Ethiopian managers’ corporate social responsibility perceptions: Demographics and personal ethical values as predictors

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ABSTRACT

Top managers are recognized as important forces in fostering the spread of ethical spirits and responsible behaviors in organizations. The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of personal ethical values and demographics (age, gender, and education level) on top managers’ CSR perceptions in Ethiopia. A quantitative approach involving a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 294 executive managers of four sectors (floriculture, food, textile, and banking). Multiple linear regressions were employed to analyze the data. The analysis revealed that while some personal demographics, i.e., age and educational level had no impact on Ethiopian managers’ CSR perception, gender was positively and significantly correlated with managers’ CSR perception. Additionally, the analysis indicated that managers’ personal moral values had significantly influenced Ethiopian managers’ CSR perception.

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Introduction

Despite corporate social responsibility has long been around both in the practice and literature for more than half a century, it has been remained a topic of debate between practitioners and academicians alike. Scholars and managers acknowledge the systematic interconnectedness and interdependence between organisations and society. However, the kinds of interactions between business and society have been uncertain and featured by the developments of various concepts such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), triple bottom line, and sustainable development and related empirical analyses. For example, Dahlsrud (2008) has mentioned the difficulty of defining corporate social responsibility and the existing definitions are biased and focused on some dimensions of corporate social responsibility. The author further stated that the lack of having single universal definition has been a challenge for businesses to formally incorporate CSR into their strategies. While CSR is among 10 top workplace trends (SIOP, 2015), defining and conceptualizing it remains uncompleted and debatable. Hamidu, Haron & Amran (2015) asserted that it seems there is no single definition embracing all dimensions thought be integral parts of CSR because of its dynamic nature over time and across space. Lack of consensus on as to what constitutes CSR continues to be heard among scholars and professionals. Some argue policies and practices should be voluntary to be considered as CSR; others think respecting the laws and rules is part of CSR; others considered ethics to be integral component of CSR. However, virtually all scholars recognise philanthropy to be part of CSR and tend to perceive as CSR is only philanthropy (Carroll, 2016).

The argument on CSR involves the role firms supposed to have in a society, if the firms have roles beyond the economic responsibility to society, is it a moral obligation and/or strategic advantage (Glavas, 2016). Debate has been also in existence that whether engagement in the CSR will destruct firms from realizing their economic goals or be in congruent with their visions and missions (Rupp, Williams & Aguilera, 2011). While business firms’ contributions to social prosperity are well recognised, their supply of goods and services involve numerous negative externalities. Despite their constructive forces in the socio economic development of any nation, it has been widely reported that their operations have unintended negative consequences on the environment, community and the life of workforces. Regardless of the hot debates continued to exist whether firms should be focused on economic...
responsible for the successful adoption of CSR initiatives and programs by organisations. Today's managers are increasingly required to consider the interests of customers, suppliers, bankers, employees, and shareholders with the intention of maximizing returns to all possible stakeholders. The need to understand the antecedents of corporate social responsibility in the literature is extensively dominated by institutional theory assumptions embedded in western cultures. Institutional theory is privileged and has got wide recognition in explaining why organisations behave in socially responsible ways (Scott, 2008). It is argued that institutional factors that lie outside the organisation set standards, expectations and values those organisations obliged to align their practices accordingly (Mellahi, Frynas, Sun & Siegel, 2016; Tan, Shao & Li, 2013). Campbell (2007) strongly pronounces that institutional factors serve as bridges between organisations and society; and determine behaviours organisations inclined to adopt. Supporters of institutional frameworks as drivers of corporate social responsibility believe that there should be institutions besides market to enhance and constrain the behaviors of businesses (Campbell, 2006, 2007; Matten & Moon, 2008). The propensity of firms to behave in socially responsible ways and to respond to the needs of potential stakeholders is largely dependent on the existence and capacity of the surrounding institutions.

