

Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting on Websites in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the extent and nature of corporate social responsibility reporting (CSRR) on the websites of companies listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), and to examine the factors influencing the amount of CSRR on those websites. The population of this study was all the companies listed on the SET. By using quota sampling, 221 firms were selected as the research sample. Content analysis was used to quantify the CSRR on the websites of the sample. Descriptive analysis and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. This study found that 138 firms (65 %) provided CSRR on their websites. Companies in the natural resource sector disclosed the most CSRR on their websites with the consumer products sector providing the least. Significant relationships were found between the amount of CSRR on websites and the size of the company, the type of auditor, liquidity, and ISO standards. The usual limitations associated with sampling, and content analysis apply and the study did not consider the issue of the quality of the reporting on websites. This study is the first study of website-based CSRR by Thai companies. It also refutes previous statements in the literature that companies in developing countries are ignorant of the use of this technology.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility (CSR), stakeholder theory, media agenda setting theory

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาขอบเขตและลักษณะการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบนเว็บไซต์ของบริษัทที่จดทะเบียนในตลาดหลักทรัพย์แห่งประเทศไทย และทดสอบหาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อปริมาณการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบนเว็บไซต์ ประชากรในการศึกษานี้คือบริษัทที่จดทะเบียนในตลาดหลักทรัพย์แห่งประเทศไทยทั้งหมด โดยวิธีการกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบโควตา การศึกษานี้ใช้กลุ่มตัวอย่าง จำนวน 221 บริษัทด้วยการนับค่าตามวิธีการ

วิเคราะห์สาระบนเว็บไซต์ของบริษัทกลุ่มตัวอย่าง และการศึกษานี้ใช้วิธีการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยวิธีการวิเคราะห์เชิงพรรณนา และการวิเคราะห์แบบถดถอยพหุคูณ ผลการศึกษพบว่าบริษัท จำนวน 138 บริษัทมีการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบนเว็บไซต์ของตนเอง (65%) บริษัทในกลุ่มอุตสาหกรรมทรัพยากรธรรมชาติมีการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบนเว็บไซต์มากที่สุด ส่วนบริษัทในกลุ่มอุตสาหกรรมสินค้าอุปโภคบริโภคมีการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบนเว็บไซต์น้อยที่สุด ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อปริมาณการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการบน

เว็บไซต์ของบริษัท ได้แก่ ขนาดของกิจการ ชนิดของผู้สอบบัญชี สภาพคล่องของกิจการ และการปฏิบัติตามมาตรฐาน ISO ข้อจำกัดในการศึกษาครั้งนี้คือ จำนวนของกลุ่มตัวอย่าง และการนำการวิเคราะห์สาระมาใช้ อย่างไรก็ตาม การศึกษาครั้งนี้เป็นการศึกษาครั้งแรกที่ได้นำสื่อทางเลือกอย่างเว็บไซต์มาศึกษาการรายงานความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของบริษัท และผลของการศึกษาที่ได้สามารถนำมาได้แก่ การศึกษาในอดีตที่กล่าวถึงการขาดความสนใจในการใช้สื่ออินเทอร์เน็ตเพื่อสื่อสารของบริษัทในประเทศกำลังพัฒนา

คำสำคัญ: ความรับผิดชอบต่อสังคมของกิจการ ทฤษฎีผู้มีส่วนได้เสีย ทฤษฎีการกำหนดวาระของสื่อ

INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is not a new business concept in today's world, but the objective of providing corporate social responsibility reporting (CSRR) is still unclear and ambiguous. Porter and Kramer (2006) summarized corporations' main reasons for CSRR of their actions and activities under four headings: moral obligation, sustainability, license to operate, and reputation and competitive advantage. In Thailand, there are many incentives for corporations to act for CSR. For example, CSR awards have been given by the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) since 2006 to reward corporations which act in the interests of society and the environment. Moreover, the SET has founded the Corporate Social Responsibility Institute which has been established to promote CSR throughout Thailand.

