Does Job Seekers' Perception towards Corporate Social Responsibility Impact on Job Seekers' Intention to Apply for the Jobs?

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Abstract: *Job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is both a prominent notion that the business world views as strategic and a well-known concept in academia that has been assessed in relation to different constructs. Several scholars have suggested the relationship between Job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and its capability to attract numerous superior job applicants at the organizational level, yet, there is no corresponding evidence at the individual level of analysis. This study was quantitative in nature; therefore, the data for this study was collected through the use of previously structured questionnaires that had obtained good Cronbach's alpha values thus confirming their reliability. The results indicated that job seekers' are more likely to pursue jobs from socially responsible organizations. Based on the findings of the study, it concludes that there are high levels of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply in private potential organizations.*

Keywords: Job Seekers, Corporate Social Responsibility

1. Introduction

The need to attract the best recruits has become a pertinent issue among many organizations. This is due to the realization that the caliber of employees an organization has can determine its success or failure. Employers to succeed in attracting and retaining top talents, they have to put into consideration the needs of prospective and current employees (Amini & Bienstock, 2014). Therefore employers need to create incentives and images that present them as good places to work (Backhaus, Stone, & Heiner, 2002). Hence becoming an "employer of choice" or "the best place to work" has become a central human resource issue (Pfeffer, 1998). While in the past factors like reward systems, work environment influenced people's job choices nowadays people are turning more to soft factors like job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013; Backhaus, 2002).

As a result many employers are now paying increasing attention to job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility as part of their strategy to attract large numbers of qualified employees (Angelidis & Ibrahim, 2004; Palazzo & Scherer, 2008). There is a new breed of job seekers' that is placing ethical issues above financial incentives when considering a job offer (Chapola, 2016). This is supported by Chaudhry and Krishnan (2007), who observe that job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is fast gaining importance as more and more organizations are realizing its value.

In this era of globalization, winning the war for top talent to gain a competitive advantage is critical for the survival of organizations. Today, attracting and retaining talent is a major challenge to many organizations. Job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has been identified as influencing employee attraction and retention. A pay cheque alone is no longer sufficient; people want to work in organizations whose values match their own and that impact and contribute to society. It is clear that job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility can influence an applicant's decision to take up a job in a given organization. However, such studies were done mainly in developed countries. However, nothing is known about how all the four dimensions of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility identified by Carroll (1979) in the social responsibility dimension are related to early impressions of a firm's attractiveness to job applicants as an employer of choice in the Sri Lankan context.

1.1 Background Literature and Hypotheses Development

The literature review is a critical analysis in business and management research that shows the current state of the research topic is understood and supports any conceptual framework (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). According to the literature review of this research, it has covered basically job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility, job seekers' perception towards employer attractiveness and job seekers' intention to apply.

1.2 Job Seekers' Perception towards Corporate Social Responsibility

The concept of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has been defined differently by different authors. As stated by Windsor (2006), job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is a widely contested concept with no clear meaning. According to Holme and Watts (2000), job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

A broader definition of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has been given by Blowfield and Frynas (2005), who have defined it as an umbrella term for a variety of theories and practices all of which recognize: that companies have a responsibility for their impact on

society and the natural environment, sometimes beyond legal compliance and the liability of individuals; that companies have a responsibility for the behavior of others with whom they do business; and that business needs to manage its relationship with wider society, whether for reasons of commercial feasibility, or to add value for the society. Further job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is described as an implicit contract between business and society, where organizations work toward creating positive impression for stakeholders to achieve potential benefits (Kanji & Chopra, 2010). The general understanding of the concept of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is that companies have a hierarchy of responsibilities to uphold. These responsibilities have been categorized into economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. This has been exemplified by Carroll's popular model of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility (Carroll, 1991), where job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is portrayed as hierarchy of four responsibility levels: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions.

1.2.1 Economic Responsibility
Economic responsibility remains crucial in today's hypercompetitive global business environment where economic performance and sustainability have become urgent topics (Carroll, 2016).Economic responsibility includes: maximizing earnings per share; maximizing and sustaining profitability; strong competitive position; high level of operating efficiency (Carroll, 2015, Carroll & Shabana, 2010).Economic responsibility focuses on practices that facilitate the long-term growth of the business, while also meeting the standards set for ethical, legal and philanthropic practices. By balancing economic decisions with their overall effects on society, businesses can improve their operations while also engaging in sustainable practices.

1.2.2Legal Responsibility
Legally, responsible organizations should perform in a manner consistent with expectations of government and law; be a law-abiding corporate citizen; provide goods and services that meet minimal legal requirements; and that a successful organization be defined as one that fulfils its legal obligations (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2015). Legal dimension of corporate social responsibility relates to compliance with laws and regulations established by the authorities, which set standards for responsible behavior - the codification of what society thinks is right or wrong.