However, institutional theory has been criticized for its simplistic assumption of homogeneous firms’ CSR responses to environmental pressures and failure to consider organizational level dynamics as counteracting or supplementing external institutional pressures (Weaver et al., 1999, 1999b; Yin, 2017). Aguinis & Glavas (2012) noted that stakeholders and institutional perspective as drivers of CSR behaviours may explain only CSR practices those are reactive in nature while authentic and willingly adopted CSR practices attributed to top managers’ commitment and motivation. Moreover, it is individuals in the organisations who strategize, make decisions about CSR and responsible for executing them (Aguilera, Rupp & Williams, 2007; Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Managers especially top managers who hold the decision making apparatus of organisations play paramount role in shaping organisation social behaviours. As organisations are the collections of people, organisations behaviours are the reflection of its people behaviours particularly of its top managers (Hambrick & Mason, 1984; Quazi, 2003). As a result, it is logical and pragmatic to claim that top managers’ opinions and philosophies of their firms would predict the propensity of the firms to behave in a socially responsible manner.

But many CSR related researches have been conducted in the western economic and social-political environment which restrict the generalizability of their findings to the developing countries. In developing countries, governments’ policy making is primarily driven by the economic motives and CSR is not a priority agenda (e.g., Rettab, Brik & Mellahi, 2009; Visser, 2006). Moreover, Dobers & Halmel (2009) report that institutional factors which are considered as primary drivers of CSR in developed world are scarce and under resourced to mandate organisations involve in pro-social projects. On the other hand, Whitley (1992) recognises that the business systems and managerial characteristics are different across cultures implying different management approaches. In the same vein, Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, (2007) express that there have been different ways of successfully running businesses in the world. Unlike the developed world with sophisticated institutions that can guide firms’ social behaviours, in developing countries such as Ethiopia, top managers’ awareness and commitments to CSR are found to be crucial determinants of CSR initiatives (Yin, 2017). Top managers’ discretionary decisions seem to play paramount role in enhancing firms’ social behaviours.

Top managers’ decisions and actions such as CSR decisions are not only dictated by the explicitly stated organizational goals but also their decisions tend to get influenced or determined by the observable demographic attributes and long held values (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Past empirical studies conducted show the existence of linkage between the top managers’ characteristics and their perception; and CSR decisions (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015; Quazi, 2003; Thomas & Simerly, 1994).

The objective of this paper therefore, is to identify the potential determinants of top managers’ perception of CSR and contributing to filling the knowledge gaps in developing countries by examining the relationship between top managers’ demographic variables and moral values, and their CSR perception from the perspective of Ethiopian context.

The paper is structured into five sections. The first section provides the introduction of the study. The second section describes the relevant literature reviews and hypotheses development. The third section presents the research methodology adopted for the study. The fourth section presents the results and discussions of the study. The fifth section provides the conclusions of research findings.

Literature Review

Managers as drivers of corporate social responsibility

Literature reviews show that managers are crucial internal forces that determine the genuine adoption of CSR practices. Top managers are the center of decision making of organisations. Their unique positions they are in hold give them influential power to enhance CSR in organisations. Nowadays, top managers’ responsibility has been expanding beyond merely serving and maximizing the shareholders’ interests. Consequently, authors have long recognised the important roles managers play in mainstreaming CSR in the organisations. Today’s managers are increasingly required to attend the interests of customers, suppliers, bankers, employees and shareholders with the intention of maximizing returns to all possible stakeholders (Aguinis & Glavas, 2019; Freeman, 1994). Managers should fairly distribute the values created by corporations to all stakeholders with which they interact to secure resources for their operations (Freeman, 1994; Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Literature review on the importance of managers in relation with CSR show that managers’ attitudes, perception and awareness significantly influence the successful adoption of the CSR initiatives and programs by organisations (Aguilera et al., 2007;
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Managers’ corporate social responsibility perception

The theoretical and practical advancements of CSR to date are accompanied by divergent views and philosophies among the practitioners and scholars alike. The assessment of managers’ corporate social responsibility in this study is rooted in two broadly classified contrasting views. The orthodox theory asserts that the business of business is business. This dominant and conventional view assumes that companies have only one responsibility that is to maximise the wealth of the shareholders. This paradigm warns managers to be cautious of the CSR related decision they make. Managers as agents only for the stockholders, they should make any investment or decision including CSR if and only proved that doing so would improve the wealth of the stockholders than not doing CSR activities. The forerunner advocator (Friedman, 1970) is sceptical of corporate social responsibility. He argues that the business of business is business. The sole social responsibility of business is to provide adequate goods and service to the society within the framework of law and embedded social norms.

