

Could SMEs Transform Corporate Social Responsibility into Competitive Advantage in Global Supply Chain?

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(Received: 5-4-13 / Accepted: 13-5-13)

Abstract

The question ‘could Small-Medium Enterprises transform Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into Competitive Advantage (CA)’ remains uncertain and controversial in past literatures. Many researches only focus on the relationships between CSR and corporate financial performance of CA. However, CSR activities usually refer to smaller scopes such as community, plants, manufacturing process or product design, therefore, needed to be examined their relationships with CA. This paper contributes to apply stakeholder theory and interviews to a better understanding of the gap between CSR and CA: Not every CSR activity can be transformed into the source of CA. In fact, some middle transformation mechanism or other requirements are needed. The wood-processing-manufacture SMEs in global supply chain are applied to the qualitative method. The result shows that some CSR activities cannot be regarded as a single CA source if these CSR programs cannot match with other requirements such as customers’ needs and quality or their competitors without FSC certificate.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR); Competitive Advantage (CA).

1. Introduction

Different circles have valued corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) since Porter and Kramer (2006) proposed Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility (SCSR) that suggests the connection between CSR and Competitive Advantage (CA). CA resulted from CSR has become the critical issue that scholars and business circle tried to probe into. Although Porter and Kramer (2006) suggested that firms should define the activities and plans of CSR, which lead to more CA and include them in internal and external relationship and business activities. They did not indicate what kind of CSR activities could lead to CA. In fact, there are few studies on correlation between CSR and CA and those on how CSR is transformed into CA are even fewer. For instance, Greening and Turban (2000) suggested that performance of CSR could become corporate CA as well as the factor for the firms to attract high-quality and excellent employees. However, related researches are few, and most of them focus on human resources. In addition, McWilliams et al. (2006) indicated that CSR studies from 1990 to 2001 mostly focus on correlation between CSR and corporate financial performance. They

questioned that financial performance indices (e.g., stock price index) adopted by many researches are only related to financial stakeholders such as shareholders. However, CSR activities will affect different kinds of stakeholders. Therefore, in order to find how CSR influences corporate performance by stakeholders, it is necessary to probe into past research methods and conclusions. Business performance index is usually based on overall dimension of the firms (e.g., stock price index); however, CSR activities usually refer to smaller scope such as community, plants or product design. If it only examines small influences by financial performance upon regression analysis, there can be errors. Moreover, it seems that in comparison to corporate financial performance, CA of firms can result in more dimensions and connect CSR performance. In fact, Porter and Kramer (2006) also divided five forces of CA (e.g., competition with current rivals, threat from new participants, threat from substitute products or services, customers' bargaining competence and suppliers' bargaining competence) into the connections with CSR and value chain activities. However, there is still lacks of researches linking the transformation mechanism between CSR and CA. Therefore, this study attempted to classify Traditional CSR and recognized the influences on detailed corporate CA and the transformation. The findings can serve as reference for the issues regarding transformation from CSR to CA.

Since there is limitation of time and manpower and we cannot treat all SMEs as subjects, selecting timber industry with international certificates upon products allow us to analyze correlation between more detailed CSR activities and corporate CA under a global supply chain consideration. In Taiwan, ISO14001 series that SMEs and large enterprises often have are based on the whole companies or plants. In order to realize how CSR influences corporate CA and transformation in SMEs from detailed scopes of stakeholders, the timber manufacture SMEs, which possess product-level certification (such as the Forest Stewardship Council certificates) and firm-level certifications (such as ISO14001), is the suitable interviewees for this subject's purpose. This study aims to be based on competitive strategy, stakeholder theory, resource-based view (RBV) on timber manufacture industry in SMEs of Taiwan in order to recognize the actual transformation from CSR activities to corporate CA.

2. Background

2.1 Definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Although The World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2000) defines CSR as the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life, the concept of CSR has been regarded as illegibility and blurry (Hopkins, 2007; Smith and Langford, 2009). There are two views of CSR: one thought that gaining financial profitability within the framework of the law as the sole responsibility of a firm; the other believed that companies as an organization possess a much broader set of obligations (Devinney, 2009). This paper follows the latter view of CSR with a broader viewpoint as the definition from European Commission (EC) as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (European Commission 2001). This definition offers a notion of what CSR means to enterprises, but it remain unclear what the concept relates to CA.

