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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i4/4003>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i4/4003

Received: 02 Mar 2018, Revised: 28 Mar 2018, Accepted: 08 April 2018

Published Online: 16 April 2018

In-Text Citation: (Chan & Hasan, 2018)

To Cite this Article: Chan, T. J., & Hasan, N. A. M. (2018). Corporate Social Responsibility Practices from the Employees' Perspective: A Case of Malaysian Higher Education Institution. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 129–152.

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Vol. 8, No. 4, April 2018, Pg. 129 – 152

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Corporate Social Responsibility Practices from the Employees' Perspective: A Case of Malaysian Higher Education Institution

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Abstract

The current study investigates university as an entity of organisation to explore their corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. The unit of analysis in this study focused on employees in one of the research universities in Malaysia, namely Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The purpose of this study is to identify the level of employees' understanding on CSR practices as well as their perception on selected elements of CSR that prominently practised in university. A quantitative (survey) method and multistage sampling were employed in this study, whereby questionnaires were distributed to 464 UPM staff (academic and non-academic), with only 285 valid respondents. The respondents were selected from Social Science cluster faculties and Science cluster faculties. This study focuses primarily on descriptive statistics. The findings show that respondents have a high level of understanding about CSR and the three (3) specific dimensions, namely human rights, community driven, and labour rights have shown to be the CSR practices that perceived prominent by the UPM staff. Further study to replicate the research in different university context (public or private) in Malaysian to explore more on CSR practices by respective universities was suggested. Future studies also recommended that relationships between CSR, job satisfaction, and corporate reputation need to be carried out in order to see the link between those variables.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Employees, Higher education institution, Stakeholder, Sustainability

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have cut across all sectors, and in particular, there is a growing interest of CSR among higher education institutions (HEIs) (Carroll, 2015; Christensen, Thrane, Jørgensen, & Lehmann, 2009). Thus, HEIs in the global have begun to encompass sustainability and engross the efforts on campuses and communities, as universities who function as a primary key contributor have a moral obligation to educate the better understanding of sustainability issues and create solutions for the future (Owens & Legere, 2015; Wright, 2007).

CSR initiatives in the Malaysian HEIs have also gained attention as universities continued to focus on world ranking platforms and dynamic transformation. This has supported by Weymnas (2010) that many HEIs are likely to adapt business approach in order to survive in the drastic change in the industry as a result of today's turbulent environment. Therefore, universities are jumping into the bandwagon, in which more HEIs adapt to these new economic realities.

In Malaysia, the function of HEIs has been stated clearly in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP). The aims of higher education in Malaysia is set as a pivotal tool for nation-building purposes, such as promoting national unity, bridging the gaps of social disparity, and focus on the knowledge-based economy (Arokiasamy, 2011; Sirat, 2006). Hence, this has called for a higher education transformation to produce a holistic human capital to achieve the nation's goals. The NHESP's transformation focused on the seven thrusts and delivered through 23 critical agenda projects, whereby one of the agenda is accessibility and sustainability. This project was aligned with the last phase of the plan, which is Phase IV (Beyond the year 2020) that focused on the sustainability (MOHE, 2015). Thus, this had called upon HEIs to focus on the sustainability and social responsibility as it will become a general practice in the future.

Based on the above notion, the adoption of CSR concept and make the CSR practices to become important contributions towards the sustainability in the Malaysian HEIs context has become a very significant agenda (Ahmad, 2012; Ahmad & Saad, 2010). Hence, universities as a centre of research (knowledge generation, continuance, and sharing) have been asked to be the spearhead to adapt the problem and issue in regard to the global sustainability (Cortese, 2003). This is because HEIs as sustainability change drivers and leaders will help the future human capital to enhance their educational and knowledge skills to fostering legitimacy for the nation and society to become good citizens (Gumpert, 2000). Thus, the university is a platform to expose and to practise good CSR as well as enhances the healthy and beneficial lifestyle of the university stakeholders, especially the employees (Nicolescu, 2006).

Statement of Problem

Malaysian public education sectors are generally non-profit in nature when compared to the private education institutions. Hence, the idea of meeting with the bottom line profit orientation is not prominent in Malaysian educational institutions. However, the fact is there is a need for HEIs to carry out CSR because universities face numerous internal and external challenges due to its complex environment. For instance, standardisation issues, constraint in budgets, retention of staff, and competitive within the other global workforce (Chopra & Marriya, 2013) are some challenges that may influence a university's image and reputation.