Even though CSRR has been widely researched by many researchers and academics in developed countries, few studies have been conducted in developing countries (Islam & Deegan, 2010, Balal, 2000) especially in Thailand. In many developing countries in South-East Asia such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, there has been an increasing trend towards CSRR (Suttipun &

Stanton, 2012). However, studies of CSRR in emerging economies have been very general and descriptive in nature. Moreover, although many corporations use their websites to make available their financial information, there have been few previous studies investigating CSRR on websites in Thailand. Therefore, this study will help to fill that gap by investigating the narrative reporting of CSR information on the websites of companies listed on the SET, and examining the factors influencing the amount of CSRR on those websites. There were two main research questions in this study: 1) what is the extent and nature of CSRR on the websites of companies listed on the SET? and 2) what are the factors influencing the amount of CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies?

It is expected that the results of this study will act as a guide for policy makers from government organizations that promulgate CSRR regulations for Thai listed companies. This study will also contribute to the literature about CSRR in alternative media in Thailand where there is currently limited evidence. In addition, the study will explain how media agenda setting theory and stakeholder theory account for CSRR in Thailand as well as in developed countries. This paper begins with a summary of the theoretical framework, followed by a literature review and then outlines the research hypotheses. Next, details of the sample selection and research methodology are set out and the study's findings are outlined. Finally, the study's conclusions and implications, including some suggestions for future research are presented.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Many theories have been used in previous studies to explain CSRR. For example, political economy theory has been used to explain the existence and content of social and environmental accounting (William, Pei & Carol-Ann, 1999) as has social political theory (Cheng & Fan, 2010). Legitimacy theory was used by Guthrie and Parker

(1990) to explain why and how corporations tailor their actions and activities to follow social expectation and Deegan (2001) cited legitimacy theory in a well-known study relating to CSRR. However, in this study, only two theories were used to explain the extent and nature of CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies, and the factors influencing the amount of CSRR on their websites. They are media agenda setting theory, and stakeholder theory. Media agenda setting theory, offers an explanation based on the influence of the media on CSRR including why corporations disclose CSR information through a variety of media. On the other hand, stakeholder theory offers an explanation of the factors that influence CSRR in corporate media such as annual reports, stand-alone reports, and websites.

Media agenda setting theory explains how companies understand and use the widespread role of the media with different media providing different agenda-setting potential. Media agenda setting theory posits that corporations seek to accommodate social awareness and expectations relating to salient topics by the voluntary reporting of CSR information through corporate media. It focuses on corporate media as one of the most important tools that corporations use to further their interests and to deal with social expectations and awareness. In this study, media agenda setting theory is used to explain the extent and nature of CSRR on the websites of companies listed on the SET because the extent and nature of CSRR may be different in different types of media that corporations are using to communicate with their stakeholders. Some prior studies have also used media agenda setting theory to investigate CSRR in a variety of media (Joshi & Gao, 2009, Suttipun & Stanton, 2012).

Stakeholder theory seeks to explain why and how corporations undertake actions and activities to accommodate and satisfy their stakeholders. Corporations are part of a broad social system and must take account of the power and demands of

their various stakeholders (Ratanajongkol, Davey & Low, 2006) which can therefore, influence corporate actions, decisions, policies, and goals (Collier, 2008). However, the power of each stakeholder is different and can change over time so that corporations have a duty to continually adapt and apply their actions and activities to support their stakeholders' demands (Deegan, 2001). Corporate stakeholders include the company's owners, creditors and suppliers, its customers, competitors and employees, the government, the media, local communities, local charities, and future generations (Carrol & Bucholtz, 2006). In this study, stakeholder theory is used to explain which factors influence CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies while many previous studies have also cited stakeholder theory to explain CSRR (e.g. Islam & Deegan, 2010, Branco, Eugenio, & Ribeiro, 2008, Joshi & Gao, 2009). In summary, both media agenda setting, and stakeholder theories have linking point to explain why company provide CSRR on its websites. This is because company is a small unit in a broad society so it has to provide actions or activities following by social expectations and awareness. In the next section, the literature review and research hypotheses are explained.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Websites have become an obvious and alternative medium for reporting. Moreover, many companies have recognised them as being good sources of information (Frost, Jones, Loftus & VanDerLann, 2005). Website reporting is cheap, provides a means of swiftly disseminating information with little legal prescription or volume constraints, and greater flexibility. Therefore, websites have become the medium of choice for most stakeholders to find corporate information (Campbell & Beck, 2004). On the other hand, website reporting presents some disadvantages. For example, data presented one day may be removed the next day, rendering replication problematic

(Campbell & Beck, 2004).