2.2 Small- Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and CSR

There is lack of study on correlation between SMEs and CSR in Taiwan. Currently, only Hsu and Cheng (2012) studied cognitive factors of CSR implementation of SMEs in Taiwan, and found that compatibility is related to intention of CSR implementation. Cheng (2008) conducted case study on SMEs (White Wood House, Aurotek Corporation and GSK INTEK Co., Ltd.) that won the National Quality Award and National Outstanding SMEs Award by the Ministry of Economic Affairs. He focused on social responsibility participation of products, community relationship and human resources and realized that these SMEs included social responsibility in corporate development strategy and operation. And, Wang (2004) conducted

empirical study on social responsibility perception of SMEs in Taiwan, and found that participation of these SMEs in charity significantly influences their perception and participation in CSR. However, these researches mostly probe into correlation between drivers of CSR in SMEs and implementation of strategic CSR. But there is still lack of study on transformation from CSR to CA. Also, in-depth multiple interviews with senior managers or firms' owners seem to be more compelling and robust (Yin 2003). This article uses an exploratory approach, aimed at developing a grounded understanding of relationship between CSR and CA and its transformation factors.

2.3 Sample and Data Collection

As qualitative research focuses on in-depth exploration, a small but non-identical sample is recommended. Moreover, this paper applies theoretical sampling in order to obtain a diverse and interesting interviewee selection. This means that the target SMEs could inform the interviewer about the research problem addressed in this investigation (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the SMEs are selected on three grounds: firstly, their product portfolios are non-identical; secondly, they appear to be addressing CSR already based on their external corporate communications, and thirdly, CA is important to them in global supply chain. Thus, this paper's sampling is driven more by theory than by representativeness. As this paper focuses on the SMEs in a global supply chain and on the detailed scopes of stakeholders, the wood processing manufacture SMEs possessing product-level certification and firm-level certifications is chosen to be the target interviewees. In a global supply chain, Asia SMEs face keen competition from international enterprises and strive for not to be cut out from large buyers' supply chain. Taiwanese wood processing SMEs also have the same situation and have faced even more severe competition because of the Chinese industries entering into the global supply chain. Therefore, whether SMEs will influence by buyers' supply chain to implement CSR and whether those CSR practices will become CA could not only be observed from the target SMEs, but also could highlight the issue's importance. Firstly, 40 SMEs is randomly sampled from 1697 wood processing SMEs in the Taiwanese SME manufacturing database with non-identical products. Secondly, a letter of interview invitation is sent to each SME. Finally, four SMEs match with the theoretical sampling principles and accept interviews. The research applied face-to-face and one-by-one interviews with SMEs' proprietors or managers. The interview guideline is carefully prepared and adapted after pretesting. Four companies are briefly described in terms of their core area of business, markets and stated strategic and CSR focus in Table 1, as formulated in their corporate communications. However, the unit of analysis in this study is an individual interview but responses from firms' level. CSR practices in SMEs seem conducted by senior or middle-level managers and supported by top manager or proprietors. Therefore, after the SMEs are selected, to interview proprietors, top managers or senior-level managers is necessary. The interviews will be summarized in the following chapter.

Table 1: Target SMEs description

Company	Characterization
A	The A company is a medium-sized independent engineered wood floors company which employs 140 people but has a turnover about US\$ 21.4 million. The company focuses on processing imported wood into high quality, precision-milled engineered floors. Wood floors products are sold all over the world but main market is North America. Keeping stable quality is the foundation principal that the company claims commitment to. The company doesn't have a clear CSR strategy, however, it asserts publicly that all products and production are made commitment to not only socially, environmentally and sustainable use of forest resources, but also to health. The company holds FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), ISO 9001, and Green Building Materials (certified by Taiwan Architecture & Building Center) certificates. The enterprise uses various wood species from all over the world.

Besides, recycling of by-product sawdust has good performance and makes some profit feedback for this company.

