

Green approaches in Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants and its effects on corporate image

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Abstract - Previous studies have found a positive linear relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate image. CSR was found can improve an organisation's competitive edge and sustainability. In addition, CSR and the concept of 3R (reduce, reuse, and recycle) can enhance the corporate image and its effect on the performance of fast-food marketing. This research adopted a positivism paradigm and quantitative cross-sectional approach with a sampling frame comprising customers of Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants which are facing keen competition. 350 sets of data were collected from customers by using a questionnaire to measure four constructs that were adopted from previous studies to identify the relationships between various antecedents and to test four hypotheses. The research found that all direct relationships between CSR and corporate image, and similarly between 3R and corporate image, were found significant and positive. It is believed that 3R plays a better long-term role rather than CSR activities, such as philanthropic acts that help the community and support charities. The research verifies that CSR and 3R practices are appropriate competitive advantage tools to enhance corporate image, which will ultimately benefit the fast-food industry in Hong Kong.

Keywords - Corporate image; green; 3R; CSR; fast-food industry

1. INTRODUCTION

The fast-food industry in Hong Kong is the product of 'McDonaldisation' as it is in many Asian countries (Xu, 2014; Ritzer, 2011)[81][66]. Various similar food concepts such as coffee café culture and pizza and sandwich cultures have invaded Asia in the last few years (Xu, 2014; Lan and Khan, 1995)[81][45]. As the concept gained acceptance by the customers at large, competition began to increase during the recovery of the economy in 1998 (Hong Kong Food Market Trends, 2007)[29]. Tradition bound Hong Kong businessmen who were not keen to adopt CSR practices, are now forced to re-examine CSR as competition increases. Typical agency theory is almost a thing of the past as more businesses in Hong Kong increasingly turn to stakeholder theory to underpin their business model (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar and de Colle, 2010)[23]. Moreover, the three most popular and listed local fast-food retailers in Hong Kong are already voluntarily participating in social projects and further pressure is felt from international competitors, such as McDonald's and KFC, who are practicing CSR globally (Hong Kong Business Forecast Report Q1, 2015)[28].

Young customers and managers around the world are showing a growing interest in embarking on CSR activities (Hutchinson, Singh and Walker, 2012; Freeman et al., 2010; Worcester, 2009)[32][23][80]. The benefits

of CSR in enhancing the image of organisations are also sought by present-day businessmen in Hong Kong who are seeking business sustainability. However, it is rather disconcerting not knowing the actual reasons for customers being interested in a particular fast-food retailer, as customers may be just interested in the quick bite offered by the restaurant or it may be due to convenience.

There is a dearth of studies of the attitude of fast-food restaurant customers toward CSR practices of fast-food restaurants (Koenig-Lewis, Palmer, Dermody and Urbye, 2014; Wagner, Bicen and Hall, 2008)[40][77]. As Hong Kong consumers become more aware of the necessity for ethical and legal business practices, while emphasising social and environmental well-being for the long term (Massa and Tessa, 2012)[54]; Hong Kong Food Market Trends, 2007), businesses are forced to re-evaluate their societal marketing practices, specifically with regard to CSR.

This research therefore embarked on understanding fast-food customers' view on CSR's contribution to building corporate image in Hong Kong. The study also examines 3R (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) efforts of the fast-food industry in intervening the relationship between CSR efforts and reputation and image of fast-food restaurants.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Brand image are synonymously used and greatly sought after by organisations. Some firms make a great effort to brand their company in an attempt to develop the firms' image. Research shows that reputable firms have a tendency to attract customers (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012[1]; Worcester, 2009; Martin and Hetrick, 2006[53]; De Chernatony, 2006)[18], and corporate image is said to build and enhance customers' trust in the brand and the company (Alsop, 2004; Abratt, 1989)[3][2]. These concepts drive loyalty, competitive advantage, and sustainability (Firestein, 2006;[21] Resnick, 2004).

Amongst recent image building initiatives is corporate social responsibility (CSR). Convolved in its definition, CSR is used by firms for various reasons including public relation and to display ethical business conduct. However there is constant debate amongst academics and management experts over how CSR is able to benefit image building (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012; Mattila, 2009;[55] Sen, Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2006;[73] Rossiter and Percy, 1998)[67]. The fast-food retail industry is no alien to image building and the development of image whilst struggling with various accusations and contempt from customers and media alike (Wagner et al., 2008;[77] Yoon, Giirhan-Canli and Schwarz, 2006)[82].

The retail industry has proliferated since the beginning of the new millennium (Kremer and Viot, 2012;[41] Jones, Comfort, Hiller and Eastwood, 2007;[36] Christensen and Tedlow, 2000) and this growth is more apparent in the service retail industry (Kantsperger and Kunz, 2010;[38] Gurbuz, 2008;[24] Anselmsson and Johansson, 2007),[4] specifically the food retail industry. The industry's attraction has led to an increasing number of small fast-food retailers, thus causing vigorous competition within the industry (Hong Kong Business Forecast Report, 2014). This has given rise to increasing efforts to induce loyalty and sustain the business.

