

6. Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

"A good company delivers excellent products and services. A great company does all this and strives to make the world a better place."

— William Ford Jr.

As mentioned earlier, CSR is becoming an important part of businesses and an increasing number of companies are embracing CSR initiatives as part of their business strategies. However, the involvement of small to medium size restaurants in such initiative might not be as clear as other industries.

Therefore, the reason behind conducting this study is mainly to determine whether restaurants are actively involved in CSR activities and whether diners are exposed to restaurants CSR initiatives as much as other industries. In addition, the research attempted to establish if the exposure to restaurants CSR initiatives had an influence on diners' perception toward that restaurant and consequently diners' buying behavior. Furthermore, the research is conducted to determine if diners' perception and buying habits could be influenced by the type of restaurant and the economic development of the country of residence.

The previous chapter presented the findings and the analysis of the research. Out of the five hypotheses, three were rejected and two were accepted based on the correlation and multiple regression analyses. This chapter discusses the findings alongside elaborating on the managerial implications and contribution of this study.

6.2. Contribution of the study

This study has provided a unique platform for academia and practitioners to compare the perception of diners toward socially responsible restaurants based on the economic development of the country they reside in. Surprisingly the findings presented that the economic development does not influence the diners' perception as it was predicted. As a matter of fact, people from less developed country have had a more positive perception in comparison with others.

Although most participants have considered the involvement in CSR initiatives as important this study shed light on the fact that CSR is not yet an influential factor for them to base their selection. In other words, diners are more likely to choose a restaurant based on other factors rather than restaurants involvement in CSR initiatives. In addition, this study shows that the type of restaurants does not actually influence diners' buying behavior. In other words, diners are as likely to base the selection of fast food restaurant on restaurant's CSR involvement as they are when selecting a fine dining restaurant. In this regards, it can be assumed that the foremost important finding of this research could be that the majority of diners are not aware of restaurants CSR initiative as the level of exposure is low.

6.3. Managerial implications

The finding of this study could be employed to provide some guidance for restaurant managers and marketers as what is expected from a socially responsible restaurant and how to expose diners to such activities.

The finding has shown that diners' exposure to restaurants CSR involvement is relatively low and most diners do not even know if restaurants are involved in CSR activities. This reduces the tangible and intangible benefits of involvement in CSR initiatives, could it be the better image or

higher profit (Ferreria et al., 2010; Galbreath, 2009; Wigley, 2008; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Osterhus, 1997). Therefore, one of the most important issues for the managers is to allocate appropriate budget to expose diners to their CSR initiatives. However, two important factors should be considered in allocation of the budget. Firstly, it would be wise not to allocate an enormous budget for this as diners' awareness of restaurant's CSR initiatives only counts for small portion of their perception. Secondly, the exposure should be in a way that is considered sincere as oppose to a mean to gain profit. In other words, if diners think that restaurant is using CSR as a tool for publicity and earning profit, they will develop a less positive perception toward that restaurant.

As for the expectation from socially responsible restaurants, the finding of this study shows that the majority of respondents (61 percent) have expected restaurants to be involved in eco friendly practices such as reducing consumption of natural resources, reducing the wastage and etc. In addition, they have expected socially responsible restaurants to provide good quality service and food. This is interesting as this item is actually not a part of definition of CSR but many respondents (51 percent) have associated it to a socially responsible restaurant.

This could be beneficial for managers as it gives them an insight on what is important for diners and what is expected from the restaurant. Meeting the expectation not only creates satisfaction but also creates an image and reputation for the restaurant that could be translated to profit.

6.4. Research limitations

A numbers of limitations have been identified in the study as a result of time and resource constraints.

1. The scope of this study is only a few selected provinces and cities in the proposed countries such as Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, London in England and California in states. However, it should be noted that generalizing the American public perception based on only data gathered from California for instance would not be the ideal method as people from different regions of America might have different views and perception toward same issue.
2. The concept of social responsibility might be a new concept in some of the developing countries such as Iran and therefore many have not been familiar with the issue. As previously mentioned in the findings this might have influenced the data as people who just learned about CSR could have developed an emotionally strong positive perception to this issue.
3. Familiarity with CSR concepts and awareness of restaurants CSR initiatives has a small contribution to diner's perception and there are many other factor that strongly influence diners' perception of a restaurant such as the service and the quality that have not been covered in this research. In other words, diners' perception of socially responsible restaurants might be stronger if it's alongside other influential factors such as quality and service.
4. Due to the fact that most of the items for the CSR awareness construct were new and were not extracted from prior studies and the multiple response and open ended nature of the questions led to relatively low Cronbach's Alpha value for this construct.

6.5. Recommendations for future research

There are some opportunities for improvement of the findings of this study that can be considered for future research.

1. The sample should contain respondents from different regions in proposed countries in order to gather a more reliable data that can accurately explain the perception of the majority of people in that country.
2. Other factors such as quality and service could be considered alongside the CSR as influential factors affecting diners' perception. The interaction of these other variables with the CSR variable might increase the importance and effect of CSR variable on perception.
3. The use of more established items to measure the CSR awareness constructs in order to increase the Cronbach's Alpha value and enhance the reliability of this construct.