



Consumer Paradox: A Manifestation of Self-Concept in Activism in Response to Supply Chain Practices

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that organizations' operations have a direct impact on society; their effects on business and social growth and development are customarily associated with their engagement, or lack thereof, in corporate social responsibility (CSR). The reality is that organizations' dynamics can either enhance or hinder social growth and development. In relation to supply chains, attention is usually placed on focal organizations, meaning those at the end of the supply chain that provide products and services to end consumers and have power and influence over the rest of the organizations in the chain (Wang & Wood, 2016). When focal organizations state to be engaged in CSR, their socially responsible actions, and declarations regarding the latter, tend to be assumed as guarantee that

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the rest of the supply chain's actions are well aligned. Consumption naturally, and perhaps unintendedly, perpetuates organizations' unethical and questionable practices; however, consumer behavior is what can ultimately sway organizational change; the latter reveals the consumer paradox which is influenced by both self-concept and supply chain practices.

Today, their behavior is particularly and constantly tweaked by the increasing bombardment of data and information regarding organizations' business practices, as well as those of their supply chain. Hyperconnectivity propelled by social media, as well as an increase in production and access to documentaries and docuseries, have had an important role in educating consumers on the reality of shocking and appalling conditions in which products and services are being produced, manufactured, distributed, and sold to them. A series of industries and sectors around the world, including textile, retail, agricultural, automotive, farming, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, music, and technology, among others, have been effectively put on blast, as their associated firms' unethical and illegal, if not immoral, practices have been exposed. Effects of the latter are visible in their impact on consumer behavior and their ultimate purchase decision-making.

The general objectives of the study were to understand the underlining effect of consumers' self-concept on consumer activism, and to evaluate the role of consumer awareness of organizations' global supply chain practices on the shaping of self-concept and consumer activism impacting purchase decision-making. In order to do so, a set of propositions were framed to describe theoretical findings, and a conceptual model developed in order to illustrate the association of variables, constructs, and propositions. The study contributes to the understanding of consumer behavior regarding their stance on ethical behavior, social responsibility, and sustainability for purchase decision-making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supply Chains

All organizations, regardless of size and line of business, have a supply chain. An organization's supply chain is the group of organizations that collaborate in a complex system (Serdarasan, 2013) to offer a product and/or service in a market. According to Beamon (1999), it is considered to be a "one-way, integrated manufacturing process wherein raw materials are converted into final products, then delivered to customers." It

includes every actor that participates at any point in the creation, production, distribution, and selling of said product and/or service. Stevens (1989) defined the supply chain as “the connected series of activities which is concerned with planning, coordinating and controlling material, parts and finished goods from supplier to customer.” Whether local or global, supply chains must be effectively managed by implementing techniques for continuous improvements, across the chain, and competitiveness (Albino et al., 2002; Hugos, 2018). As each supply chain is unique, decision-making should be carried out both individually and collectively (Hugos, 2018) to ensure that practices across the chain are aligned with previously agreed upon policies, norms, and standards of operation.

According to Chopra and Sodhi (2004) disruption may occur in supply chains due to “natural disasters, labor disputes, supplier bankruptcy, war and terrorism, dependency on a single source of supply as well as the capacity and responsiveness of alternative suppliers.” And now, global health pandemic is also added to the list of possible disruptors. Therefore, their management is essential for a successful outcome. The effective management of supply chains is directly associated with the firm’s performance and achievement of competitive advantage (Li et al., 2006), as it may impact lead times, costs, as well as quality (Talluri & Baker, 2002). Therefore, it is common for decision-makers to primarily focus on developing strategies for cost reduction and contract renegotiation; however, there are some organizational leaders who have opted for a socially responsible and sustainable supply chain. Their practices are aligned with social, environmental, and financial performance (Silvestre, 2015), and its management positively correlates with cost and environmental performance (Cousins et al., 2019). The reality is that even those firms stating to be and have a socially responsible supply chain are falling short in their engagement; in other words, they are not actually engaging in corporate social responsibility.

