

Corporate Social Responsibility of the Media: Instrument Development and Validation

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Corporate Social Responsibility of the Media: Instrument Development and Validation

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ABSTRACT

With the emergence of significant problems in capitalist systems around the world, corporate social responsibility has taken on greater emphasis. In the media industry, in which public interest has been discussed for a long time, the importance of corporate social responsibility is magnified again. Although many studies have already addressed this topic, there is less literature on how to measure corporate social responsibility in the media industry. This study aims to develop an instrument to measure corporate social responsibility in the media industry. Using data from 253 experts who majored in communication, this study verifies a proposed instrument. Results show that corporate social responsibility in the media consists of three major constructs, namely reliability, usefulness, and fairness. The findings of this study are expected to enable practitioners to improve social responsibility in their media and to allow academics to make further headway in this research stream.

Keywords

Corporate social responsibility, Public interest, Media, Instrument development, Factor analysis

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility comes to the fore globally. There is an expectation in modern societies that firms should take on obligations related to corporate social responsibility or pursue activities that could be described as social contributions. With this in mind, many firms are trying to change and innovate with greater emphasis on corporate ethics and corporate social responsibility. However, when capitalism-driven risks such as financial crises and economic downturns emerge, firms tend to place more focus on profit maximization than on social responsibility. The profits from business activities are distributed within firms themselves, and they are generally not shared with society. The main purposes of profit sharing, which some companies have adopted, are donation and charity. Because social responsibility is utilized for firm or brand image, promotion, and marketing, corporate social responsibility is confined to social contribution activities.

Corporate social responsibility in media also falls within these boundaries. Measuring social responsibility in the media is difficult because the definitions of social responsibility in the media are various and the scope of social activities is hard to determine. Measuring the main function of the media itself has been confined to media content in practice. Because it is hard to measure to what extent the social activities of the media constitute a contribution, the media's social responsibility is also concentrated in only social contribution activities as well.

However, it is more important to identify how the media can contribute to society, through which activities such contributions have been made, and how positive the impact of those activities has been. Since firms can be categorized as producers in a society, they are able to have an impact on both mental and emotional environments. Therefore, corporate social responsibility is a larger concept which is not evaluated by only social contribution activities.

In this study, the concept of social responsibility in the media starts from that notion as well. This responsibility includes the concept of social responsibility from the view that a media company provides broadcasting and news content. This is because the media has a unique characteristic with respect to public interest. Taking into consideration that the media can have a large impact on viewers – media companies can lead opinion making and help formulate social consensus – there exists a need to define and measure the corporate responsibility of the media differently from that of general firms.

Based on that notion, this study aims to develop an instrument to better understand the corporate social responsibility implemented by the media from the view that media contributes to society through their main functions as well as through the more general social responsibility techniques used by ordinary firms, such as making contributions to society and pursuing other related activities.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Corporate Social Responsibility

The concept of corporate social responsibility began to garner lively discussion in the 1960s after having been first proposed back in the 1930s. Since at least the 1960s then, the concept of corporate social responsibility has been recognized as a very important theme (McGuire, 1963; Sethi, 1975). Its importance stems from the increasingly entrenched public awareness that a corporate firm has a responsibility to redistribute at least part of its profits to the society from which those profits were gained.

However, it is not easy to reduce the concept of corporate social responsibility into a single definition because, as a concept, it is very complex and broad (Maignan & Ferrell, 2004). Although the proper duties of a corporation have been included in the category of social responsibility (Buono & Nicholas, 1990; Carroll, 1979; K. Davis, 1960), the concept of corporate social responsibility has been defined as the mean of the ethical and discretionary responsibility beyond the economic and legal responsibility (Johnson, 1971; McGuire, 1963; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Sethi, 1975). This definition stems from Bowen’s (1953) earlier work, in which he defined a businessman’s responsibility as having to do business or make decisions from the perspective of social purpose and value.