Besides, pressure from the peer institutions (Ferrer-Balas, et al., 2008), the availability of the funding or grants for CSR (Evangelinos, Jones, & Panoriou, 2009), and reputation management

(Bebbington, Larrinaga-González & Moneva, 2008) have caused the university to foster CSR initiatives. However, Atakan and Eker (2007) found out that most universities tend to highlight the teaching of CSR through various curricula and courses, but often do not go beyond classroom teaching to practise CSR in the actual form as a way to improve the needs of various stakeholders. Before the goal can be a success, stakeholders of the university, especially the employees need to share a mutual understanding of the CSR concepts (Wright, 2010). This is because Ramasamy and Hung's (2004) study argued that the awareness and understanding of CSR in developing country like Malaysia is still at the minimal stage. Furthermore, Ahmad and Saad's (2011) study indicated that university staff perceived CSR likely to be philanthropic in nature, however, CSR is not merely focusing on philanthropy, but beyond it, whereby this is the gap that going to be addressed in this particular study.

However, CSR dimensions that explore wider categories of CSR, and focus specific elements relevant to the Malaysian context, such as 1) human rights; 2) labour rights; 3) environmental stewardship; 4) social reporting; and 5) community driven need further extension of study (Hasan, 2013, 2017). Most importantly, Hasan (2013) suggested that these items are pertinent in Malaysia because the items were compiled and collated from existing global CSR best practices as well as local standards.

Therefore, the current study sought to fill those research voids by determining the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of understanding of CSR practices among UPM employees.
2. To identify the elements of CSR practices (human rights, labour rights, environmental stewardship, social reporting, community driven) that perceived prominent in UPM context.

Literature Review

Employees as Primary Stakeholder

According to Barnett (2005), CSR is a form of corporate investment characterised by a dual orientation towards the improvement of social welfare and stakeholder relations. This orientation focuses on employees and how the employees will give an impact towards CSR policies. Firstly, employees act as agents of social change when they push the organisation to adopt socially responsible behaviours (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi 2007). Secondly, environmental policy demonstrates that employees' support is necessary to secure effective CSR programmes and policies (Ramus & Steger, 2000). Thirdly, employees as a stakeholder perceive, evaluate, judge, and react to CSR programmes and actions (Rowley & Berman, 2000; Rupp, Ganapathy, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006). Employees also need to give feedbacks to the organisation in order to ensure the CSR activities planned by the organisation were effective. In other words, successful or not the CSR initiatives depend on the factors mentioned.

According to De Roeck, Marique, Stinglhamber, and Swaen (2014), they argued that the employees' perception also concerned about organisation actions that focus on the employee needs as an internal stakeholder. Therefore, employees' perception toward CSR is crucial in order to shape the overall perception of the organisation responsible level.

CSR in Education Sector

Ismail, Amat Johar, Mohd Rasdi, and Alias (2014) carried out a research on the types of CSR programmes and the outcomes for the development of the school as a unit of the education sector. The findings of the study showed that school CSR programmes include improving the physical infrastructure, gained funding, providing and supplying study material for students and teachers. In addition, the results also revealed that school CSR programmes significantly contribute to the development of the school in term of living and the achievement of the students and teachers. Based on the discussion above, it is the paradigm shift for corporations to enrol themselves to engage in the education-based CSR programmes as there are many beneficial effects on the students, teachers, and the community as stakeholders.

Asemah, Okpanachi, and Olumuji (2013) carried out a research on the need for HEIs (universities) to carry CSR programmes. The findings showed that universities have to be socially responsible to their stakeholders including the employees. There are various dimensions of CSR practices that universities can focus on. For instance philanthropic responsibility, environmental responsibility, employee health and wellness, qualified employees, and legal responsibility. Based on the above discussion, HEIs in the world need to immerse themselves in CSR programmes in order to win the goodwill from the stakeholders. Hence, it can be suggested that universities should endeavour to be socially responsible and communicate their CSR initiatives to their stakeholders effectively. Besides, Nagy and Robb (2008) highlighted the concept of good corporate citizen due to the corporatisation of the universities. Hence, universities have tried to merge the policy of corporate citizenship into their vision and mission statements. In a wider perspective, universities or institutions not only should meet with the local, state, and federal legitimacy requirements. However, universities should also treat the requirement as a chance of being better beyond the compliance standards. This had in line with Shawyun (2011) that universities should address the current and future impact on the society in order to ensure the faculties, staff, and students identify, support, and strengthen the key stakeholders as a good citizen.

Wright (2010) carried out a research in examining the cohort of universities in Canada based on the president and vice-presidents point of view regards the concept of sustainable development, sustainable universities, key issues faced by the universities, and the barrier in implementing CSR initiatives on campus. The findings showed that the participants understand the concept of sustainable development, but they are not familiar with the term sustainable universities. The results also indicated that financial problems, lack of awareness, and understanding regarding the sustainability issues are the reasons that inhibit the performance of CSR in universities. In addition, lack of shared vision at the HEIs is a barrier for the university to progress towards the leading world sustainable institutions (Pollock, Horn, Costanza, & Sayre, 2009).