Focal firms are those that are at the far end of the supply chain (Frostenson & Prenekert, 2015), have direct contact with end consumers (Wang & Wood, 2016), and provide them with products and services. They are, therefore, the organizations in the supply chain that are visible to current and potential stakeholders, particularly to consumers. Further, they have the power and ability to influence practices, policies, and standards of the rest of the organizations in the chain (Wang & Wood, 2016). Focal firms set the tone, in that they indicate the manner in which the entire chain will operate and ought to act accordingly. So, technically,

if they state to be engaged in corporate social responsibility, then, they and the rest of the chain should demonstrate zero tolerance for any unethical or questionable practices. Furthermore, the policies, actions, and results ought to be based on business strategies well aligned with socially responsible strategies.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a mindset and holistic approach to business. It stems from the firm's corporate philosophy, which is informed by organizational culture (Schneider et al., 2013). It requires organizations to always operate in an ethical manner, with the intent of achieving positive effects on social, environmental, and financial performance. There are various advantages to firm engagement in CSR, including a positive association of the latter with collaborator commitment (Brammer et al., 2007), organizational performance (Margolis & Walsh, 2003), and competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer, 2006). CSR is also well associated with consumer satisfaction (Jermstittiparsert et al., 2019) and loyalty (Han et al., 2019), therefore, it is important for organizations to transparently share their socially responsible actions and results with current and potential stakeholders. Moreover, there are various reasons why firms should effectively engage in CSR, all which may be summed up as their accountability toward society, the environment, and the firm itself (such as internal and external stakeholders), as business operations are only feasible because of them and their effective management.

Firms proactively engaging in corporate social responsibility diligently ensure that all organizations in their supply chain are also socially responsible. Socially responsible supply chains are well associated with supply chain performance (Mani et al., 2018). To be clear, if any of the firms in the supply chain are engaging in questionable and/or unethical practices, then, the entire supply chain is rendered not socially responsible. It is common practice, for the focal companies that state to be socially responsible, to obtain socially responsible, environmentally friendly, and/or fair trade, certifications, labels, and marks to denote that they are doing good and well. However, these by no means ensure that the focal firm and the rest of the supply chain are, in fact, not engaging in any questionable or unethical practices.

Non-socially Responsible Supply Chains

There are many ways in which organizations across supply chains take part in unethical business dynamics. The latter include but are not limited to any type of discrimination, exploitation (human and environmental), violence, fraud, corruption, impunity, abuse, theft, as well as unfair and unequal wages, unsafe work conditions, microaggressions, among many others. One of the most pervasive forms of unethical behavior falls under the classification of modern slavery. Even though slavery has been abolished, the reality is that modern day slavery persists; in fact, there are currently about forty million people enslaved (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020) around the world. The U.S. Department of State (2020) affirms that slavery exists “any time a person has been recruited, transported, or compelled to work by force, fraud, or coercion.” There are many types of modern slavery including: “sex trafficking, child sex trafficking, forced labor, bonded labor or debt bondage, domestic servitude, forced child labor, unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers” (U.S. Department of State, 2020), as well as “human trafficking, descent-based slavery, forced and early marriage” (Anti-Slavery International, 2020).

According to Anti-Slavery International (2020), modern day slavery is defined as the “severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain.” Forced labor is a type of modern slavery and an appalling common practice in the private sector which, to be clear, includes organizations across supply chains. In 2016, the International Labor Organization (ILO) found that over 24 million people were in forced labor, of which about 64 percent are exploited within the private sector (Freedom United, 2020; ILO, 2017). That is, about 16 million people working for organizations in different stages of supply chains are being exploited. And, to add insult to injury, in 2019, “more than 630 million workers worldwide did not earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme or moderate poverty” (ILO, 2020). To clarify, extreme poverty refers to people who are living with less than \$1.90 per day (The World Bank, 2020).