	Definitions	Included concepts		
		Economic Responsibility	Legal Responsibility	Ethical/ Discretionary Responsibility
Bowen (1953)	A businessman has a responsibility to do business or make decisions from the perspective of social purpose and value.			○
Davis (1960)	There is a responsibility for the decision makers to protect and promote the social welfare as well as profit.	○	○	○
McGuire (1963)	The corporation has a responsibility to society beyond its economic and legal responsibility.	○		○
Johnson (1971)	There is a responsibility for management, with a balanced view, to consider the profit of the employees, subcontractors, salespeople, communities and the nation beyond the profit of the stockholders.	○		○
Carroll (1979)	There is a responsibility to act as an ethical and faithful corporate citizen that goes above and beyond the responsibility to make an effort to obey the law and make profit.	○	○	○
Buono & Nicholas (1990)	It is proposed that a corporation must contribute to the realization of value in a broad range that goes beyond the economic value as well as stockholders and interested parties.	○		○

Table 1. Concepts of Corporate Social Responsibility

Standing on the basis of these discussions, the concept of corporate social responsibility can be understood as the business practice of maintaining good relations with interested parties (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Gruning & Hunt, 1984; Stroup &

LNaubert., 1987; Wood & Jones, 1995), and it could be defined as a responsibility to contribute to the society where the corporation operates and pursue business practices that have a positive influence on members of the public.

The Public Interest of the Media

There are various theories and discussions about the concept of the general public interest. The public interest of mass media is diversely defined according to the era or political and social trends. When we see the public interest in terms of the majoritarian that Held (1970) referred to, the public interest provides people with the things they want, actualized by the majority of people. In terms of the unitarian, the public interest is determined by a specific ideology or dominant value, in this case guardians or specialists who investigate whether it is right or not is served (McQuail, 1983). In Korea, while paternalistic public ideology was initially adopted in the process of accepting systems related to public interest and broadcasting, it was then redefined by the market-oriented value. However, emphasis has been placed on the idea that broadcasting is free from specific personal interests and works for the public. Promoting public interests is the goal of broadcasting.

The reason that mass media is classified as broadcasting particularly related to the public area is because mass media carries socially huge influence and spectrum scarcity. In general, a public concept called the public trustee model is based on such reasoning. Mass media magnifies social integration by providing a public service that establishes public information, public culture, and public discourse. It is related to the public sphere theory (Habermas, 1989) insofar as broadcasting is a sphere where members of the public can communicate with each other. The utilitarian model is a concept which assumes that universal service provides the biggest welfare for the largest audiences (Lim & Park, 2008). Aside from these theories, the public interest of mass media is defined by the deliberation democracy theory, the theory of social responsibility (Hutchins, 1947), and so on.

However, the public concept of mass media has been changing. The media environment has changed as a result of convergence and market-logic, and this is weakening the conventional basis of the public-logic. With the emergence of the smart-media environment, there is the possibility that universal service will become the most crucial ideology rather than quality of content. Second, as the efficiency of spectrum resources is increasing, the idea of spectrum scarcity is beginning to be undermined. Even though demanding spectrum resources are still rare resources, the efficiency of spectrum resources is relatively improved (Winston, 2005). Third, public value has changed. After public broadcasting becomes commercialized due to the appearance of competitions, the characteristics of public value are altered. There is an insistence that enjoyment and joy should be included in the concept of public value. The criticism is that John Reith's approach, in which he states that mass media informs us, educates us, entertains us, integrates our society, promotes the function of democracy, and improves culture and learning, is too enlightening. Finally, the concept of the citizen or the public as audience has been lessened, and the role as the consumer broadened (Livingstone, Lunt, & Miller, 2007).

In the age of digital convergence, the concept of public interest for the media has been redefined and altered. Though the media environment and the user's media consumption propensity are changing, the necessity of firmly maintaining the public utility offered by mass media is still important. However, most countries have inadequate criteria and procedures to judge the public interest of mass media content, and it is hard to find basic or practical research related to this line of inquiry.