In addition, Dahan and Senol (2012) conducted a research on the CSR in Istanbul Bilgi University. The purpose of the study was to identify the factors which influence the CSR performances of the university. The findings showed that CSR performance unable to be successful without the support of the management of the university. Furthermore, the findings also indicated that Bilgi University carried out CSR in a very minimal ways. Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that most universities include Bilgi University only focus the CSR as an initiative or programmes, but do not perform the CSR effectively.

Nejati, Shafaei, Salamzadeh, and Daraei (2011) conducted a research on CSR and the top 10 world university websites. Nejati and colleagues used content analysis to analyse the website of the

Top 10 world universities that ranked by Times Higher Education, 2009. They analyse the CSR by focusing on organisational governance, human rights, labour practices, environmental practices, fair operating practices, consumer (students) issues, and community involvement and development dimensions. The findings indicated that the leading universities in the world have a concern about the CSR issues actively and revealed the practices on their websites.

In the same vein, Hasan (2017) carried out a study to explore on the current standards of CSR initiatives in the Malaysian HEI's corporate website. The study utilized qualitative content analysis method. The findings of the study showed that human rights and anti-corruption/bribery was the least being highlighted on the university's corporate website, however, the community driven is a major CSR practices that being practice and prioritise by the university.

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that universities in society had evolved to become a general practice in near future. Hence, universities as part of HEIs are not just focusing on education and research that granted academic degrees in the various fields of study, but universities have a more significant role in training and nurturing the human capital, creating knowledge, and help to solve societal issues and problems in order to be a good citizen.

In a developing country like Malaysia, Ahmad (2012) conducted a study to look into the CSR drivers based on students' perceptions as one of the stakeholders of the university. The findings indicated that generally, respondents are aware of the significant to protect and preserve the environment. The role of CSR in developing responsive public had also been highlighted. Furthermore, Ahmad argued that lack of exposure to the CSR activities that the students can participate by themselves need to be addressed.

Based on the discussion above, the environmental aspect of CSR in HEIs owed to be a significant aspect that needs to be focused. However, there are some other factors or initiatives can contribute towards the CSR initiatives in the HEIs context. This had provided the reasons for HEIs like universities in Malaysia to engage with their own relevance of CSR initiatives and programmes. Hence, efforts to understand CSR in the HEIs setting are important for the sustainable development and shaping the policies of the universities.

Methodology

Participants

Out of the 464 questionnaires that being distributed, 297 were returned (64% response rate). However, only generate 285 valid responses which represent the total of 61% of the success rate. The distribution of male and female respondents was relatively equal, but female respondents were slightly higher with 56.5% as compared to the male respondents which make up about 43.5%. More than half of the respondents were non-academic staff (52.3%) with ages ranging from 31- 40 years old (47.4%). As for the educational level, the highest numbers of respondents were Masters and Ph. D holders (44.6%), who have served UPM less than 5 years (34.0%).

Procedures

A multistage sampling procedure was applied in this study. Firstly, researchers applied cluster sampling to identify faculties based on the social sciences and science cluster. After that, the researchers used a probability sampling (simple random) to get the list of faculty from social science and science cluster, whereby each of the faculties has an equal chance to be selected.

However, due to the limitations, this study was unable to study all the faculties. Thus, researchers pick a minimum suggested number (should be at least 30%) for each of the clusters and this has been supported by Cohen (1988).

In addition, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is chosen because UPM currently ranked 27th in the UI-Greenmetric World University Ranking and top 3 in Asia to promote the university sustainability and environmental management (Muhamad Noh, 2017a). In the context of UPM, the social sciences cluster comprises of four (4) faculties, and the science clusters have 11 faculties. Hence, faculties under social science cluster that being selected comprised of Faculty of Education Studies, Faculty of Human Ecology, whereas for the science cluster consists of Faculty Science, Faculty of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, and Faculty of Engineering. The academic staff members comprised of Professors, Associate Professors, senior lecturers, lecturers, and teaching assistants, whereas the non-academic staff members comprised of registrars, assistant registrars, clerks, administrative assistants, laboratory assistants, assistant science officers, and computer technician with Gred N17 and above which involve in the administrative decision-making process.

