing in CSR to get the recognition that comes with the status as the literature and findings of this study have shown how much consumers recognize CSR companies.

Failure to do so could put them at a disadvantage as they might be overtaken by those CSR companies who might even be producing poor quality products.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

After having gained an understanding of perceptions on the consumers' side in accordance with the purpose of the study, conducting research to derive an understanding of companies' perceptions and intentions of CSR is suggested. The proposed research would seek to get an understanding of how companies are committed to the practice of CSR, what their perceptions are regarding the subject of CSR and as to whether engaging in CSR is a value add or a drain to the business.

In addition, most of the questions in the survey were quantitative in nature, limiting the respondents from expressing their views openly. The questions confined the respondents because they were required to pick from the provided options.

In a qualitative study respondents would be able to elaborate and give reasons for their responses which would be instrumental in bringing an improvement where CSR is concerned. A suggestion is made to do a pure qualitative study on the same subject in future.

Another limitation of the study was that the sample size was too small to draw reliable conclusions considering the population of Manzini. It is suggested that a larger sample size be taken in future to strengthen the reliability of the findings.

One last suggestion for future research would be to do an investigation five years from now as to whether or how much CSR companies in Manzini would have contributed towards improving the standard of education in the country Swaziland through the CSR initiative of educating the youth.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

The aim of the research was motivated by the desire to gather information on how consumers perceive companies that engage in CSR, the focus was on Manzini based companies and the consumers surveyed were residents of Manzini.

A study of this nature has never been conducted in the area and this study was to provide an insight into the situation and to make recommendations on areas of improvement so that everyone; the consumer, the company and ultimately the nation at large will benefit from the results.

The research was able to identify the perceptions of consumers in Manzini on the CSR initiatives. It was observed however that even though most of the results were in line with available literature there were a few that came different and were more specific to the Manzini setup and they presented opportunities for future research.

In spite of the highlighted limitations of the study the most important finding was that consumers in Manzini do not have a mature level of understanding of the subject of CSR. Some consumers had challenges in understanding the concept of CSR and future research would have to focus on exploration of the level of awareness of CSR initiatives by stakeholders.

As it was with available literature on the study, some findings were diverse in terms of the expression of views, however conclusions were drawn and inferences made by focusing on common themes and majority views. The literature was in harmony with the finding that consumers like companies who are involved in CSR. They are willing to support such companies by buying their products and even paying extra for such. They perceive that all companies are equally responsible for taking the initiative to give back to the community because they also stand to benefit in many ways, the ultimate benefit being a healthy bottom line for companies involved.

Although the findings cannot be generalized to the population of consumers in Manzini at large due to the limitation of the small sample used which was not representative enough of the entire population, it does however provide an indication of consumer

perceptions of CSR that caring companies need to consider in order to implement meaningful CSR and to reap the rewards of being good corporate citizens. This research could be a base for future research in this area where a larger sample will be selected. Then the results of the future research will validate the present findings.

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Appendix 1: Research Instrument

Corporate Social Responsibility Questionnaire

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF CORPORATE FIRMS IN MANZINI BASED ON THEIR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES

Please kindly assist by filling this questionnaire which is a data collection instrument for a study I am conducting to uncover the perceptions of consumers towards companies in Manzini based on their corporate social responsibility initiatives. The information will be treated with great confidentiality and no individuals' names will be mentioned.

1. What is your gender?

Female.....

Male.....

2. Please indicate your area of residence

Hhohho	
Manzini	
Shiselweni	
Lubombo	

3. Please indicate your age group amongst these

18-22	
22-27	
28-32	
33-37	
38-42	

43-47	
Above 48	

4. Please indicate your income bracket amongst these

0-E2999	
E3000-E5999	
E6000-8999	
E9000-E11999	
E12000-14999	
E15000-E17999	
E18000-E20999	
Above E21000	

5. Please indicate your occupation

Entrepreneur	
Professional	
Private Employee	
Civil Servant	
Other, please state	

6. What is your qualification

Matric	
Diploma	
Undergraduate	
Post-Graduate	
Any other qualification	

7. Please state your level of understanding for Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives by companies in Manzini on this scale

1. Extremely high	
2. High	
3. Moderate	
4. Low	
5. Extremely low	

8. What mostly influences your perception about a company?

.....

9. How important is a company's involvement in CSR in your buying decision

10. Extremely important	
11. Very Important	
12. Important	
13. Not important	
14. Not important at all	

10. Do you believe all companies should be involved in CSR?

A) YES

B) NO

Please explain your answer.....