2.1 Corporate Image

Some of the factors that frequently affect corporate image are product image, brand image and brand user image (Worcester, 2009). Hence, corporate image is delineated as the experiences, impressions, beliefs, feelings and knowledge of people, which are apparently branding efforts (Low and Lamb, 2000)[48]. Measures of corporate image are as contentious as the concept. Company's brand name and specific messages such as its social contributions, treatment of its employees, society and the environment, and ethical business practices that are related to CSR, are relevant in the current competitive environment (Kremer and Viot, 2012; Fan, 2005; Firestein, 2006; Arpan, Raney and Zivnuka, 2003; Lam and Zhang, 2003). Organisations continue to experiment with various strategies, including CSR activities such as

charity events to enhance their image and reputation (Hutchinson et al., 2012; Massa and Testa, 2012).

CSR is the new addition to efforts in building corporate image. CSR programmes that place attention on stakeholders' interests and needs deliver better perceptions amongst customers. Amongst CSR activities that brings positive image are product quality, service quality, and employee care (Bourdeau, Graf and Turcotte, 2013;[10] Lemmink et al., 2003)[47]. These tend to induce customer recommendations to friends and family and, more importantly, form a company identity (Arendt and Brettel, 2010).

For the purposes of this study, which relates to CSR's influence on corporate image, the definition of image has been narrowed down to customer's perception based on the identity of the company and the various word of mouth recommendations heard and spread by customers.

2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) was established in the early 1950s to ensure organisations act responsibly and conduct their business ethically (Vlachos, 2012[76]; Mattila, 2009[55]; Brown and Dacin, 1997)[11]. The need for CSR has increased in the new millennium as changes in society and the environment become more frequent, faster and more damaging.

CSR was initially defined with three dimensions: economic, legal, and voluntary (Carroll, 1979)[14]. In later years these dimensions were extended to four dimensions: economics, legal, ethics, and discretionary (Carroll, 1999). The ethics dimension was introduced following financial scandals involving several organisations and the unethical business conduct of several manufacturers (Bourdeau et al., 2013; Carroll, 1999; Pinkston and Carroll, 1996). The ethics dimension of CSR emphasises ethical business conduct to ensure consumers, society and the environment are protected (National Center for Sustainability Reporting, 2012; Mattila, 2009).

The sceptical view of customers on CSR activities undertaken by retailers may be clouded by their perception of a variety of retail activities, such as products, physical appearance, and the service rendered as described earlier (Jahdi, 2007b)[34]. Dissatisfied customers can spearhead a collective negative word of mouth about the retailer and question the integrity of its CSR activities, thereby damaging the retailer's image. Hence retailers embarking on CSR activities need to strategically plan them and support them with good retail operations (Teimouri et al., 2011; Pomeroy and Dolnicar, 2006; Devinney et al., 2006; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005)[43].

2.3 Relationships between CSR and Image

The restaurant business faces complication in relation to their CSR activities. As these retailers sell products that directly concerns human health, issues including supply chain of organic food, pesticide-free vegetables, biodegradable packaging, and restaurant's cleanliness top

the list of customer critique (Assiouras, Ozgen and Skourtis, 2013)[6], posing further challenges for fast-food restaurants. CSR practices are traditionally connected to multinational companies and rarely seen in local food and beverage retails. Vlachos (2012)[76] and Mattila (2009) argued that the nature of the food and beverage businesses restricts them from exhibiting their CSR practices. Instead, customers misconstrue these initiatives as a necessity and natural in a restaurant business, where a clean restaurant serving genuinely sourced food supplies are somewhat expected by their customers. However, whether it is CSR or not, meeting expectation and going beyond the expectation leads to increased corporate image.

2.4 The Mediating role of Recycle, Reduce, and Reuse (3R)

The 3R in this research is about recycle, reduce, and reuse which are commonly terminologies in environmental businesses. However, the application of all three concepts is quite rare especially in businesses (Mario and Chew, 2012). While the CSR notion is ambiguous in description and application, the 3R notion is clearly understood as the application of environmentally friendly tools in society's daily affairs. Businesses are essential for society and the country but coercing the use of 3R is impossible due to its high operational cost, the inconvenience of reducing usage and using reusable products, and the need not to dissatisfy or inconvenience end users (Denasiewicz and McCarty, 2011). The 3R concept is also interchangeably used with 'green practices' (Schubert, Kandampully, Solnet and Kralj, 2010; Lee, 2008).

Typically, reusable, recyclable packaging and biodegradable packaging and utensils at food and beverage retails are perceived as inconvenient, expensive and even unattractive (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2014). The implementation of 3R is easier with society than it is with businesses, though businesses are bigger users of products that can be recycled and reused. However, it is encouraging to know that customers are paying more attention to businesses that practice the 3R concept (Bezzina and Dimech, 2011)[9].

Some studies argue that 3R practices are ethical practices and as such support legitimate theory (Bezzina and Dimech, 2011; Jahdi, 2007a)[33], whereas the fact that customers, employees, and suppliers, are engaged in this practice and it is often described as 'green practice'. Therefore, 3R is clearly a part of CSR by fulfilling the environmental dimension (Samiha, 2013; Jahdi, 2007b; Carroll, 1999; Pinkston and Carroll, 1996)[62].