1.2.3 Ethical Responsibility
Although economic and legal responsibilities embody ethical norms about fairness and justice, ethical responsibilities embrace those activities and practices that are expected or prohibited by societal members even though they are not codified into law. Ethical responsibilities imply that organizations will embrace those activities, norms, standards and practices that even though they are not codified into law, are expected nonetheless (Carroll, 2016). Ethical responsibilities embody those standards, norms, or expectations that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, and the community regard as fair, just, or in keeping with the respect or protection of stakeholders' moral rights.

1.2.4 Philanthropic Responsibility
Philanthropic responsibilities most affect the community and nonprofit organizations, but also employees because some research has concluded that a company's philanthropic involvement is significantly related to its employees' morale and engagement (Carroll, 2016). Philanthropic responsibilities involve the society's expectation of an organization to be a good corporate citizen by contributing resources to the community and improving the quality of life (Caroll & Buchholtz, 2009). Philanthropy encompasses those corporate actions that are in response to society's expectation that businesses be good corporate citizens. This includes actively engaging in acts or programs to promote human welfare or goodwill.

1.3 Job Seekers' Intention to Apply

Job seekers' intention to apply involve an active effort and engagement on the part of the job applicant to learn more about the organization, make contact with the organization, attempt to secure an interview with the organization and pursue employment (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001). Recruitment is one of the key techniques for influencing job seekers' pursuit intentions (Rynes, 1991).

Job seekers' intention to apply refers to the intention to pursue a job to remain in the applicant pool (Chapman, 2005). Identifying the predictors of job seekers' intention will provide important insights for understanding the factors that predict the young applicants' behavioral intentions. Backhaus, Stone, and Heiner (2002), determined that at the stage of deciding to accept a job offer, job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility related information was more meaningful than at other stages in the recruitment process.

The Relationship between Job Seekers' Perception towards corporate Social Responsibility and Job Seekers' Intention to Apply
The quality of the recruitment process can result in successful identification of potential employees with selected skill sets. Recruitment processes can influence the pool of candidate characteristics, including the size of the job applicant pool (Barber, 1998; Turban & Cable, 2003). The inclusion of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility information in recruitment material has been proposed as a means to attract a large applicant pool (Kim & Park, 2011; Lis, 2012). The inclusion of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility information in recruitment advertisements is an untapped, inexpensive tool that has the potential to enhance organizations recruitment outcomes.

It also differentiates the organization from its competitors (Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991). According to Edelman (2008), a leading global public relations organization, reported that job seekers and current employees are a valuable audience to receive job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility information.

Behrend, Baker, and Thompson (2009), and Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996), discovered that an applicant's job pursuit intentions can be linked with the organization's social stance. Furthermore, an organization's job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has been associated with an increased likelihood of a prospective applicant's decision to pursue a job opportunity (Turban & Greening, 1996). The decision to interview and accept a job offer is also linked to job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility (Greening & Turban, 2000). Based on this, the hypothesis is:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply.

Table 1: Summary of Relationship between Job Seekers' Perception towards corporate Social Responsibility and Job Seekers' Intention to Apply

Year	Authors	Findings
1996	Turban & Greening	An organization's job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has been associated with an increased likelihood of a prospective applicant's decision to pursue a job opportunity.
2000	Greening & Turban	The decision to interview and accept a job offer is also linked to job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility.
2008	Edelman	Job seekers and current employees are a valuable audience to receive job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility information.
2009	Behrend, Baker, & Thompson	An applicant's job pursuit intentions can be linked with the organization's social stance.
2011 & 2012	Kim & Park, Lis	The inclusion of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility information in recruitment material has been proposed as a means to attract a large applicant pool.

(Source: Literature Review)

2. Methodology

This methodology chapter of the research study mainly focuses on discussing those research methods and techniques used by the researcher while justifying the reasons for use those methods (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

2.1 Research Strategy

Research strategy is also helpful for the researcher to use specific data collection methods to support the arguments (Saunders, 2003). Surveys tend to be used in quantitative research projects, and involve sampling a representative proportion of the population (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The surveys produce quantitative data that can be analyzed empirically. For this study researcher has used a survey strategy.Also for this study data collected within a particular period of time. Therefore this is a cross-sectional study.

2.2 Sampling Design

Sampling method refers to the rules and procedures by which some elements of the population are included in the sample. The best sample design depends on research objectives and on research resources. The total population for the study was 1650 students of potential private organizations in Kurunegala. Out of these, 350 Students were selected as sample to conduct this research by using random sampling method.

2.3 Method of Data Collection

According to Sekaran (2006), there are some different ways for gathering data. Those data can be obtained from primary or secondary. This study depends on primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the most important source of the research, which is gathered at the time of study from the students who followed certificate, diploma, degree and professional courses of potential private organizations in Kurunegala area. Questionnaires also were used as the data collection method for this research. This study conducted with 350 students who followed study programs in potential private organizations. It was collected by distributing a structured questionnaire.