However, in considering CSRR, annual reports have up to now been the primary and most used means for researchers and academics to investigate the extent and nature of CSR information rather than other media including websites. Although many prior studies have used corporate annual reports to study CSRR, some studies have also considered websites. For example, using the Top 50 Thai listed companies, Suttipun and Stanton (2012) found that 88 percent of firms provide environmental disclosures on their websites, and there was a relationship between the type of industry, the ownership status, and the type of audit firm, and the amount of CSR disclosure. Using stakeholder theory, larger companies undertake more actions or activities which make a greater impact on society, and have more number of stakeholders than smaller companies that why the larger companies have to provide more amount of CSRR than smaller ones (Newson & Deegan, 2002). Wanderley, Lucian, Farache and Sousa-Filho (2008) used corporate websites to study CSRR from eight countries: Brazil, Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, and Thailand. They found that the country of origin of the company and the type of industry influenced the amount of CSRR on websites. Joshi and Gao (2009) also studied the use of the websites of 49 multinational companies for environmental reporting, finding that those companies with a strong equity base and in a good financial condition had a propensity to voluntarily disclose more environmental information than other companies. Tagesson, Blank, Broberg, and Collin (2009) investigating the extent and nature of environmental disclosures on 267 Swedish corporate websites, found a significant positive relationship between environmental disclosure and the size and profitability of the company, with government companies disclosing more environmental information than private companies. From the results, stakeholder theory suggests that government companies have to respond more to social

expectations, stakeholder concerns, and political regulation than private companies (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). Mayasari (2011) investigated CSRR on the websites by Indonesian listed companies finding that companies in the mining and energy sector provided more CSRR on their websites than other industries. Theoretically, this is because the companies in mining and energy industries are expected from stakeholder concerns affecting more social and environmental impacts than companies in the other industries such as financial, service, and technology industries (Choi, 1999). Moreover, the most common CSRR related to environmental, community, and customer issues. Allam and Lymer (2002) examined CSRR on the websites of 50 companies from five countries: the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and Hong Kong. They found that 44 percent of the US companies, 86 percent of the UK companies, 42 percent of Canadian companies, 48 percent of Australian companies, and 24.5 percent of Hong Kong companies provided CSRR on their websites. In the following sections, 12 hypotheses on which this study was based, relating to the level of CSRR provided by companies is summarized in Table 1.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was an empirical study investigating CSRR on the websites of companies listed on the SET. The population of this study was all the 489 companies listed on the SET (Data at 9th March 2012). Using quota sampling, 221 firms were selected as the sample (Yamane, 1973). Although, in previous studies, annual reports have normally been used to investigate CSRR, this study investigated corporate websites as a medium for providing CSR information. Companies are increasingly using their websites to disseminate CSR information because they are a medium capable of presenting real-time information to multiple distant stakeholders at very low cost (Joshi & Gao, 2009, Othman & Ameer, 2009). Further, there have been a number of studies

which have documented the increasingly common practice of internet CSRR (Tagesson, Blank, Broberg, & Collin, 2009, Williams, Pei, & Carol-Ann, 1999), although Islam and Deegan (2010) suggested that reports on websites do not always provide access to previous disclosures and that it is therefore difficult to gain a perception of the change in disclosures across time.

Content analysis was used to quantify the amount of CSRR on websites among the sample between September and December, 2012. The content analysis was based on the word count in the Thai language versions because measures by word count have been found to be highly correlated with other measures, such as sentence count, line count, or percentage of page count devoted to particular disclosures (Hackston & Milne, 1996).

