

**TO UNDERSTAND IRISH MILLENNIALS PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO A COMPANY'S IMAGE.**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
a Master of Science Management degree.
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ABSTRACT

Purpose - As corporate social responsibility issues continue to take centre stage in modern business and as companies continue to incorporate CSR programmes in their strategies, this paper investigates the link between CSR and corporate image. This is explored by focusing on the perceptions of Irish millennials who literature has described as an influential generation but yet literature offers little on their expectations on issues concerning CSR and corporate reputation.

Design/ methodology/ approach – A qualitative study was conducted where ten interviews with Irish millennials was undertaken in order to gain more insights on CSR and corporate reputation issues. Data was analysed using thematic analysis which enabled the discovery of themes and sub themes.

Findings – Irish millennials interviewed agreed of the important role that CSR plays in a company's image. However participants also agreed that other factors plays a part when determining a corporate reputation. Themes like philanthropic aspect and CSR benefits were discovered amongst some others. Process was suggested to be a key element in company reputation besides people, planet and profit as suggested in literature.

Originality/value - This paper adds to the body of knowledge by providing an insight into CSR and corporate reputation issues from an Irish millennial perspective as most studies concerning millennials are based on American millennials.

Key words: Corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate image and company image.

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Dedication

This dedication is to my parents and my siblings for their constant support. Thanks for your enduring support and love.

This one is for you Brian sr. & Mavis!!

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CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Modern business organisations wish to build synergy between their businesses and philanthropic activities because of the ever rising public concern over social and ecological issues (Kanta, Ramana and Mallikarjuna 2014). Issues concerning the sustainability of the environment, ethics and other social related issues are of greater importance to the global market and organisations (Harun, Prybutok and Prybutok, 2018). At the heart of this are millennials who are showing a deep sensitivity towards CSR issues (Klimkiewicz and Oltra, 2017). In today's marketing driven organisations, it is becoming quite obvious that gone are the days when businesses were being built on philosophies that maximised shareholder value and maximising profits only. Such companies are now seen as a recipe for disaster. Nowadays a lot of marketing driven organisations are being guided by professional ethical norms and values, (Guckian et al., 2018). Although a lot has been written and researched about business ethics or corporate responsibility, there is still a gap that needs to be understood on how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities influence consumer perception (Tinker, Barnes and Wilson 2017). The y generation (millennials), consisting of over two billion people worldwide are becoming the world's most generational cohort because of their consumer spending growth and overall economic prospects, (Rocker, 2017). This generation is also mostly engaged in a lot of CSR activities as they have become of age at a time of difficult economic and social disruption, (Delaney, 2016). This has given millennials a different outlook and set of attitudes and behaviour than any other generation before them. Therefore there is a need to find out more from this particular group on how they view CSR and what they expect from companies as their influence cannot be underrated by organisations.

A lot of scandals like environmental disasters, labour exploitation, product recalls and the way in which companies have reacted to such scandals, have been reported in different literature, (Comyns, 2016). Such literature details how different organisations caught up in different CSR scandals have experienced reputational consequences (Beder 2002; Firestein 2006). Scholars and business analysts have often defined reputation as the most competitive advantage that a company can have (Deephoue 2000). Some scholars even identifying corporate reputation as being the most critical and enduring asset that a company can possess, (Olmedo-Cituentes et al., 2014).

However research on the relationship between CSR and corporate reputation has been inconclusive as people's perspective and moderating factors continue to change with time (Moderan and Garcia 2016). Identifying this gap in literature

Caracuel et al., (2017) encourages for continuous research on the relationship of these two factors with different modifying factors. Noting the importance of Millennials as discussed above, this paper tries to add to the body of literature by trying to understand the perspective of Irish millennials on the linkage between CSR and corporate reputation. As Sum (2017) observed that issues to do with CSR is not a one size fits all format thereby encouraging research based on each community or culture.

1.2 RESEARCH GAP

There is a gap in literature as scholars and professionals agree that results into the linkage of CSR and corporate reputation are inconclusive (Modorran and Garcia 2016). Tinker, Barnes and Wilson (2017), identifies a gap in literature on how CSR activities influence consumer perception on corporate reputation and thus encourages for more research into the topic.

As observed by del Brio and Lizaezaburu (2017), few researchers have investigated the link between CSR and corporate reputation and more so from a millennial perspective. Deng and Xu (2017), identifying this gap, requests for further research in this area as many issues concerning CSR and Company image are not clear and deserves more investigation. Sum (2017) also calls for continuous research on issues concerning CSR as they are not a one size fits all format. So hopefully this study will add to the body of knowledge on issues concerning CSR and corporate reputation from an Irish millennial perspective.

Most papers on the relationship between CSR and company image used quantitative methods, Hillenbrand and Money (2007), Siltaoja 2006): thus Gazzolla (2018) highlighting the lack of significant detail on the link between CSR and company image and calling for more detailed research on the topic.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (i) How do Irish millennials understand CSR and what expectations do they hold on organisations?
- (ii) What are the factors that influence a company's reputation and are they related to CSR?
- (iii) How do Irish millennials relate to companies with good or bad CSR reputation?

1.4 RESEARCH OUTLINE

The following chapters will be outlined in this research paper:

Chapter one: involves a brief introduction of the topic and identification of the research gap.

Chapter two: include a detailed analysis of literature on issues concerning CSR, corporate reputation and millennials. The rationale behind conducting this research and the aim and objectives of this research will be highlighted.

Chapter three: Will detail the methodology used in collecting data and the reasons for the selection of the methods. Ethical considerations and reliability issues will also be discussed.

Chapter four: Will involve a results section where a logical flow to findings will be highlighted with key findings.

Chapter five: Involves the discussion section where findings observed in chapter four, will be linked back to literature. Important findings will be highlighted and linked back to previous studies. This chapter will also offer a conclusion to the study and recommendations for future research and implications of the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate social responsibility is a topic that has undergone through extensive research by academics over the past years but yet still there is not a universal definition of CSR (Okoye, 2009). Bowen (1953), regarded as the fore father of CSR, defines CSR as the pursuance of obligations by businessmen in order to fulfil those policies that will help them to make policies and decisions that are valuable in terms of objectivity and values of society. Bowen was recognising the need for Managers to be able to take responsibility for the good of the public. Drucker (1954), enhances this point by stating that all decisions made by Managers need to promote the good of the public by contributing to its stability, harmony and strength.

Zemigala (2017), says the majority of terms that do describe CSR, refers to those voluntary social and environmental aspects of an organisation. These terms can be divided into two parts namely internal and external activities, (Gasparski, 2003). Internal activities are all the pro workforce activities and external activities detailing all the actions that are addressed to partners, local community, public authorities and the ecology. Zemigala further refers to CSR as companies being responsible for their impact on society by being sustainable, competitive and innovative towards the economy and individual enterprises.

Although corporate social responsibility has become popular within most government, companies and organisations all over the world, it has its fair share of critiques. According to Galant (2017), some economists argue that CSR stands in the way of business prosperity as the sole purpose of a business is to maximise profit making. Some philosophers see CSR as a social enslavement tool and some Sociologists see it as an element of corporate management thus there being no need for it to be singled out as an entity or a subject matter (Sum, 2007). However literature encourages the continuous research between CSR and other factors as CSR practices do not fit into a one size fits all format, there is need to add to the body of literature by trying to understand how CSR affects different communities (Kunz, 2018).

2.2 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THEORIES

Literature has offered us many different theories of CSR with the conception of CSR having a wider diversity of topics and many that still need to be further explored (Matten and Moon, 2008). However, the common view being that all these views and theories encompassing three main activities namely economic, social and environmental. All these addressing issues concerning the 3Ps namely people, profit and planet (Cuervo-cazurra 2018). In line of this background, we look at three CSR

theories that collectively encompass the 3Ps but developed throughout the past different decades.

2.3 FRIEDMAN SHAREHOLDER THEORY

Friedman (1970) stated in his shareholder theory that the responsibility of any business is to maximise profits so that it earns a good return on its investment whilst being a good corporate citizen by obeying the law and nothing more or less. Friedman argued that to go further than this, was going beyond the mandate of a business. This school of thought has caused a disagreement between academics and the business community alike. Hermans et al., (1993) supports this theory by stressing that managers act as agents for shareholders therefore they are morally and legally bound to protect shareholders interests by striving to maximise employer's wealth. Having the same outlook is Levitt (1993), who adds that profits can be attained by aggressive competitive strategies through whatever way the managers decide, as long as it is lawful.

However Jahn and Brul, (2018), accuse the Shareholder theory as being incoherent and setting up low ethical standards for managers. They feel by managers only striving to return profit on investment, they neglect other core responsibilities of an organisation by not being responsible to other stakeholders that also play a part in their success. Academics like James and Rassekh (2000), dismisses this theory as being tolerant to companies that are involved in immoral practices in the pursuit of maximising profits. Li and Zhang (2010), faults the theory for focusing on outcomes and paying little attention to factors that determine the extent of CSR in most organisations.

However despite the comments Friedman made on CSR, Cosans (2009), feels he never gave a proper systematic summary of his views on CSR or the moral obligations that managers need to be assigned with when they are in pursuit of profit. For this reason, Jahn and Bruhl (2018), feels it could be the reason why there are different approaches and definitions to this theory. In trying to address some of the criticisms of the shareholder theory, Edward Freeman developed the stakeholder theory.

2.4 STAKEHOLDER THEORY

Freeman (1984), in his stakeholder theory, stresses of the morals and values in an organisation when defining CSR. He states that the value of a business is not only to create value for shareholders alone as defined by Friedman above, but also to extend that value to other relevant stakeholders as well because they are an important part of any business. Clarkson (1995) defines stakeholders as any group of people that have any interest or claim in an organisation. He emphasises the point that businesses can only survive if they utilise their skills by creating valuable products that do satisfy its stakeholders namely its suppliers, customers, investors, government and employees, (Peloza et al., 2012).