The focal firm may be transparently sharing, for instance, “fair” wages within the firm and still willingly accept that at the other end of their supply chain workers are earning less than living wage, and in many cases less than minimum wage. Or boast about their secure, healthy, empowering working conditions, as a “great place to work” and accept that at the far end of the chain, workers are denied basic human rights. This is

the case of the well-documented issues surrounding fast fashion; the year 2020 is about to end and sweatshops are still making headlines. Forbes has reported that these include garment workers in Los Angeles, California, working 12-hour shifts and earning about 3 cents apiece or 5 dollars an hour, substantially below the state's minimum wage (Meagher, 2020). And, even more enraging and disturbing, the ILO (2018) has reported that approximately 152 million children are forced into child labor worldwide. Children around the world are working at "all stages of the supply chain in the fashion industry: from the production of cotton seeds in Benin, harvesting in Uzbekistan, yarn spinning in India, right through to the different phases of putting garments together in factories across Bangladesh" (Moulds, 2017). As these are common practice across industries, it is not shocking that those consumers take a stance against the brands that are enabling this behavior.

Consumer Behavior

Basic economic principals of supply and demand dictate that an increase in demand causes an increase in supply. In a market with multiple competitors, demand is affected by a series of potential variables, such as price, quality, ease of use, convenience, among many others. In other words, organizations are faced with the need to constantly innovate their business strategies in order to add value to their products and services and appeal to their current and potential consumers. The most effective manner to achieve this is by understanding consumer behavior; that is to say, what motivates them, what influences and impacts their purchase decision-making, and what does their perception of added value entail, leading to their satisfaction and, ideally, their loyalty.

When considering consumer behavior generically, without doubt, price (Sinha & Batra, 1999) is and will probably remain one of the most important determinants in consumer purchase decision-making. However, the more variables considered, the finer the understanding; that is, organizational decision-makers are able to better appreciate the subtleties of consumer behavior toward a product/service and brand. There are certainly other factors which also play a significant role in consumerism, such as: personal values (Vinson et al., 1977), emotion (Richins, 1997), brand image (Zhang, 2015), culture (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2011), the environment, and sustainability (Dijksterhuis et al., 2005; Verbeke

et al., 2007), among many others. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the underlying variables that are providing context to consumer purchase decision-making to fully understand their process and, in turn, their impact on business growth and development.

Socially Responsible Consumer Behavior

It is fair to say that consumers are currently more vocal about their preference to associate with organizations that are responsive to stakeholders' needs and wants, conscious about the social issues that permeate society and are authentic, honest, and effective in their efforts to alleviate them. As ethical expectations (Whalen et al., 1991) are certainly a factor considered in decision-making, consumers are significantly comfortable with disseminating experiences and opinions they have of organizations' unethical practices on social media, particularly on Social Networking Sites (SNSs); meaning that, they further strengthen the awareness of other current and potential consumers about organizations' practices. According to (Amoako & Dartey-Baah, 2020), people have become more aware and interested in the impact of organization's actions on the environment and society, such as "environmental protection, employee protection, and customer convenience," and it is information of these practices that inform firm-stakeholder relationships. Thus, the correlation between ethics and consumer behavior (Bray et al., 2011), and socially responsible consumerism (Gonzalez et al., 2009) have gained special attention in the last decade, as they have become increasingly familiar in day-to-day conversations.

Ethical consumers demonstrate their stance on social issues, and the responsibility they feel toward them, by means of their purchases (De Pelsmacker et al., 2006). In other words, they relate what they purchase directly with a social matter (Shaw & Clarke, 1999) with which they are concerned. And, according to Roberts (1993), socially responsible consumers intend to positively impact social change by purchasing products and/or services that they consider to positively impact society and the environment. Webb et al. (2008) found that there are three key dimensions to socially responsible consumerism; these being, purchase decision-making based on an organization's CSR results and performance, proactive recycling, and avoiding the consumption of products that may have a negative impact on the environment. Lee and Cho (2019) affirmed that socially responsible consumption is related to consumers' value of

self-transcendence. Therefore, socially responsible consumers' behavior is directly related to an issue that does or could potentially pervade and devastate society and the environment.