The Instrument

The research instrument employed for data collection in this study is a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire used in this study comprised of three (3) main sections. Section A is the demographic profile of respondents (gender, staff, age, race, education, tenure, position, and department). Section B consists of questions on the understanding of CSR practices which have been adapted from Fadun (2014) and Pham (2011). For instance “I understand the meaning of the term CSR”, “CSR provides a favourable public image”, “CSR will become a general practice in the near future” have been asked. Section C comprised of questions on five (5) elements of CSR practices which were human rights, labour rights, environmental stewardship, social reporting, and community driven. Questions in Section C were drawn from a compilation and collated existing best practice international standards as reviewed in the literature (Chen, Nasongkhla, & Donaldson, 2015; Hasan, 2013; Montgomery & Stone, 2009; Pham, 2011; Tetřenová & Sabolová, 2010; Turker, 2009).

This survey item for section B were designed as statement measured on a five-point Likert-scale where 1 represents “strongly disagree”; 2 represents “disagree”; 3 indicates “somewhat agree”; 4 represents “Agree”; and 5 indicates as “Strongly Agree”. For section B, a composite score of the scale was derived and later categorised into three levels (low, medium, and high) using the analysis of cutoff point. Thus, based on the above calculation, score of 8 – 18 was categorised as low, score of 19 – 22 as medium, and score of 30 – 40 as a high level of understanding of CSR.

For Section C, the interpretation of the Likert scale which based on Umi, Zamri and Jamaludin (2011) is listed as below:

1	Strongly disagree	Negative
2	Disagree	
3	Somewhat agree	
4	Agree	Positive
5	Strongly agree	

To test the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted. 50 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the employees of UPM in the Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, however, only 30 questionnaires were returned.

In this study, reliability test of the research instrument was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha testing and it is the most frequently used tools in social sciences research. According to Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, and Page (2015), the reliability analysis scale can be accepted if the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is between 0.6 and 1.0. This is in line with Ghozali (2011) whereby the ideal value of Cronbach alpha should be above 0.70. Therefore, the reliability results analysis showed that the construct and items on the understanding of CSR practices, CSR practices by specific elements were reliable. (See Table 1).

Table 1. Cronbach's alpha on the understanding of CSR practices, specific elements of CSR practices.

Construct/ Items	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha (Pre-test) n=30	Cronbach's alpha (Post-test) n=285
<u>Section B</u>			
Understanding of CSR Practices	8	0.83	0.83
<u>Section C</u>			
Elements of CSR Practices			
Human rights	5	0.82	0.83
Labour rights	6	0.73	0.85
Environmental stewardship	7	0.86	0.90
Social reporting	5	0.81	0.89
Community driven	7	0.85	0.87

Results and Discussion

Objective 1: To determine the level of understanding of CSR practices among UPM employees

Table 2 indicated that the level of understanding of CSR practices as high. More than half of the respondents, 190 (66.7%) of employees has a high level of understanding of CSR practices that carried out by UPM. This has proven that UPM as a green university has carried out various CSR

programmes and the employees are aware of it. This was congruent with the findings of Nejati et al. (2011) that university in the world has started to concern about CSR practices and revealed it on their website. This is also similar in Malaysia context that the implementation of NHESP by the MOHE that focus on the sustainability practices has motivated most of the HEIs in Malaysia to start practising CSR initiatives (MOHE, 2015).

Table 2. The level of understanding of CSR practices (n=285)

Level of Understanding of CSR Practices	Frequency	Percentage
Low (8 – 18)	5	1.8
Medium (19 – 29)	90	31.6
High (30 – 40)	190	66.7
Total	285	100.0

Table 3 summarises the mean and standard deviation of the items on understanding of CSR practices. The item “organisation should conduct social responsibility initiatives” was mostly agreed by the respondents and had the highest mean score ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.74$). The item which had a second highest mean was “CSR provides a favourable public image” ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.78$). However, the item “I know the meaning of the term CSR” had a lowest mean score ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.88$). The result of this item was not encouraging as the employees might not get enough exposure about the knowledge and terminology of social responsibility, sustainable development, and citizenship, despite UPM’s has numerous CSR initiatives. This is in line with the findings of Wright (2010) which indicated that the respondents understand the sustainable development concept, but they are not familiar with the term sustainable universities. Hence, the UPM’s CSR initiatives would not have reached out fully to its stakeholders, especially the employees effectively if knowledge of CSR is not clear to its stakeholders. This suggests that the information related to CSR policy needs to be communicated properly to the employees and their awareness of CSR practices can still be improved.