The stakeholder theory is characterized by its high levels of co-operation, trust levels and the continual sharing of information between the organisation and all its stakeholders, (Jones, Harrison and Felps 2018). Thus it has become a mainstay in ethics and management theory for the past decade as it has involved the interests of other players in business, (Ortis and Strudler 2002).

As much as the stakeholder theory has gained popularity, there is still a gap in literature on the costs that are involved when an organisation is pursuing this policy, or can an organisation satisfy all its stakeholders expectations?(Jones, Harrison and Felps 2018). According to Ortis and Sandler (2002), this theory offers a problem in trying to find out how a business can sustain itself if it tries to meet all the concerns of its stakeholders. Therefore recommending a reciprocal stakeholder theory where all the other various stakeholders also consider the obligations that they have to the organisation. Carroll (1991), suggests a way in which an organisation can conduct business by taking into consideration both the shareholder theory and the stakeholder theory by coming up with the Carrols pyramid of CSR.

2.5 CARROL'S PYRAMID OF CSR

Carrols pyramid of CSR tries to offer a way in which business can be conducted in a profitable, legal, ethical way and at the same time also supporting the community in which it operates in by putting emphasis on the importance on corporate action and the implementation of their social role (Carroll 1991). The model encourages businesses to respond to all aspects of the social world and these being economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic obligations thus the construction of the four tiered pyramid (Claydon, 2008).



Figure 1.1 – The pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility (Carroll 1991).

This four tiered pyramid, is one of the most cited in CSR literature, (Geva, 2008), as it does represent CSR as a multi layered concept that consists of four inter related concepts that deal with issues concerning a business and the environment that it operates in at the same time (Reeve and Pincin, 2018). Other scholars look at the model as being a mediating factor between the shareholder theory and stakeholder theory as it is durable, simple and easy to understand and has an intuitively appealing logic (Pinkston and Carroll 1994).

According to Carroll (2004), these four responsibilities, have been developed in order to cover all views of CSR and what stakeholders do expect from organisations both economically and socially. For these responsibilities to be useful and implemented successfully, it depends on the size of the company, the industry it operates in and its economic circumstances. However Nastiti and Sukuharsono (2017), stresses the need that companies need to fulfil their economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic duties if they are to achieve community demands and acceptance and not only maximising profits as the shareholder theory stated.

Despite that the model has been durable and widely cited in CSR literature because of its simplicity, easy to understand and intuitively appealing logic (Crane and Matten 2004) it still has its fair share of criticism. Geva (2008) questions whether applying these responsibilities in the corporate world in the advised order can work universally and match all company sizes. As observed by Crane and Matten, whilst most American and European companies emphasized on economic responsibility as being the foundation of their businesses, some countries like Germany and Sweden ranked legal responsibility as being the foundation of their businesses. In most African countries whilst economic responsibility remained the base, it was followed by philanthropic responsibility and not legal responsibility. Campbell (2007) argues that the CSR pyramid only suits those companies that are financially strong because they will have enough resources to fulfil all the four tiers of the pyramid. Campbell argues that companies that are economically weak are less likely to engage in CSR activities because they have fewer resources to be able to invest time money and effort into CSR activities. Furthermore Claydon (2008) faults the CSR pyramid as failing to explain how a healthy bottom line can ensure the achievement of CSR or vice versa.

2.6 THEORIES AND DEFINITIONS SUMMARY

As can be observed through the different definitions and theories of corporate social responsibility, there is no final consensus on the definition of CSR, (Freeman and Hasnaoui, 2008). Despite many attempts by different scholars to define CSR, there still seems to be no universal definition and most definitions seem to be vague and ambiguous, (Schwartz and Saiia, 2012). According to Matten and Moon (2008), there is no need to keep looking for a universal definition of CSR since the term denotes the complex and the ever changing relationship between businesses and societies. According to Campbell et al., (2012), CSR seems to be affected and

influenced by a change in different variables like corporate culture and competition amongst many others. However further studies and research will be required in order to gain a deeper understanding of these relationships and how they relate to individual communities, (Campbell et al., 2012).

The above definitions and theories also show the evolution that CSR continues to undergo over different decades. It is for this reason that companies need to continuously redefine their CSR policies as CSR and people's expectations are continuously evolving, (Hamidu, Haron and Amran, 2015).

2.7 CSR AND CORPORATE REPUTATION

Literature has a general consensus on how reputation is valuable to an organisation, (Fatima, Rahman and Khan 2015). Corporate reputation can be described as the way in which different stakeholders evaluate a company (Deephouse, 2000). This can be described in terms of how good or bad a company's reputation is (Roberts and Dowling, 2002). According to Lai et al., (2010), corporate reputation is the overall impression that reflects the collective perception of stakeholders and the ability and intent by organisations to meet their expectations and demands (Lin-Hi and Blumberg, 2018).

Branco and Rodrigues (2006) describe corporate reputation as being a valuable and an intangible asset of any organisation thus the need for it to be safeguarded. According to Peroza et al., (2012), many stakeholders from customers, employees, investors to purchasing officers do regard corporate reputation as being an important factor in their decision making process before dealing with an organisation. When stakeholders think that a company has a good reputation, they develop trust on the company and this is the basis for most organisations survival as it creates loyalty which is vital for business, (Hillenbrand and Money, 2007). Matuleviciene and Stravinskienne (2016), adds that the long term success of any business depends on the relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders as this relationship will determine the future financial success, sustainability and its overall reputation.

Yadav, (2018), states that the significance of a good reputation has continuously risen in the global business world over the years. This has led to consumers to use company reputation as one of the important determinants when they are evaluating products being offered on a market. It is therefore important for companies and organisations not to down play the value of their reputation (Hsu, 2012). Many organisations are enhancing their reputation by being involved in different CSR activities and there has been a lot of empirical evidence on how organisations can use CSR to improve the reputation of their organisation. According to Deephouse, (2000), CSR needs to be considered as a form of strategic investment which can be viewed as a means of building reputation or maintaining it. However there is still a gap in literature on the effects of not practicing CSR to an organisation and its reputation (Lin and Blumberg, 2018). Gazzola (2018), whilst in agreement that CSR

enhances corporate reputation, feels there is lack of significant literature to link CSR and corporate risk thus encouraging for further research.

Sohn and Lariscy, (2015) argues that practicing CSR will not save a company's reputation in times of a scandal. He argues that people often overlook the positive CSR strides an organisation has had before the tragedy but rather concentrate on the shortfall at hand. They further argue that companies need not practice CSR to enhance their reputation but rather to fulfil the obligation that they have to their stakeholders. Pradhan (2016) feels it is the way how a company responds to social pressure that will determine its reputation. A bad reaction will directly affect its market value by pushing away investors and harming the reputation of the firm and likewise the way it reacts to a particular scandal, is the way its reputation will be created.

Different studies have studied this relationship between CSR and company image but the results have been inconclusive (Modorran and Garcia (2016). As Caracuel et al; (2017) states, there is always a change of the mediating and moderating factors when it comes to the measurement of the relationship. This enables the continuous research to add to the body of literature as we try to understand the linkage between corporate social responsibility and company image with a different variable being millennials.

2.7.1 CSR AND BAD CORPORATE IMAGE

In the wake of the financial crisis of 2008 that led to the melt down of global financial markets, corporate scandals and the worst economic disaster since the great depression of 1929,(Leon and Moyo 2015), deep questions and concerns have been raised pertaining to trust issues between consumers and the general business world, (Kearns 2017). This has been so because during the economic down turn millions of people lost their homes, jobs and much of their savings which arguably most people put the blame on private sector greed which was centred at profit maximisation at all cost, (Page, 2013).

This lead to consumers having trust issues with the corporate world (Wilkins and Campos, 2011). Making things worse some of the top companies that were seen as leaders in CSR like WorldCom and Enron, were caught up in issues were they used poor accounting loopholes to hide billions of dollars in debt from failed deals in order to balance their books and seem like they were making profits (Taylor, 2019). More recently, consumers have also been affected by the Volkswagen fraudulent engineering scandal that involved software modification on their turbo charged direct injections diesel engine vehicles in order to evade emission regulations (Holten, 2019).

All these scandals by leading corporations still signify the gap between words and action; do companies really care about stakeholders or CSR (Paddington, 2019). Are organisations involved in CSR to do good to their stakeholders or are they using it as

a means of maximising profits? Do consumers continue to support such organisations? What is the general outlook and expectation of consumers in the wake of such scandals? According to Lin (2018), CSR will continuously be important to the corporate world and much more to those with bad reputations because they can use CSR to fix their reputation. However, there is a gap in literature on consumer's attitudes to companies with a bad CSR reputation. Lin-Hi and Miller (2013), defines companies with bad CSR reputation as those organisations involved in intentional deception and those companies doing good but still not avoiding some bad malpractices.

Since CSR is a self-regulating mechanism where most businesses monitors and ensures their own active compliance with socio ethical standards and norms,(Mir and Shah 2018), there is still a challenge when it comes to bad CSR in most organisations as these companies continue to cherry pick CSR initiatives, (Confino 2019). There continues to be irresponsible behaviour and practices in some firms and this despite some of these companies being exposed by the media for their irresponsible behaviour (Deephouse, 2000).

Although CSR has gained momentum in Ireland over the past years, observers, consumer groups and the Irish government feels that Irish companies could do more in CSR initiatives (Mc Greevey, 2019). A number of studies show that Corporate Ireland is lagging behind European standards in terms of CSR activities engagement, (Holten, 2019). According to Gucklan et al.,(2019), there is need to further understand what role consumers can play in the wake of these corporate scandals as they play an instrumental role in determining the financial success of corporations by choosing to engage with them or not. This can be done by trying to understand how consumers engage presently and in the future with companies that have been caught in international corporate deception like that engaged by VW in the emissions case, (Phau et al., 2018).