The 3R concept is a significant and innovative move towards cost reduction and profit maximisation, whilst satisfying end users with safe and quality services and products. Hence, CSR activities that do not directly affect customers need 3R activities to induce and enhance corporate image. Corporate image needs customers to experience various company offerings, such as product and service quality. Meanwhile, corporate image requires

clear and convincing communication from the company. In fact, the information on 3R allows customers to feel they are playing a part in improving and sustaining the environment, which is not achievable individually.

2.5 Research Hypotheses

As stipulated above, the argument in favour of a relationship between the convoluted notion of CSR and 3R is undeniable. Although CSR has various definitions, Carroll's (1999) is the most commonly used and most closely relates to the current situation in business with its four dimensions of economy, legal, ethics and discretionary that are most useful but not considered in many CSR related activities. However, the 3R approach fulfils this gap by assisting in developing a sustainable environment whilst saving costs for the business (Butler, 2008; Scanlon, 2007)[12][70]. As the literature suggests that 3R is part of CSR as much as CSR is part of 3R (Schubert et al., 2010), the following hypothesis has been formed to indicate the correlation between CSR and 3R.

H1: There is a significant and positive correlation between CSR and 3R in Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants.

The literature review above demonstrates the relationship between 3R and corporate image. The aim of 3R practices in businesses is fundamentally to save production costs or the cost of running the business (Butler, 2008) that suggests the relationship between 3R and image as depicted in H2. The competitive edge the business gains through cost cutting procedures of 3R provide the business with an image formed in customers' minds (Bezzina and Dimech, 2011). With these in mind, H2 below are formed to reflect the relationship between 3R and image of a business.

H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between 3R activities and corporate image in Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants.

It should be noted that CSR has direct relationships with image. However, as discussed before, the 3R concept though unambiguous and complex in practice, is useful in being visible to customers; it is also easier to communicate the 3R notion. Therefore, 3R is recognised as a mediator, showing 3R converts customers who understand CSR to those who participate to achieve personal goals in saving and sustaining the environment as well as forming various emotional attachments with the organisation that lead to image (Schubert et al., 2010; Montoro-Rios, Luque-Martínes and Rodriguez-Molina, 2008)[58]. Hypothesis H4 has been formed to verify the relationship between CSR and image. Meanwhile, 3R can be directly viewed and experienced by customers, a close involvement of the customer in intervening the relationship between CSR and image are developed as H4. The recyclable products, the reuse of the product and the reduction of usage are distinctive features applicable to fast-food retail and play a significant role in assisting CSR to build reputation and image.

H3: There is a significant and position relationship between CSR and corporate image in Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants.

H4: The 3R activities of food utensils and packaging mediate the relationship between CSR initiatives and corporate image in Hong Kong's fast-food restaurants.

2.6 Research Framework

The following Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study.

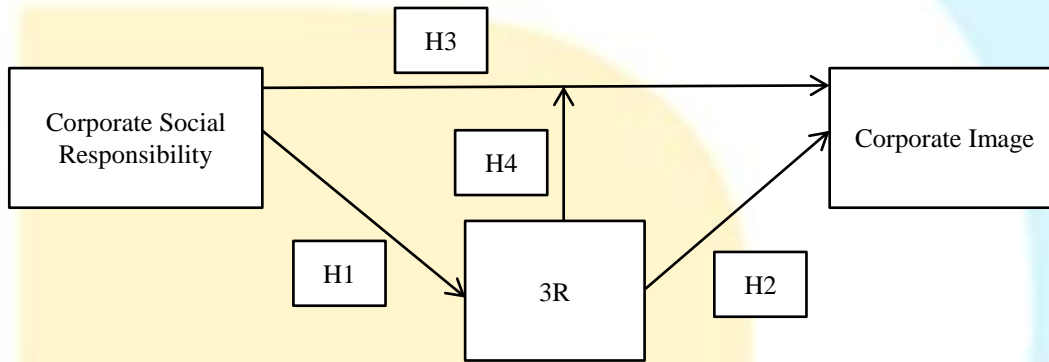


Figure 1 Research Framework

3. METHOD OF STUDY

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

This research identified personal method as the most suitable to collect data for an extensive research such as this where questionnaires were distributed to customers of fast-food restaurants in Hong Kong. A total of 350 self-administered questionnaires were distributed in 15 fast-food locations to customers 18 years old and above. The researcher approached potential respondents in person, explained the purpose of the interview and its anonymous nature, and assured confidentiality of the data provided. Upon passing the questionnaire to the potential respondent, he/she was advised to read the information sheet and that consent to participate would be implied upon returning a completed questionnaire. This study attracted 330 completed questionnaires from 15 locations in Hong Kong where there are high traffic fast-food restaurants.

3.2 Measurement Items

This research defines CSR as the responsibility and concern shown by fast-food restaurants in Hong Kong toward the environment, employees, customers, people who are physically or mentally challenged, and charitable activities (Lacey, Close and Finney, 2010; Dahlsrud, 2008; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2008)[42][16][65]. This research adopts stakeholder theory that observes Carroll's

(1999) social, ethical, economic, and discretionary dimensions of CSR.

Corporate image was measured using scales adapted from Arendt and Brettel (2010), Lemmink, Schuijf and Streukens (2003)[47], and Maxham III (2001)[56] as these include items regarding company identity and positive word of mouth disseminated to friends and family, which are relevant to trust and communication impetuses that drive customers to form an image.

