Chapter 8

Creating Customer Value in Corporate Social Responsibility for Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is described as companies’ voluntary practices on social and environmental issues. It is employed as a PR activity which also gives consumers a positive company image and provides sustainability and profit increase for the benefit of the company. Namely, consumers become one of the crucial parties that companies deal with because the view is that consumers are prone to buy products produced by the companies with CSR. However, consumers should perceive an added value for themselves provided by these products. At this point, subject of CSR is important to create this added value and cultural product may be a good issue which customers may feel good to be involved. In other words, the more companies benefit from valorization of cultural products in the context of CSR, the more consumers perceive added value for themselves. This chapter aims to provide a comprehensive overview the relationships among CSR, cultural product, and customer value.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Culture plays vital role to maintain civilizations. It is a comprehensive term including tangible or intangible assets like art, institutions, habits, mythes, beliefs, language, traditions, etc. One of the most important things about culture is that cultural heritage must be handed down the next generations for whole community’s wellbeing and each individual in the community is responsible for doing this as well as preserving it.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), on the other hand, is a kind of business paradigm which supports to sustainable development by providing economic, social, environmental benefits. It was a voluntary issue but nowadays CSR become a compulsory matter. Today’s businesses are practicing environmental efforts, philanthropy, ethical labor practices and volunteering for various reasons. While some companies practice different forms of CSR, some companies see it a core of their activities. One reason to commit CSR is giving a good image to the third parties. The other reason is to attract customers’ attention. Additionally, the role of CSR was found on buying decision in different studies (Pant, 2017; Eshra and Beshir, 2017; Türkmen et al., 2016; Min et al., 2012).

One topic which companies are interested in via CSR projects is cultural heritage. Therefore, cultural products, as a so crucial element of cultural heritage, is one of the most crucial topic for CSR. Performing CSR projects for taking attentions of consumers towards cultural products, stressing the importance of them as well as preserving, maintaining and transmitting them to the next generations would create a good image on consumers’ eyes. Companies that commit cultural product-related CSR activities are accepted as more charmy and philantrophic by consumers. However, CSR projects should deliver the right values to the consumers via cultural products in order consumers to be involved voluntarily in this transaction. At this point, concept of customer value comes into the ground.

Today, consumers are “consumers of consumption age”. Concept of value is a critical factor for consumers. Customer value means the difference between the values the customer obtains from owning and using a product/service and the costs of gaining the product/service (Kotler and Armstrong, 1999). In other words, it means to create more value to the customer during a business transaction than the customer expects according to his / her past experience and value he / she pays. As long as the company offers more than the customer pays, customer perceives a good customer value. For this reason, value has become a critical marketing issue for the success of the firms (Berkowitz et al, 1997). If customer does not percieve a value, then he / she does not want to be a part of this transaction and won’t be involved. Therefore, it is one of the most important points to create customer value during committing CSR.
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