

research snapshot

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Corporate Social Responsibility Does Not Say a Lot on the Responsibilities to Children

What is this research about?

Children and their parents are very important stakeholders for businesses. However, growing concerns are emerging around the impact of their activities on youth. Companies attempt to address the impact of their activities through mandates of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, CSR reports and strategies offer little in the way of their effects on children. This makes it difficult for companies to sustain valuable relationships with children and parents, as well as observe and manage their reputation to the public.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers looked at the numerous impacts that businesses have on children. They wanted to create a set of guidelines so firms could understand and manage their responsibilities to children and their parents. To compile a list of impacts, the researchers looked at print and online news media, as well as company websites and reports within the United Kingdom. These records were published between January 2002 and September 2006. With this content, the researchers outlined the positive and negative impacts that were identified. Their findings informed the types of responsibilities and

What you need to know:

Corporate social responsibility among firms needs to address their impacts on children. It will help businesses manage their reputations in the public, as well as meet their own responsibilities to youth through their numerous impacts.

responses companies should uphold to children.

What did the researchers find?

The researchers outlined 7 corporate responsibilities to children:

- Physical protection: The safety, health and fitness of children.
- Moral protection: Access to products and inappropriate content (or content for adults) and the use of child labour.
- Social and cultural participation: Contributing to culturally significant goods, and managing excessive consumerism.
- Economic wellbeing: Supporting children and their families by minimizing parental debt and creating positive advertising.
- Education and employability: Support

programs and strategies for learning, through the company's products and opportunities for skills and work.

- Parental employment and family life: Providing work, flexible terms and childcare for parents.
- Children's charities: Support through donations, philanthropy and creating partnerships for change.

Many of the corporate impacts were not instances where laws were broken, but additional areas that businesses should consider in their CSR. The researchers named 5 different attitudes that firms use to handle these issues:

- Defensive: Firms can deny the negative impacts and outcomes of their relationship with children.
- Compliance: Firms create a policy in response to the issues, accepting them as one of the costs to business.
- Managerial: Firms may develop a more detailed, central management to respond to CSR.
- Strategic: A "built-in" strategy, where an issue becomes a part of the firm's main business strategies.
- Civil: Getting partners involved on a broader scale, with other firms in the industry or with stakeholders.

How can you use this research?

This research may be used by those in both private and non-profit sectors. It suggests opportunities for partnerships between the two to address social issues that both encounter. It

may also shed insight on the different types of impacts that business can have on children. This may be useful for industries that work with youth and education.

About the Researchers

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