2.7.2 CSR AND GOOD CORPORATE IMAGE

Despite some organisations being caught up in intentional corporate deception, others like Microsoft are taking a lead in CSR initiatives. Microsoft seems to be one of the leading organisations to be following the Carrols pyramid model by addressing all the four responsibilities and still having a net income of \$ 15 billion in the past 17 years (Telegraph, 2019).

Another organisation that applies good CSR is Intel Corporation. During the global recession of 2008, the company lost 42% off its share price and 90% of its net income, (de Gooyert et al 2017). Yet days after releasing its fourth- quarter losses in 2008, the company announced a renewed commitment to education and development in less developed countries by committing \$100 million towards global education programmes (Delevigne, 2009). This type of commitment to socially

responsible activities is not what most analysts would expect of a company that is confronting significant financial losses, (Bansal, Jiang and Jung 2015).

In Ireland, the Irish government launched its first CSR plan that is entitled good for business, good for the community; Irelands national plan on CSR (Kearns, 2017). This plan was established in recognition of the positive impacts that CSR brings to businesses and in trying to build confidence and trust between customers and the business community that was lost during the financial crisis of 2008. However there is still a gap in literature on the effects of what might happen to those companies that are practising CSR once they are embroiled in irresponsible behaviour (Sohn and Lariscy 2015). Gazzola, (2018) recommend the need for further research as the models for operating global business are continuously changing because of climate change, globalisation and social inequality. Rucker (2017), observing that millennials are the generation that is taking a leading role in calling for corporations to take a responsibility for their environmental and social impacts.

2.7.3 MILLENNIALS

Millennials or Generation Y as they are sometimes called are those people born between 1980 and 2000, (Miller, 2011). However when it comes to the definition of millennials, there is no general consensus in regards to the period on which it starts. Other definitions indicate them as those born between the years of 1980 – 1995, Elderman (2010), 1982 – 1994, (Kravounis, 2015) or 1982 – 2005, (Howe and Strauss 2007). However for this paper we will consider those born between 1980 and 2005 as they encompass all the years identified by different scholars.

Global millennials now account for almost 30% of the world population and they are becoming the largest consumer group in history because of their size and earning potential, (Fry, 2018). This generation constitutes the most educated, informed and inter connected in history thus making them highly desirable to employers but a challenge to satisfy by companies, (Morton, 2002). This is because millennials look for additional information about products and the companies producing them thus making the jobs of marketers and organisations more difficult, (Bondarouk and Olivas – Lujan, 2013).

2.7.4 MILLENNIALS AND CSR

Millennials are a generation that is more engaged in CSR activities than any other generation before them because they were born in a time of both economic and social turmoil thus giving them a different outlook on life than other generations, (Delaney, 2016). This generation has grown up in a time that has been rife with stories of organisations causing the depletion of the ozone layer because of manufactured chemicals and relentless financial scandals caused by unethical organisations, (Cone, 2015). Thus millennials as a generation are taking a leading role in making the society they live in a much better place to live in and do feel strongly about it, (Aidhi 2005).

This generation of civic minded individuals, do believe that it is their responsibility to make this world a better place and they also do believe that companies and organisations have a responsibility to join them in this effort, (Mc Glone, Spain and Mc Glone, 2011). According to Delaney (2016), millennials are a generation that is deep rooted with innovation and technological interventions as a way of life and like to indulge in CSR activities that are not short term but have long term and well defined objectives. This group shows a deep sensitivity towards ethical and CSR issues, (Howe et al., 2000). Millennials belief in fairness, equal rights and trying to make the world a better place, have them expecting to make different choices when dealing with organisations based on the companies ethical and CSR choices, (Deloitte, 2014).

2.7.5 MILLENNIALS DIFFERENCE TO OTHER GENERATIONS

According to Delaney, (2006) Millennials are different to other generations in that they are not looking for programmes that have been tried and tested before; they are a generation that enjoys the unknown and like to be challenged. A generation that is ambitious connected, innovative and expressive that is looking for causes to support because they want to feel that they are making a change to the world, (Roker 2017). As a result, it is important for companies to uncover their distinctive passion points and speak to their personal driver if they are to engage them. With this in mind, companies need to create unique CSR activities that inspire this generation because if not, this generation is prepared to punish or reward an organisation based on its commitment to social causes (Cone, 2015).

Millennials are also different to other past generations in their use and experience of technology. They are considered as digital natives whose digital immersion has been so intense that different studies have found them to be leaders in the use of technology and has embraced the use of technology than any other previous generation, (Tapscott, 2009). Technology being a very important element of the modern business world as it has changed the way business used to operate before and it affects business culture and helps in efficiency, (Parasursman and Grewal, 2000). Technology has also brought in the use of social media which helps instant communication and millennials are at the fore front of this as they are heavy social media users and are influenced by global trends than local trends unlike past generations, (Morton, 2002). Millennials are also using social media to garner product related information and to share it or to influence other users, (Barnes, 2015).

2.7.6 WHY COMPANIES SHOULD NOT IGNORE MILLENNIALS

Millennials are fast becoming the largest share of the global workforce and are bringing into the work place a change into the old ways of working by influencing organisations to be environmentally friendly and socially responsible, (Smith, 2008). According to Fry (2016), millennials expect those companies that they do work for, to

incorporate CSR permanently in their strategic plans and demonstrate external social values as part of the organisations contribution to the community. Winograd and Hais (2014), estimates that by 2025, this generation will make up half of the global workforce and will have the power to effect change on societal issues and will hold corporations to having social conscience. Thus it is important for organisations to understand this generation and their perspective so that they meet their expectations.

However there is still a gap in literature on how organisations can meet this new approach to business that is spearheaded by millennials and still operate profitably (Gazzola, 2018). Diamantopoloue et al., (2016), attributes young consumers and in particular millennials to being receptive to CSR activities and initiatives whilst Perez and del Bosque (2018), encourages for more research on this particular group and what they expect from organisations because literature offers us little information as much literature is about American millennials.

2.8 SUMMARY

As observed throughout the above literature review, both academics and practitioners have contradicting views on CSR, but almost agree on its importance to the organisation. This has led to most organisations incorporating CSR initiatives in to their companies' strategies. However there is debate in literature whether these initiatives are done for the betterment of the shareholder to maximise profits or the stakeholder to be a good citizen? The past financial crisis and the recent scandals that have involved top companies that were seen as being leaders in CSR initiatives has resurfaced this debate amongst both academicians and practitioners alike. Customers alike are now demanding more from organisations and taking a leading role in this initiative are the millennials.

However in order to address these issues, there is need to first understand how these millennials understand CSR (Campbell 2012), what expectations do they have on organisations and why are they more concerned with CSR issues (Fry, 2016). IN trying to address this, (Sum, 2017) encourages for research to be conducted in different areas concerning CSR as CSR issues are not a one size fits all. The other factor that has been encouraged for research is on the factors that influences a company's reputation. Gazzolla (2018) observed that these factors are continuously changing and there is need to find out if CSR issues affect an organisations reputation.

2.9 RATIONALE FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

In recent years academics and industry professionals have become more interested in trying to find out how concepts of CSR relates to corporate reputation (Fombrun 2005). In part the reason for this is that elements of CSR have been viewed as key drivers for reputation (Hillenbrand and Money, 2007).Some scholars suggests that antecedents of a good reputation includes companies embracing CSR standards

(Fombrum 2005). Melo and Garido-Morgado (2012) suggests that CSR is becoming a key driver of corporate reputation as consumers are holding corporates responsible.

At the centre of this are Millennials who are becoming an influential economic group who tend to have a strong tendency to ethical consumption than other generations and rewards those companies that give back to society (Nielsen, 2014). Furthermore issues to do with CSR and company reputation are continuously evolving and changing over time as stakeholders expectations continues to change and thus requiring the continuous research between these two factors, (del Brio and Lizarzaburu 2017). This reason validates the conducting of this research as issues concerning CSR and company image are being incorporated in the strategies of modern business in the wake of recent corporate scandals as earlier discussed in the literature review of this paper. According to Saunders et al., (2016), research that is conducted based on current events is more likely to be academically valid than other older studies.

There is still a gap in literature in trying to understand how corporate social responsibility activities influence consumer perception on corporate reputation issues (Tinker, Barnes and Wilson 2017). Formankova et al., (2019), observes that despite millennials being an important and influential generation, there is limited literature pertaining to their approach to corporate social responsibility. According to del Brio and Lizarzaburu, (2017), few researchers have investigated the linkage between CSR and corporate reputation together and more so from a Millennial perspective. Sum (2017), also encourages for the continuous research between CSR and other factors in different societies as CSR practices are not a one size fits all format. Each society is encouraged to define how it relates to CSR and organisations need to pay particular attention. Furthermore Gazzolla (2008) identifies the lack of significant literature about CSR, corporate image and millennials.

It is for these gaps identified in literature that this paper will try to investigate and add to the body of literature by trying to investigate the research question which is: To understand Irish millennials perception of CSR in relation to a company's image. Although literature offers us minimal material on the linkage between CSR and corporate reputation, most of the material has been documented based on American studies and not much on the Irish context. This paper hopes to add to the body of literature by documenting the opinions and perceptions of Irish millennials as Sum (2017) observed that issues to do with CSR does not require a one size fits all approach.

2.10 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

According to Saunders et al., (2016), it is vital in any research that aims and objectives are clearly set out in order to ensure that the most appropriate

methodologies are chosen after all relevant literature has been reviewed prior to conducting the research.

