

Influence Of Corporate Social Responsibility As Perceived By Salespeople On Their Ethical Behaviour, Attitudes And Their Turnover Intentions

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ABSTRACT

The ethical behavior of salespeople has become a tremendous challenge in the business world. While a great majority of big companies communicate about their Corporate Social Responsibility, this study shows for the first time that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has no influence upon the ethical behavior of salespeople. However, it demonstrates that a reputation associated with CSR can be a precious management tool that can be used to act upon salespeople's satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions. More specifically, CSR policies, as perceived by salespeople, increase their satisfaction level which, in turn, decreases their turnover intention. Likewise, CSR policies, as perceived by salespeople, increase their organizational commitment, which, in turn, contributes to decrease their turnover intention. In addition, this study provides avenues to explore regarding the tools influencing the ethical behavior of salespeople. The answers of 197 salespeople were collected using an innovative recruitment method with high potentialities - social networks.

Keywords: CSR; Ethical Behavior; Attitudes; Satisfaction; Organizational Commitment; Turnover Intention; Salespeople; Marketing; Business

INTRODUCTION

Academic research on selling has grown in importance after the creation of the Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management (JPSSM) in the 1980s. Selling techniques, motivation and performance have been major research subjects for the last 30 years. Now they have come to a state of maturity and there is plenty of room for new research subjects (Gieger & Guenzi, 2009). One “hot” subject is the ethics of salespeople, which has kept on increasing in academic importance since the 1980s. Most of these research projects have gravitated around factors influencing decision-making processes of salespeople's supervisors (Bellizzi & Hasty, 2002, 2003; Deconinck & James, 1992; Bellizzi & Bristol, 2005), ethically questionable situations for salespeople (Dublinsky & Loken, 1989; Dubinsky *et al.*, 1985, 1992; Chonko & Burnett, 1983) as well as antecedents of organizational variables (culture, salary, etc.), individual variables (age, gender, education, etc.) and environmental variables (company size, industry type, etc.) on salespeople's ethical behavior (Loe *et al.*, 2000; Schwepker, 2001; Roman & Munuera, 2005; Jamarillo *et al.*, 2006; Hsu *et al.*, 2008; Mulki *et al.*, 2008; Lavorata, 2009). Why such focus on salespeople? First, they are the front line - the organization's main interface with existing and prospective clients. Second, in a context of globalization undergoing constant change, and continuous pressures for performance, salespeople have been given new responsibilities at a higher strategic and sometimes global level (Chonko *et al.*, 1991; Ingram, 2004; Geiger & Guenzi, 2009).

On the other side of the coin, this highly strategic work is also known for its ethical lapses (Dubinsky & Hartley, 1986). When salespeople are subject to daily pressures from their superiors, in large part due to their strategic role as an “income source” for the company, they are often left in an uncomfortable ethical position.

Salespeople can find themselves facing ethical dilemmas that generate tension, frustration and stress, culminating in conflicts with their superiors, a drop in job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions (Weeks & Nantel, 1992). Moreover, in the event of undesirable behavior, companies can suffer from negative word-of-mouth, a drop in customer satisfaction, complaints, public damage, a blow to their reputation, and, ultimately, the demise of their business (Bellizzi & Hasty, 2003).

Hopefully, if companies acquire tools to enable salespeople to act ethically, they will be able to avoid a loss in public trust from financial, environmental and social scandals (Ferrell *et al.*, 1989) and develop long-term relationships with customers (Schwepker & Hartline, 2005). Managers acknowledge that high ethical standards are critical to building long-term customer relationships based on trust (Johnston & Marshall, 2003). Salespeople feel that corporate ethics constitute a competitive advantage (Gilbert, 2003). Customers view salespeople with ethics as being credible and having morals, which goes a long way toward extending relationships (Wright & Lundstrom, 2004). According to several studies, the way in which companies respond to societal pressures has consequences on their profitability, their legitimacy and their own survival (Mackey *et al.*, 2007; Aguilera *et al.*, 2007; Donal *et al.*, 2008). Hence, the behavior of salespeople seems to be essential to the smooth functioning of the company, its image and its reputation.