- B** The B company is a small-and-medium-sized engineered timber veneers company that employs 50 people. Engineered veneer is exported to markets all over the world as a kind of recompose decorative material. Quality, design and experimentation of new innovation for satisfying customers are basic core value that the company claims commitment to. The enterprise also doesn't have a clear CSR strategy but do make commitment to social, environmental and economical aspects in all operations and productions. This company has a turnover over US\$ 9.3 million per year and the general environmental friendliness of logs raw material is emphasized. The enterprise possesses a FSC certificate. Another aspect highlighted by the company is the health aspect that is the reason pursuit of environmental protection and responsible environment of production.
- C** The C company is a medium-sized, privately owned company involved in engineered wood floors. The company is medium-sized based on the size of the workforce 238 employees and its annual turnover is over US\$ 20 million. Floor products are sold both domestically and overseas, where export markets such as Japan, China are main source of massive purchase. The company holds many certificates and stresses their importance, such as ISO14001, ISO 9001, Green Building Materials, and JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard) certificates. Again, this enterprise doesn't have a clear CR strategy but it endeavors to fully implement the ISO14001 Environment Management System to reach the goals of reducing conflicts to environments, and protecting living quality and human health. The company asserts that its research teams have devoted on the research of using forest resource efficiently to make natural and non-poisonously wooden materials. In addition, one of their pursuing ideas is creating sustainable working environment.
- D** The D company is a small-and-medium-sized company. It has manufactured and designed wooden home furnishing products for 37 years. This firm owns 62 employees and has a turnover about US\$ 6.7 million per year. Their products include wooden music boxes, jewelry boxes, CD racks, clocks and desktop organizers, etc. The company has developed more than 100 new products per year and won many patents for their proprietary designs due to the strategy of products diversity. ISO 9001 is the only certificate it possesses. Additionally, USA is the main market though the firm exports its items to European area and Japan, too. The company, as the market of home accessories facing keen competitions, highlights innovation, quality and mutual benefit. The enterprise doesn't announce its commitment to CSR publicly. But it asserts that environmental dimension is considered in all daily operations and all production process. Communication with related stakeholders is also considered before CSR decisions.
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3. Finding: CA and CSR in Wood Processing SMEs

This paper divided SMEs' operation into internal and external operations in order to acquire clear CA in each operations form RBV. The resource items categorized by Galbreath and Galvin (2008) have been adopted for this study. Besides, in order to identify CA and understand the activities of SMEs' CSR, main stakeholder suggested by Spiller (2000) and the

CSR activities of SMEs identified by Jenkins (2006) were also applied. The interview process is: firstly, interviewees are asked to identify their SMEs' CA through RBV by internal, external operations and stakeholders separately; secondly, interviewees were inquired to point out their firm's CSR; thirdly, interviewees were requested to answer whether it is possible to connect those CSR activities to their CA. Finally, interviewees explained the reasons from CSR to CA transformation and non-transformation.

3.1 CA in Internal Operations

3.1.1 Production and End Products

All eight interviewees put emphasis on the importance of production technologies. Related employees should acquire flexibility and ability of dealing with a contingency. Therefore, '*flexibility*' is their CA. Sometimes, they even need to adjust their procurement strategies in order to meet customers' demand. Besides, '*Serial and automatic standard production*' is CA. The other president pointed out that reducing drop rate of in-process-products during manufacture by importing automations in order to raise the efficiency of serial production let the firm build more CA than other companies.

3.1.2 Processes

Three of four companies all possessed the ISO 9001 certificate due to the diffusion of the ISO 9001 in manufacturing industries in Taiwan. Two of four companies have the ISO 14001 certificate. One president noted that acquiring the ISO certification indeed brings more CA than no ISO firms for marketing. Moreover, two SMEs hold the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certificates. Due to frequently asking for the FSC from customers in supply chain from developed countries, two managers asserted that the purpose of acquiring the FSC certificate is to increase "customers' identification" to their company. The other company didn't apply FSC but think that obtaining the JAS (Japanese Agricultural Standard) certificate has been enough since their target market is Japan.

3.1.3 Economic Responsibility toward Owners

All interviewees agree with that their economic responsibility is to make profit and reduce costs in order to secure the survival of their firms. Two Presidents both developed their own brand strategies in China and Taiwan markets in order to gain higher profits of final floor products than profits from ODM and OEM before. The audit manager asserted that OBM (Own Brand Manufacture) indeed brings higher price through higher quality, brand identifications, advertisement and marketing. However, he also addressed that to transfer from ODM (OEM) to OBM means that their enterprise simultaneously needs to reach higher quality requirements, this actually exists many difficulties.