2.11 RESEARCH AIM

This paper aims to explore and discover the perception that Irish millennials have of corporate social responsibility in relation to a company's reputation in regards to the gaps in literature as discussed in the introduction and literature review chapters of this paper. This research paper also aims to add to the body of literature concerning CSR issues and company image from an Irish millennial perspective. Thus the aim of this research is: To investigate how Irish Millennials link CSR and corporate reputation. Based on this aim, the specific research objectives and questions are outlined below.

2.12.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE

To try and understand how Irish millennials understand or interpret CSR and their expectations on organisations.

Freeman and Hasnaoui (2011), determines there is no consensus on how people understand CSR thus Campbell et al., (2012) calling for further research on how each community understands and interprets CSR.

With millennials demands on corporations increasing (Campbell et al., 2012), Tinker, Barnes and Wilson (2017) calls for the need to investigate their expectations on corporations so that corporations are aware and do not miss out on this influential group. Perez and del Bosque (2018) identify that much literature on CSR and millennials is based on American literature therefore there being a need for different societies to contribute to the body of knowledge before generalising findings. Hopefully this research adds to literature by offering an Irish perspective.

Based on the above, the first research question is: How do Irish millennials understand CSR and what expectations do they hold on organisations?

2.12.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE TWO

To examine factors that does influence a company's reputation and to further explore the link between CSR and corporate reputation from an Irish Millennials perspective.

As determined by Crane and Matten (2004), many stakeholders around the globe use the Carroll's four tiered pyramid in order to determine a reputation of an organisation. However it was observed that the determinant responsibility was not universal as discussed in literature. This offers a gap in literature as little or no literature has been researched about what determinant Irish millennials use. It would be interesting to find out if they determine a company's reputation by using any of Carroll's four responsibilities or none at all.

Modorran and Garcia (2016) observed that despite different research on the link between CSR and company image, the results are still not clear and there is need for more research to be carried. Baraibar-Diez and Sotorrio (2018), encourages for more research on the role of CSR and company image but linking it to different variables. It is for this reason that this research paper attempts to investigate the role CSR plays in a company's image.

Based on the above, the second research question is: What are the factors that influence a company's reputation and are they related to CSR?

2.12.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE

To investigate how Irish millennials relate to organisations that were once caught up in bad CSR or irresponsible behaviour and to those that have a good CSR reputation.

Guklan et al., (2019) encourages for further research in order to understand how consumers view companies that were once caught up in corporate scandals. Sohn and Lancy (2018), feels there is need to understand how consumers deal with organisations that have a good CSR reputation and if consumers put preference in dealing with these organisations. What if a company has a good CSR reputation but gets involved in an irresponsible behaviour? How would consumers look or deal with the company? Garzolla (2018) observes that literature does not offer us much in trying to answer these questions thereby there being a need for further research.

Based on the above the third research question is: How do Irish millennials relate to companies with good or bad CSR reputation?

CHAPTER 3 –RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 CHAPTER INTRODUCTION

After analysing and identifying the specific gaps in the literature as has been discussed in chapter 1 and 2 of this paper, this chapter will provide a description of the various primary research methods used in the study. The methodology process used in this paper is in line with the research onion as was presented by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2015), in the research ‘Onion’ – see figure 3.1.

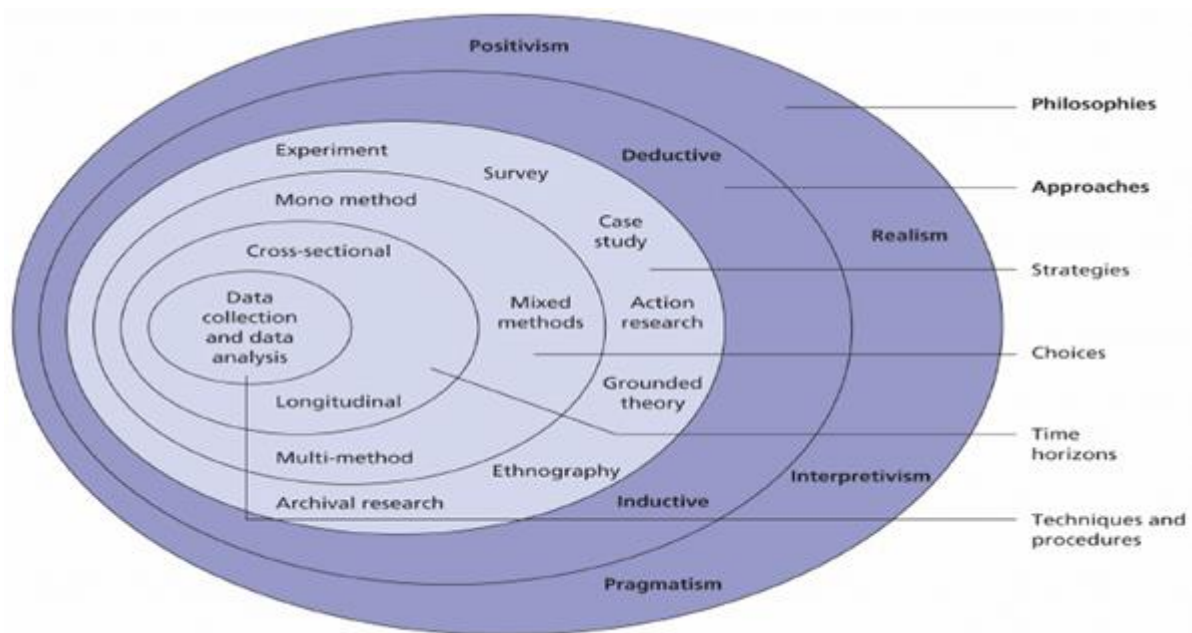


Figure 3.1 Research onion: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2015)

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research philosophy is defined as the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge, (Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016). It is the starting point of any research, (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Positivism and Interpretivist are mainly the broadly recognised philosophical frameworks of the natural sciences according to (Quinlan et al., 2018). Positivist researchers using scientific quantitative methods whilst interpretivists preferring humanistic qualitative methods and do tend to follow subjective assumptions regarding knowledge, (Saunders et al., 2015).

Thus interpretivist philosophy being suitable for this paper because of its nature of promoting a small sample in depth interviews which aligns itself with the aim of this paper of gaining insight into understanding Irish millennials perceptions of CSR in

relation to a company image other than positivism which would look at quantifying the results.

Despite Saunders et al., (2015), stressing of the importance of the research onion, some academics argue that a research philosophy can only be discussed once a research paradigm has been established, (Mayer, 2015). According to (Kuhn, 62), research paradigm is defined as the set of common beliefs and agreements that are shared between scientists on how problems needs to be understood and shared. Saunders et al., (2016), identifies two major paradigms being ontology and epistemology.

Ontology being referred to assumptions about the nature of reality, (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2011), whilst epistemology relating to knowledge, what constitute knowledge and the process through which that knowledge is created. According to Saunders et al., (2015), the ontology paradigm includes such approaches as objectivism and subjectivism whilst the epistemology paradigm includes positivist and interpretivist approaches. Being that interpretivist is the philosophy adapted this paper then aligns itself with the epistemology approach. The reason being that there is need to gather, interpret and understand knowledge thus interpretivist epistemology would be appropriate for this papers' objectives. Furthermore the data collected in this research paper will be subjective and not objective reality which could determine the use of positivist quantitative research.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

Two commonly used approaches are deductive and inductive (Quinlan, 2011). Deductive being grounded in the epistemology of natural sciences while inductive embedded in social sciences. Saunders et al., (2016) defines the deductive approach as involving the testing of a theoretical proposition by employing a research strategy that is specifically designed for the purpose of its testing. While Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013), defines the inductive approach as involving the developing of theory as a result of the observation of empirical data.

This research will employ the inductive method as research starts by collecting primary data to explore and draw conclusions from one or more particular facts or pieces of evidence as Bryman and Bell (2011) states that it is the conclusion that explains the facts in an inductive method. Quinlan (2011), states that when employing a qualitative approach and interpretivist framework, the induction approach is typically used in the research process as it allows for small samples and in depth interviews that provides a better understanding to the nature of the issue being addressed. This approach allows for the social reality of the participants own experiences to emerge, thus meaning it is less rigid in terms of research design compared to the deductive approach, (Yin 2014).

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Saunders et al., (2016), defines research design as the general plan of determining how the researcher will go about answering the research question(s). Exploratory research method, which is of investigative nature, (Cooper and Schindler, 2014) is going to be employed. This is because of the need to thoroughly investigate and understand Irish millennials in regards to their perception of corporate social responsibility and company reputation. Other methods like quantitative, would not be suitable to gather this information because of its nature of emphasizing on the quantification in the collection and analysis of data which is not the objective of this paper. This will be the sole method of collecting data because it allows for the collection of information or data that is descriptive, personal and extremely subjective thus it cannot be quantified.

The other reason for using the mono qualitative method is that most studies that have been conducted on the link between CSR and company image have predominantly employed quantitative methods that used surveys and quantitative data analysis despite most studies perceiving experience as being an inherently subjective perception. It is for this reason that Deng and Xu, (2017), observed a gap in literature and requesting for a deeper and more insightful analysis on the link between CSR and company image and linking it with different mediating factors and thus a qualitative approach being the best option of gathering data.

Data will be collected using the cross-sectional approach which involves the collection of data over a particular time other than longitudinal approach which involves data collection over an extended period of time, (Robson 2002). The reasoning being that this research paper is time constrained thereby ruling out the longitudinal approach.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

In depth interviews will be the source of data collection for this paper. This is in line with an interpretivist qualitative method of data collection as stated by Quinlan (2011) that data collected in a qualitative research needs to represent non numeric data such as thoughts, ideas, feelings and understanding that cannot be quantified. Although there are a number of ways to conduct an exploratory research like focus groups and observations amongst others, conducting interviews was the method that would deliver best our set objectives. Hiller (2010) attributes interviews to potentially being a more effective way of obtaining more authentic accounts of the participant's experiences over other data collection methods. Saunders et al., (2015), credits interviews as being an effective and useful tool in gathering primary data when seeking new insights or perceptions. All this fits well with our research question of trying to understand Irish millennials CSR perception in relation to a company's image.