Up until now, while means of influencing ethical behaviors of salespeople have been addressed in numerous studies, no research has been done to examine the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on such behavior. And yet, CSR could allow for the creation of a business environment in which salespeople would be prone to behave ethically. Therefore, we have studied the relationships between CSR, salespeople's ethical behaviour, organizational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention. First, a literature review conceptualizes the terms "business ethics" and "CSR". The resulting hypotheses are summarized in a frame of reference. Second, the methodology will be explained. Third, the results are displayed and are integrated in the revised frame of reference. Fourth, results are discussed and managerial implications are explained. Lastly, the conclusion of this article underlines the limits of this study as well as areas of future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Overall, there is some confusion between business ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR). This comes from the fact that CSR is a normative concept, which goes under constant re-conceptualizations (Pasquero, 2005b; Gond and Igalens, 2008). For the purpose of this study, we will mention only a few. Bowen (1953) described CSR as the obligation of businessmen to act in accordance with the values of the society and its economic development. Carroll (1979) distinguished four dimensions for CSR: 1) economic (meeting consumption needs), 2) legal (respecting the law), 3) ethical (abide by moral rules), and 4) discretionary (for instance philanthropic). For Wood (1991; 2010), the CSR concepts situate the business organization within its institutional, organizational and individual context; in order to survive, business organizations must be recognized as legitimate by the society and, thus, in general. In turn, they must establish responsible relationships with their stakeholders, which involve ethical decision-making from managers. Pasquero (2007) defined CSR as: "The whole of obligations, legally required or deliberately chosen, that a company has to assume in order to appear as a replicable model of good citizenship in a given environment". In 2010, the International Standard Organization (ISO) published a CSR norm based on a five-year multi-stakeholder negotiation process. It defines social responsibility as pertaining to the impacts of the organization's decisions and activities on the society and the environment. It involves implementing, throughout all organizations, ethical behaviors that contribute to sustainable development and take into consideration stakeholders' expectations, while respecting the law (ISO 26000, Turcotte *et al.*, 2011). All these definitions encompass broad notions aimed at improving businesses' practices and activities through their relationships with stakeholders by various means and is not limited to philanthropy to which CSR is often mistakenly reduced to. In a systematic analysis of most often referred to definitions of CSR, Dashrud (2010) identified the following five dimensions associated with CSR in this order of importance: 1) environmental concerns, 2) social contribution, 3) economic development, 4) stakeholders' relationships, and 5) voluntary actions based on ethical values. In short, CSR is a multidimensional concept of which ethics are part, but is not limited to.

Business Ethics

Business ethics have dramatically grown in importance after the frequent occurrence of financial scandals in the 1990s, e.g. Ahold, Tyco, Vivendi, Enron, Arthur Andersen, Worldcom, Citibank, etc. It appears that business ethics can be a means of influencing individual conducts (Valentine & Fleischman, 2007). It can be defined as “respecting a number of social norms that society recognizes as superior moral goods and which arouse individuals’ pride and adherence” (Pasquero, 2005b). However, business ethics and CSR are often used interchangeably, although they are both distinct concepts. Carroll (1979), in his definition of CSR, includes ethical expectations as one of the pillars of CSR among economic, legal and discretionary expectations. The article by Garriga and Melé (2004), proposing a review of the main theories and approaches of CSR, classifies ethics as one of the four segmentation groups (instrumental theories, political theories and integrative theories). Also, the number of empirical studies in relation to CSR has kept increasing since the 1980s (Turker, 2008). Currently, about 80% of Fortune 250 companies publish substantial information regarding their social and environmental impacts and more than 75% of the biggest companies worldwide have a strategy of social responsibility and use GRI rules of conduct as a reporting basis (KPMG, 2008)². While there may be some confusion between business ethics and CSR, business ethics is an integral part of CSR (Valentine & Fleischman, 2007).