Though lacking in usage and visibility, 3R practices are clearly distinguishable (Samiha, 2013) [68]and widely used in various businesses. This research borrows the measurement items for 3R from Samiha (2013), who studied the effect of the use of reusable utensils, recyclable packaging, and biodegradable package and utensils at fast-food restaurants in Hong Kong. More importantly, this study examined if CSR needs concepts such as 3R to positively build corporate reputation and image in the context of fast-food restaurants.

The six items for CSR were adapted from Ramasamy and Yeung (2008) and Lacey, Close and Finney (2010); six items for 3R were adapted from Samiha (2013); four items for corporate image were adapted from Maxham III (2001), Arendt and Brettel, (2010), and Lemmink et al. (2003). The measurement items are shown in Table 1 below.

Corporate Social Responsibility	Questions (Constituent Variables)
CSR1	The fast-food restaurant provides a safe dining environment for customers.
CSR2	The fast-food restaurant provides a healthy working condition for employees.

CSR3	The fast-food restaurant is very active in supporting the disadvantaged.
CSR4	The fast-food restaurant is committed to using a substantial portion of its profits to support communities where it does its business
CSR5	The fast-food restaurant puts charity into its business activities.
CSR6	The fast-food restaurant shows concern over environmental degradation.
Corporate Image	Questions (Constituent Variables)
CI1	The fast-food restaurant has a distinctive identity.
CI2	I often say positive things about this fast-food restaurant.
CI3	I heard positive comments about this fast-food restaurant.
CI4	I would be happy to recommend this fast-food restaurant to friends and family.
Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3R)	Questions (Constituent Variables)
3R1	The fast-food restaurant provides food utensils and packaging that can be reused.
3R2	The fast-food restaurant reduced the use of non-biodegradable utensils and packaging.
3R3	The fast-food restaurant uses packaging made from recycled paper.
3R4	The fast-food restaurant encourages customers to bring their own tiffin carriers or containers.
3R5	The fast-food restaurant does not use plastic utensils.
3R6	The fast-food restaurant asks customers to bring their own bag.

Table 1. Measurement Items for Construct in this Research

3.3 Data Analysis

The returned questionnaires were checked for tainted questionnaires before the data was analysed statistically. The keyed-in data was eyeballed to identify wrongly keyed in values. Simple analyses, such as frequency and maximum and minimum values were calculated to identify other abnormalities in the data. The data underwent several stages of analysis to ensure all assumptions were met. This began with descriptive analysis, which provided an overview of the data characteristics. Next, measurement analyses, using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), were used to confirm the validity and

reliability of the data. Finally, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the significant roles played by the constructs presented in the research framework.

4. RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Characteristics of Samples

Responses from the 350 completed questionnaires in which one respondent was removed from the data set, leaving 349 respondents for further analysis. Their characteristics are shown in Table 2 below.

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	135	38.7
Female	214	61.3
Age		
20 or below	136	39.0
21-40	179	51.3
41-60	31	8.9
61 or above	3	0.9
Marital status		
Single	293	84.0
Married	56	16.0
Education level		
Primary	2	0.6
Secondary	108	30.9
Tertiary	205	58.7
Post-graduate	34	9.7
Salary level per month		
HK\$10,000 or below	210	60.2
HK\$10,001-20,000	70	20.1

HK\$20,001-40,000	46	13.2
Above HK\$40,000	23	6.6

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Demographics (n=349)

4.2 Analysis of Data for Validity and Reliability

The data was analysed for its validity and reliability prior to significance testing. As such the validity test using EFA was carried out with a PCA using Varimax rotation Table 3 presents the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistics and the Bartlett's Sphericity's chi-square statistics to measure the

method. Using a measurement model in Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), this validity test result was then confirmed by Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).

4.2.1 Validity Analysis with EFA

sampling adequacy and the correlation of items respectively.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.901
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2655.621
	Df	91
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3. KMO Test for Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test for Sphericity

The EFA run with Varimax rotation went through 25 iterations with an eigenvalue of 1. As the items converged within 8 iterations, the outcome values below 0.51 were

suppressed, resulting in the rotated component matrix in Table 4 below.

Items measuring constructs of the research	3R	CI	CSR
3R5 The fast-food restaurant does not use plastic utensils.	0.843		
3R6 The fast-food restaurant asks customers to bring their own bag.	0.834		
3R4 The fast-food restaurant encourages customers to bring their own tiffin carriers or containers.	0.733		
3R3 The fast-food restaurant uses packaging made from recycled paper.	0.679		
3R2 The fast-food restaurant reduced the use of non-biodegradable utensils and packaging.	0.647		
CI3 I heard positive comments about this fast-food restaurant.		0.812	
CI4 I would be happy to recommend this fast-food restaurant to friends and family.		0.800	
CI2 I often say positive things about this fast-food restaurant.		0.754	
CSR4 The fast-food restaurant is committed to using a substantial portion of its profits to support communities where it does its business.			0.843
CSR5 The fast-food restaurant puts charity into its business activities.			0.812
CSR3 The fast-food restaurant is very active in supporting the disadvantaged.			0.811