Table 3: Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to the understanding of CSR practices (n= 285)

Understanding of CSR Practices (n=285)	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation should conduct social responsibility initiatives.	0.7	2.1	16.1	57.5	23.5	4.0	0.74
CSR provides a favourable public image.	0.4	3.9	18.2	53.7	23.9	3.9	0.78
Donations to charitable and public welfare activities are the social responsibility of the organisation.	1.4	3.2	18.9	57.5	18.9	3.8	0.79
CSR will become a general practice in near future.	1.1	3.9	27.0	51.2	16.8	3.7	0.80
Organisation should be concerned with the protection of a wide range of communities.	0.4	5.6	27.0	50.2	16.8	3.7	0.80
The commitment to CSR is a waste of organisational time and resources. (Reverse)	31.2	35.1	16.1	15.4	2.1	3.7	1.11
CSR is concerned with treating stakeholders ethically or in a socially responsible manner.	1.4	6.0	26.3	49.8	16.5	3.7	0.85
I know the meaning of the term corporate social responsibility (CSR).	1.8	6.0	30.5	45.6	16.1	3.6	0.88
Overall						3.8	0.84
						3	

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree
 Besides, the findings suggest that the respondents have positive views on the CSR practices which will help boost the UPM's CSR credibility which supports Castaldo, Perrini, Masani, and Tencati's (2009) study, in that CSR initiatives will help universities as an organisation to develop positive ethical identities and build relationships with the key stakeholders of the organisation including employees. In addition, CSR initiatives provide a favourable public image as a good public image

will help to strengthen the organisational brand, builds morale within stakeholders, including employees (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Smirnova, 2012).

Furthermore, respondents also agreed that CSR will become a general practice in the future. This result supports the study done by Popa (2010), whereby in the current global competitive environment, various internal stakeholders and external stakeholders have pressured organisations to improve on their CSR initiatives. In particular, CSR is a way for organisations to showcase their concerns of the communities and the environment. Hence, CSR initiatives will potentially be an organisations' common act of good deeds for the society and will become a general practice in the near future.

Objective 2: Specific elements of CSR practices (human rights, labour rights, environmental stewardship, social reporting, community driven) that perceived prominent in UPM

The second objective of this study was to identify the elements of CSR practices that are perceived prominent by the respondents. The analysis was carried out based on the items in each construct and presented summated scores in percentage. The mean score for the item analysis was based on the five-point Likert-type scale. The higher the mean scores, the higher the respondents perceived on the elements of the CSR practices.

Human Rights

In the most general sense, every individual that works in an organisation has the right to be treated fairly as a human being. Table 4 explained the data on human rights as one of the elements of CSR that perceived by the respondents. Human rights are a significant aspect of CSR because of the act of humanity towards employees, promotes an organisations' social justice, and improves fair distribution among communities (Umlas, 2009). The mean scores for the five items ranged from 3.41 to 4.22. The item which has the highest mean value among all the other items were the statement "organisation respecting the right to practise religion" ($M = 4.22, SD = 0.79$), followed by the statement "organisation adheres to local values, customs, norms (race, ethnicity, and gender)" ($M = 3.92, SD = 0.78$) which had the second highest mean. The overall mean score of 3.75 corresponding to human rights as one of the elements indicated that employees are fairly aware of the human rights initiatives that practised by UPM. Hence, it can be interpreted that UPM employees want more human rights initiatives to project more important and relevant gestures in practicing CSR. Hence, there is a need to improve or further practices the CSR initiatives that focused on human rights as the current study conducted in a multicultural setting.

This is inclined with Ahmad and Ramayah's (2012) study that practising ethical human aspects of CSR in Malaysia as a multi-cultural country can be significant and relevant as it represents the harmony of the organisation and society as an entity. In addition, Malaysian organisations are required to be sensitive towards employees' religious beliefs and other local values and norms, such as allowing employees of the various races to perform their prayer routine, being sensitive to diverse cultures, and values (Bursa, 2008). Thus, human rights become an important aspect that needs to look into.

Table 4. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to human rights (n= 285)

Statement	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation respecting the right to practise religion.	0.7	1.4	14.0	42.8	41.1	4.22	0.79
Organisation adheres to local values, customs, norms (race, ethnicity and gender).	1.4	2.5	18.9	57.2	20.0	3.92	0.78
Organisation notifies employees' awareness of human rights violations in the company's policy.	2.1	8.1	25.6	47.7	16.8	3.69	0.92
The management of the organisation is primarily concerned with employees' needs and wants.	3.2	10.5	30.9	45.3	10.2	3.49	0.93
The managerial decisions related to employees are usually fair.	2.8	9.8	38.6	41.4	7.4	3.41	0.87
Overall						3.75	0.86

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree
 UPM, being one of the leading universities in Malaysia that currently ranked 15th world's best in the QS Top 50 under 50 (Muhamad Noh, 2017b) need to sustain its reputation as an organisation to provide education and promote diversity on campus. However, further to this notion, Mohd Hasan (2013) emphasised that foreign-owned organisations are less likely to report the issue on religion and often, locally-owned organisations are the ones likely to report on this. She further added that expressing sensitivities towards a religion is a topic that is highly sensitive in a Malaysian context and therefore, the foreign organisation is likely to avoid reporting in their public documents (Mohd Hasan, 2013). This is consistent with the current findings of the study because the current result shows that the organisation respecting the rights to practise religion items is highly perceived by the respondents in the Malaysian HEI as a local organisation or institution.