As a theory, it states that any decisions and actions by managers for the sake of promoting corporate social responsibility that could not add value to the wealth of shareholders would lead the business to be inefficient than otherwise. Such decisions would harm not only the owners but also other stakeholders by reducing reinvestment by the companies and subsequently job opportunities. Practitioners who subscribe to this school of thought tend to weigh the impact of corporate social responsibility on financial performance. Some researchers (e.g., Orlitzky, Schmidt & Rynes, 2003) found positive relationship between firms’ CSR and financial performance. However, a meta-analysis by Margolis, Elfenbein & Walsh, (2007) 88% of empirical literature reviewed showed no statistical significant relationship between CSR and financial performance.

On the other hand, a stakeholder theory that appears a widely accepted contemporary view of corporate social responsibility presupposes that organisations are part of the larger community in which they operate. The theory assumes that the existence of contractual agreement between the business and the society. The theory argues businesses are accountable to other stakeholders besides the owners who have stake in the businesses because business actions affect societal interests and in return societal decisions would affect businesses (e.g., Carroll & Buchholtz, 2006; Freeman et al., 2007). Stakeholders are defined as groups or individuals who can affect or are affected by the achievement of firm’s objectives (Freeman, 1984). Besides the moral responsibility organisations owe to the society, stakeholder theory recognises the potential benefits of embracing stakeholders’ interests in their responsibilities.

Engaging in corporate social responsibility would offer benefits such as increased employee and customer loyalty, increased reputation and cost reduction (e.g., Carroll & Shabana, 2010; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). Proponents of the theory strongly stress that managers should transform their decision making paradigm from shareholders’ wealth creation centred criterion to the incorporation of wider stakeholders’ interests so that any group with a stake in the organisation at least not adversely affected by firms goal attainment (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Freeman et al., 2004). As opposed to sceptics of broader view of CSR, advocates of stakeholder theory state that pro-stakeholders behaviours are compatible with owners’ value maximisation. They condemned the separate attempt of shareholders’ wealth maximisation.

Research model and hypothesis development

Demographic characteristics and managers’ CSR perception

Reasonable size of literature reviews show that personal characteristics of managers have impact on their attitudes and decisions concerning CSR. Managers as decision makers, their perception of the business and its environment are likely to be impacted by their inborn and acquired personal demographics. Personal characteristics are composed of two types- inborn demographics and acquired characteristics. Inborn characteristics involve age and gender over which individual managers have no control whereas acquired ones include education, religion and training which are obtained by personal efforts and initiatives (Quazi, 2003). It is reported that young managers are more aware and inclined to embrace CSR practices than the old generation managers (Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Quazi, 2003).
It is argued that a manager’s moral development and judgment is positively related with age. Older individuals have self-transcendent values and favourable attitudes to CSR (Haski-Leventhal, Pournader & McKinnon, 2017). Different generations have been characterized by differing values orientation, lifestyles and attitudinal dispositions (Cho & Hu, 2009). As CSR is a new advent, it may be perceived that as a threat to existing social and business and consequently old managers perceive and react negatively to CSR (Panwar et al., 2010a). In contrast, young people are more knowledgeable and aware about social responsibility of firms (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003; Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004; Panwar et al., 2010a).