11. In your opinion should it be mandatory for all companies to practice CSR?

A) YES

B) NO

Please explain your answer:

12. How did you become aware of CSR activities by the companies in Manzini?

Media	
Family and Friends	
Books	
Internet	
Any other sources	

13. Which industry is more important for CSR activities

Food and Beverages	
Utilities	
Financial Services	
Healthcare	

14. To what extent do the following CSR activities appeal to you?

	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Educating the youth					
Caring for the environment					
Sports Sponsorships & Development					
SME Development					

15. In your view what is a company's major responsibility?

Customers	
Employees	
Suppliers	
Society	
Environment	

Other	
-------	--

16. Please state your level of agreement with the statement 'Consumers want to know the extent of involvement in CSR of the company behind the product they are buying

1. Strongly agree	
2. Agree	
3. Neutral	
4. Disagree	
5. Strongly disagree	

17. Why does the CSR status of the company behind the product matter, if at all?

.....

18. Do you agree that the quality of products is very related to the company, such that CSR companies produce high quality products

1. Strongly agree	
2. Agree	
3. Neutral	
4. Disagree	
5. Strongly disagree	

19. How would you rank your willingness to pay an extra price for products offered by a company involved in CSR?

1. Extremely high	
2. High	
3. Moderate	
4. Low	
5. Very low	

20. What percentage of the annual budget should go to CSR?

0-10 percent	
11-20 percent	
21-30 percent	
31-40 percent	
41-50 percent	

51-60 percent	
61-70 percent	
71-80 percent	
81-90 percent	
91-100 percent	

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING....

Appendix 2: Informed Consent

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 14th April 2016

Dear Valued Consumer

My name is Ncamsile Dlamini an MBA final year student from the University of KwaZulu- Natal

Email address: ncdlamini.nd@gmail.com

Cell number: +26876323499

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on Consumers' Perceptions of Corporate Firms in Manzini based on their Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives. The study is directed at consumers in the Manzini region only and its aim is to assess the impact of CSR as perceived by consumers around the Manzini region so as to determine consumer preferences and what consumers consider to be the best CSR approach. The study is expected to enroll fifty participants all from the Manzini region. It will involve filling in a questionnaire and submitting it immediately after completing it. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 20 minutes.

There are no anticipated risks to you if you participate in this study, beyond those encountered in everyday life. The study will also not in any way provide the participants with direct benefits. The results will help bring an improvement on how companies conduct CSR programs as they will get to know views and expectations from consumers who are their major stakeholders.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number_____).

In the event of any problems or concerns/ questions you may contact the researcher at (+26876323499) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you choose to be in the study you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You can also choose to skip any question. Participating in the study does not mean you are giving up any of your legal rights.

The records of this study will be kept private as they will be stored electronically in my personal computer which requires a password to access any information. Any report of this study will not disclose your name or any individual information by which you could be identified.

CONSENT

I have been informed about the study entitled
.....
..... by
.....(provide name of researcher/fieldworker).

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

I have been informed about any available compensation or medical treatment if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at cell number 76323499

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001
Durban
4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion | YES / NO |
| Video-record my interview / focus group discussion | YES / NO |
| Use of my photographs for research purposes | YES / NO |

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness
(Where applicable)

Date

Signature of Translator
(Where applicable)

Date

Appendix 3: Ethical Clearance



15 June 2016

Ms Neemalie Olga Dlamini (214578677)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Dlamini,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0461/016M

Project title: Consumer perceptions of corporate firms in Manzini based on their Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives.

Full Approval – Expedited Approval

With regards to your application received on 26 April 2016. The documents submitted have been accepted by the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee and **FULL APPROVAL** for the protocol has been granted.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shobuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Mr A. Dooz
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
Cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shobuka Singh (Chair)

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010
100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

FOUNDED CAMPUSES: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

Appendix 4: Turnitin Summary

Turnitin

Page 1 of 1

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH 1

1.1 Introduction The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not new 37

1.1.1 Introduction globally including in developing countries such as Sweden. Although various studies have been done in Sweden looking at CSR from different perspectives none of them have been done on consumer perceptions relating to CSR activities as performed by companies in Sweden. In the light of this, this research was planned and conducted as that companies in Sweden that practice CSR will get a feedback whether or not their CSR activities improve their image or not. This study explored the main consumer perceptions of CSR and how such impacts on corporate image and support from the consumers which translates into sales and market loyalty. In

This chapter an overview of the study is presented. The problem statement is 18

put forward followed by the significance of the study and the objectives of the research. A brief research methodology overview is presented. The limitations review, the limitations of the study and chapter outline are presented as well. 1.2 Problem Statement: Swedish based companies are taking the race to provide Corporate Social Responsibility in that was necessary so as to improve the standard of living in the country (Sjoholm, 2014). The expectations are that they should be able to reap the benefits of increased return on investment so as to maximize profits. The question is whether they are doing it correctly not for the right reasons and whether the CSR activities are aligned with the expectations of the stakeholders? While well planned and in CSR activities can potentially improve the image of the firm and possibly also increase sales, badly planned and un-CSR could destroy a company. If the image is ruined it could be a total failure. However, the shareholders could be compromised by

- 1% match (student papers from 03-Nov-2015) Submitted to University of Kwazulu Natal
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