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Table 4 describes the loading of five items into component 1, renamed as 3R factors, whereby item "3R1: The fast-food restaurant provides food utensils and packaging that can be reused" was removed. The rest of the items loaded highly between the eigenvalue of 0.647 and 0.843. Three out of four items that represented corporate image loaded highly into component 2, which is renamed as corporate image (CI). The item removed "CI1: The fast-food restaurant has a distinctive identity" failed to load with the rest of the items. The remaining three items loaded between eigenvalue of 0.754 and 0.812. Three items, amongst the six items representing CSR loaded highly in component three, whereby "CSR1: The fast-food restaurant provides a safe dining environment for customers", "CSR2: The fast-food restaurant provides a healthy working conditions for employees" and "CSR6: The fast-food restaurant shows

concern over environmental degradation" were removed. Thus "CSR 3: The fast-food restaurant is very active in supporting the disadvantaged", "CSR4: The fast-food restaurant is committed to using a substantial portion of its profits to support communities where it does its business" and "CSR 5: The fast-food restaurant puts charity into its business activities" loaded highly between the eigenvalue of 0.811 and 0.843. As such the removal of five items from the three components showed the fulfilment of the convergent and determinant assumptions for this study (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson., 2010; James, Kover, Sonner and Keeler, 2005).

4.2.2 Validity Analysis with CFA

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with a similar purpose as EFA, confirms the validity of the items in the research using the correlation of constructs.

Relationships	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Estimate
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Relationships			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Estimate
CSR6	<---	CSR	1.000				0.769
CSR5	<---	CSR	0.847	0.064	13.304	***	0.712
CSR4	<---	CSR	0.962	0.062	15.510	***	0.818
CSR3	<---	CSR	0.914	0.065	14.053	***	0.748
CSR2	<---	CSR	0.753	0.064	11.826	***	0.640
CSR1	<---	CSR	0.441	0.057	7.689	***	0.428
TR6	<---	3R	1.000				0.834
TR5	<---	3R	0.982	0.064	15.249	***	0.731
TR4	<---	3R	1.151	0.063	18.290	***	0.832
TR3	<---	3R	0.819	0.066	12.392	***	0.623
TR2	<---	3R	1.044	0.064	16.201	***	0.764
TR1	<---	3R	1.178	0.074	15.999	***	0.757
CI4	<---	CI	1.000				0.854
CI3	<---	CI	0.851	0.053	16.187	***	0.775
CI2	<---	CI	0.931	0.057	16.325	***	0.780
CI1	<---	CI	0.414	0.054	7.677	***	0.417

*** shows p-values < 0.05

Table 5. Regression Weights for Measurement Model 1

CFA with three constructs represented by 16 items, the Regression weights Table 5 above showed that all items for the constructs are representative and significantly correlated as the Criterion Ratio (C.R) value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 (Kline, 2011; Bryne, 2001). Meanwhile, the measurement assessment in Table 6 shows CMIN = 826.09, DF = 183, p-value = 0.0001 and CMIN/DF = 4.51, as CMIN/DF is > 2, there is no model fit (Kline, 2011; Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen, 2008; Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). Moreover, p-value corresponding to CMIN statistics shows < 0.05, supporting the prior decision, rejecting the fit of the model.

The GFI = 0.801 in Table 6 is lesser than the recommended statistics $GFI \geq 0.9$ for model fit. Besides

AGFI = 0.748 while the recommended decision statistics is $AGFI \geq 0.9$. Moreover, CFI = 0.845, while the decision statistics recommends $CFI > 0.9$ for model fit. Thus, Table 6 shows the model is not fit. As the model was an unsatisfactory fit, several items were removed to ensure the items appropriately represent the constructs in this study. Therefore, several items that did not fit nor represent the construct were removed. The removal was based on the Modification Index (MI) for standardised estimates which was set at 20 for the original model (Model1). The relationships that had the biggest MI was removed to strengthen the measurement model (Hooper et al., 2008; Bryne, 2001; MacCallum and Austin, 2000).

Model	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Default model	826.094	183	0.000	4.514	0.801	0.748	0.845	0.100
Saturated model	0.000	0			1.000		1.000	
Independence model	4351.117	210	0.000	20.720	0.231	0.154	0.000	0.238

Table 6. Model Fit Statistics for Model 1

Thus, prior to running the SEM, several items were removed from the data set. The first few removed were those items that were found unfit in EFA. These are the items CSR1, CSR2, CSR6, 3R1, CI1, CR1, CR2 and CR3.

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label	Standardised Estimates
CSR5	<---	CSR	1.000					0.740
CSR4	<---	CSR	1.178	0.080	14.650	***	par_1	0.882
CSR3	<---	CSR	1.081	0.079	13.747	***	par_2	0.779
TR6	<---	3R	1.000					0.872
TR5	<---	3R	0.959	0.059	16.172	***	par_3	0.746
TR4	<---	3R	1.117	0.057	19.440	***	par_4	0.844
TR3	<---	3R	0.768	0.062	12.314	***	par_5	0.611

TR2	<---	3R	0.908	0.062	14.593	***	par_6	0.694
CI4	<---	CI	1.000					0.867
CI3	<---	CI	0.835	0.051	16.328	***	par_7	0.772
CI2	<---	CI	0.905	0.056	16.260	***	par_8	0.770

*** shows p-values < 0.05

Table 7. Regression Weights for Measurement Model 2

Table 7 shows the regression weights for the new measurement model with reduced number of items. The regression estimates are all with CR > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05, indicating significant relationships. Moreover the

estimates have improved or are higher than those in Table 5 named as model 2 with model fit statistics presented in Table 8.