Table 1 Hypotheses (H) and previous studies related to CSRR

H	Factors influencing the amount of CSRR	Previous studies	
		Found a relationship	Found no relationship
1	Type of industry	Choi (1999), Ho & Taylor (2007), Stray & Ballantine (2000), Ahmad & Sulaiman (2004), Newson & Deegan (2002)	Mahadeo, Oogarah-Hanuman & Soobaroyen (2011), Marston & Shrives (1996)
2	Size of company	Ho & Taylor (2007), Cormier & Gordon (2001), Deegan & Gordon (1996), Choi (1999)	Davey (1982), Roberts (1992)
3	Ownership status	Cormier & Gordon (2001), Tagesson, Blank, Broberg & Collin (2009), Balal (2000)	-
4	Country of origin of the company	Jahamani (2003), Niskala & Pretes (1995), Wanderley, Lucian, Farache & Sousa-Filho (2008),	Suttipun & Stanton (2012)
5	Type of auditor	Joshi & Gao (2009), Suttipun & Stanton (2012)	Inchausti (1997)
6	Type of business	-	Choi (1999)
7	Age of the company	-	Choi (1999)
8	Financial risk	Joshi & Gao (2009)	-
9	Profitability	Roberts (1992), Hackston & Milne (1996), Tagesson, Blank, Broberg & Collin (2009), Clarkson, Richardson, Vasvan & Florin (2009)	Patten (1992), Gray, Kouhy & Lavers (1995)
10	Liquidity	Suttipun (2012)	-
11	ISO14001 compliance	Ahmad & Sulaiman (2004)	-
12	Adherence to the ISO26000 guidelines	Ahmad & Sulaiman (2004)	-

The instrument used in this study consisted of two sections. In the first section, corporate background information was identified such as total assets, type of industry, type of business, ownership status, type of auditor, age, liquidity, risk, and profitability. In the second section, the categories of CSRR on websites in 2012 were identified based on a system of categorisation adapted from previous studies (Rizk, Dixon, & Woodhead, 2008, Spiller, 2000). The CSRR identified was quantified using word count. There were five main categories of CSRR: the employee, the customer, the environment, the society and community, and fair operation. The dependent and independent variables used in this study are shown in Table 2.

The data collection process was conducted twice by the researchers. The two sets of data collected were compared and adjusted for differences or errors in the data collected on the first and second occasions. The final data were analyzed using the statistical software. To investigate the extent and nature of CSRR on corporate websites, descriptive analysis was used. Multiple regression was used to test for the significance of the 12 independent variables as predictors of the amount of

CSRR on the websites of the Thai listed companies.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Out of the sample of 221 companies, 212 firms maintained their own websites in order to communicate with their stakeholders. Moreover, 138 companies (65%) provided CSRR on their websites (See Table 2), with 74 firms (35%) not reporting CSR information on their websites. As the results, it can be seen that the industry sectors providing the three highest volumes of CSRR on their websites were agriculture and food, natural resources, and industrial products. This is because they are high profile industrial sectors which have a higher social and environmental impact than low profile sectors such as property and construction, technology, service, finance, and consumer products (Suttipun & Stanton, 2012, Choi, 1999, Wanderley, Pei & Carol-Ann, 2008). This means that companies in these higher profile sectors have to comply with more regulations and standards relating to the provision of CSR information than companies in low profile industrial sectors.

Table 2 The variables used in this study

No.	Variable	Proxy
1.	CSRR	The amount of CSRR on websites (Word count)
2.	Size of company	Total assets
3.	Type of industry	1 = high profile company, and 2 = low profile company
4.	Ownership status	1 = government companies, and 2 = private companies
5.	Country of origin	1 = international companies, and 2 = domestic companies
6.	Auditor	1 = big 4 auditors, and 2 = non-big 4 auditors
7.	Business type	1 = family business, and 2 = non-family business
8.	ISO14001	1 = ISO14001 compliant, and 2= non ISO14001 compliant
9.	ISO26000	1 = adheres to ISO26000, and 2= does not adhere to ISO26000
10.	Age	The reported age of the company
11.	Liquidity	The ratio of current assets to current liabilities
12.	Risk	The ratio of debt to equity
13.	Profitability	Net profit

The average amount of CSRR on company websites was 501 words per company. Based on the five CSRR categories, there were an average of 141 words relating to employee issues, 41 words devoted to consumer issues, 112 words in respect of environmental issues, 189 words in connection with social and community issues, and 20 words relating to the issue of fair operation for the other stakeholders such as competitor, creditor, and supplier. Thus CSR information about social and community issues was the most common form of CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies, followed by employee issues, environmental issues, and consumer issues, with the issue of fair operation the least common topic of CSRR on the websites investigated in this study.