While CSR is the way organizations can tackle social and environmental issues, consumer activism is how consumers participate in the reduction and eradication of social and environmental issues. Although socially responsible consumerism has become mainstream, it is not a new concept and is certainly not a novel practice; in fact, according to Glickman (2004), American consumer activism can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century and the abolitionist movement with the “free produce movement” which exhorted consumers to purchase free labor products, meaning, those not produced by slaves; further, it provided products for those consumers that were adamantly against slavery. And, in England, Elizabeth Heyrick who, in 1824, wrote the pamphlet “Immediate, not gradual Abolition: Or, an inquiry into the shortest, safest, and most effectual means of getting rid of West Indian slavery” (James & Shuttleworth, 2017), called for the boycott of products produced by means of slave labor. Therefore, as long as there has been firms engaging in questionable and unethical practices, there have been consumers unwilling to enable that behavior.

In relation to social responsibility, there are three types of consumers: activists, inactive, and conformist. Figure 9.1 depicts the three CSR-related types of consumers. An activist consumer diligently seeks information about the provenance of products, services, brands, and, in general, firm dynamics. They wish to be in the know and are engaged with at least one social and/or environmental issue that drives their purchase decision-making of products and services, and influences their word-of-mouth related to the brands offering the latter. A conformist consumer is aware of certain questionable or unethical practices and consciously decides to not take it into account for their purchase decision-making; the latter, however, does not impede them from sharing information about such practices. Also, the inactive consumer is unaware of firms' questionable or unethical practices and, therefore, do not influence their purchase decision-making. Hence,

- P₁: Consumer unawareness of unethical or non-socially responsible supply chain practices leads to an inactive consumer behavior.

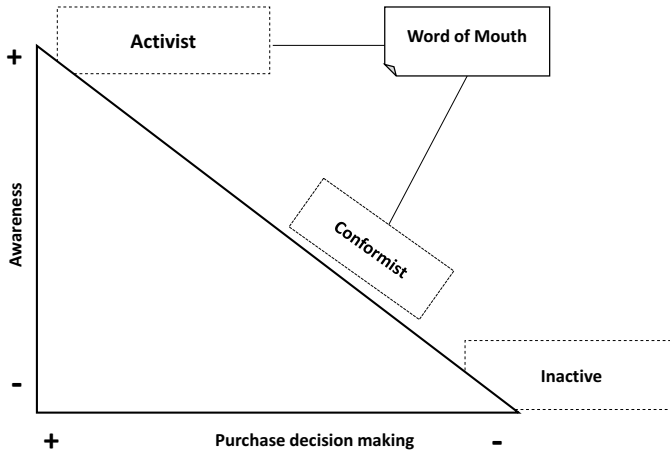


Fig. 9.1 Consumer taxonomy by corporate social responsibilities (*Source Author*)

Devinney et al. (2010) have posited that social consumerism is “embodied within and embodies general notions of corporate and consumer behavior coevolving to create, characterize, and police a marketplace.” Further, according to Melé (2009), individuals have the power to direct decision-making, and policy-making, by means of their consumption; and, Vitell (2014) argues that if consumers demand socially responsible products and services, they can impact firm’s engagement in CSR. Therefore, it makes sense that at least some consumers would use their power to influence a firm’s business practices via their consumption.