Considerable research results claim that CSR perception and attitudes differ across gender. It is proposed that men and women differ in evaluating sensory information obtained about an object, business or the environment (Meyers-Levy, 1989). Therefore, difference in the drawing cues from the available information may impact the CSR formation process in an organisation (Pérez & del Bosque, 2013). Review of pertinent literatures reveal that women managers reported to have traits, i.e., empathy, caring, concern for others and interest for realization of common good and consequently, women managers tend to be more concerned about CSR than their counter men managers (Boulouta, 2013). Rooted in social role theory, women are more characterized by pro-social behaviours such as helping, caring and protecting others than men (Eagly, 2009). Empirical evidences have shown that organisations having female managers on decision making positions are more likely to promote and engage in socially responsible behaviours (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2017; Celis et al., 2015).

Despite the inconclusive findings on the relationship between level of education and a person’s ethical considerations, it is widely believed that a person’s logical reasoning and moral judgment is positively related with level of education attained. Studies suggest that educated people can better understand organisation and environment interdependency and thus, they show up more concern for CSR issues (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003; Pérez et al., 2015). Persons with higher educational achievements are more likely to exhibit wider appreciation of organisations-society relationships (Quazi, 2003). As study conducted by Panwar et al. (2010a) depicts managers’ CSR perception and attitudes vary with level of education attained. Following aforementioned argument, it is possible to propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Older managers have positive perception of corporate social responsibility than younger managers.

Hypothesis 2: Males and females managers differ in their perception of corporate social responsibility.

Hypothesis 3: Managers with higher education qualification have more social orientation than managers with lesser education achievement.

Personal moral values and managers’ CSR Perception

Moral philosophy is a base for judging and making decisions related with ethical contents. The ethical decision making concepts is rooted in the normative ethical guidelines derived from moral philosophy and philosophically there have been two basically different ethical assumptions- teleological and deontological (Ferrell & Gresham, 1985). Teleological philosophy posits that the morality of behaviours are totally determined by the consequences of the behaviours while deontological philosophy argues that the methods and intentions of behaviours for judging ethical decisions. The ethical judgments of behaviours by managers shall be well understood by examining the personal moral philosophies of the decision makers (Forsyth, 1992; Singhapakdi et al., 2008).

Forsyth, (1980), described two dimensions of personal moral philosophies- idealism and relativism. Idealism refers to the degree to which the individuals “believe that desirable consequences can be achieved with right action having no harms to others. Idealistic individuals genuinely assume that desirable outcomes can be achieved without causing harm to others (Henle et al., 2005). Idealists
are usually viewed as individuals aligned with deontological view of philosophy - centred on moral absolutes and never considering people as means to others’ ends (Forsyth, 1992). Empirical works demonstrate that individuals who subscribed to idealism moral philosophy tend to positively perceive CSR because it is believed that idealists have attitude of concern for others, altruistic and have self-transcending values (Kolodinsky et al., 2010; Park, 2005).

Relativism measures the degree to which individuals reject universal moral principles such as never stealing, no lying and killing is always wrong while making decisions involving moral elements. Relativists who are strongly identified with relativism are sceptical of universal moral absolutes and focus on evaluation of specific situations and involved stakeholders in determining the morality of ethical decisions (Forsyth, 1992; Singhapaki et al., 1995). Because relativism is found to be associated with teleological view of moral philosophy, relativists are reported to be insensitive and less concerned with CSR (Davis, Andersen & Curtis, 2001). Some scholars have shown that relativism is negatively correlated with managers’ CSR perception and commitments (Kolodinsky et al., 2010; Singhapaki et al., 2008). Having recognised the above theoretical and empirical arguments, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**Hypothesis 4:** Idealism moral value would positively affect Ethiopian managers’ perceived importance of ethics and social responsibility.

**Hypothesis 5:** Relativism moral value would negatively affect Ethiopian managers’ perceived importance of ethics and social responsibility.