Table 2: Questionnaire Development

Variables	No. of. Items	Adopted from Authors
Economic Responsibility	05	Lin, (2010)
Legal Responsibility	05	Lin, (2010)
Ethical Responsibility	05	Lin, (2010)
Philanthropic Responsibility	05	Lin, (2010)
Job Seekers' Intention to Apply	05	Avery, (2013) and Aiman-Smith, (2001)

(Source: Developed for study purpose)

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviation and Cronbach's as of studied variables are presented in Table 3. The level of the independent and dependent variables were identified as low, moderate or high based on George and Mallery(2003), specifications. The results of the current study showed that the mean score for the job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility fell into high level (Mean = 3.80), while the mean score for job seeker's intention to apply also indicates a high level (Mean = 3.72).

The results of correlation analysis (Table 4) highlighted that all the dimensions of corporates social responsibility have a significant positive correlation with the intention to apply for the job in any organization. Therefore, it indicated that the job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility had a strong positive ($r = 0.853$) relationship with job seeker's intention to apply. As the level of significance is less than alpha value (in this case, 0.000). It can be concluded that there is enough evidence to say that there is a positive relationship between job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply. Hence, hypothesis of the current

study is proved. The finding is empirically supports the finding of Behrend, Baker, and Thompson (2009) and Bauer and Aiman-Smith (1996), who discovered that an applicant's

job pursuit intentions can be linked with the organization's environmental stance.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach
Economic responsibility	3.76	0.834	0.915
Legal responsibility	3.84	0.831	0.871
Ethical responsibility	3.77	0.852	0.892
Philanthropic responsibility	3.85	0.778	0.858
Job Seekers' Perception towards corporate Social Responsibility	**3.80**	**0.706**	**0.948**
Job seekers' Intention to Apply	**3.72**	**0.859**	**0.902**

(Source: Survey Data)

Table 4: Correlation among Job Seekers' Perception towards corporate Social Responsibility and Job Seekers' Intention to Apply

Variable		Economic Responsibility	Legal Responsibility	Ethical Responsibility	Philanthropic Responsibility	Job Seekers' Perception towards CSR
Job seekers' intention to apply	Pearson correlation	0.698	0.749	0.718	0.766	0.853
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

(Source: Survey Data)

Effects of Job Seeker's Perception towards Corporate Social Responsibility on Job Seeker's Intention to Apply

To examine the effect of the independent variable on dependent variable the researcher used the simple regression analysis. The "R Square" statistic indicates that 72.8% of the variation in the job seekers' intention to apply is explained by job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility. In other words, 27.2% of variance of job seekers' intention to apply is affected by other variables. The coefficient value (B) of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility is 1.038, which explains 1 unit of change in job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility can change positively job seekers' intention to apply by 1.038 units.

The findings of this study supports with the empirical evidence which were carried out by past researcher (Turban & Greening, 1997). Their finding suggests that, an organization's job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has an effect on applicant's opinion of the working conditions at the organization. Based on this study, job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility has an impact on job seekers' intention to apply which is already proved by the past researchers.

4. Conclusion

The required data were collected through students who are following certificate, diploma, degree and professional course in Kurunegala to investigate the objectives of the current research. Accordingly the results of the study showed that variables of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply were remained in high level. The Pearson correlation technique was applied to analyze the relationship among the variables. There is strong positive significant relationship among the dimensions of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply. Among these the highest and lowest relationship with intention to apply are respectively the philanthropic and economic responsibility. And also the results of a simple regression analysis indicated that, there is a positive impact

of job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility on job seekers' intention to apply.

5. Recommendations

This study will provide understanding job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply concepts of potential private organization academic sector. From this research, it found job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility effect of the job seekers' intention to apply. According to above conclusion following recommendations can be given:

Mainly, as the outcome of the study it was identified that job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility and job seekers' intention to apply had a positive relationship. Thus, on the basis of this study, management of organizations in the particular district consider increasing their job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility from various aspects, as individuals are currently becoming more socially aware when job hunting.

Organizations should put in place job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility policies and communicate these policies to all employees because the support of employees in the implementation of these policies is very important. Organizations should monitor their job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility programs regularly in order to make any amends from time to time taking into account the environmental dynamism.

Further, the target organizations could aim to gain an understanding of how private potential organization students evaluate organizational characteristics during job seekers' intention in order embedded these characteristics into their business strategies that could contribute to the continuous improvement of their overall job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility.

Management of organization must also encourage business code that are based on law or beyond it to clear up any

confusion that may arise during recruitment activities with the intention of avoiding job seeker's misunderstandings of the actual job seekers' perception towards corporate social responsibility of the firm.

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