Labour Rights

Labour rights indicate organisations' initiatives in communicating the rights of employees' that in line with the International Labour Standards (ILO) or other local Malaysian employment act. Table 5 shows the labour rights as a CSR element. Based on Table 5, the mean score of the six items ranged from 3.40 to 4.00. A statement which has highest mean value was "organisation provides training for employees" ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.78$). Statement "organisation provides equal rights and opportunities for employees in recruitment and promotion" has the lowest mean

score of 3.40. The overall mean score of 3.70 indicates that the respondents were conscious about the labour practices that carried out by UPM. A possible interpretation of this finding suggests that in higher education sectors, like UPM do not have many issues related to labour rights as stipulated by the ILO standards (Mohd Hasan, 2013), whereby UPM accommodate to the regulations and the culture of the particular nation where it operates. Therefore, it can be interpreted that employees are inclined to have positive views on the given rights as employees of UPM.

Table 5. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to labour rights (n=285)

Statement	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation provides training for employees.	0.4	3.5	17.9	51.9	26.3	4.00	0.78
Organisation working hours adhering to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) standards.	2.1	3.2	24.6	56.8	13.3	3.76	0.80
Organisation provides a quality working environment.	1.8	7.4	22.5	53.3	15.1	3.73	0.87
Organisation implements flexible policies to provide a good work and life balance for employees.	1.4	4.2	31.6	52.3	10.5	3.66	0.78
Organisation emphasises employees' health and safety during works.	4.6	3.5	27.7	48.8	15.8	3.67	0.94
Organisation provides equal rights and opportunities for employees in recruitment and promotion.	3.2	9.5	39.3	40.7	7.4	3.40	0.88
Overall						3.70	0.84

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

This has supported the study done by Nejati et al. (2011) whereby in terms of labour practices, the world leading universities providing informative resources on employee benefits, compensation, learning, and development. In addition, the website of the universities also highlighted the significance of healthy, balanced work environment among employees (Mohd Hasan, 2017; Nejati et al., 2011).

In addition, Manfredi & Holliday (2004) highlighted that the way organisations balance work and life are by taking initiatives to adopt flexible working arrangements, such as job sharing, flexible working timetable, paid time off policies, and sponsored family activities or events by the

organisation. Based on the initiatives suggested, it will eventually help to increase the employees' satisfaction with the contemporary working situation that adheres to the labour practices.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship is the synergy effect of environment where the use of resources are based on renewable resources in order to protect the environment from pollution, minimise the use of natural resources, and environmental wastes (Okafor, Hassan, & Hassan, 2008). Table 6 presents the environmental stewardship as one of the elements of CSR practices. Table 6 shows the mean score of the seven items ranging from 3.32 to 3.88. The statement "organisation has an environmentally related mission" has the highest mean score among the other statements ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.76$). This is in line with the *Green@UPM* programme that implemented by UPM on the Environmental Management System (EMS) MS ISO 14001: 2004 to promote the enculturation of the best practices towards a sustainable environment and development (Green@UPM, n. d.). However, the overall mean score of 3.68 indicates that the employees understood about the UPM environmental stewardship initiatives, however, it is relatively low in UPM context. In a general sense, within a Malaysian context, Malaysians have a lack of awareness towards the environmental stewardship (Cowper-Smith & de Grosbois, 2010). Thus, this possibility influences the results of this current study. The relatively low score here also signifies a contradiction between the image being projected by UPM of green living on campus and the actual practice of green living. The awareness of environmental stewardship within HEIs requires further improvement.