Regarding salespeople, an ethical selling behaviour can be defined as “a just and honest action that enables salespeople to adopt long-term relationships with customers, their trust and their satisfaction” (Roman & Munuera, 2005), such as selling products that are adapted to the needs of the client, disclosing appropriate information about the product, and avoiding sales technique that apply pressure. Salespeople remain the most criticized profession by the public (Dubinsky, 1984; Marchetti, 1997). This may be explained by the fact that salespeople convince potential customers by manipulating them (Lavorata, 2005). Variable remuneration, challenges, and bonuses lead to suspicious behaviours (Lavorata, 2005; Kurland, 1996). Salespeople also need to achieve sales objectives and quotas that put pressure on them (Wotruba, 1990). In addition, they have to cope with reaching short-term quantitative objectives while maintaining long-term qualitative objectives of trust and satisfaction (Dubinsky *et al.*, 1985). Increased pressure comes also from the fact that salespeople are responsible for generating company revenues (Dubinsky, 1984; Deconick & Good, 1989; Hsu *et al.*, 2008; Jamarillo *et al.*, 2006). In addition, professions that are done out of the company are more prone to drifting behaviors because employees are psychologically, physically, and socially separated from their managers (Belasco, 1966 in Dubinsky *et al.*, 1992; Vittel & Festervand, 1987 in Weeks & Nantel, 1992). They may not have the feeling of belonging to the company and may have a weak understanding of their companies’ norms and rules (Dubinsky & Hartley, 1986).

The question is thus how to increase the ethical behavior of salespeople despite all the profession-specific drawbacks that impede them to behave more ethically? Salespeople, just like any other individual in the company, are influenced by the type organizational culture and climate (Stead *et al.*, 1990). Organizational environment has an important influence on the ethical behavior of employees (Trevino *et al.*, 2006). While it appears that CSR, as an organizational environment, could increase salespeople’s ethical behavior, up until now, CSR, as an organizational environment, has still not been studied as an influent variable (Aggeri *et al.*, 2005). In fact, since business ethics, as one aspect of CSR, is recognized as a method for improving salespeople’s ethical conduct, CSR could thus contribute to such an improvement in a broader sense. Therefore, the first hypothesis is the following:

H1: Salespeople’s perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their ethical conduct.

Variables Impacted by Organizational CSR Policies

Organizational Commitment

Several studies have shown that CSR had positive consequences on the well-being, pride, satisfaction, performance, and turnover intention of employees (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2008). Organizational commitment is “the strength of identification and commitment of an individual to a given organization” (Porter *et al.*, 1974: 604).

² The sample is composed of Global Fortune 250 companies and of the 100 biggest companies by revenue from 22 countries worldwide.

Several studies found a relationship between CSR and employees' organizational commitment (Peterson, 2004; Maignan *et al.*, 1999; Turker, 2009).

In addition, there is a significant relationship between organizational commitment and performance at work, especially in sales (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Jamarillo *et al.*, 2005). Brown and Peterson (1993) also demonstrated that satisfaction and organizational commitment were positively correlated, with the former being an antecedent of the latter. Eventually, employees committed to their company have a lower absenteeism rate and lower turnover intentions (Mulki *et al.*, 2006; Brown & Peterson, 1993; Griffeth *et al.*, 2000). Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 are thus:

H2: Salespeople's perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their organizational commitment.

H3: Salespeople's satisfaction has a positive impact on their organizational commitment.

H4: Salespeople's organizational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.

Satisfaction in the Workplace

The ethical climate has a significant impact on salespeople's satisfaction (Weeks & Nantel, 1992; Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Ethics is an integral component of CSR (Pasquero, 2005a; Valentine & Fleischman, 2007), so CSR has a correlation with job satisfaction. Salespeople may sometimes act in contradiction to their ethical considerations in order to reach sales objectives, which increases the role of conflict (Sims & Keon, 1999). These situations may lead to job dissatisfaction (Spector, 1997). Turnover intentions are then negatively impacted by satisfaction in the workplace (Brown & Peterson, 1993). Managerial changes, such as CSR policies, are a means of improving employee satisfaction in the workplace (Harter *et al.*, 2002). Hypotheses 5 and 6 are thus:

H5: Salespeople's perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their satisfaction.

H6: Salespeople's satisfaction has a negative impact on their turnover intentions.