3.1.4 Employee Management

All interviewees recognized the importance of personnel departments and their professional knowledge. All employee retentions of four companies are higher than the average of same industries. Although the serial connection automatic production has caused redundant labors, three SMEs expanded their capacity of factories to solve this problem. One company developed product diversity and re-trained some employees to adjust to match the new process of production. The audit manager mentioned that serial productions also reduce mistakes and damages due to decreasing the movements of in process products from one device to another machine. Therefore, this process in the meantime mitigated employees' burdens of causing mistakes and damages due to working labors. The SOP/SIP also increased employees' efficiency. Every unit and department all builds their working schedules and goals with daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly. This will contribute to the understanding a holistic procedures of production recognized by employees. More, workers can easily satisfy customer's need by follow the SOP/SIP which is designed by connection with customer's requirements for final products.

3.1.5 Organizational Structure

Every company constructs clearly hierarchical structure. In Taiwan, the presidents of SMEs usually are the proprietors or the largest stockholders of their SME. Their titles sometimes are called the chairman of the board, owner, general manager, etc. These four SMEs are all family enterprises that mean in Taiwan their second generation, such as sons or daughters, frequently to be put in the position, special assistant of chairman of the board, to learn and to be familiar with business in order to take over their firms in the future. One president identified the benefit of family business with devoted family members working around.

3.2 CA in External Operations

3.2.1 Wood Procurement

Except the CA from internal sources, many presidents and managers all stressed the importance of the 'long term relationship or contracts with raw wood suppliers' and 'the availability of sources of wood materials' as the vital CA for survival. One president of floor companies emphasized that the procurement of raw wood should always be focused on whether the quality of the wood, the specification or material match with the demand of customers. The other president of the floor company felt that the skills and ability of procurement managers and middlemen are also their CA.

Besides, one president asserted that their customers in global supply chain always care about the source legitimacy and sustainability. He thought that the FSC of sources can be a CA for acquiring customer's orders from North America, but a premise is that the quality of final products also matches with customer's needs. In other words, the FSC certificates cannot be granted as a single CA without other conditions fulfilled, such as quality, price and services. The other president also pointed out that the FSC and PEFC could assure their customers the source of materials legitimacy and sustainability. Therefore, his company intends to acquire the FSC and PEFC in the future while prudently percolating procurement sources.

3.2.2 Logistics

One sale manager stressed that the price, the service, and the speed are the most important considerations when mentioning about logistics. Since Taiwanese factories face a global competitive supply chain environment, they always need competitive logistics to cooperate with them. Customers from Japan, North America and Western Europe not only require high quality final products, but also speedy and reliable transportation and care. Long-term relationships with logistics are emphasized by all interviewees. One president highlighted that the price of logistics cannot be granted as a single CA without other conditions tied in, such as the former mentioned delivering time and safe transportation. Flexibility also asserted by other president.

3.2.3 Wood Suppliers

The four companies rely on raw wood material acquisition from a large range source of mills all over the world. There are suppliers from Malaysia, Indonesia, North America, South America, Australia and Africa. And some engineering wood boards are from Russia. These suppliers offer a large range of color, category and pattern of raw wood and engineering boards to choose and to satisfy requirements. However, the relationships between the mechanical manufacturers and suppliers are mutual benefit and stable, reliable suppliers are CA.

3.2.4 Customers

Long-term relationships with customers were pursued by all four SMEs. Basically, USA, Japan, Western Europe and China are the main source of their customers. Only a few parts of their customers are from inland Taiwan. Also, the relationship is built on mutual trust and

collaboration. Customers mainly care about three things: First, the quality of the final products; Second, the sustainability, safety and legitimacy of their sources; and Third, the price of the products. The loyalty of customers also is a CA. One president thought that to develop the OBM strategy and to maintain a stable quality and quantities is the way to obtain customers' loyalty. Customers are the firm's best marketing and witness. When their customers have good evaluation of the final products, they will become a CA of the firm and a benefit for the promotion of products. Moreover, 'Green consciousness' customers can't be granted as a single CA for wood products without putting the quality, reliability and relationships terms into considerations. And, re-educating customers is a CA.