Model	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA
Default model	198.269	59	0.000	3.360	0.916	0.900	0.943	0.080
Saturated model	0.000	0			1.000		1.000	
Independence model	2510.857	78	0.000	32.190	0.303	0.187	0.000	0.299

Table 8. Model Fit Statistics for Model 2

The table above shows that CMIN = 198.27, DF = 59, p-value = 0.0001, statistics that indicate that model 2 is not fit as the p-value is < 0.05, and CMIN/DF = 3.4 is greater than 2. However, GFI = 0.916 (GFI ≥ 0.9) and AGFI = 0.900 (AGFI ≥ 0.9) indicate a model fit. Moreover, CFI = 0.94 (CFI ≥ 0.9) and RMSEA = 0.08 (RMSEA ≤ 0.08), also show model fit (Hooper et al., 2008; Weston and Gore Jr., 2006; MacCallum and Austin, 2000).

The reliability analysis was undertaken on the remaining items after validity test with Cronbach's Alpha test (Han and Fan, 1995; Nunnally, 1978)[60]. Though the items derived for this research are borrowed items from past studies, the reliability test verifies their reliability in the context of fast-food restaurant customers in Hong Kong. The outcome of Cronbach's Alpha reliability test for this study is presented in Table 9 below.

4.2.3 Reliability Analysis

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
CSR	0.840	3	12.40	3.598
3R	0.866	5	25.37	6.391
CI	0.845	3	12.36	3.811

Table 9. Cronbach's Alpha for Constructs

The reliability test resulted in CSR, 3R and CI having high reliability. The Cronbach's alpha for CSR = 0.840, with three items, a mean of 12.40 and a standard deviation of 3.60 show that the strength of association is very good (Hair, Money, Page and Samouel, 2007; James, Kover, Sonner and Keeler, 2005; Hsu and Fan, 1995). Similarly, the Cronbach's Alpha for 3R is 0.866, has five items, a mean of 25.37 and a standard deviation of 6.39. Meanwhile CI's Cronbach's Alpha = 0.845, has three items with mean of 12.36 and standard deviation of 3.81. These constructs are also represented with items that are strongly associated with one another and their respective constructs.

4.3 Test of Significance: Direct Relationships

Table 10 below indicates that the relationships listed in the first column are all significant. The positive value of standardised estimates = 0.521 indicating a positive

relationship between CSR and 3R. Table 11 below is a correlation table whereby TCSR is a summated score of items representing corporate social responsibility or the total score of CSR3, CSR4 and CSR5 and TTR is the summated score of the 3R items of TR2, TR3, TR4, TR5 and TR6.

Table 11 shows the correlation coefficient (r) between TCSR and TTR = 0.454, with a p-value = 0.0001 as p < 0.05, indicating a significant correlation between TCSR and TTR. This means that "H1: There is a significant and positive correlation between CSR and 3R" is supported. Beside these, the correlation coefficient between TCSR and TCI = 0.489, p-value = 0.0001, show a significant correlation between CSR and CI. The correlation between 3R and corporate image is significant and stronger with r = 0.546 and p-value = 0.0001.

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardised Estimates
3R <--- CSR	0.634	0.076	8.322	***	0.521
CI <--- CSR	0.406	0.077	5.300	***	0.327
CI <--- 3R	0.517	0.063	8.228	***	0.507

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Standardised Estimates
CSR5 <--- CSR	1.000				0.738
CSR4 <--- CSR	1.167	0.080	14.598	***	0.872
CSR3 <--- CSR	1.091	0.079	13.744	***	0.784
TR6 <--- 3R	1.000				0.858
TR5 <--- 3R	0.960	0.061	15.631	***	0.735
TR4 <--- 3R	1.142	0.059	19.283	***	0.849
TR3 <--- 3R	0.781	0.064	12.228	***	0.612
TR2 <--- 3R	0.930	0.064	14.599	***	0.700
CI4 <--- CI	1.000				0.853
CI3 <--- CI	0.844	0.055	15.404	***	0.768
CI2 <--- CI	0.944	0.059	15.889	***	0.790

*** shows p-value < 0.05

Table 10. Regression Weights for Structural Model

Correlations					
		TCSR	TTR	TCI	TCR
TCSR	Pearson Correlation	1	0.454**	0.489**	0.460**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	349	349	349	349
TTR	Pearson Correlation	0.454**	1	0.546**	0.524**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	349	349	349	349
TCI	Pearson Correlation	0.489**	0.546**	1	0.674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	349	349	349	349

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11. Correlation Coefficient between CSR and 3R

With the correlations being high and significant, SEM may relate it to an incorrect model, thus reducing the chances of a model fit (Kline, 2011). However, in a perception and behaviour study such as this, multi collinearity is common and can be detected with high values of Modification Index (MI) though the model fit is significant. In a nutshell, a fit model requires less correlations (Kline, 2011; Hooper et al., 2008)[39][30]. Table 10 further shows the positive standardised estimate value of 0.507 shows a positive relationship, supporting “H2: There is a significant and positive relationship between 3R activities and corporate image”.