The study also considered the type of CSR in detail and this is shown in Table 3. The results show that Thai listed companies provided more reporting of social and community information (189 words) on their websites than any other issue. Moreover, the sub-issue of social investment and donations (91 words) was the most common CSRR on the websites of companies listed on the SET. This is because even though CSRR in Thailand is still voluntary, many companies view CSRR as a tool for advertising, and as a public relations strategy (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Such strategies are regarded as an important part of company's strategic plans to sustain and survive in their business (Ahmad & Sulaiman, 2004). Therefore, it is obvious that CSRR in relation to social investment and donations, and community relationships (35 words) is a part of corporate strategies which seek to enhance competitive advantage and reputation. In the current business environment, competitive advantage can be derived not only from financial performance, but also from aspects of CSR such as high quality production, waste management, and environmental spending and activity. Moreover, social investment and donations can also benefit companies in their tax planning. However, the findings of this study suggest that

investment in aspects of CSR and donations are mostly aimed at improving the company's reputation, or reducing the negative perceptions people might hold in respect of companies, since corporations did not generally invest in CSR and donations as a part of their main business strategies.

The CSR disclosure related to the employee aspect was the second highest on websites, with general policy for employees (48 words), operational safety (33 words), and training and development (21 words) being the most common subjects reported on by companies listed on the SET. This may be because companies recognize the position of their current staff as stakeholders and feel obliged to provide them with useful information about their authority, rights, job description, and benefits. In addition, reporting under the heading of the employee on websites also benefits future staff who may decide to work for corporations.

Under the heading of the environment, the most common disclosures related to waste management systems (23 words), energy and raw material management (22 words), and environmental spending and activities (21 words). Most of the environmental reporting of Thai listed companies was mandatory reporting of matters such as waste management systems, energy and raw material management, and pollution management. For example, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has promulgated the Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act requiring companies to manage and control waste and pollution in Thailand including water, noise, air, and other environmental pollution and the act also requires companies to make environmental disclosures. In addition companies also undertake voluntary reporting of environmental spending and activities to publicize their environmentally beneficial actions and activities to their stakeholders.

It was notable that the amount of CSRR on companies' websites in relation to the issues of the consumer (total 44 words), and fair operation (22 words) was much lower than the amounts devoted to

Table 3 The amount of CSRR on websites by each issue

Issue		Mean (No. word)	Ranking
Main-issue	Sub-issue		
1. Employee	1.1 General policy for employees	48	2
	1.2 Operational safety	33	4
	1.3 Training and development	21	8
	1.4 Employee equality	11	15
	1.5 Employee benefits	10	18
	1.6 Wages and rewards	7	22
	1.7 Employee communication	6	25
	1.8 Health encouragement	4	27
	1.9 Employee family welfare	2	31
	1.10 Employee help projects	2	31
	1.11 Career planning	2	31
	1.12 Others	4	27
2. Consumer	2.1 General policy for consumers	16	11
	2.2 Consumer rights	10	18
	2.3 Consumer communication	8	21
	2.4 Product safety	7	22
	2.5 Privileges for consumers	2	31
	2.6 Others	1	37
3. Environment	3.1 Waste management system	23	6
	3.2 Energy and raw material management	22	7
	3.3 Environmental spending and activity	21	8
	3.4 Environmental management system	16	11
	3.5 Environmental pollution management	11	15
	3.6 Other policies for the environment	10	18
	3.7 Environmental assessment projects	7	22
	3.8 Environmental R&D	4	27
	3.9 Others	2	31
4. Society and community	4.1 Social investment and donations	91	1
	4.2 Community relationships	35	3
	4.3 Community rights policy	25	5
	4.4 Health and safety of community	19	10
	4.5 Other social and community policies	13	13
	4.6 Social and community goals	11	15
5. Fair operation	5.1 Fair competition	12	14
	5.2 Rights in assets	5	26
	5.3 Political participation	3	30
	5.4 Anti-corruption	2	31
Total (Average number of words)		501	