3.6 TYPE OF INTERVIEW TO BE CARRIED OUT (SEMI-STRUCTURED)

According to Saunders et al., (2016), there are three types of interview format when conducting qualitative research, namely structured, semi structured and unstructured interviews. The main difference being that structured interviews usually have pre-coded answers, semi structured interviews are non-standardised and unstructured interviews are informal according to (Robson 2011).

Both these interview types are significant depending on how the researcher wants to acquire data and which method best meets the desired aims and objectives of a particular research, (Quinlan 2011). One to one interviews will be conducted unlike group interviews because this paper seeks to understand each individual's perception without the influence of others.

Semi-structured interviews are going to be used in this paper because they accord a set of self-prompt questions that guides the interview and starts with an open ended question then follows respondent tangents of thought with interviewer probes, (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Questions are not going to be fixed as one question might lead to a follow-up question depending on the response the respondent might give. This approach will allow those being interviewed to lead and be able to drive the interview to certain type of information which we had no idea or even discussed in literature. The advantages of such questions is that it allows the interviewer to deviate from the set question list in order to seek more clarity where needed and respondents are able to respond in a way that is best suited to their own personal experiences and perceptions, (Saunders et al., 2015). Structured interviews would not be suitable because of its nature of not allowing deviation and unstructured would not be suitable because it would be difficult to evaluate responses equally and objectively after asking participants different questions.

3.7 POPULATION

Cooper and Schindler (2014), defines population as the universe of units from which a sample can be selected. This is the breath from which participants chosen for this study was selected from. Irish millennials born between 1980 and 2005 and based around Dublin will be the population as we will try to cover all the years that define a millennial as observed in the literature review of this paper. By encompassing all the millennial definition, we hope this will represent those who are still in college and those who are in the work place.

3.8 SAMPLING

Non-probability sampling method was used in selecting the ten participants involved in this research. This was because this method is associated with qualitative studies (Saunders et al., 2016)and relies on researcher's knowledge and expertise on the subject area to subjectively choose participants, (Singh and Mangat, 2013). Probability sampling would not be ideal for this paper as there was no need for each

unit in the population to have a chance of being selected. Although there are many types of non-probability sampling techniques (Saunders et al., 2016), the chosen technique used is convenience sampling. This is because it offers the selection of cases based on ease of accessibility, (Bryman and Bell, 2015). As this paper faces cost and time restraints, convenience non probability seems the ideal method as Coper and Schindler (2014), describes this method as being cost effective and can sometimes be implemented more quickly than probability sampling.

3.9 PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHICS

Ten interviews were conducted consisting of equal number of males and females. Furthermore as literature offers us different interpretations of millennials, participants interviewed in this paper covered each generation of millennials (those born in the 80s, 90s and 2000s) so that we can have a fair representation of each generation.

ID	MALE OR FEMALE	MILLENNIAL GENERATION
P1	M	80s
P2	M	80s
P3	F	80s
P4	M	90s
P5	M	90s
P6	F	90s
P7	F	90s
P8	F	2000s
P9	F	2000s
P10	M	2000s

Table 3.1 Participants demographics

3.10 PILOT STUDY

Prior to the commencement of interviews with participants, a limited trial interview process was conducted with two participants to check the research tool (interview questions) on issues concerning clarity and interpretation as recommended by (Robson, 2011: Quinlan 2011).

Resulting from the pilot sample, it was observed that the use of the full name corporate social responsibility was recommended other than using the abbreviation CSR. This was because some participants seemed not to be clear with the abbreviation than the full name.

3.11 ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis approach was used in analysing data collected from the interviews. This is an approach where common themes were identified from the amount of data collected and tried to find common relationships among the words of different subjective individuals. Saunders et al., (2015), defines thematic analysis as an analytical technique which is useful when there is a large amount of qualitative data and the researcher is trying to find relationships amongst words of subjective individuals.

Braun and Clarke (2006) guideline to thematic analysis method was followed and the process started by data familiarisation, transcription of verbal data, generation of initial codes and the search for themes. This process involved the discovery of what was of interest in the data and then data was coded and collated forming a list of different codes that was identified across the data set. The identified themes were then reviewed and refined before being defined and named before the final analysis.

The analysis process involved the identification of themes being correlated with the research questions of this study and further interpreted with reference to secondary data as discussed in the literature review of this paper. Braun and Clarke (2006), recommends that in thematic analysis that has an interpretivist approach, data needs to be processed inductively by means of identification of themes within the data collected and cross referencing this data with existing research that is available in the field of study in order to help draw conclusions or theories.

3.12 RELIABILITY

In order to ensure credibility and reliability, most of the questions used in conducting interviews, had been used in past peer reviewed articles, (Siltaoja, 2006: Hillenbrand and Money 2007: Tinker Barnes and Wilson 2017 and Lu, Mao and Deng, 2018). These semi- structured questions acted as a guide to consciously maintain an impartial position during the process of conducting the interviews. Yin (2014), credits the semi-structured interviewing process to eliminating any engagement in informal conversation where the researcher's values could steer the engagement in a particular direction.

3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Saunders et al., (2016) defines ethics as being the standards of the researcher's behaviour in regards to the rights of those who do become the subject of a research project, or those that are affected by it. Bryman and Bell (2015), identifies four main ethical issues that need to be addressed when conducting interviews namely, harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception.

In conducting this research the four principal issues identified by Bryman and Bell acted as a guideline in addressing all issues concerning ethics. Firstly all participants

chosen to take part in this research were made to understand why they were chosen and to what their views contributed to the project. They were told that the prime factors of conducting this research is in fulfilment of a requirement for a master of science research project and probably add to the existing literature on issues to do with CSR and company reputation from an Irish millennials perception. In line with this, consent forms were provided, filled and signed off by participants prior to the start of each interview. Participants were informed that all research will pertain to a specific academic exploration and will not be used in any other reports apart from that intended.

Participants were advised that by them accepting to take part in this interview process, they were not obliged to remain in the interview process as they could terminate or remove themselves at any point during the process. Participants were made aware that the interviews would be recorded and transcribed and that they will be afforded access to both the audio and transcribed data at any time they may request.

Participants' anonymity was guaranteed all throughout the interview process and participants will not be referenced by their names but by a number so that they are not personally identifiable. Due diligence was put in securing all the data and European Union guidelines in protecting data from members in the euro zone was adhered as general data protection regulation (GDPR) 2018, guideline was followed. GDPR guidelines regulates the way an individual or organisations manages personal data as it ensures that there is watertight consent management and requires effective data rights management systems to ensure the safety and misuse of data, (Nagle, 2018). To this effect participants were assured of the safety of all data files and advised of the destruction of all files once the project has been marked and grade

CHAPTER 4 – RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Below is the table of themes and sub themes that emerged from interviews conducted:

THEMES	SUB THEMES
(1) Philanthropic aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency and fairness - Advertising CSR
(2) CSR benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust - Longevity - Good corporate reputation
(3) Irresponsible corporate behaviour	
(4) Business ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government policy - Self-regulatory
(5) More to Corporate reputation	

Table 4.1: Themes and sub themes.

4.2 Philanthropic Aspect.

Results from the data collected indicate that participants in this study are clear and consistent when it comes to corporate social responsibility. It was observed that most of the participants related CSR with philanthropic actions. Participants felt companies should engage in CSR activities as a passion for giving back to society and the environment and need not expect anything in return.

Participant ten highlighted this point by saying *“Corporate social responsibility is a way that a company gives back to its operating environment. Because a company operates in a corporate world, it uses resources such as people, raw material and other operating resources from the society it is operating in, therefore, it has a responsibility to serve and help the same society”*.

The same point was highlighted further by participant two who talked of companies doing CSR voluntarily *“I would say corporate social responsibility would mean companies being able to take responsibility for their impact on society..... I would say it is where companies do integrate either their social or environmental concerns into whatever business operations that they are doing voluntarily”*.

Participant six also agrees to CSR as being philanthropic by saying that, *“CSR for me is a way of giving back to the society..... And not expecting anything in return”*.

4.2.1 Transparency and Fairness

However although most of the participants in this study were in agreement that companies need to look at CSR as philanthropic duty, some issues do stand out during the interviews. Transparency and fairness stood out as being a key element to companies when they are involved in CSR activities. Participant two observed that *“CSR is about being transparent and having goodwill for people and the environment”*. On fairness participant three observed that, *“To me corporate social responsibility..... is all the responsibilities that companies and organisations have towards all their associates. I think business as an entity needs to be operated on a fair basis”*.

4.2.2 Advertising CSR

During the interviews most participants felt that when companies are doing CSR initiatives, they should not use it as a marketing tool for advertising because it defeats the whole purpose of CSR.

Participant five highlighted this by saying that *“Companies also do not need to try and keep advertising their CSR efforts, that to me looks like they are using CSR for advertising. It removes the realness from the whole initiative”*. Participant two also wondered if some of the companies use their CSR initiative as a marketing tool,

“Mostly when you look at such companies, they are the ones on the mountain top blowing their whistles on what CSR programmes they are doing and how they are making the world a better place. You tend to wonder is this an advertisement or what.” Participant eight adds by saying, *“CSR to me is not a marketing tool. I know a lot of companies use it as a marketing tool, which in my eyes is completely wrong”*.