**Research and Methodology**

**Sample and Data Collection**

The subjects of this study were corporate top managers in Ethiopia. The target study samples involved CEOs and executive managers who directly report to CEOs. The top managers surveyed were drawn from companies categorized as large in Ethiopian context belonging to various sectors, namely, agricultural, industrial and service. These selected sectors were purposely chosen to represent different sectors/sub sectors as per international standard industrial classification (Statistical Division, 2008). The purposive selection of the sectors also reflects the importance the sectors have to the Ethiopian economy growth and the attention which is given to them by the government.

Accordingly, floriculture was selected from agriculture, food processing and textile were chosen from manufacturing and banking business was selected from service sector. Having identified these industries, firms have been stratified based on the industries they belong to. Once they have been formed into non overlapping strata, disproportionate stratified random sampling based on the author’s judgment and convenience was used for the three sectors (i.e. floriculture, food processing and textile). Whereas for the bank sector, census survey was used since the number of banks in the country is relatively small.

Population frames for food and textile sectors were obtained from their own authority and capacity building institutions whereas population frames for bank and floriculture industries were obtained from their sectorial associations. Consequently, while there are active 72 floriculture producers registered in Ethiopia, 44 flower growers were randomly selected and approached. And 28 floriculture producers’ managers returned useable questionnaires. With respect to food industry, 110 firms were randomly selected and questionnaires were distributed to. Out of the distributed questionnaires, managers of 42 firms have filled out the questionnaires. As for the textile industry, 96 firms engaged in textile were randomly selected. From the sample firms, managers of 43 firms have filled out the questionnaires. Concerning bank industry, census survey was used as the total number of banks in Ethiopia is only 18. Managers of 13 banks have filled and returned useable questionnaires.

**Data Collection**

Data was collected using survey questionnaires from sample managers. Having chosen sample firms, questionnaires were distributed to top managers of the firms with accompanying letter describing the purpose of the research and declaring guarantee of the confidentiality of the data which aimed to reduce social desirability bias inherent in self-reported data. In total 294 useable questionnaires were collected. The data were collected by trained enumerators led by one of the authors.

**Measurement of variables**

**Dependent variable/Top managers’ CSR perception:** Top managers’ perceptions/attitude of CSR, was measured with the scale developed by (Singhapaki et al., 1995). The scale composed of three dimensions designed to gauge managers’ perception of the roles of ethics and social responsibility as determinants of different aspects of organisational effectiveness. The dimensions/factors included are Good Ethics is Good Business, Profits are Paramount and; Quality and Communication. The internal consistency reliability test of Cronbach Alpha were 0.86, 0.78 and 0.71 respectively.

**Moral values:** The moral values of the top managers was measured with the scale named Ethical Position Questionnaire/EPQ/ developed by (Forsyth, 1980). The scale consisted of 20 items. The first 10 items measured “idealism” and the second 10 items measured “relativism”. The reliability test of Cronbach Alpha for both idealism and relativism was 0.75.
We also gathered data about demographic predicting variables, i.e, age, gender and educational achievement. Age was represented by the chronological age of sample managers. Gender (i.e, male and female) were represented by one dummy variable. Educational level (i.e., diploma, degree, master, and phd & above) of sample managers were represented by three dummy variables.

**Result and Discussion**

**Result**
The research hypotheses testing were conducted using SPSS 25.0 software to evaluate the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable. We run multiple linear regressions to test the hypotheses.