A regulation system to evaluate the public interest of content while taking into account regulations on programming and content which enable the realization of and assessment of the value of public interest has not been introduced (Youn & Park, 2008). Because an obvious and systematic case of regulating public interest evaluation is very rare, it is also difficult to set a concrete evaluation standard and process. For example, the public interest test in America focuses on national security as part of the qualitative entry regulation. The UK government emphasizes the diversity of public opinions, quality and diversity of broadcasting content, and broadcaster's responsibility for the public. The government then applies the public interest test to the M&A of media firms. In Korea, though a legal basis to evaluate the value of public interest on media content is inherent in some clauses of the Broadcasting Act, the legal basis is inadequate to embody an object, form, and content of the public interest test (Lee et al., 2009).

RESEARCH MODEL

Measuring corporate social responsibility is very hard because there are few concrete definitions and methodologies on social responsibility (Abbott & Monsen, 1979). There could be significant differences in how to properly define social responsibility and which factors should be considered as important.

As mentioned before, social responsibility is classified into economic responsibility (e.g., profit chasing), legal responsibility (e.g. to justify profit chasing), and ethical or social contributions. Most studies have utilized these classifications in their efforts to measure corporate social responsibility (Aupperle, Carroll, & Hatfield, 1985; Carroll, 1979).

In this study, a different methodology from those used on general firms should be applied because corporate social responsibility with respect to the media is more strongly connected to the concept of public interest and has more powerful impacts on society than general corporate social responsibility. Measuring corporate social responsibility cannot exclude the obligation of public interest because media has a strong impact on society, for example in shaping social opinions.

A content analysis of the publications that media firms produce is an important tool in measuring corporate social responsibility (Abbott & Monsen, 1979; Cochran & Wood, 1984). This is because the content that is created by a goods and services firm has the ability to influence society. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize the context of content that goods and services media firms create. Considering the social influence of media, content analysis is an appropriate tool to measure the corporate social responsibility of media firms.

Reference	Measurements
Sethi (1975)	Social Obligation, Social Responsibility, Social Responsiveness
Carroll (1979)	Economic Responsibility, Legal Responsibility, Ethical Responsibility, Discretionary Responsibility
Maignan & Ferrell (20004)	Social responsibility as a social obligation, social responsibility as an obligation for interest groups, social responsibility based on ethics, and corporate social responsibility as a managerial process
Abbott & Monsen (1979)	Social Accounting, Reputational Scales, Content Analysis of Corporate Publications
Cochran & Wood (1984)	Reputation Index, Content Analysis

Table 2. Measurements of Social Responsibility

This study proposes a measurement methodology with three major constructs, namely reliability, fairness, and usefulness, from the view of the content responsibility of goods and services media firms in measuring corporate social responsibility.

Credibility

Social trust is generally formed through social relationships with family and friends. Trust within the larger society is built with information that is provided indirectly. In particular, an individual must depend on indirect information such as mass media so as to recognize information from outside of the local community (Severin & Tankard, 1997). Based on this indirect information, the individual recognizes and makes decisions about the social phenomenon or affair that he has not experienced firsthand. Thus, the media that provides indirect information performs an important role of social trust building. This means that the media firm has corporate social responsibility.

Social trust (credibility) can be measured using five constructs: accuracy, fairness, being unbiased, being trusted, and telling the whole story (Meyer, 1988). According to a more recent study, it can also be measured with these five constructs: accuracy, being trusted, being unbiased, reality, completeness (Flanagin & Metzger, 2000).