other issues. There were two main reasons why Thai companies devote less CSRR to those issues than to other issues. Firstly, companies pay less attention to their consumers and other stakeholders (under the heading of fair operation) than they do to society, the community, employees, and the environment. Stakeholder theory posits that, although corporate management will tend to satisfy the information demands of stakeholders, the provision of information is dependent upon how powerful stakeholders are perceived to be. Therefore, corporations will not respond to all stakeholders equally (Nasi, Nasi, Philip, & Zylidopoulos, 1997), but will tend only to respond to the expectations of those stakeholders who are important to the corporation's ongoing survival and have an impact on corporate operations. Additionally, corporate websites may not be an appropriate medium for companies to communicate information to their consumers and other stakeholders and corporations may provide CSRR under the headings of the consumer and fair operation through other media. It is apparent that Thai companies use more than one

medium to communicate with their stakeholders including annual reports, stand-alone reports, websites, advertising, news on TV and radio, and even letters and circulars.

To investigate the influence of the factors investigated on the amount of CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies, the data were analyzed using multiple regression and the results are shown in Table 4. The results show a significant relationship between the size of the company and the amount of CSRR on websites. Specifically the larger firms listed on the SET provide more CSRR on their websites than do the smaller firms. This is because the larger firms have a greater number and variety of stakeholders which translates into more stakeholder power than that influencing smaller firms so that the larger companies have a greater need to satisfy stakeholder demands. Moreover, there was a significant relationship between the type of auditor, liquidity, ISO14001 compliance, and adherence to ISO26000, and the amount of CSRR on websites. In particular, companies that use big 4 auditors provided more CSRR than companies

Table 4 Regression results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3469.867	1565.085		2.217	.028
Industry	-139.768	114.560	-.075	-1.220	.224
Size	.001	.000	.370	6.047	.000**
Ownership	-317.617	445.883	-.043	-.712	.477
Country	554.616	377.603	.086	1.469	.143
Auditor	-223.614	104.432	-.127	-2.141	.033*
Business	446.751	435.259	.060	1.026	.306
Age	-2.608	2.768	-.057	-.942	.347
Risk	-.005	.108	-.003	-.051	.960
Profitability	1.455	1.569	.059	.928	.355
Liquidity	-27.575	9.134	-.189	-3.019	.003**
ISO14001	-416.226	139.445	-.198	-2.985	.003**
ISO26000	-1215.513	317.967	-.251	-3.823	.000**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

which use non-big 4 auditors. This is probably because the big 4 auditing firms are likely to be more concerned with the risk of damage to reputation than non-big 4 auditors and, companies who perceive greater potential gains from external monitoring would be likely to employ larger auditing firms.

The study also supports the hypothesis that ISO14001 compliance influences the amount of CSRR on websites. This is because when companies become ISO14001 compliant, they are mandatorily required to provide environmental information on matters such as waste and pollution management, environmental management policy, and environmental assessment. Similarly, even though the ISO26000 guidelines, which set out an international corporate social responsibility standard, provide only for voluntary reporting, the pressure and force from adherence to the guidelines is likely to influence corporations to provide more CSRR on their websites than companies who do not adhere to ISO26000. Moreover, the Thaipat Institute, which is a Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) certified training partner in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, and which works closely with many larger listed companies in Thailand, promotes the ISO26000 guidelines to corporations that wish to provide CSRR relating to their business. Finally, the study found no relationship between the amount of CSRR on websites and the age of the company, the type of industry, profitability, financial risk, the ownership status, the country of origin, or the business type.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the extent and nature of CSRR on the websites of companies listed on the SET, and to examine the factors influencing the amount of CSRR on those websites. The results indicate that 138 firms (65%) provided CSRR on their websites. Companies in the natural resources sector disclosed the largest amount of