The CI value = 5.300 and p-value = 0.0001 for the relationship between CSR and CI, hence with p-value < 0.05, the relationship is said to be significant with a positive standardised estimate of 0.327. Consequently “H3: There is a significant and positive relationship between CSR and corporate image” is supported.

4.4 Test of Significance: Intervening Relationships

Direct relationships are significant and supported, the rule to evaluate mediating role is satisfied (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Thus the intervening relationships were summarised in Table 12 below shows the effect of 3R and CSR on CI.

Constructs	Standardised Total Effect		Standardised Direct Effect		Standardised Indirect Effect	
	CSR	3R	CSR	3R	CSR	3R
CI	0.591	0.507	0.327	0.507	0.264	0.000
3R	0.521	0.000	0.521	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 12. Standardised Estimates of Total, Direct and Indirect Relationships

The estimates of Standardised Total Effect, Standardised Direct Effect and Standardised Indirect Effect produced by SEM was utilised to assess the intervening effect of 3R on the relationship between CSR and CS and CI. With the direct relationships confirmed, the SEM's version of mediation impact was taken into consideration

as full, partial and no mediation. Table 11 was used to conclude the following based on decision rules suggested by Hair et al. (2010) that the mediating role of 3R on the relationship between CSR and CI by two points (1) the direct relationship between CSR and 3R and CSR and CI are significant and (2) the Indirect Effect (IE) of CSR on

CI = 0.264 (> 0.085) and the Direct Effect (DE) = 0.327, thus $IE \cong DE$, showing 3R is a partial mediator in the relationship between CSR and CI. Accordingly, “H4: The 3R activities of food utensils and packaging mediate the relationship between CSR initiatives and corporate image” is partially supported.

5. DISCUSSION

This research provides an enriched empirical perspective of CSR and 3R and their impact on service retailing, which enhance managers' knowledge for developing robust strategies to build corporate reputation and image. Although the association of CSR and 3R to corporate image are corroborated by a myriad of studies (Assiouras et al., 2013; Vlachos, 2012; Mattila, 2009), the influence of 3R, its association with CSR and the nature of their relationship are uncertain. This research presents the notion that in order to be more effective, CSR requires other easily assessed and accessible concepts such as 3R to provide a partial intervention in reputation and image building (Lacey et al., 2010; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2008).

This research identifies significant and positive relationships between CSR and corporate reputation and image. Although this research show that 3R is positively and significantly related to corporate reputation and image, the most noteworthy finding in this study is the partially significant intervention of 3R between the relationship of CSR and both corporate image. These findings suggest to image building managers that CSR activities that are visible and that can be experienced by the customers can essentially develop stronger reputation and image. This is particularly relevant for the service industry where inconsistent service delivery can damage reputation even though the product quality is consistent. A reputable image is most certainly a competitive advantage to an organisation (Abratt and Kleyn, 2012, 2009; Martin and Hetrick, 2006; De Chernatony, 2006).

Therefore, more efficient and competitive plans are needed to sustain businesses in the fast-food retail sector. Managers in this industry may be able to compete better with CSR activities that are capable of sustaining image and reputation. Depending on the characteristics of the retailer such as food retailer, grocer, international or large organisation, the relevance of the CSR activities carried out is essential. Some international retailers may introduce CSR activities that are broadly practiced in all their global organisations, but may not succeed in some places because of cultural differences (Worcester, 2009; Sarbutts, 2003). It is therefore essential for managers to undertake CSR activities that are recognised, appreciated and shown interest in by their customers. Previous studies indicate that CSR activities that are close to the heart of customers, or align with the cause that customers are fighting for, attract more attention from customers. As such customers tend to form better perceptions regarding the organisation allowing better formation of reputation

and thus the building of image (Teimouri, Jamehshooran and Heydari, 2011).

This research further revealed that CSR activities that are visible to customers or those that can be experienced by playing a part in them, such as 3R activities, may attract and sustain more customers (Fetscherin and Usunier, 2012; Jose, Rugimbana and Gatfield, 2012; Pomeroy and Dolnicar 2006; Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt and Birtchnell, 2006; Polonsky and Scott, 2005; Lafferty and Goldsmith, 2005). The 3R activities that are directly used or experienced by customers, such as the efforts to save energy, the use of reusable energy, usage of materials that are recycled and recyclable products, are highly likely to attract customers' attention. The positive perception and attitude toward such activities eventually strengthens the reputation and image of the organisation (Bourdeau et al., 2013; Teimouri et al., 2011).

Facilitating CSR in a fast-food restaurant is very complex since the spectrum of scrutiny is wide and broad. Besides judging the service provided at the restaurant, a customer might also judge the restaurant based on the employees since satisfied employees are known to provide quality service and enhance the restaurant's reputation. The source of raw produce, such as sustainability of supply and sustainable harvesting, can be pertinent to a customer. The society is currently keen on healthy food and thus wants to know such things as whether raw produce supplied are organic, pesticide free, without preservatives, and whether meat is sourced from free-range farms. As such, communication on food sources and products are CSR programmes that are capable of attracting customers and increasing reputation and image.