Meyer (1988)	Flanagin & Metzger (2000)
Accuracy	Accuracy
Fairness	Being trusted
Being unbiased	Being unbiased
Being trusted	Reality
Telling the whole story	Completeness

Table 3. Measurement of Credibility

Fairness

Since the commercialism age arrived, the objectivism of the news has been the main philosophy (Schudson, 2001). Fair and balanced reporting about both sides of the case became accepted as an important principle in particular (Gilboa, 2005). Because media has an important role in building attitudes about specific groups (Sigelman & Welch, 1993), the fairness of the media has a larger social influence, and thus, this is a core factor of the social responsibility of media firms.

Fairness has been discussed extensively. Some papers assessed the importance of reporting on both sides of controversial issues (Lacy & Fico, 1991), while some papers determined that the core of fairness is objectivity, which means that a media firm’s task was to pull together data from both sides, and that a reporter’s personal opinion would not be shared (Kitty, 1998).

Fairness has been measured with two constructs: the cognitive level and the behavioral level (Rosengren, 1980). Attempts were also made with two other constructs: truth and impartiality (Westerstahl, 1983). Rosengren’s (1980) methodology included sub-constructs: being honest and being related were included at the cognitive level while neutrality and being balanced came in at the behavioral level. Westerstahl (1983) also included sub-constructs: being honest and being appropriated were included under trust, and neutrality and being balanced were placed under impartiality.

Rosengren (1980)	Westerstahl (1983)
Cognitive level	Trust
- being honest	-being honest
- being related	-being appropriated
Behavioral level	Impartiality
- neutrality	- neutrality
- being balanced	- being balanced

Table 4. Measurement of Fairness

Usefulness

The use of media has relevance to the gratification of media users (Palmgreen & Rayburn, 1982; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1981). This is because users are aware of their needs by themselves and choose the media that can satisfy their desires (Ferguson and Perse 2000). Although the motive for choosing a particular media source or service is connected to satisfying needs, perceptions take precedence over activity choices. That is, when users are aware of the high effective value expected in using types of media, they use that media. This is the usefulness of media, which in turn increases the use of media.

Usefulness has been measured using six dimensions: work more quickly, job performance, increase productivity, effectiveness, makes job easier, and useful (Adams, Nelson, & Todd, 1992; F. D. Davis, 1989; Hendrickson, Massey, & Cronan, 1993). In another case, measurements were made with two dimensions (usefulness and effectiveness) and five sub constructs (makes job easier, useful, increase productivity, effectiveness and job performance) (Chin & Todd, 1995; Segars & Grover, 1993).

Davis(1989)	Adams et al. (1992)	Hendrickson et al. (1993)
Work more quickly	Work more quickly	Accomplish task quickly
Job performance	Job performance	Improve performance
Increase productivity	Increase productivity	Increase productivity
Effectiveness	Effectiveness	Enhance effectiveness
Makes job easier	Makes job easier	Easier to do work
Useful	Useful	Useful in work

Table 5. Measurements of Usefulness

METHODOLOGY

In order to measure Media Corporate Social Responsibility using the constructs developed in the paper, it is necessary that instrument validation should precede other core empirical validations (Cook & Campbell, 1979). The previous literature usually recommended a step-by-step process of instrument validation in order to develop new multi-item scales having high reliability and validity (Compeau & Higgins, 1995; Moore & Benbaasat, 1991; Smith, Milberg, & Burke, 1996; Stroup & LNeubert., 1987; Webster & Martocchio, 1992). The instrument development process usually includes three steps: item creation, scale development and instrument testing (Moore & Benbaasat, 1991). Instrument validation is executed as follows: 1. Pretest, 2. Technical validation 3. Pilot test of reliability and construct validity, and 4. Finally, a full scale survey (Stroup & LNeubert., 1987; Webster & Martocchio, 1992). Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the outline of the process.