Table 6. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to environmental stewardship (n=285)

Statement	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation has an environmentally related mission.	0.4	2.5	26.0	51.2	20.0	3.88	0.76
Organisation participates in activities which aim to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment.	1.8	2.1	24.9	54.0	17.2	3.83	0.80
Organisation implements special programs to minimise its negative impact on the natural environment.	0.4	4.9	30.5	50.2	14.0	3.73	0.78
Organisation raises employees' awareness of environmental issues.	1.1	4.9	28.4	51.2	14.4	3.73	0.81

Organisation tries to offer environmentally friendly products.	0.7	7.0	29.5	49.1	13.7	3.68	0.82
Organisation's efforts in investing environmentally efficient technology.	1.1	9.1	29.1	51.9	8.8	3.58	0.82
Organisation communicates greenhouse emission in tons of CO ² or equivalent.	2.5	12.3	41.8	37.5	6.0	3.32	0.86
Overall						3.68	0.81

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

The current results support the study done by Sweeney and Coughlan (2008), whereby they emphasised that environmental stewardship requires proper execution in order to enhance the products and operations of the organisation. Furthermore, Haw (2010) stated that most of the Malaysian organisations are practising environmental stewardship by educating the public about green living. This is consistent with the findings of the current study in UPM as UPM is the world's top 3 universities in Asia that helps to promote environmental conservation and green technology through sustainability. For example, UPM supported the Green Township project "Bandar Hijau Serdang" with the collaboration of Municipal Council Subang Jaya (MPSJ) (Saaba, 2012). Hence, this has in line with Ahmad's (2012) findings that environmental aspect of CSR is one of the vital dimensions that needs to be focused by HEIs.

Social Reporting

Social reporting is the organisations' initiatives to report on social issues of employees and accountability, which involves the organisations' efforts and actions in communicating their policies transparent to the various stakeholders (Mohd Hasan, 2013). Table 7 presents the items related to social reporting as CSR practices. The mean score of the five items ranged from 3.31 to 3.58. Based on the social reporting statement, the statement with the highest mean score was "organisation communicates awareness towards CSR issues and actions" ($M = 3.58, SD = 0.80$). Furthermore, the statement "organisation practised open dialogue with employees as a stakeholder" have the lowest mean score ($M = 3.31, SD = 0.85$). This suggests that although UPM practises CSR initiatives or programmes, these initiatives may not fully communicate to the employees as part of UPM's stakeholders. There is a big possibility that UPM as an organisation lack of practising open dialogue with the employees as the majority of the decision-making process is from the management of UPM to their employees. This has supported the notion that most of the CSR initiatives were being communicated top-down. This will cause dissatisfaction among employees as the employees might think that they need to compromise their own values to suit the initiatives or policies (Powell, 2011). Thus, social reporting has a lowest overall mean score of 3.43 as compared to other CSR elements. This could interpret that employees, particularly in the higher education sectors have no inclination towards social reporting as CSR initiatives. This further supported by Gomez and Vargas Preciado (2013) that social responsibility practices and reporting have not yet become a mandatory requirement that needs to be carried

out HEIs. Thus, it makes the social reporting in HEIs context become a voluntary basis rather than obligatory like public listed companies.

Table 7. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to social reporting (n=285)

Statement	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation communicates awareness towards CSR issues and actions.	1.8	6.0	33.3	50.0	8.1	3.58	0.80
Organisation practices transparency in reporting.	1.4	8.1	41.4	43.2	5.6	3.44	0.78
Organisation publishes the performance of CSR activities through various channels (corporate websites and the media).	1.4	5.6	48.4	37.9	6.7	3.43	0.76
Organisation reveals the evaluation results of CSR activities with an official report.	1.4	8.8	44.6	39.3	6.0	3.40	0.79
Organisation practices open dialogue with employees as a stakeholder.	3.5	9.1	46.7	34.7	6.0	3.31	0.85
Overall						3.43	0.80

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

The current results are in line with the study done by Tee (2008) in which he explored the motivation behind CSR reporting in Malaysian organisations and the effect of reporting in the Malaysian context. Based on Tee's findings, he suggested that in the Malaysian context, CSR reporting was relatively low. This notion supports study done by Cowper-Smith and de Grosbois (2010) as well, where the environmental reporting in Malaysia is still relatively low. According to Fombrun (2005), there are several reasons for not disclosing social reporting. For instance, the absence of legal, regulatory enforcement and the practice of CSR standards will remain voluntary, lack of stakeholders' demands, the act of wanting policies to remain confidential from the public, poor competitive performance, poor in performance measurement, and negative publicity (Belal, 2007; Rowe & Guthrie, 2007).

Community Driven

Table 8 presents the community driven CSR element. The mean score of the seven items ranged from 3.42 to 3.97. Based on Table 8, the statement "organisation provides internship for students" has the highest score ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.77$) as the internship is compulsory for students

and one of the requirements under Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQA) prior to graduating. For instance, UPM provides students who are unable to get organisations to carry out their practical or internship by allocating them to faculties, divisions, and centres. Hence, internships that provided by UPM is an act of discretionary that helps the students as their primary external stakeholder (clients).