Turnover Intention

Through supportive leadership, CSR takes employee well-being into account and thus reinforces the relationship between salespeople and their organization. The more congruence between employees' values and organizational values, the less turnover intention (De George, 1990, in Schwepker, 2001). When employees feel well in the workplace, this translates into satisfaction and commitment and therefore a desire to stay employed at the company (Tett & Meyer, 1993; Brown & Peterson, 1993). Bhattacharya *et al.* (2008) found that CSR activities influence organizations' ability to attract and retain employees. However, several studies were unable to find a relationship between the ethical climate and turnover intentions (Schwepker, 2001; Mulki *et al.*, 2006; Jamarillo *et al.*, 2006). Instead, they emphasized that CSR could indirectly impact turnover intentions through satisfaction (Jamarillo *et al.*, 2006; Deconinck, 2009) and organizational commitment (Schwepker, 2001; Mulki *et al.*, 2006). Hypotheses 7, 8 and 9 are as follows:

H7: CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has a direct and negative impact on their turnover intentions.

H8: CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has an indirect and negative impact on their turnover intentions through satisfaction.

H9: CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has an indirect and negative impact on their turnover intentions through organizational commitment.

The hypotheses resulting from the literature review; that is, the preliminary frame of reference, is displayed in Figure 1. Hypothesis 8 and 9 are supposed to leverage indirect impacts from CSR on turnover intention through mediatory variables. These hypotheses are thus not shown in the frame of reference but will nevertheless be tested.

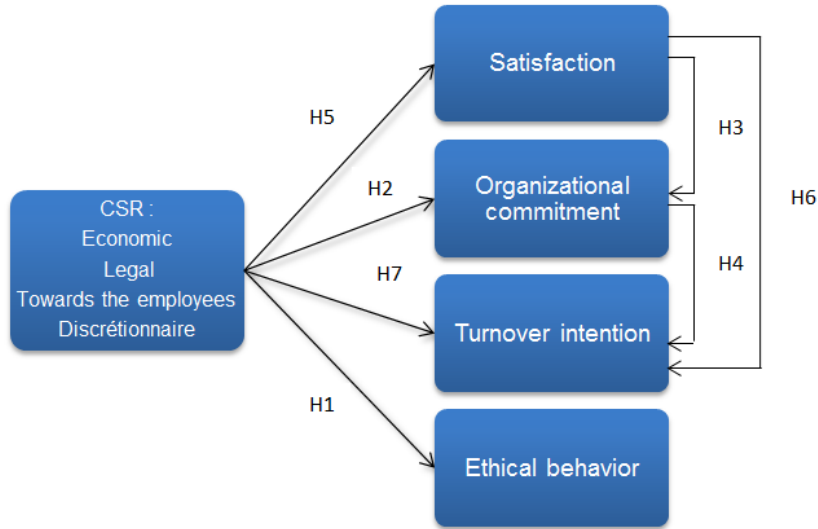


Figure 1: Preliminary Frame Of Reference

METHODOLOGY

Measurement Scales And Social Desirability Bias

In order to validate the hypotheses, we opted for a descriptive confirmatory design. All the constructs were measured using existing scales. Maignan & Ferrell’s (2000) CSR measurement scale was used to measure CSR on four dimensions; namely, economical, legal, ethical and discretionary. This scale is itself based on Carroll’s (1979) multidimensional definition of CSR. The ethical behavior was measured by means of three scenarios depicting ethically conflictual situations (Schwepker, 1999). Respondents were asked how they would react to each of these three scenarios, and their ethical behavior was inferred based on the responses they provided. Organizational commitment was measured with Mowday *et al.*’s (1979) *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* (OCQ) used in many studies on ethical climate (Babin *et al.*, 2000; Schwepker, 2001; Mulki *et al.*, 2006; Lavorata, 2009). Satisfaction is measured with Schwepker’s (2001) shortened version of the INDSALES measurement scale developed by Churchill *et al.* (1974). Turnover intention is measured using the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) developed by Moynihan *et al.* (2000). Beyond strong validity and reliability of this scale, it also allows to obtain more information than with other scales. Studies based on respondents’ statements are always subject to respondents’ social desirability bias. In order to overcome this drawback, the questionnaire was put online so that there is no contact between the researcher and the respondent, which increases respondents’ honesty (O’Connor & Magde, 2003). The questionnaire was also completed in an entirely anonymous fashion (Randall & Fernandes, 1991). Eventually, Marlowe-Crowe’s social desirability measurement scale was included in the survey in order to group respondents according to their level of social desirability.