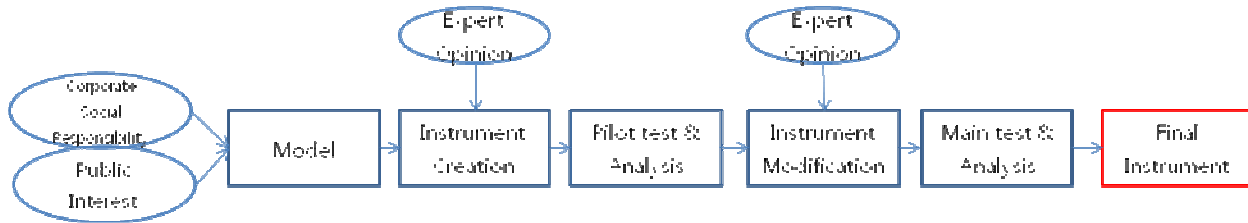


Figure 1. Instrument Development Process

Item creation

The first step in our research involved the creation of parameters to measure Media Corporate Social Responsibility. Item creation was done by reviewing the previously available literature. In this step, content validity was checked (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). Content validity refers to the adequacy of the content of a measuring instrument and its relation to established literature (El-Shinnawy & Markus, 1997).

First, a draft version of the instrument was developed. While developing the draft instrument, this paper held a practices committee that included professors who had work experience of ten or more years. During five meetings, we added, rewrote and eliminated questions. After the meetings, the first version of the instrument, which had 36 question items, was prepared. In this version, a five point Likert scale was used to elicit answers. Seven question items among the 36 were reverse-coded because the questions were asked in the negative (Suh, 1999; Webster & Martocchio, 1992).

Table 6 shows the initial categories and the corresponding constructs for the instrument as well as the number of question items in each construct.

Constructs	Abbreviation of constructs	Number of question items
Credibility	CR	14
Fairness	FA	14
Usefulness	US	12

Table 6. Constructs (Initial version)

Pilot testing and main testing

A pilot test was executed. The pilot test was administered to sixty students. Among them, thirty one majored in the department of business administration at a university, and twenty nine majored in the department of mass communication at a university in Korea. Students were encouraged the fill out the survey.

Exploratory factor analysis was done using the data collected from the first version of the survey. The cut-off criteria had a factor loading of 0.5. The question item which had the lowest maximum factor loading was removed. Finally, nineteen items were removed. The first version of the instrument, which had twenty two question items, was thus validated. The instrument had three constructs after the test.

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
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Credibility	8	0.882
Fairness	6	0.876
Usefulness	8	0.916

Table 7. Reliability Check for Constructs (Pilot test)

The second version of the instrument for the main field survey had twenty four question items. A field test was implemented to verify the result of the pilot test using the empirical study. As such, this paper conducted a field test of media professionals in Korea from December 4 to 11, 2007. A complete enumeration survey was carried out targeting the members of the Korean Society for Journalism and Communication Studies (KSCS). KSCS consists of professors, lecturers, journalists and media professionals in Korea. Among the media professionals, there were employees of the 17 media companies that were research objects. In that case, they were excluded from the list due to bias. Finally, this paper conducted its field survey targeting 557 members of KSCS. 253 of the respondents participated in the main field test (response rate 45.4%).

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Credibility	7	0.917
Fairness	6	0.910
Usefulness	8	0.888

Table 8. Reliability Check for Constructs (Main test)

RESULTS

To identify the constructs, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. For each construct, reliability has been checked using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 8 shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis in the final stage. Three constructs have eigenvalues greater than 1.0 resulting from varimax rotation (CR06, FA02, FA03, FA06, FA12 were reverse-scored). These three constructs showed a total variance of 65.37%.

This paper named the factors based on the results from the exploratory factor analysis. To determine internal consistency, we performed a reliability check with Cronbach's alpha. It is recommended that factors have values greater than 0.7 in the established study and 0.6 in the exploratory study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kahai, R.B., & Cooper, 2003; Nunnally, 1976). Table 9 shows the names of constructs and their corresponding number of items. It shows that all constructs are greater than 0.7. The final instrument is in the Appendix. The instrument has three constructs which consist of twenty one question items.