The key issue observed by most of the participants from the interviews is that they feel as though most of these companies and organisations use CSR in order to advertise themselves. Participant ten highlighted this point by saying that *“But the catch is don’t advertise your CSR activities or initiatives because that creates doubt in some people’s minds like is this company serious or is it just using CSR to look good”*.

4.3 CSR BENEFITS

Most of the participants agreed that CSR is beneficial to both the company and stakeholders. Companies benefit from CSR as they use it as a way of giving back to society whilst stakeholders benefit as they are able to engage and share information with companies on issues concerning sustainability and more. Participant ten said, *“Since an organization uses many resources like people, raw materials and others as I have said, so CSR is important to an organization as a way of giving back”*. Participant seven also said that, *“.... by a company engaging in CSR practices, it*

shows that its concerns are not just centred on profitability as they are able to get and address stakeholders concerns”.

However despite most of the participants being in agreement of the important role that CSR plays to an organisation, the participants had different opinions on the benefits of CSR. Some of the benefits mentioned are trust, longevity and good corporate reputation.

4.3.1 TRUST

Some of the participants in the interviews said that CSR will help in improving the trust levels that stakeholders and mainly customers have with most organisations. Participant four said, *“CSR makes sure that there is trust generated between the company and all its stakeholders”.* This was also mentioned by participant seven who said, *“In my eyes, I think, if a company is into CSR, I would regard that company as a highly reputable company which I could easily trust and be proud to associate with”.* Participant nine added, *“Companies now are using CSR to regain trust that they lost during the financial crisis”.* However participant four highlighted the key issue by saying that, *“.... This trust is only limited to the organisations present activities”.*

4.3.2 LONGEVITY

Some of the participants during the interviews felt that by organisations implementing CSR policies, it will add their business life. Participant two said, *“CSR is action and not just mere rhetoric, so if used correctly it can increase the trust levels that customers have of an organisation and the longevity of the entire business.”* Participant five also added, *“So if CSR is used correctly it would add a life span to your business in this competitive world of business where most businesses are failing to survive because of stiff competition”.* Participant six added that, *“In my opinion I think if an organisation does not have strong CSR policy, it will not survive in business because after the crash of 2008, people are now demanding more”.*

4.3.3 GOOD CORPORATE REPUTATION

Whilst in the interviews some of the participants talked of the role of CSR as enhancing the trust levels between an organisation and its stakeholders or for business longevity, most of the interviewees also said that CSR is important in the creation of a good corporate reputation. Participant ten said that, *“The CSR practices done by the company may influence a good reputation for the company since customers feel a sense of attachment or closeness with a company”.* Participant one linked CSR and corporate reputation by saying, *“If a Company is practicing CSR which I would call proactive CSR then it will help the organisation to survive in this fierce world of competition and will create goodwill or say reputation”.* Participant seven added, *“Have a strong CSR pedigree then you are assured of a strong reputation.....”*

However, in most of the interviews, the interviewees felt that in order for these companies to enhance good corporate reputation, trust and longevity, they need to start with local communities as Participant four said, *“I think CSR needs to look at local issues first before they look at the global village”*.

4.4 Irresponsible Corporate Behaviour

Most of the participants felt that irresponsible behaviour from companies and organisations leads to lack of trust on the part of customers and a bad reputation for the company. Participants felt that there was a strong connection between lack of trust and bad reputation. This was evident in that most of the respondents went back to the financial crisis of 2008 where customers felt betrayed by banks and even though a decade has gone, most of the participants still did not have that full trust with the banking sector. Participant nine observed that, *“That bond that you have with an organisation is what determines how you think about the company be it positive or negative. There is no way you can go and say you have a bad relationship with a company but their reputation is good. Nope, it doesn’t work like that”*.

Adding on the same point, participant 2 said, *“Likewise if you have a bad CSR reputation say like of using minors in your labour force then surely this will also affect your reputation. I don’t think people would like to associate with say companies that mistreats its workers, pays its suppliers late and all that. Your reputation on this one will surely follow you”*. Participant three added by talking about the trust people lost on companies after the crunch by saying, *“And then look at these banks, not many people trusted them after the crunch, they wrongly invested peoples monies and it ended up people losing a lot of money and they still have a bad reputation. Even though they are now trying to rebuild that trust but still not many people can say they have 100 percent trust in banks. So what I am trying to say is if an organisation does bad to me then to me its reputation is bad.no two ways about that”*.

The key issues observed through the participants’ responses are that millennials do value trust a lot and they feel companies need not take that for granted. The other key issue observed was that companies need to work in building a good relationship with all its stakeholders as this special relationship resonates well with millennials. Participant ten summarized this point by saying *“The relationship I have with a company does not only influence me to be loyal but will influence how I view the whole organization”*.

4.5 Business Ethics

During the interviews, participants highlighted the need for companies to uphold their ethical standards in conducting business. Most participants in the interviews said companies need to have morals and values in their business decision making process. Participant nine said, *“I expect companies to live up to the standards that they’re supposed to adhere to”*. Participant five added *“so I do expect a company to*

be trustworthy and then finally I expect it to operate ethically. Let it be a responsible company.....” Participant two added that, *“I think businesses need to do business in a professional manner where they are following ethical standards and operate in a way where their decisions are guided by upright moral standards”*.

However despite most of the participants being in agreement that companies need to uphold to ethical and moral standards, participants were divided on who needs to make sure that these standards are upheld. Some participants felt that there is need for strict government policies whilst others felt companies need to be self-regulatory or industry regulated.

4.5.1 Government Policy

Participant one said, *“Government as well need to tighten laws and regulations concerning issues to do with CSR because if not then we will keep having these CSR scandals”*. Participant nine added that *“Companies need to adhere to certain ethical guidelines that are set up by local councils or general government regulations. Participant eight spoke of these government laws and regulations being fair to both parties if they are to become effective, “The government needs to come up with strong CSR regulations that will be seen to be fair by the company and the people and in so doing these policies can benefit and protect everyone”*.

4.5.2 Self-Regulatory

Some participants during the interviews said that CSR need not be regulated by government but let the company or industry regulate itself because CSR is voluntary. Participant five said, *“Companies need to follow the rules and regulations set up by its regulatory body and be a good citizen really, nobody needs outside policing when doing charity”*. Participant seven added that, *“industries need to come up with strong checks and balances and regulations in order to safeguard malpractices”*. Participant three also said, *“Each particular industry as well needs to come up with strong laws and regulations that protect each industry because generalising CSR laws cannot work and by these companies regulating themselves they are more likely to adhere to these laws”*.

4.6 Other factors influencing corporate reputation.

Whilst most participants were in agreement that CSR will enhance a company's reputation, they felt that CSR is not the only determinant to corporate reputation. Participants mentioned other factors such as product quality, customer care, the relationship one holds with a company and social media influence as some of the factors that will influence or determine a company's reputation.

According to Participant 10, *“As a customer, my relationship is based on my experience with the company and to build a good reputation..... Even though a reputation can be influenced by peers, a personal relationship with the company is*

important to determine a company reputation in the eyes of the customer". He further adds that, "The social media also influence how people view the company, for instance if a customer complains of any bad dealings with an organization, it may cause a bad reputation"; Participant 5 adds to this by saying, "To me when you talk about a company's reputation then it's about that relationship that it has with its stakeholders".

Most of the participants also talked of product and service quality, Participant two highlighted this by saying *"the company builds a reputation throughgood products and services or if they have good ideas, which helps the people to meet the basic needs".* Participant six added, *"So I would say a combination of product or service and the message that goes with it and in this case then it's the word of mouth or support from the public using the internet or whatever medium,".* Participant nine also pointed out these issues, *"Mostly they are..... customer service, online profile, customer reviews and the social media which when combined add to a company's reputation".*

The other key factor that most of these participants highlighted is that as much as they can make their own individual opinions, peer or group influences play a part when they make an opinion on an organisation. The reason being that humans as social beings we depend and are easily influenced by what others in our circle say or do. As participant 1 pointed out, *"Reputation if I can also add is built by our circle of friends and associates who consciously and subconsciously affects our thinking method in one way or the other".*

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was to investigate Irish Millennials' perceptions of CSR, and factors that influenced these perceptions. The first research question asked how do Irish millennials understand CSR and what expectations they hold on organisations. Based on the results of this study it can be seen that Irish millennials understand CSR as being a philanthropic act and expect organisations to be fair and transparent in their actions and they also expect organisations to not advertise CSR.

Irish millennials showed a deep understanding on issues concerning CSR as most participants had been affected by the financial crisis of 2009 and had grown up in a time of economic and social turmoil, (Delaney 2016). This experience has stayed on with Irish millennials and thus they are passionate with CSR issues and are taking a leading role in holding companies responsible in their pursuit of making the world a better place, (Roker, 2017). The key aspect observed on CSR being philanthropic was that participants understood the company's other obligations like making profit (Claydon, 2008), and were willing to pay more for sustainable products. This addressed Gazzolla (2018) concern that can a company operate profitably by addressing all stakeholders concerns?

Participants also expected companies to be transparent and fair in their transactions by constantly sharing information with relevant stakeholders. Participants expected companies to share information, even that of which they are not comfortable with. They felt that as key stakeholders they have the right to information thereby in return they can make informed choices as was observed by (Jones, Harrison and Felps 2018) that millennials demand the continuous sharing of information by organisations.

Participants also highlighted on the need for companies not to advertise their CSR activities as they felt that by advertising these activities it devalues the essence of the philanthropic act and might be seen as a marketing tool instead of its intended purpose of the company being a good corporate citizen. Overall participants had a deep understanding of CSR and have high expectations from companies to play a key role in making this planet a better place as highlighted by (Aidhi 2005).

The second research question from this study asked what the factors that influence a company's reputation are and are they related to CSR. We can see from the theme identified in the results section that participants felt that despite CSR playing a crucial role in determining a company's reputation (Deephouse 2000) other factors also play an important role. Participants highlighted other factors like product, ethics, trust, peer pressure, and process as some of equally important factors.