CSRR on their websites, with the consumer products sector providing the least. Further, the most common CSRR undertaken by Thai listed companies was in relation to social and community issues followed by information relating to the employee, the environment, and the consumer, with the least information being provided about the issue of fair operation on the websites investigated in this study. The study also found that there were significant relationships between the amount of CSRR on websites and the size of the company, the type of auditor, liquidity, ISO14001 compliance, and adherence to the ISO26000 guidelines. The study supports the findings of previous studies related to CSRR in developing countries that corporations still provide only narrative CSRR through this medium. Moreover, it appears that corporations use CSRR for advertising and as a tool for public relations, the main priority being to increase and improve their image and thereby gain a competitive advantage.

This study results support the prior study finding (See Suttipun & Stanton, 2012, Trotman & Bradley, 1981) of a positive relationship between size of company and the amount of CSRR on websites. This is because the larger companies have to face with more pressure from their stakeholder demands than smaller companies. In terms of audit type, the present study conforms Joshi and Gao (2009) because companies being audited by Big 4 auditing firms were normally large companies that found the positive relationship with the amount of CSRR on websites as earlier explanation. Within ISO14001, and ISO26000, this study encourages the result from a prior study (See Ahmad & Sulaiman, 2004) that found a possible relationship between both international standards and the amount of CSRR on websites. This is because both standards can make companies having higher reputation, and more competitive advantage from their stakeholders, therefore, the amount of CSRR on websites was followed by influence of ISO14001, and ISO26000 (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

The study provides support for Thai policy makers from government organizations such as the committee of the SET, the Federation of Accounting Professions, and the Ministry of Commerce which promulgate CSRR regulations for Thai listed companies. This is because CSRR in Thailand is still a voluntary reporting so research hopes that if Thai government organizations provide a regulation of CSRR, they can bridge the gap between corporate activities, or actions, and social expectations, and stakeholder needs for sustainable development. This study also contributes to the literature about CSRR on alternative media in Thailand where only limited evidence has previously been available. In addition, the study indicates that media agenda setting theory and stakeholder theory can be used to explain CSRR on the websites of listed companies in Thailand as well as in other developing countries. Finally, the study highlights the importance of the information released by way of CSRR to corporate stakeholders to enable them to make informed decisions. For example, investors can use CSRR information to gain a “true and fair perspective of operations” when buying, holding, or selling corporate stock. Customers can also use CSRR information to make decisions about buying one company’s products as against those of its competitors.

This study has limitations in terms of the sole use of websites as the source of data, the subjectivity of the data collection method, and the time period chosen for the study. Firstly, the study used only one medium to examine CSRR by Thai listed companies, although there are many media that corporations use to communicate with their stakeholders, such as annual reports, stand-alone reports, and newspapers. Next, content analysis was used as the method to quantify the amount of CSRR on the websites of Thai listed companies, but the quality of and the underlying motives for CSRR remain unclear and a matter of speculation. Therefore, CSRR on websites cannot guarantee whether companies will not have CSR impacts, or companies will success in CSR issues. Finally, the

study investigated the CSRR on the websites of listed companies relating to only one quarter in one year, and a longer time period could provide more detailed information.

If it can be shown that CSRR can contribute to financial performance as well as to social and environmental performance, it is certain that corporations would increase their reporting of CSR information about their operations. This would not only satisfy social expectations, and stakeholder demands, but would serve as a facet of companies’ strategic business plans. Therefore, the relationship between the CSRR of Thai listed companies and their operational performance should be studied. The reason of CSRR is still unknown because although CSRR in Thailand is still a voluntary reporting many companies provide CSRR in their own media. Therefore, the reason why companies are trying to present about CSR issues to their stakeholders will be investigated in the future. Moreover, almost all previous studies about CSRR in Thailand and developing countries have concentrated on companies listed on stock exchanges but have largely ignored CSRR by other business organizations such as unlisted limited companies, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and One-Village-One-Product (OVOP) enterprises. Therefore, the study of CSRR in those companies should be considered in future research.

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