**Profile of respondents**
The sample of the survey consisted of chief executive officers and senior managers drawn from floriculture food, textile and bank industries in Ethiopia. While the age of the sample ranged from 24 to 70 years, the largest proportion lies in the age category of 36-45. The respondents were predominantly male (87.8 %). As for level of education, all samples have attended college education and above. Majority of the samples have got their first degree (58.5%). Table 1 provides demographic information of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-35</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD and above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explore the relationships among the variables, multiple linear regressions analysis was conducted. Based on the theoretical knowledge, gender, age, educational achievement and moral values were considered as independent variables assumed to influence CSR perception. CSR perception as dependent variable was regressed on variables, namely, gender, age, educational achievement, idealism and relativism. The regression results presented in Table 2 depicts the existence of direct relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable ($R^2=.195$, adjusted $R^2=.174$ and $F$ value = 9.382). This indicates that 19.5% variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The result was statistically significant at $p < 0.01$. In general, the model was statistically significant. As hypothesised that gender differences exist in CSR perception, the study result showed that male and female differ concerning perception towards CSR. Male and female managers showed statistically significant differences in their CSR perception ($β=0.451$, $p<0.05$) while the hypothesised positive relationship between managers’ age and CSR perception was not supported. In the same vein, the hypothesis claiming the existence of positive association between managers’ academic achievement and CSR perception was not supported. In addition to the demographic variables, the associations between the two dimensions of personal moral philosophy and managers’ CSR were explored. Consistent with the hypotheses forwarded, the analysis indicated that ethical idealism was positively and significantly correlated with CSR perception ($β=0.292$, $p<0.01$) while ethical relativism was negatively and significantly associated with CSR perception ($β=0.253$, $p<0.01$).
The current study aimed at exploring the association between demographic factors, and moral values and managers’ CSR perception in Ethiopia. In doing so, it is sought to extend the current knowledge of the association between the observable demographic variables and managers’ CSR perception at the same time the moral values and managers’ CSR perception to a developing world by presenting the empirical knowledge and experiences of Ethiopian case.

Similar with many past researches, the current study has evidenced that male and female managers did differ in their CSR perceptions. A review of theoretical and empirical literatures on gender and social responsibility orientation shows that females hold strong sense of caring and ethical behaviour than males (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2017; Roxas & Stoneback, 2004). The finding of this study extends the established knowledge that female and male managers significantly differ in their personal propensity to engage in corporate social responsibility in Ethiopia context. The wide spread role divisions between males and females across the world, for example, agent and communion respectively has seemed to imply different CSR expectations. Likewise, in Ethiopia case, this gender characterisation appeared to impact managers’ pro-social tendencies and behaviours.

As for the regression result of age and managers’ CSR perception, the finding showed that there is no relationship between them. In other previous studies, it was found that as age increases, the managerial moral judgment and ethical decision making increase. Studies by (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2017; Serwinek, 1992; Goethem et al., 2012) highlighted the strong positive relationship between managers’ age and managers' attitudes toward CSR. Although the existence of linkage between age and managers’ CSR perception was found in prior researches, natural age increment was found to have no association with managers’ CSR perception in Ethiopian case. In the present study, natural age increment was found to have no association with managers’ CSR perception and commitment in Ethiopian case. However, the current research finding is similar with findings of studies conducted by (Panwar et al., 2010a; Pérez et al., 2015; Quazi, 2003) that confirmed managers’ physical maturity per se could not influence managerial social obligations commitment to their stakeholders.

Contrary to common sense that as managers get educated, one may expect managers would have wider understanding of its business environment and consequently positive attitude to corporate social responsibility. But in the current study, no evidence was found to predict that level of education could determine the managers’ CSR perception though majority of surveyed managers have higher level of education. This absence of significant relationship between managers’ level of education and CSR perception did not stand as odd finding. Since the study aimed to explore only the level of education achievement as predicator of managers’ understanding of CSR with no consideration about the specialization/field of study, the study finding portrayed that level of education achievement per se could not determine managers’ CSR perception. Past studies confirmed that the academic disciplines managers attended seem to be more important in influencing managers’ CSR perception (e.g., Panwar et al., 2010b). The finding was also consistent with findings of (Abdul & Ibrahim, 2002; Serwinek, 1992) which asserted that education or university training is the least factor compared to such as family upbringing and societal customs in determining managers’ attitudes towards CSR.