Consumer Paradox

Bypassing the action and effects of actual consumption of a product and/or service, consumer decision-making is a paradox. We cannot negate the fact that our very existence on the planet correlates with the state of the environment. Human beings’ actions certainly cause an effect on others and the environment, which can either be in the direction of improvement or deterioration; however, in many cases, the former and the latter occur simultaneously. Take, for example, a Penrose staircase which demonstrates a logical contradiction in action,

whereby two-dimensional and logical elements are connected to generate a contradictory three-dimensional object. Something similar occurs with consumption. Consumer behavior, for all intents and purposes, perpetuates the vicious cycle of supply chains' unethical and questionable practices, particularly when referring to conformist consumers who are those that are aware of unethical and questionable practices yet purposefully dismiss them in favor of consumption. However, it is consumer purchase decision-making that can ultimately and effectively influence organizational change; hence, the consumer paradox is manifested.

Destruction and construction are both probable and simultaneous outcomes of consumption. In other words, the mere act of buying sets off a series of processes that inevitably harm the environment and, in most cases, interfere with society's well-being, restricting business and social growth and development. Nevertheless, with no intent to relieve firms from their responsibility, consumers have decisive power and influence to change organizational policies, standards, practices, and, ultimately, results. In other words, while consumption is associated with the destitution of the environment and modern-day slavery, it is also a significant means by which ethical and socially responsible behavior can be fueled. The question, then, is what sways some consumers in one direction and others in a completely opposite direction in terms of purchase decision-making? Or why do some consumers take the route of activism, while others choose to remain passive?

Self-Concept

Self-concept is the way an individual thinks about, perceives, and evaluates herself/himself. It is the "the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to self as an object" (Rosenberg, 1989); therefore, it is a subjective perception of oneself (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). It is both the "cognitive and affective understanding of who and what we are" (Schouten, 1991). The definition the self-concept is an ongoing process which begins in childhood and continues throughout adulthood, although it is less heightened in the latter. According to Slaninova and Stainerova (2015), the individual's experience with the environment is what shapes the self-concept; further, the environment as well as significant others are what influence how individuals form their self-concept. Therefore, it helps individuals understand and value themselves in terms

of their relationships, role identities, and possessions (Schouten, 1991) among others.

Self-concept is relevant for consumer behavior understanding (Belk, 1988) as consumers' purchases aid in their definition of self-concept (Zinkhan & Hong, 1991), and they define others on the basis of their possessions (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004). Social identity theory (Hogg, 2018) describes the self-concept in terms of personal and social identity; in a sense, it is a manner in which individuals categorize and identify themselves in groups. As such, self-concept is well associated with brand perception and preference (Gonzalez-Jimenez, 2017; Ross, 1971), as they attribute certain personal traits to products, brands (also known as brand personality) (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004), and services. Moreover, the ideal-self refers to the manner in which an individual would prefer to perceive her/himself, while the social-self denotes how the latter presents toward other individuals (Sirgy, 1982).

Self-image congruence relates to consumer behavior (Graeff, 1996) as it impacts their attitudes, preferences, and purchase intentions (Achouri & Bouslama, 2010), and it suggests that "people are what they buy" (Rodriguez, 2015); thus, consumerism occurs in the midst of the process of self-creation and self-improvement (Schouten, 1991). In reference to brand selection, Ilaw (2014) found that consumers prefer to purchase from organizations that demonstrate to be congruent with their self-image; moreover, consumers' self-concept is enhanced if this occurs and it is recognized by others (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967).

It is consumers' self-concept that can drive activism; in fact, it is most likely the strongest mediator in consumer activism and purchase decision-making. However, while consumers' behavior is widely affected by the awareness and knowledge of, for instance, product attributes, it seems that mere awareness of unethical or questionable practices are not enough to sway all consumers to switch brands and/or engage in activism. This occurs because it may also solidify consumer behavior regarding conformism or inactivity as it depends on the individual's identity and how much the environment has influenced them. In other words, consumer behavior is not spontaneous or random rather, a consumer that categorizes and identifies her/himself as an ethical, socially responsible, and sustainable buyer further strengthens their self-concept as such with their purchase decision-making.