Procedure

To validate the quality of our questionnaire, we conducted a preliminary test with 13 salespeople. Feedback was then used to improve the quality and understanding of the questionnaire. The enhanced survey was carried out over the Internet, using corporate and social networking databases. We obtained data from 220 respondents, which complies with our methodological requirements (D’Astous, 2005).

Sampling

The desired confidence level of 95% enabled to calculate the size of the sample, which should have been comprised of 188 respondents. A convenience sampling method was then used in order to contact salespeople. This process was justified by the fact that the researchers didn't have a database that gathered the contact information of all Canadian salespeople. Second, the resources of the study were limited and did not include a budget for purchasing contact listings about salespeople. Instead, another innovative method was used. Salespeople were contacted by means of professional social networks, such as Viadeo and LinkedIn, as well as personal networks.

Respondents were drawn from French-speaking countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Some also came from Quebec and other parts of Canada. The sample represents a population that is predominantly male (77.6% of respondents), young (65.3% are between 25 and 44 years old), and educated (over 88% have an advanced education; half have a master's degree). The majority of the respondents (81.6%) work in the B2B market and the others work in the B2C market (17.9%). In addition, selling often takes place outside of the company (45.4%), both inside and outside the company (28.6%), or only inside the company, which is known as "inside sales" (26%). Respondents are often paid according to their level of performance since 80% of them have a portion of variable pay in their total salary. This variable portion represents, on average, of 30% of their total salary. However, only 3.6% of the respondents are paid based on their performance alone. Conversely, almost one respondent out of five has a fixed salary, which is rather a high number given the mainstream practices in selling environments.

RESULTS

Reliability And Validity

Factor analyses analyzed the percentage of variance explained by the measurement scales. Converging validity varies thus between 68% and 81%. In order to verify the quality of our factor analysis, we correlated factor scores to components. Almost all correlations were over 0.92, except for the correlation between the RSE3 (measure of CSR policies in organizations and its aspect toward employees), which confirms the quality of our factor analyses. Eventually, Cronbach's alphas verified the reliability and internal consistency of the constructs. All of them are near the value of 1 and above 0.6, as recommended by Malhotra (2009).

Hypothesis Testing

Prior to hypothesis testing, we wanted to make sure that variables of ethical behavior were not biased by salespeople's social desirability. As suggested by Lavorata (2005), we calculated Pearson's correlation coefficients based on the social desirability scale and the ethical behavior scale. Correlations were very weak (<0.3), thus respondents' social desirability did not bias the collected data.

The results of the regressions led us to draw several conclusions regarding the validity of our nine hypotheses. These conclusions are included in Table 1. The revised frame of reference is also displayed in Figure 2.