3.2.5 Local Community

When discussing the association of the firm with the surrounding community, several interviewees highlighted the importance of the company as an employer and a source of income to the region. Specially, the company C, which is located in the remote village, owns 100% employees from the local community. The president of this firm thought that the local manpower is very vital to the firm and she fully understood that the firm should always recognize its economic responsibility. Therefore, the company cooperates with the local university, such as forest department and department of wood science and design to train and reserve of talents and manpower. This project is not only benefit to the firm, but also benefit to the local employment rate.

3.2.6 Society

Two managers indicated that the efficient and pluperfect logistic companies around and atmosphere in society that is encouraged toward export-oriented direction are the vital CA. The production manager asserted that the competitive environments for facing a global market through export-oriented policy pushing the firms to adjust their strategies for market fluctuations and thus the firms gain flexibility, this is a CA.

3.3 CSR and CA

Then, all presidents and managers were asked to define the concept and to describe how their companies practice CSR. They were also asked whether they considered CSR to be a current or potential source of CA for the firm and to identify their transformation. Table 2 is the summarized responses from eight interviewees. From table 2, it shows that producing non-poisonous products, enhancing the employment rate of communities, motivation programs, caring for employees' rights and welfare, FSC certificate and ISO14001, caring for customers' complaints and requirements, environmental protection and non-pollution working environments, purchasing materials of sustainability, safety and legitimacy, hosting activities for better lives of local community, charity and philanthropy, paying taxes, compliance with law and planting trees around area of the factory and making communities healthy environments are CSR activities of the interviewee SMEs. Among them, producing non-poisonous products can be regarded as the source of CA only when this product matches with 'green consciousness' consumers' needs and requirements for quality. All interviewees agree that no CA can benefit from community activity since global supply chain and international customers cannot recognize the enhanced image and reputation from local communities. All interviewees agree with that motivation programs for employees' rights and welfare can build good relationship with employees. When employees feel warm caring from SMEs, their works become efficient and corporate-identification from employees will increase. These effects will help employees' retention and recruitment, reducing risk form slack in works and saving costs from efficient workers. One interviewee also asserts that caring for customers' complaints and requirements can help SMEs to build good relationships with international customers and to improve their service and products through take accounts of customers' complaints. Hence, enhance SMEs' image, reputation and the possibility of customers' retention. Actually, environmental protection and non-pollution working environments not only benefit to employees, but also reduce SMEs' costs in the long term. Firms can benefit from recycling through selling sawdust of by-products. And, due to the

increasing costs of waste handling and waste fines, reducing waste for protecting environments also can decrease costs. Besides, good working environments will bring efficient work and healthy employees; this will also benefit firms' profit. Finally, responsible materials purchase is regarded as a source of CA when comparing with competitors without sustainability, safety and legitimacy purchases. The actions of environmental protection and responsible purchases can avoid negative reports and unnecessary attention from NGOs or

Table 2: CSR and identified CA or Non-CA and the transformations in SMEs

What constitutes CSR	Transformation	Identified CA
Producing non poisonous products	Positive influences in image and reputation	Green products only when match with customers' needs and quality as a source of CA
Enhancing the employment rate of communities	Positive influences in image and reputation, reduction of risk and cost saving	Local human source as a source of CA
Motivation programs caring for employees' rights and welfare	Positive influences in image and reputation, and on employees' active attitude, stay and recruitment, reduction of risk and cost saving	Building relationship with and taking care of employees as a source of CA
FSC certificate and ISO14001	Positive influences in image and reputation, increase of incomes	FSC and ISO14001 certificate is as a source of CA only when comparing with no FSC and ISO14001 competitors
Caring for customers' complaints and requirements	Positive influences in image and reputation, reduction of risk and increase of incomes	Good relationships with customers as a source of CA
Environmental protection and non-pollution working environments	Positive influences in image and reputation, reduction of risk, cost saving and increase of incomes	Non-pollution, recycle and healthy working environment as a source of CA
Purchasing materials of sustainability, safety and legitimacy	Reduction of risk	Responsible materials purchase as a source of CA only when comparing with competitors without sustainability, safety and legitimacy purchase
Hosting activities for better lives of local	Harmonious relationship with local communities cannot	Not as a source of CA

community	acquire international customers' attention	Not as a source of CA
Charity and philanthropy	The effects for enhancing firms' image and reputation are very little	Not as a source of CA
Paying taxes	Global supply chain, customers, communities and society regard this as a matter of course	Not as a source of CA
Compliance with law	Global supply chain, customers, communities and society regard this as a matter of course	Not as a source of CA
Planting trees around area of the factory and making communities healthy environments	Harmonious relationship with local communities cannot acquire international customers' attention	Not as a source of CA
Enhancing the employment rate of communities	Global supply chain and international customers cannot recognize the enhanced image and reputation	

boycotting. Consequently, reduce the risk of business operation of SMEs.