However the key issue that most participants seemed to agree on was on the importance of the process involved to deliver the product or service. They felt that

process plays an important role in creating a company's image. Participants felt that despite the importance of CSR in determining reputation, other factors as well have an important role.

The third research question asked how Irish millennials relate to companies with good or bad CSR reputation. On companies with good CSR reputation participants felt that this will be beneficial to the company as it will lead to people having trust in the company and this will lead to the organisation's longevity in the business as it can also use its good reputation as an asset as was also observed by (Hillenbrand and Money 2007).

However on trust, participants stressed that this trust is limited to the company's present CSR initiatives. They felt that a company's past or future initiatives is of no less significance as it holds no value to them. This attribute can also be lead back to millennials growing up in a time of economic and social turmoil thereby being slow to trust as was observed by (Winograd and Hais 2014).

Participants also felt that good CSR reputation will prolong the company's life span in business in a world where the life span of most businesses seems to be short because of fierce competition as was also observed by (Yadav, 2018). Good CSR policies will also lead to the increase of the value of the company. Participants stressed of the importance of good reputation and how in modern business reputation is being determined as an intangible asset thereby being of significant value to an organisation as was observed also by (Branco and Rodrigues 2006). Overall participants felt connected with a company with good CSR practices and were willing to support such companies by paying higher prices for sustainable goods as was observed by (Croydon 2008).

On companies with a bad CSR reputation, participants felt disconnected with such companies. They felt a bad CSR reputation will lead to lack of trust and overall will create a bad reputation for the company which will eventually lead to its demise. Participants felt that it is difficult for a company to survive when it has lost the trust and support of its key stakeholders as was observed by (Yadav 2018).

Results from the current study is in line with findings by Delaney (2016) that millennials are more concerned with CSR issues because of having grown at a time of social and economic turmoil. Thus taking a lead in trying to make this world a better place as observed by (Howe et al., 2000) and expecting companies to join them in this effort by being responsible (Mc Glone, Spain and Glone 2011).

The findings of this paper are also in line with the findings by Hilbrand and Money (2007) Siltaoja M (2006), which showed the link between CSR and corporate image. However some key issues will be discussed based on the findings:

Most participants in the study used the philanthropic aspect as a determinant of CSR and showed a deep care of issues concerning equality and the environment. This is

in line with Aidhi (2005) observations that the millennials are taking a leading role on matters concerning the communities and the environment. This observation also supports Roker (2017) that millennials are leaders on social and environmental issues and are holding companies responsible for their actions.

Although participants looked at CSR as being philanthropic, they were aware of the company's other obligations like making a return on their investment, (Croydon 2008). As such participants were willing to pay even a slightly higher price for sustainable products. This finding supports Cone (2015) that millennials are willing to pay more for activities that inspires them and seems to address Kanta, Ramana and Mallikarjauna (2014) concern that there needs to be found a synergy between business and CSR, if not one party will gain over the other.

However on the issue that most participants referenced CSR to philanthropic duties, this was unlike some of their European counterparts who referenced CSR to a company being ethical, (Geva, 2008). This was an interesting finding however it supported Sum (2017) argument that issues concerning CSR need not be generalised and used as a one size fits all format but be investigated based on each culture region or country because people's hopes and expectations are different.

Participants also felt that for CSR initiatives to be successful, companies need to be transparent and fair in their approach to business. Participants called for an open door communication policy between all stakeholders and the company. This was in line with Wagner et al., (2009) suggestion that companies need to continuously engage with stakeholders and keep redefining their CSR policy as people expectations continuously change. However participants even expected companies to share information that they are sometimes not comfortable with as this builds trust. Jones, Harrison and Felps (2008), observed that the millennial generation demands the continual sharing of information to all stakeholders.

The finding that participants recommended that CSR should not be advertised highlights the concern that Pradham (2016) observed that when some stakeholders are talking about CSR, they normally talk of only the determinant that applies to them despite there being other determinants. This offers a challenge as Palazzi (2017) observed that although advertising CSR might not be recommended for philanthropic aspect of CSR, it could be useful in other aspects like addressing stakeholder concerns and adapting codes of conduct that meet international standards. To address this challenge, Roker (2017) recommended for the continuous engagement between the company and stakeholders and Cone (2015) suggests that companies need to come up with unique CSR strategies for each stakeholder.

Participants' agreement that CSR is beneficial to a company and thus calling for organisations to embrace it was in line with Fatima, Rahman and Khan (2015) observation that literature seems to be in general consensus about the importance of CSR to organisations. However the key issue observed during the interviews is that

when talking about CSR issues, participants had the same expectations on all companies despite the size. This was in contrast to Nasiti and Sukuharsono (2017) observation that CSR expectations depend on the size of the company. This finding also contrasts Campbell (2007) observation that the CSR pyramid suits companies that are financially strong. Participants had similar expectations on both small and big companies.

One of the benefits participants attributed to CSR was trust. Participants felt CSR enables the growth of trust between stakeholders and the company. This is in agreement with what Jones, Harrison and Felps (2018), observed that one of the benefits of CSR is that it offers a high level of trust and co-operation between the company and its stakeholders. However the key issue observed by participants is that this trust is limited to the company's present CSR activities. Participants felt that a company's past and future CSR initiatives are of no less significance. This is in line to the finding of Mc Glone et al.,(2012), that observed that millennials loyalty to brands or a company, is limited to a company's current CSR initiative as past activities holds no value. This is a challenge for modern businesses to be pro- active and come up with strategies that will continuously engage this influential generation as observed by (Barnes, 2015).

The other benefit of CSR as observed by the participants was that it offers companies longevity in business. This is in line with Galant (2017), observation that CSR is one of the key components for modern business prosperity and long life. Winograd and Hais (2014) also recommended that companies need not ignore the millennial generation for the growth and sustainability of their businesses. However Holten (2019) observed that Corporate Ireland is lagging behind European standards in terms of customer engagement. This is an area that most Irish companies need to address as it has been observed through this study that most participants are looking for constant engagement with companies.

Despite CSR being beneficial to the organisation, participants felt that irresponsible behaviour by Companies will lead to lack of trust from the customers and a bad reputation for the company. This supports the observation made by Leon and Moyo (2015) that most customers have lost trust on companies because of the irresponsible behaviour that was done by companies during the economic crisis of 2008. Although a decade has gone most participants in this study still referenced to the experiences they had gone through during economic crisis of 2008. This supports Delaney (2016), observation that millennials having grown in a time of organisations causing massive depletion of the ozone layer and relentless financial scandals, do have trust issues with companies and as a result companies need to do more to gain the trust levels of this influential generation.

Participants also felt that irresponsible behaviour by companies will lead to them having a bad reputation which will be difficult to repair. This observation supports Wilkins and Campos (2011) finding that irresponsible behaviour by organisations will

lead to bad corporate reputation and lack of trust. . However the concern is that issues concerning irresponsible behaviour continue to be prevalent in the corporate world and some involving big multinational organisations, (Holten, 2019), the relationship between companies and its stakeholders mostly on trust will continue to be an issue. Participants agree with Kearns, (2017) observation that questions and concerns pertaining to trust issues between consumers and the business world continue to exist. Paddington (2019) observed the same problem and suggested that companies need to back their words with action in order to maintain or re build trust with customers. Most participants were also consistent that they are willing to punish companies based on their commitment to social causes as was also highlighted by (Cone 2015).

Despite that many participants supported the fact that CSR influences corporate reputation as observed by Murma, Bravi and Palazzi (2017), they also acknowledged the importance of other factors to determining a corporate reputation. This is in line with Deephouse (2000) observation that there are many ways that stakeholders can use to evaluate an organisation. Some of the factors highlighted by participants in this study are product or service quality, customer care or the process that service is delivered, customer relationship with the company, social media influence and company reviews. Some of these factors are in line with the factors highlighted by Fombrum and Shanley (1990) who mentioned ethics and morality, history, efficiency, product, public image and human resource as some of the factors.

However the key issue that participants mentioned that is not highlighted more in literature is that of the process that is used to deliver that product. Participants felt process plays an important role in creating a corporate reputation. Cuervo- Cazorra (2018) mentioned of the 3 Ps that helps create a reputation of a company being people, profit and planet. However Cuervo-Cazorra encouraged for research into other elements that might play apart as Kolk (2016) observed that CSR is an ever evolving topic. With this thought process in mind, the 3ps of Cuervo-Cazorra could be further developed after further research into 4ps by adding process. Participants felt process is the link that can connect the 3ps and this might in part attempt to answer Modorran and Garcia (2016) observation that studies between CSR and corporate reputation have been inconclusive because of the ever changing mediating factors,

Participants also highlighted the importance of how peer influence plays a part in determining a company's reputation. This is in line with what Morton (2002) observed that millennials are interconnected and they try to influence each other in matters concerning CSR and corporate reputation. This is in line with the observation made by Rucker (2017) that millennials are more connected and try to influence each other on global trends than any generation by using social media.

Finally participants felt that companies need to have a high level of ethical standards if companies and stakeholders are to benefit from CSR. Most participants felt that by

companies keeping up high ethical standards, they might avoid having a negative impact on people and the environment. This opinion by the participants supports Carroll (2004), who said that companies do have an obligation to do what is right, just and fair so that they should avoid causing any harm.

The deep concern showed by participants on talking about companies having ethical standards and maintaining them, is in line with the finding made by Howe et al (2000) who observed that millennials are a generation that shows deep sensitivity towards ethical and CSR issues. Participants in the research expects more from companies and are willing to hold accountable companies that are un ethical and do not operate fair practices. This supports Aidhi (2005), finding that millennials have a passion on ethical issues, expect companies to hold high standards, (Deloitte 2014) and are willing to deal with companies based on ethical and CSR choices, (Mc Glone et al., 2011).