Concerning the relationship between moral values and managers’ CSR perception, findings consistent with past studies were found. Previous research studies (e.g., Forsyth, 1992; Henle et al., 2005) have confirmed that the ethical values held by individuals could influence their moral judgments, moral attitude and ethical behaviours. Similar with these findings, the current study showed strong association between managers’ ethical values and CSR perception in Ethiopian context. Ethical idealism was found to be strongly positively correlated with managers’ CSR perception. This implies that managers who showed high ethical idealism such as creating no harm to other persons may perceive organisational success in terms of how well their organisations work in harmony with all concerned stakeholders. Saying it in slightly different expression, managers with high ethical idealism tend to measure organisation

### Table 2: Regression analysis results for personal backgrounds and CSR perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>6.257</td>
<td>9.630</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>2.209</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Degree</td>
<td>0.193</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>0.211</td>
<td>0.563</td>
<td>0.574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD and above</td>
<td>0.627</td>
<td>0.877</td>
<td>0.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>5.223</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relativism</td>
<td>-0.253</td>
<td>-5.484</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = 0.195, p < 0.01,$  
$F$ value $= 9.382, p < 0.01$
success in terms of satisfying the needs of other stakeholders with which direct or indirect interactions exist. In contrary, ethical relativism was found to be negatively associated with managers’ CSR perception. Managers who are sceptical of universal moral principles and rules are inclined to perceive the narrow role of businesses in the society which is profit maximisation for the shareholders. It can be inferred that managers who have high ethical relativism may not engage in activities that would enhance the well-being of society unless otherwise they get proof for engaging in such activities will have positive impact on the bottom line.

Conclusions

The research aimed to investigate the impact of observable personal characteristics and moral values on managers’ CSR perception. Given the roles that top managers play in spreading and instilling CSR spirits in the organizations particularly in developing world, exploring the link between individual characteristics and CSR perception would add to the knowledge of determinants of managers’ CSR perception. It is widely recognized in the literature that CSR is a complex phenomenon and thus, managers’ CSR involvement cannot be adequately explained by explicitly set organizations performance metrics per se without the inclusion of individual level factors. The findings of the study extend the established inconclusive causal relationships between managers’ characteristics and CSR perceptions to developing country, Ethiopia. The study confirms that gender differences have impacted managers’ CSR perceptions while age has not shown any statistically significant linkage with managers’ CSR perception. In addition, the analyses of level of education achievements only do not necessarily impact managers’ CSR perception. Some previous empirical researches have witnessed that the disciplines managers have attended are more important than level of education in predicting managers’ CSR perception. On the other hand, the moral values managers have acquired in their ages from their upbringings and religions have significantly predicted managers’ CSR perception.

In addition to the theoretical contributions of the study, the findings of the current research have some practical implications for mainstreaming CSR in Ethiopian businesses. Despite the fact that managers’ education level would probably tell us something about the persons’ level of logical reasoning and understanding of the situations around, it fails to explain managers’ CSR perceptions. Enhancing managers’ positive CSR perceptions requires integrating ethics education and CSR teaching into the education system either at degree or post graduate levels or providing CSR awareness raising trainings for the incumbents. In addition, organisations could potentially advance the spread of ethical behaviours by applying selection tools that incorporate measure of managers’ moral values. However, there are some limitations worth mentioning. The first limitation is that the research focused on only top managers. However, middle and lower level managers’ CSR perception matters as they are the main actors in the implementation of CSR. Second limitation, the current research considered only personal demographic factors and moral values as determinants of managers’ CSR perception. Nevertheless, individual attributes, e.g., personality and religion which are potent influencers of CSR perception were not incorporated and thus impact the quality of the research. Third limitation, the study addressed top managers of a few sectors. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to managers of all sectors.

Future researches may be targeted on incorporating other personal and contextual factors that potentially impact managers’ CSR perception. In Ethiopia the socio-economic environment is largely under the control of government and a study into contextual factors such that financial performance of the firm and firm ownership may add fresh insights to the knowledge accumulation of determinants of managers’ CSR perception. In the present study, ethical values are found to be strongly associated with managers’ CSR perception. Further study should be directed to explore the black box of how ethical idealism is positively correlated while ethical relativism is negatively associated with managers’ CSR perception preferably with qualitative approach so that deep and wider conceptualization shall be realized.

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