Nevertheless, the following CSR items, namely the hosting activities for better lives of local community, charity and philanthropy, paying taxes, compliance with law and making communities healthy environments, are not took as the source of CA by all interviewees, although they can bring some benefits, such as enhanced SMEs' image and reputation from local communities and society. All four SMEs emphasize that buyers from global supply chain and international customers are difficult to recognize the local benefit effects. Besides, the effect of the above non-CA CSR items to enhance employees' recruitment is low. Furthermore, all interviewees thought that their stakeholders take SMEs' paying taxes and compliance with law for granted. Hence, they are difficult to become a source of CA.

4. Conclusions and Implication

This article analyses the connection between CSR and CA of SMEs under global supply chain framework and to explain the intermediary reasons. The main contribution is to identify what are SMEs' CSR and CA in a global supply chain and to offer the transformation and explanation for CSR transferring to the source of CA. To this end, this research contributes to a better understanding of the gap between CSR and SMEs' CA: Not every CSR activity or program can be transformed into the source of CA. Also, this article contributes to understand the relationship between CSR and CA from small dimensions of detailed business operations, not only from financial performance. Especially, under the global supply chain thinking, many benefits causing from CSR cannot be switched to the sources of CA recognized by international buyers and customers. The reason is because SMEs identify CA from the angle of the competition and the global supply chain viewpoints, but implement CSR through social and environmental concerns. However, this paper doesn't intend to suggest that a SME in a

global supply chain only needs to implement CSR items of the source of CA, but reveal that SMEs in a global supply chain still have intention to practice CSR items of non-CA voluntarily.

Obviously, the CAs, which are transformed by CSR, only account for a small part of total CA items. Besides, some CA brought from CSR cannot be regarded as a single CA if the CA cannot match with other conditions such as customers' requirements and quality or competitors without these CA items. Moreover, almost half CSR items cannot connect to the source of CA, this result implies half CSR activities are unrelated with their operation strategies and this result is similar with the EC report (European Commission, 2002). Moreover, the above finding implies some problems of managerial CSR decision: First, although Porter and Kramer (2006) proposed the 'Strategic CSR' and indicated that each company should identify the particular set of societal problems that it is best equipped to help resolve and from which it can gain the greatest CA, it is possible when SMEs' CSR decisions are made only by Strategic CSR thinking in the future to put those CSR items which cannot connect to CA to the second priority tier. However, those CSR items might be must-do or urgent activities, for example, paying taxes or compliance with law. Second, some CA cannot be identified without other required conditions even when they have already been connected through Strategic CSR thinking. However, this may cause some SMEs with traditional CSR that intend to apply Strategic CSR to misunderstand that SMEs can reach a single CA through CSR practices. Third, if SMEs apply Strategic CSR thinking to make CSR decisions and priority, this may cause SMEs to ignore some important contributions that are not from CA, such as harmonious relationship, or a peaceful society, etc. If SMEs' only make their CSR decision by Strategic CSR thinking, they might focus only on firms' CA but ignore some hidden risk in the future. Therefore, it is vital for Strategic CSR consultant, SMEs owners or senior managers intending to apply Strategic CSR to understand the above flaws to integrate Strategic CSR, risk management, ethics, social and environmental concerns together in order to make appropriate CSR decisions and priority.

As a qualitative study, this paper bears from a limitation inherent in all such researches, namely that the results cannot be generalized. However, the objective of qualitative research is exploration and conceptualization, rather than generalization (McCracken, 1988). Hence, future studies on the connection on CSR and CA could apply quantitative methods. However, this article still reveals interesting viewpoints for further researches. For example, how to combine social and environmental concerns, Strategic CSR thinking, risk management and global supply chain viewpoints together to make CSR decisions can offer an issue for further research. Finally, that a gap might exist between SMEs' perception of CSR and Strategic CSR consultants also offer another possibility for future issues.

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