Item	Construct		
	C1	C2	C3
US01	0.769	0.1581	0.0969
US02	0.7576	0.2751	0.1157
US03	0.7371	0.3825	0.1293
US04	0.72	0.2169	0.0973
US05	0.6895	0.4085	0.1485
US06	0.6803	-0.0156	0.1779
US07	0.653	0.2693	0.1808
US08	0.6383	-0.1025	0.1912
CR01	0.1821	0.7829	0.3926
CR02	0.2963	0.7554	0.0102
CR03	0.192	0.7467	0.3709
CR04	0.1808	0.7465	0.3122
CR05	0.2554	0.7144	0.323

CR06	0.2457	0.7073	0.429
CR07	0.0151	0.6553	0.2547
FA01	0.2009	0.144	0.8193
FA02	0.1407	0.1113	0.8178
FA03	0.3176	0.1985	0.7018
FA04	0.4421	0.2126	0.7005
FA05	0.4804	0.2374	0.6972
FA06	0.3309	0.2457	0.691
Eigenvalue	4.2013	4.9795	4.5499
Percentage of variance	20.00%	23.71%	21.66%

Table 9. Rotated Factor Loadings (Main test)

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Because of certain limitations in measuring corporate social responsibility by using the quality of media, the instrument tool for the social responsibility of media was created from a framework which consists of corporate social responsibility and public interest. The instrument tool that this paper newly proposed has three constructs: credibility, fairness and usefulness. Based on the three constructs, twenty one question items were developed.

Generally, constructs of credibility, fairness and usefulness had been used for measuring programs such as news, dramas, documentaries, and so on. These programs are the main goods and services of media firms and a social influence of public interest is achieved with these programs. Thus, the social responsibility of media firms has a lot of duties, not only social contributions but also making programs and broadcasts.

Nevertheless, when we discuss the social responsibility of the media, the evaluation of social contributions and programs is referred to differently. However, social contributions and programs have an ethical and public interest; they are realized individually. Yet, when we evaluate the social responsibility of the media, the basic functions of media must be accounted for when measuring the media.

From this point of view, this study adds not only corporate social responsibility but also the responsibility from the perspective of the basic functions with respect to the distinct characteristics of media. Therefore, this study gains significance because it redefines the concept of social responsibility for the media. Furthermore, this study proposes a way to measure the social responsibility of the media. In the past, the public interest evaluation construct was only conducted using program screening based on content analysis. However, this study provides implications for a modified and applicable construct to better measure the social responsibility of the media.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

Nevertheless, this study has some limitations because there are few discussions on the social responsibility of the media. In particular, it does not theoretically make a definite link between corporate social responsibility and the social responsibility of the media as we previously suggested.

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APPENDIX

Construct	Index	Question Item
Usefulness	US01	It provides necessary information for my leisure life (hobbies).
	US02	The obtained information is used in daily life.
	US03	The information provided is helpful in my work.
	US04	There is a variety of/a lot of interesting information.
	US05	The provided information helps in self-development.
	US06	The news is immediately/quickly covered.
	US07	It deals with a variety of information.
	US08	There is easy access to information.
Credibility	CR01	The press releases are reliable.
	CR02	The press releases are detailed and professional.
	CR03	Articles and news deal with facts.
	CR04	A lot of information shows trust to the public.
	CR05	I will refer primarily to the media when there are conflicting reports.
	CR06	When dealing with news, it is based on real stories.
	CR07	Articles and news are not obscene/offensive.
Fairness	FA01	The media is not disproportionate to specific issues or parties.
	FA02	Articles and news are not biased by political tendencies.
	FA03	There is non-biased coverage of global/international issues and countries.
	FA04	There are balanced opinions as opposed to reporting in the news.
	FA05	The information content is objective.
	FA06	Articles and programs reflect the values of various groups.

Table 10. Instrument of Corporate Social Responsibility of the Media