Although most participants agreed on the need for companies to be ethical and have morals and values, they had different opinions on who should ensure that these ethical standards and morals are adhered to. Some participants felt that for companies to be ethical and maintain the ethical standards, government needs to come up with clear rules and regulations concerning CSR. Participants felt companies have no moral right to regulate themselves going by past experiences as Deephouse (2000) observed that these companies have no moral right to regulate themselves because they continue to be involved in irresponsible behaviour and practices.

As such participants felt that government needs to be the one to regulate industries by coming up with laws and regulations for each county or country. This thought process supports what Cosans (2009) observed that most companies have no moral obligations and Lin- Hi and Miller (2013), observation that governments need to regulate CSR because of private sector greed. This is also in agreement with Lin and Bloomberg (2018) observation that if the industry is left to regulate itself, companies will cherry pick projects and will sacrifice doing CSR projects in order to maximise profits as they are always under pressure from investors.

However the key issue highlighted by participants was that it is important for government when coming up with these laws and regulations to involve all stakeholders when drafting these laws. Participants felt that for these laws to be seen to be fair government need to engage both the industry and all concerned stakeholders. This is line with what Guckian (2019), suggestion that government need to consult more if they are to come up with regulations that are adhered to by both parties as it is difficult to police each and every company.

Other participants in this study felt that companies or industries need to regulate themselves since CSR is voluntary. They also felt that if these companies or industries regulate themselves, they will be able to adhere to their own laws easily

and will need no policing. This thought process supports what Mir and Shah (2018) suggested that CSR needs to be a self-regulated mechanism where each industry ensures its own active compliance.

5.1 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Irish millennials define CSR using the philanthropic determinant which is different to other European nations who use ethics and legal as a determinant thereby this being vital for organisations not to generalise CSR as a general concept.

The findings also suggest that despite participants being in agreement that corporate reputation is determined by people, planet and profit; participants also highlighted process as being an important part of the 3Ps. This signifies that consumers' expectations are forever changing thereby companies need to constantly engage with stakeholders.

The final implication observed was that participants despite putting value on CSR as being a determinant of corporate reputation, acknowledged the importance of other factors as quality among many others in determining a corporate reputation. This signifies that companies need do more than CSR alone to have a good reputation

5.2 STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The strength of this paper is that it contributes to the body of literature Irish millennials perception on issues concerning CSR and corporate reputation where most of the research is based on American millennials. This responds to calls in literature for more research into CSR and corporate image issues as these issues cannot be generalised.

One of the limitations of this paper is that it used a qualitative mono method whereby a mixed methodology would have offered the chance of using both qualitative and quantitative methods which would enable the richness of data collected as it would be backed by figures.

Since this research was based on a small sample size of only ten millennials and based in and around Dublin city area, data analysed cannot be generalised as it will be limited to that setting alone and not representative of the whole Irish millennial population.

The other limitation is that this study is based on the Irish context and therefore cannot represent any jurisdiction.

The final limitation is that of the time frame imposed to hand in this research paper. Hiller (2010), recommends that research to do with opinions and perceptions, needs to be conducted over a longer period of time as peoples opinion and perceptions might change over time. As this paper needs to be presented within a short time

frame, it will not be possible to determine if people's opinion and perception might have changed over a longer time frame.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although this research has contributed to the body of knowledge by giving Irish millennials perception on CSR issues and how they affect a company's reputation, it has also opened a window on the importance of future research in connection with these issues.

Firstly as the sample of this research was small, the findings could not be a fair representation of Irish millennials thus it would be encouraged to conduct a research that had a fair representation of Irish millennials.

Secondly as this research concentrated on millennials, it would be interesting to find out and compare how other generations understand CSR and if at all they link it to corporate reputation.

It would be interesting to conduct the same research using quantitative method to be able to generalise the findings.

Finally, as many participants in this research said that there are many factors that contribute to a company reputation including the process of product or service delivery as discussed in chapter four and five, it would be interesting to evaluate reputation based on different stakeholders' understanding of corporate reputation.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This paper achieved its research aim which was to investigate how Irish millennials link CSR and company image. As observed through chapter three and four of this paper, Irish millennials gave their opinion on matters concerning CSR and company image in a clear and precise way.

Howe and Strauss (2000) suggested that millennials will be a generation that will have a high level of awareness on issues concerning corporate social responsibility. This study supports that suggestion as it has shown that millennials have a clear understanding of CSR issues and do expect companies to be held responsible for their conduct. However the interesting aspect is that participants in this study determined using the philanthropic aspect as compared to other European nations who used ethical and legal as a determinant.

Participants in this study also called for CSR not to be advertised which highlights the concern that when people are talking about CSR, they only use the determinant that makes sense to them ignoring some other well important determinants. This offers a challenge because on one hand participants are calling for the continual sharing of information between the company and stakeholders and on the other they

are saying CSR need not be advertised. If CSR is not to be advertised, then how would companies communicate with all its stakeholders on important issues?

The study also showed that there is a strong relationship between CSR and a company's image. This was analysed by finding out from participants if they used CSR as a determinant to corporate reputation. This paper suggests that there is a strong link on the two variables as it was observed that CSR was one of the common factors used to determine a company's reputation.

However some interesting factors like peer pressure and process emerged that were not so prominent in literature. Participants felt that peer pressure plays a major part in a company reputation as people are easily influenced by the opinions of family and friends. Deephouse (2000) observed that millennials are a more connected generation and the internet has made it easy for them to connect through social media. This interconnection has helped them to influence each other on social and environmental issues. So as much as companies need to work on their CSR policies to have a good reputation, other important factors as well like peer pressure and many others need not be ignored.

This study has also attempted to address the gap in literature as observed by Cuervo-Cuzzura (2018) that the 3Ps of Product, public image and Planet could not be the only determinants of a corporate image. This study suggested that the process that a product or service is delivered could be an important factor as well. So this paper suggested the creation of the 4Ps as an enhancement to Cuervo-Cuzzura,s 3Ps.

Overall this paper has added to the body of knowledge by adding to literature the views of Irish millennials on issues concerning CSR and corporate image. As Formankova et al., (2019) observed that there is lack of literature from millennials pertaining to issues concerning CSR and corporate reputation despite them being an influential generation. The limited material on this generation is based on American case study, (Sum 2017), thus hopefully this paper have added to literature and laid the ground work where issues of CSR and company image can be further researched from an Irish millennial perspective.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE - CONSENT FORM

TO UNDERSTAND IRISH MILLENNIALS PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO A COMPANY'S IMAGE.

Consent to take part in research

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering questions and giving my personal perception on issues concerning corporate social responsibility and company reputation.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being audio-recorded and transcribed.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation and a copy of which will be available to the National College Dublin library.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in the researcher's storage and can only be accessed by him and his supervisor until the exam board confirms the results of the dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for two years from the date of the exam board approval of results.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

Date

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

APPENDIX TWO - INFORMATION SHEET

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

TO UNDERSTAND IRISH MILLENNIALS PERCEPTION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO A COMPANY'S IMAGE.

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to unde

rstand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

This study is about understanding Irish millennials perception on issues concerning corporate social responsibility and company image and is being carried out in fulfilment of a requirement for a Master of Science research project for the National College of Ireland.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART IN THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

A face to face interview will be conducted asking for your perception on issues to do with corporate social responsibility and company reputation. This interview will be conducted at a quiet location in Dublin. During the interview, I will be taking notes and the interview will be recorded for reference in case I miss any part of the interview.

WHY YOU HAVE BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART.

You have been selected for this interview because you meet the criteria set out in the title of this research paper which is to hear the perspectives of an Irish millennial.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation in this research interview is completely voluntary and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse to answer any questions and withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever.

POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS.

Hopefully this research paper will add to the body of knowledge on issues concerning corporate social responsibility and company image from an Irish millennials' perspective.

CONFIDENTIALITY.

Your personal details will be kept private and will not be used in the written research study. All interview notes and recordings will be used for the purpose of the research project only. Non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms and audio recordings will be collected and retained as part of the research process. All consent forms and audio recordings will be securely stored.

INFORMATION PROTECTION.

Signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained and securely stored and will only be accessed by the researcher and his supervisor until after my degree has been conferred. A transcript of interviews in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for a further two years after this.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY.

Results of this study will be submitted to the National College of Ireland as part of a Master's Degree programme.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.

For further information contact me on X17157030@student.ncirl.ie or my supervisor Dr Conor Nolan (conor.nolan@ncirl.ie) at National College Ireland.

THANK YOU.

APPENDIX THREE- RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

- (1) What are the factors that influence a company's or organisations reputation?
- (2) What are your expectations of a company to you as a consumer and to the field/domain they operate in?
- (3) What relationship do you think exists between you as a customer and a company? EXPLAIN
- (4) Do you think the relationship you have with an organisation will determine its reputation? Explain
- (5) How do you understand or interpret CSR?
 - a. Can you think of any examples of a company/organisation engaging in CSR practices?
- (6) How would you describe the relationship or connection between CSR and a company's reputation?
- (7) How does corporate social responsibility play a role in an organisations reputation?
- (8) What do you think are the effects of practicing or not practicing CSR to an organisation?
- (9) What is your opinion on companies that were once involved in a corporate scandal and how do you relate to them?
- (10) What are your views on companies that are involved in CSR practices but get involved in a corporate scandal?
- (11) How do you think an organisation can use CSR to enhance its reputation?

Compiled from papers by: Hillenbrand and Money, (2007), Siltaoja M. Elise (2006), Liu, Mao and Deng (2017) and Tinker, Barnes and Wilson (2017).