Table 1: Summary Of Hypothesis Testing And Validity

Hypotheses	Formulation Of Hypotheses	Statistical Analysis	Conclusion
H1	Salespeople's perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their ethical conduct	-Impact of the economic dimension of CSR: ($\beta_1=0.047$; $t=0.572$; $p=0.568$). -Impact of the legal dimension of CSR: ($\beta_2=-0.172$; $t=-1.611$; $p=0.109$). -Impact of the dimension toward employees of CSR: ($\beta_3=0.107$; $t=1.090$; $p=0.277$). -Impact of the discretionary CSR dimension: ($\beta_4=0.059$; $t=0.819$; $p=0.414$).	Rejected
H2	Salespeople's perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their organizational commitment	Impact of perceived CSR on organizational commitment: ($F=32.436$; $p=0.000$).	Accepted
H3	Salespeople's satisfaction has a positive impact on their organizational commitment	Impact of organizational commitment on satisfaction: ($\beta_1=1.159$; $t=13.972$; $p=0.000$).	Accepted
H4	Salespeople's organizational commitment has a negative impact on their turnover intentions	Impact of organizational commitment on turnover intention: ($\beta_1=-0.353$; $t=-3.782$; $p=0.000$).	Accepted
H5	Salespeople's perceptions of CSR have a positive impact on their satisfaction	-Impact of the economic dimension of CSR on satisfaction: ($\beta_1=0.999$; $t=2.383$; $p=0.018$) -Impact of the legal dimension of CSR on satisfaction: ($\beta_1=0.080$; $t=1.489$; $p=0.138$). -Impact of the dimension toward employees of CSR on satisfaction: ($\beta_1=0.285$; $t=5.727$; $p=0.000$). -Impact of discretionary CSR on satisfaction: ($\beta_1=0.039$; $t=1.067$; $p=0.287$). -Impact of CSR on satisfaction: ($F=32,363$; $p=0.000$).	Accepted
H6	Salespeople's satisfaction has a negative impact on their turnover intentions	Impact of satisfaction on turnover intentions: ($\beta_1=-0.619$; $t=-4.071$; $p=0.000$).	Accepted
H7	H7: CSR, as perceived by salespeople has a direct and negative impact on their turnover intentions	-Impact of the economic dimension of CSR on turnover intentions: ($\beta_1=0.074$; $t=0.646$; $p=0.519$). -Impact of the legal dimension of CSR on turnover intentions: ($\beta_2=-0.026$; $t=-0.174$; $p=0.862$). -Impact of the dimension toward employees of CSR on turnover intentions: ($\beta_3=-0.386$; $t=-2.808$; $p=0.005$). -Impact of the discretionary CSR on turnover intentions: ($\beta_4=0.211$; $t=2.108$; $p=0.036$). -Impact of perceived CSR on turnover intentions: ($F=32.436$; $p=0.011$).	Rejected
H8	CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has an indirect and negative impact on their turnover intentions through satisfaction	Since CSR as perceived by salespeople has a significant influence on satisfaction (H5), but not on turnover intentions (H7), and that satisfaction has a significant influence on turnover intentions (H6), we can say that CSR as perceived by salespeople has a significant influence on turnover intentions through the "satisfaction" variable.	Accepted
H9	CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has an indirect and negative impact on their turnover intentions through organizational commitment	Since CSR as perceived by salespeople has a significant influence on organizational commitment (H2), but not on turnover intentions (H7), and that organizational commitment has a significant influence on turnover intentions (H4), we can say that CSR as perceived by salespeople has a significant influence on turnover intentions through the "organizational commitment" variable.	Accepted