Besides, the statement “organisation employs people from the lesser advantaged group or affected publics” has the lowest mean score of 3.42. It shows that UPM as an organisation should be concerned on the affected or less fortunate publics by employing them. It cannot be denied that UPM as a reputable research HEI in this nation has done a lot of philanthropy or discretionary initiatives to help the community and its surroundings. However, the management of the UPM should consider about hiring people from the less advantaged groups as it is the void that needs to be fulfilled in the future. As a whole, the overall mean score of 3.72 for the community driven element suggests that respondents have good recognition regards the community driven practices that carried out by UPM. This could be interpreted that employees are inclined towards community services when it comes to CSR initiatives (Mohd Hasan, 2017). For instance, previous studies have indicated that there are higher chances for employees to link CSR initiatives with philanthropy above other categories of CSR. For example, Mutz (2008) state that in the early development of the community driven initiatives, organisations traditionally supported the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of the local community by giving a charitable donation to the communities.

Table 8. Percentage, mean, and standard deviation of respondent response to community driven (n=285)

Statement	%					M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Organisation provides internship for students.	1.1	1.4	20.4	54.0	23.2	3.97	0.77
Organisation encourages its employees to participate in voluntary activities.	-	4.2	19.6	55.4	20.7	3.93	0.75
Organisation has charity or philanthropy and monetary contribution to the community.	-	4.9	26.7	50.5	17.9	3.81	0.78
Organisation provides sponsorship/scholarship for students.	1.1	3.5	28.8	48.1	18.6	3.80	0.82
Organisation sponsors cultural and environmental events.	1.1	6.7	32.6	51.2	8.4	3.59	0.78
Organisation supports non-governmental organisations working in problematic areas.	0.4	8.1	37.5	45.3	8.8	3.54	0.78

Organisation employs persons from lesser advantaged social groups/ affected publics.	0.7	13.	37.	37.	9.8	3.4	0.87
		7	9	9		2	
Overall						3.7	0.79
						2	

* Organisation in the above statement refers to UPM.

1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree

Furthermore, the findings also consistent with the results of Ahmad and Saad (2011), whereby they wish to identify the concepts and initiatives of CSR to academicians, managers, and students in the context of Malaysia. The results showed that the respondents rank highest on the social engagement and welfare, corporate citizenship, community engagement categories, which shows that CSR initiatives are often perceived as discretionary rather than legal responsibility. In contrast, the current findings were different from the results found by Fadun (2014), that discretionary or philanthropy component was least emphasised by the stakeholders as compared to other CSR dimensions in the Nigerian context.

The recent literature argues for organisations practise moral obligations to the community beyond merely giving out donation and instead improve its legitimacy of such practice (Blomgren, 2011). It is important to note here that community driven initiatives are an integral practice of an education sector as evident in the findings of this research. This is in line with the findings of Ismail, Alias, and Mohd Rasdi (2015) in that the education-related activities are the dominant contribution of CSR in community development. Therefore, community driven serve as an element that needs to be included in CSR initiatives in order to increase the social and workforce qualities.

Based on all the CSR elements discuss above, it can conclude that UPM has initiatives that practising all the CSR elements, however, social reporting is still a voluntary CSR practice that carried out by universities. Hence, this has urged the management of the university to be more proactive in carrying out CSR initiatives for the sake of their stakeholders, including employees and communities.

Conclusion

In summary, CSR initiatives are important communication strategies for higher learning institutions in this 21st century. The current study shows that a majority of the UPM employees, either academic or non-academic, have a high level of understanding about CSR practices. Based on the empirical data, three (3) dimensions which were human rights, community driven, and labour rights have shown to be the significant aspects of CSR practices in UPM. However, there is no specific standardised indicator to measure CSR initiatives and the social reporting in Malaysian universities. This was indicated in this current study whereby the social reporting dimension was the least being perceived by the UPM staff. The need for standardised indicator is particularly timely as the university heads towards a world class ranked university. Standardised global and local standards and best practices create a benchmark for a clear cut

guideline in practising their CSR initiatives. As such, universities (either public or private) in Malaysia can place research universities as their benchmark not only in the academic niche, but also in the area related to social responsibility and sustainable development.

There are several limitations in this study. One of which the study is only limited to one of the research universities in Malaysia, which is UPM. Therefore, the future study can look into other research universities in Malaysia, particularly, Universiti of Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) about their CSR programs and initiatives. Last but not least, the relationship between CSR practices by universities with employees' job satisfaction, leadership style, and corporate reputation was suggested for future study to enhance the advancement of knowledge in the CSR arena.

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