For instance, a consumer with a self-concept that drives activism will proactively seek to purchase from brands that execute strategies and have

a firm stance on policies that ensure that practices, across their supply chains, are socially responsible. However, a conformist may be aware that the practices of organizations in the supply chain are not on the up and up, and still purchase from the brand. They may very well disagree with the practices; however, the awareness is not enough to deter their purchases. In other words, they present a higher degree of tolerance for unethical practices, particularly if they are occurring in the far end of a supply chain; therefore, the following propositions are formed:

- P_{2a}: A consumer's self-concept impacted by awareness of unethical and non-socially responsible supply chain practices influence consumer activism.
- P_{2b}: A consumer's self-concept not impacted by awareness of unethical and non-socially responsible supply chain practices influence their conformism.
- P₃: Consumer activism derived from self-concept and awareness of supply chain practices, impacts purchase decision-making which directly impacts the firm.
- P₄: Consumer conformism derived from self-concept and awareness of supply chain practices perpetuates the status quo of unethical and questionable business dynamics.

Consumers' Self-Concept Driving Change

It seems that mere awareness of unethical practices is insufficient to instigate change both by organizational leaders and consumers. As such, the self-concept element turns out to be highly relevant and discernable in activism. Activist consumers can drive organizational change by two general means: by avoiding consumption and by using their voice. As was stated earlier, understanding consumer behavior is elemental for supply and demand, and the latter can be a change-driving force. On one hand, by ceasing to demand a brand's products and/or services, which have been, for instance, performed by workers in forced labor, and/or manufactured by means of environmental destruction, consumer activists do not perpetuate the status quo and send a message of dissatisfaction. On the other hand, activist consumers' voices are significantly powerful; according to Hirschman (1970), voice is described as:

Any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with the intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions and protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion.

Therefore, consumers may use their voices to demand that firms change their current policies, standards, and norms for ethical ones and effectively engage in CSR. Currently, the most common forms of consumer voice include, but are not limited to, public shaming via social networking sites (Basak et al., 2019), as well as social media led boycotts, and call-out and cancel culture. The latter, in turn, can potentially influence business dynamics across supply chains; hence,

P₅: Consumer activist can dismantle the status quo of unethical and questionable business dynamics by demanding organizational policy change.

MODEL ANALYSIS

Focal firms are those that are positioned at the end of the supply chain that have direct, or more direct, contact with end consumers and have power to influence policy-making across the supply chain. Too many focal companies claim CSR engagement, yet are permissive of non-socially responsible practices across their supply chains; therefore, for the study's purposes, the model contemplates unethical or questionable supply chain practices. Figure 9.2 depicts the conceptual model describing the effects of consumer awareness of supply chain practices and their self-concept on behavior.

Unaware consumers of unethical practices across the supply chain remain inactive in relation to firms' engagement in corporate social responsibility (P₁). Given their lack of awareness, their self-concept is not relevant for a socially responsible purchase decision-making. Individuals' self-concept and self-image impact their preferences and purchase intentions because the former indicates how they perceive themselves and the latter suggests that "people are what they buy" (Rodriguez, 2015). If their self-concept is strongly aligned with ethics and social responsibility, then, the awareness of unethical and non-socially responsible practices

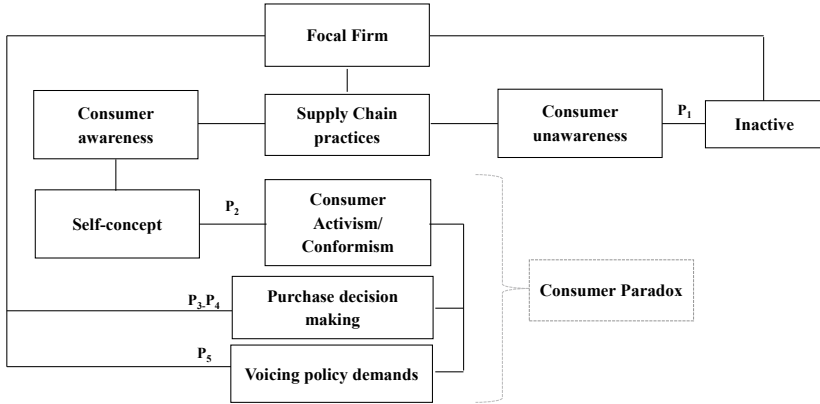


Fig. 9.2 Self-concept effect on consumer behavior in response to supply chain practices (*Source* Author)