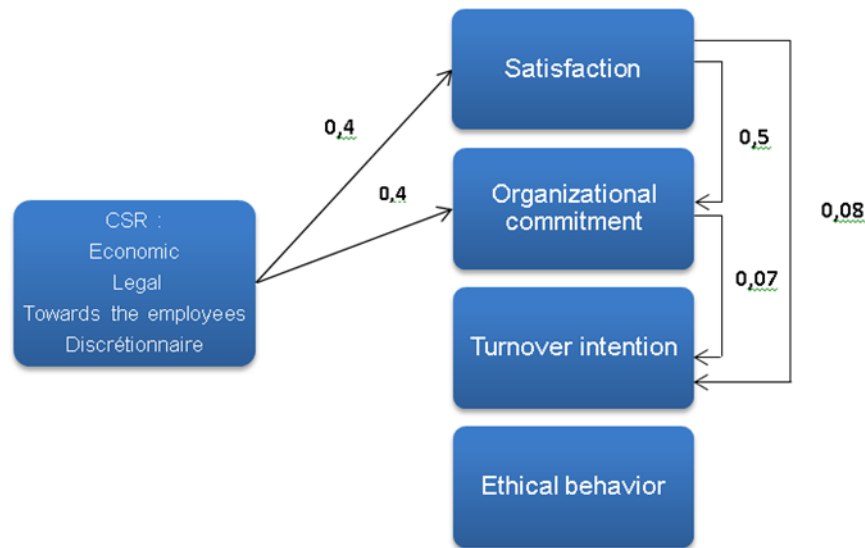


Figure 2: Revised Frame Of Reference

Discussion Of The Results

This study aimed at developing a model to explain the relationships that link CSR perceived by salespeople to their ethical behavior, their satisfaction, their organizational commitment and their turnover intentions. The study revealed interesting findings. First, it has been discovered that CSR, as perceived by the respondents, does not have a significant influence on salespeople's ethical behavior (H1). There are two ways of interpreting these results. Firstly, we relied on data interpreted by respondents who are not experts in management and who do not necessarily know all about their companies' CSR policies. Secondly, salespeople were chosen as subjects of this study because they are particularly exposed to pressures related to the ethical behavior. However, the level of CSR as perceived by salespeople does not have a significant influence on their ethical behavior because other factors more specific to the very job of salesperson play a controlling role, regardless of the CSR level in the company. For example, most significant organizational and individual variables are gender, education, work experiences, culture, ethical codes, sanctions or rewards (Stead *et al.*, 1990; Loe *et al.*, 2000). Thirdly, given CSR is a multidimensional concept, the dimensions other than ethics might have a heavier weight on the perception of CSR.

Second, we took up the challenge proposed by Aggieri *et al.* (2005) who wanted to know the effect of sustainable development on employees' commitment (H2). Actually, the CSR, as perceived by salespeople, significantly influences their organizational commitment because they identify themselves more strongly with a "responsible company" than with a "classical company". This finding is supported by the literature (Peterson, 2004; Turker, 2009). As a matter of fact, salespeople feel that their behavior is congruent with their values. They satisfy their needs and suffer less from conflicts emerging from gaps between their personal and organizational values which, in turn, strengthens their organizational commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Third, we found a significant relationship between CSR perceived by salespeople and their satisfaction (H5), which corresponds to the conclusions of Bhattacharya *et al.* (2008) who showed that, as employees identify themselves with their organization's CSR policies, it brings them a sense of well-being and satisfaction. These results can be explained by the increasingly stronger will of employees to work for responsible companies. Such companies would thus endorse a role of substitution for religion or for the city in which people find lower satisfaction and less meaning to their life. Fourth, we confirmed the results of Brown and Peterson's (1993) meta-analysis on salespeople who found that satisfaction exerts a positive influence on organizational commitment. We answered the request of Bhattacharya *et al.* (2008) who hypothesize a relationship between CSR and employee retention. In fact, CSR has a negative influence on salespeople's turnover intentions (H8; H9), which represents a symbolic consequence of a higher level of well-being. These elements result from several aspects intrinsic to CSR - higher attention to employees' needs and motivations and re-appropriation of a meaning of life by doing a job in a company that participates in the community (Economist, 2008).

Managerial Implications

First of all, there are a number of implications related to attitudinal and intentional variables. CSR indirectly improves organizational salespeople's retention. It is also a factor of attraction and motivation of talented employees (Albinger & Freeman, 2000) and it lowers absenteeism (Meyer *et al.*, 2000). By improving the attitude of its employees, a company also increases customer satisfaction (Rucci *et al.*, 1999 Sears). More satisfied employees also mean better profitability and productivity not to mention a higher stock price. There are many types of CSR policies - recycling, re-use of consumed products, anti-discrimination policies, career plans, business voluntary work, to name but a few.

CSR doesn't directly influence salespeople's ethical behavior, which means that managers have to use other methods to impact organizational and individual factors. Ethical codes, for instance, enable companies to provide reference points for their employees (Stead *et al.*, 1990). According to Dubinsky *et al.* (1980), salespeople even ask to be guided by an ethical code in order for them to better at handling ambiguous situations. Such codes should, however, be implemented in an honest way. Moral rules should answer to company-specific needs (Stead *et al.*, 1990). They should be neither too detailed nor too restrictive so that salespeople may use their own judgement (Dubinsky *et al.* 1985). Also, the development and enforcement of these rules should be done in conjunction between managers and employees so that the latter adhere to the values of the company (Dubinsky *et al.*, 1985). This process should also be iterative, once rules become obsolete, with employees and managers coming together to think about new creative ways of doing things (Stead *et al.*, 1990). Management should also make sure to develop, communicate, and reinforce the ethical values of the company through these codes by means of information letters, group meetings, the company website, etc. (Trevino, 1986). Some control mechanisms could also be implanted to increase manager-salespeople interactions between salespeople and managers, such as detailed reports, clients' answers, etc. (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996; Hsu *et al.*, 2008). To benefit fully from these tools, HR and managers need to explain in details the purpose and usefulness of these control mechanisms, companies also need to understand that, by letting salespeople write detailed reports, they do not lose in productivity, but gain in better quality in sales processes so that the company's image gets improved. Also, detailed reports may bring managers and salespeople closer together.

