

Chapter 13

Understanding Relationships Between Corporate Social Responsibility, Organizational Identification, and Ethical Organizational Behavior: USVI Retail Employees' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents elements of a student-faculty collaborative research that quantitatively examined the predictive relationships of retail employees' perceptions of corporate social responsibility (PCSR) and organizational identification (POI) on their perceptions of ethical organizational behavior (PEOB). One hundred and eighteen retail employees from 20 companies in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI) participated in an online survey. While no predictive relationship was found, the findings of this study identified significant relationships between retail employees PCSR, POI, and perceived ethical organizational behavior PEOB. The strongest association was discovered between PCSR and POI. Thus, this chapter spotlights a need for retail organizations to focus on the potential of employees' PCSR and POI in creating more authentic and responsible organizational environment.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has generated mainstream attention in both the private- and public-sectors. Although there is no singular or agreed upon definition of the concept, as recognized by Dahlsrud (2008), CSR can be defined as a private-sector organizations' integration of societal concerns, and social accountability and obligations within its operations. Additionally, CSR can be considered as positive and socially responsible interactions with organization's stakeholders (e.g., customers, society, managers, suppliers, creditors, shareholders) that go beyond its economic interest (Turker, 2009, p. 413). Like other parts of the world, many companies in the Caribbean have also sought to increase their CSR presence due to public encouragement, pressuring, and incentivization from customers, suppliers, investors, activist organizations, the media and government.

Unfortunately, there is limited research to support these important and necessary social movements within the Caribbean Region. Additionally, most CSR research has generally centered on macro-level/external organizational initiatives (i.e., community-directed philanthropy, eco-efficiency, charities, humanitarian concerns) and profitable marketability (i.e., brand image). There is a definite contextual space and need for more micro-level/internal CSR research in the Caribbean. Specifically, more attention must be given to employees and their perceptions. Lindsey Hall, Baker, Andrews, Hunt and Rapp (2016) confirmed that employees are undoubtedly integral to any service or product delivery, especially regarding sales or retail (p. 25). Thus, more investigations should be performed to gain empirical evidence-based knowledge on the associations between employee perceptions of CSR and their organizational identity and performance.

This chapter provides an account of a student-faculty collaborative exploratory research study on employee-centered CSR. A successful student-faculty collaborative research is rooted in evenly co-operative efforts that offer an enriching learning experience and produces useful and usable scientific knowledge on a specific subject matter. As the retail industry is the largest industry in the United States Virgin Islands (USVI, a Caribbean territory of the United States), this research study quantitatively investigated the hypothetical possibilities of a predictive relationships between USVI retail employees' perceived corporate social responsibility (PCSR) and perceived organizational identification (POI) towards their perceived ethical organizational behavior (PEOB). This chapter presents the key segments of the study: background/literature review, methodology, empirical findings, limitations, future directions, and conclusion.

BACKGROUND/LITERATURE REVIEW

There are global surges of research interests in corporate social responsibility (CSR), due to an increased demand for comprehensive knowledge by external organizational stakeholders (e.g., customers, society, government, managers, suppliers, creditors, shareholders). CSR knowledge is the awareness and understanding of an organization's CSR culture, initiatives, and engagement in positive contributions to society (Kim, 2019). CSR knowledge can also be defined as context-based information (internal and external) about organizational CSR acquired through experiences and observations (Kim, 2019). Lai, Yang and Wu (2015) affirmed that "increasing volume of research investigating CRS" is due to the "academic or practical values" of CRS knowledge (p. 554). As of 2018, there have been 2,386 publications in CSR from 100 countries (Low & Siegel, 2019, p. 8).

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