across supply chains impacts self-concept and leads to the proactivity on consumer activism (P_{2a}) which, in turn, impacts their purchase decision-making (P_3); for instance, upon awareness, these consumers may decide to switch brands to another which is perceived to be engaging in CSR. Furthermore, given their power, they may use their voice to dismantle the status quo of unethical and questionable business dynamics by demanding that firms change their policies (P_5), actions and, ultimately, their results. However, if awareness of the unethical and non-socially responsible supply chain practices does not impact their self-concept, leading to consumers conformism (P_{2b}), purchase decision-making remains unaltered, further perpetuating the status quo of the firm's unethical and questionable business dynamics (P_4). In other words, they tolerate unethical practices, likely to satisfy a need that the product and/or service offers. Finally, the differences in dynamics of activist and conformist consumers illustrate the consumer paradox.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Organizational culture, defined by the values that guide organizational dynamics (Schneider et al., 2013), is informed by the firm's engagement, or lack thereof, in corporate social responsibility. Therefore, there is a problematic dissonance between focal firm's statements of CSR

engagement and the reality of supply chain actions. It is important to acknowledge that supply chains are not a cog in a machine; rather, they are a cog in society. As such, just like corporate social responsibility, they work through society, and for society. In the pursuit of executing strategies related to cost leadership, a series of alarming consequences are evidenced, across supply chains and industries, such as the unacceptable involvement of the private sector in the millions of workers in forced labor worldwide. Although malpractice, negligence, non-socially responsible, unethical, and illegal practices have been well documented, their awareness seems insufficient to drive change.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO) (2016), decent and dignified work conditions are elemental to closing the poverty gap. In other words, illegal, degrading, and inappropriate working conditions have a direct correlation with a poverty-stricken population.

The latter seems to be no more than common sense; however, the reality is far from it. It should be clear that for activist consumers and firms engaged in CSR, a value chain is one that is ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible across the chain; in other words, it adds value in every stage of the chain by guaranteeing social well-being, and environmental protection. Moreover, as doing so will have a positive effect on financial performance, it is not only strategic, but also makes good business sense.

It may be argued that the current global health crisis has significantly disrupted, and in some cases devastated, global supply chains. Of course this has had a significant negative effect on the global economy; however, the somewhat more insidious part are the individuals that have been negatively impacted because of the supply chain breakdown. Yes, workers have lost their source of income because a part of the supply chain has stopped operations; however, they are being pushed into extreme poverty because the work conditions, pre-Covid-19, were already indignant. Therefore, it is no wonder consumers have been fighting for decades to end these practices by means of information dissemination and boycotting.

As consumers have substantial power to foster socially responsible actions, they can either be enablers or inhibitors of organization's active participation in, among other things, modern-day slavery. And, importantly, they and organizational leaders can take part in the co-creation of a truly socially responsible approach to doing business, rather than pursuing cost-effective, unethical, and irrational behavior, which has led to the hyper-normalization of abuse, extreme poverty, hunger, and inequality.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Future research could study the relation between conformists' self-concept and the thought process behind their purchase decision-making in order to understand the low impact of awareness of firms' unethical practices on their behavior. Also, future research could analyze different unethical practices across supply chains to determine if there are degrees of unethical behavior and if these have different effects on consumer purchase decision-making. Finally, it would be interesting to study potential differences of conformists' behavior in relation to different industries and cultures.

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