Whenever objectives are too high or aim at short-term sales volumes while promoting longer-term relationships, based on trust and satisfaction, salespeople may be led to lie or behave unethically (Dubinsky *et al.*, 1985; Schweitzer *et al.*, 2004; Grover & Enz, 2005). A solution could be to eliminate commissions or decrease their importance. Stable remuneration has ethically positive impacts on salespersons' behaviors. In order to motivate sales teams, this may not be sufficient though. A compromise would be to develop remunerations that are also dependant on the salesperson's experience; a junior salesperson would thus start with a fixed income with incentives to focus on constructing quality relationships with the client without forcing the sale (Kurland, 1996). As a consequence, companies need not only develop rewarding systems for ethical behaviors, such as ethical objectives and performances, but make them part of salespeople's evaluation criteria, compensations, and benefits based on work quality (Darmon, 2008).

Training and internships in ethics have gained considerable attention over the last 20 years (Sachet-Millet, 2005). During these trainings, salespeople who have weaker ethical values than their colleagues will feel a cognitive imbalance and will tend to modify their behaviors and restructure their ways or reasoning (Trévino, 1986). Several methods have proven successful in this respect - Kohlberg's moral development (1969) and exposing people to levels of moral development that are superior to theirs to advance their moral reasoning. The ethical challenge of Martin Lockheed is also worth mentioning - implementing mini-cases and team works to develop ethical conscience.

CONCLUSION

This piece of research emphasized the benefits of CSR amid personnel, especially salespeople. The results indicated that CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has an influence on salespeople's satisfaction and organizational commitment, but CSR neither does influence salespeople's ethical behaviors nor does it impact their turnover intention. However, intention turnover seems to be influenced by CSR, as perceived by salespeople, through such

mediatory variables as “organizational commitment” and “satisfaction”. In addition, CSR constitutes a major challenge for organizations’ prosperity for they are directly related to salespeople’s turnover intention and companies’ performances. We drew the conclusion that since CSR, as perceived by salespeople, has no significant influence on their ethical behavior, other factors directly linked to ethical behavior should be taken into account.

LIMITS OF THE STUDY AND FUTURE AREAS OF RESEARCH

We ensured that this study was carried out as rigorously as possible. However, some limitations are worth noting. First, the sample was non-probabilistic, which may be a source of bias from the researcher. An exhaustive list of our target population was difficult to obtain, and we thus preferred to broaden our sample. Second, the results are based on respondents’ perceptions and opinions. Answers concerning companies’ CSR level may be biased through their perception. Not all employees know the depth and scope of their organizations’ CSR efforts, especially salespeople, who tend to be socially, psychologically and physically detached from the company. Meanwhile, it was not the purpose of this study to measure accurately companies’ CSR level, but rather to grasp how it was perceived by a portion of their employees, and which are, by definition, subjective. Third, answers regarding ethics may be biased by respondents’ social desirability. We proactively included a social desirability measurement scale in order to reduce that bias. In fact, no significant correlation was found in the answers, indicating that the social desirability bias is relatively low.

Future research on the subject should focus on the link between CSR, salespersons’ ethical behaviour and their integration into a relational approach. Relational marketing refers to “all the marketing activities that aim at establishing, maintaining and developing good relationships” (Berry, 1983; Morgan and Hunt, 1994 in Palmatier *et al.*, 2007), which could be studied as a natural consequent of CSR policies. In fact, implementing CSR policies could reduce conflicts with clients, perception of benefits in the relationship and increase interactions for an improved communication between both sides in a win-win relationship.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

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