The current research hypothesised that 3R utensils and packaging might be a means of attracting customers. The findings show these are suitable as a direct impetus to form reputation and image. The partial role it plays as mediator indicates that the 3R concepts such as biodegradable and reusable packs, and reusable and recyclable utensils, may be suitable CSR programmes at fast-food restaurants as they provide a means of self-service purchasing where front-liners are unable to educate customers of the reasons behind usage of these materials nor communicate the sources of raw material for the food. Thus the 3R initiatives are suitable to represent CSR in a service industry such as fast-food where the necessary visibility and experiences are lacking (McDonald and Lai, 2011; Wigley, 2008). Thus managers need to understand their service and product to enable them to formulate CSR programmes that are simple, visible and that could be experienced by customers to enable them to use CSR to build reputation and image.

The primary stream of theories for this study has been drawn from service marketing literature where customer behaviour upon encountering CSR and 3R has been studied. This study has been theoretically grounded, enhancing the theories behind service marketing where the use of CSR and 3R to form reputation and image have been empirically analysed. This has added valuable

understanding to the roles played by CSR and 3R in changes that takes place in customer behaviour, which leads to the reputation and image of the organisation. The effect of CSR on reputation and image are well established (Tewari, 2011; Teimouri et al., 2011; Wagner et al., 2008). However, there has been little research on CSR's correlation with 3R. The present study augments the knowledge on CSR, its correlation with 3R and the role of both in strengthening reputation and image of a service organisation assisting in building theories of service marketing. The study deliberates on the ability of CSR to enhance customer's perception of the organisation and positively communicate the organisation, as such introducing a new variable 3R that is relevant to food services, suggesting CSR must have 3R or other relevant elements to form positive perceptions and word of mouth to create reputation and image. The positive correlation between CSR and 3R found in this study indicates these are inter-related variables. Though findings on CSR's influence on corporate reputation and image are significant, and the direct influence of 3R and reputation show positive and significant relationships, 3R seems to remain as a major player in this relationship confirming previous studies that indicate only selective CSR activities gain customer attention (Bourdeau et al., 2013; Sen, Bhattacharya and Korschun, 2006; Mohr and Webb, 2005). Therefore, the present study theoretically proves that visible and experiential CSR activities are necessary to form and strengthen reputation and image.

6. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study utilised convenience sampling to distribute questionnaires outside fast-food outlets that have high customer traffic. As such, it is not surprising that the questionnaires were completed by groups of customers with similar characteristics, such as female or students. The similarity in demographics of the respondents could have produced similar opinions amongst a particular demographic of customers, as such presenting a limitation of the study. Moreover, a limitation could have been developed when the sample to whom the questionnaires were distributed were customers of fast-food restaurant but who may not be knowledgeable on certain aspects of the research. This is clearly reflected in the remaining items for CSR, which strictly relate to philanthropic acts of the restaurant while other dimensions of CSR were removed. Thus there could have been interviewees who had no knowledge of CSR programmes initiated by the restaurant. Moreover, as the interviews were conducted outside only a few pre-determined restaurants, generalizability could have been compromised. The sampling technique could have led to limitation as the responses to the items relating to CSR, 3R, corporate reputation and image may have been distorted by diluted knowledge of these constructs, thus drawing responses that reflect social desirability.

Moreover, as the questionnaire was self-administered, common method bias could have led to patterns in responses due to social desirability. Besides this, the cross sectional design used to collect data limited the information that could have been obtained due to the pattern in perceptions such as before and after the introduction of 3R activities.

Judging by the limitations above, future researcher may be able to sample appropriately and adapt or develop measurement items that are more likely suited for the context and business within which the study is conducted. It would also be interesting to assess 3R as a moderating variable, providing CSR researchers new knowledge and CSR theory. The moderating effect of 3R on the relationship between CSR and consumer behaviour can further benefit managers in formulating strategic CSR activities in the future. Researchers might be able to gain more insights by comparing differences amongst several demographics or customer profiles. Other studies could include a comparison of perspectives between foreign customers and Hong Kong customers. This could be useful as Hong Kong domestic fast-food entrepreneurs are rapidly exploring the market in Mainland China.

7. CONCLUSION

This research was undertaken with the aim of understanding CSR's contribution to corporate image, with 3R as an intervening construct. The research found the profile of fast-food customers in Hong Kong to be young adults who are single, with mid-level education and sufficient disposable income. The data analysis demonstrated a direct relationship between CSR, 3R, and corporate image. CSR being the key independent variable in this research was proven to be a pertinent impetus in the sustainability of a business. The partial intervening influence of 3R in these relationships further illustrated the need to have detectable CSR initiatives that would strengthen the image of the organisation and appropriately represent CSR. This research underpins the established theory shown in the study's research framework by using a positivism paradigm to assess CSR and 3R as contributors to image. A plethora of literature covering the breadth of marketing, service and retailing disciplines was analysed but most 3R-related information was gleaned from non-academic literature, thereby revealing a gap in the academic research on this topic. Analysis of the collected data resulted in the removal of several items that were adapted to measure the constructs due to their lack of validity and reliability. The research concludes that CSR is essential for building image but that visible and experiential CSR activities, such as 3R, are needed to evoke formidable image.

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