THE RELATIONSHIP OF STUDENTS’ CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PREFERENCES

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ABSTRACT
The objective of this study is to investigate the relationship of ethical preferences with the individual orientation toward corporate social responsibility that covering the economics, legal, ethical, and discretionary aspects. Sample was taken from undergraduate and graduate level accounting students enrolled in the behavioral accounting subject. With the understanding of the corporate social responsibility concept in the subject, it is expected that students can assess the corporate social responsibility orientation based on their behavioral perspective. A number of 195 final respondents were selected. The results from regression analysis show that two types of ethical preferences have significant relationship with the certain aspect of corporate social responsibility orientation. Utilitarianism ethical preference has opposite direction with formalism ethical preference when connected to CSR orientation. While formalism gives the emphasize to legal orientation, utilitarianism gives its opposition toward legal orientation and has positive direction toward economic orientation.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility orientation, ethical preference judgment, utilitarianism, formalism.

BACKGROUND
Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly important aspect in today’s business practices. The running of the business is not only concerned with economic achievement, but should also consider social and environmental aspect. In Indonesia, the CSR movement has gained momentum after series of catastrophic environmental losses caused by natural disaster such as earthquake, landslide, and flood as well as caused by human error in the case of global warming. In the wake up of the environmental losses from various disasters, it has opened our concern about the importance of social responsibility that stem from companies’ activities. There is increasing demands from society that corporation should play more active roles to compensate the social impact of their economics activities. External dynamics social change as resulted from climate changes, rocketing oil price, and spread of disease globally are among factors that also trigger the increasing rate of social
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awareness of businesses. In this regard, the attention of corporate sector to contribute toward its social and environmental issues becoming crucial agenda to be explored in the academic discourse.

Many debates among academicians and practitioners arise as whether corporate social responsibility can be brought voluntarily or mandatory. As a response to emerging pressure from various parties, Indonesian government has accommodated regulation about CSR through the new Company Act 2007. Despite the opposition from business sector, in the company’s law section 74, it was stated that companies in the natural resources sector are considered mandatory to carry out their social and environmental responsibility. Furthermore, the responsibility is compulsory for those companies and it’s arranged in company’s budget and is calculated as the expense (Section 74 article 2).

Basically, many efforts have been done to develop the relationship of business with its environment. Nevertheless, such effort could only be effective if there were collective awareness about the importance of social responsibility coming from the individual. The need of public accountability that closely related to corporate social responsibility would require us to educate persons that eventually will engage in the business sector. University as one of main provider of human resources to business sector should also be active in training and educating business students about the role of business in society through corporate social responsibility concept and orientation (Leitao et al., 2007). At the global level, United Nation through its body that is UNESCO has declared the program with theme one decade of education for sustainable development 2005-2014 (United Nation, 2005). The program has mandate the education institution to encourage collective consciousness about sustainable development with the concern of social and environment responsibility. Based on the spirit, it is significance of this study in introducing social responsibility aspect to student as the main product in the higher education institution.

While some research topics have been extensively review corporate social responsibility into many areas of research such as corporate social performance (Wood, 1991; Wood, 2010), corporate social disclosure (Gray et al., 1995) as well as corporate social orientation (Aupperle et al., 1985; Burton, Brian &Hegarty, 1999; 2000), only few research topics engage in corporate social responsibility orientation aspect in
Indonesia. Most of the studies focus on disclosure of corporate social responsibility. Therefore, this research is trying to fill the gap by examining empirically the students’ orientation on corporate social responsibility. In addition, personality aspect of trait character also will be investigated in order to observe mutual relationships between orientation and personality traits.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a lot of definitions and has been interpreted in multi dimensions. The basic notion of CSR reveals that business not only encompasses profit as their objective but should also bring non economics aspect from their operations. Generally, non-economics aspect resulting from corporate activities can be divided into social and environmental matters. The concern of such social aspect is dealing with contribution of companies to participate to the social welfare while environmental effect has concern with how intense companies’ effort to minimize negative pollution like waste as result of their daily operations.

While controversies still around among scholars when defining the exact meaning of corporate social responsibility, this study refers the definition of CSR from Carrol (1979, 1999) in providing the concept of CSR. In this regard, the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time (Carrol, 1979). Furthermore, definition above constitutes four important points as pillar of corporate social responsibility functions, namely:

1. Economics responsibility, focus on productivity and profitability of companies as basic business principle to achieve competitive advantage.
2. Legal responsibility indicates that any accomplishment in economic performance should be in adherence of existing rule and laws.
3. Ethical responsibility, not mandatory as a law but it’s about expectation from community to companies to be ethical when performing their business. Consists of unwritten rule, norms, values that born and growing in common society.
4. Discretionary responsibility, it is a role conducted by company in voluntarily, come from the awareness and concern of the firms to their environment.
Matten & Moon (2004) presents a conceptual framework for understanding CSR, the ‘implicit’ versus the ‘explicit’ CSR. ‘Explicit’ CSR is about corporate policies with the objective of being responsible for what interest society. ‘Explicit’ CSR can for example be voluntary, self-interest driven CSR policies and strategies. ‘Implicit’ CSR is dealing with a country’s formal and informal institutions that give organizations an agreed share of responsibility for society’s interests and concerns. Therefore, implicit CSR is values, norms and rules which result in requirements for corporations to address areas that considered important by stakeholders. Business associations or individual organizations are often directly involved in the definition and legitimization of these social responsibility requirements.

Theoretical Ground

The theoretical background in explaining the role of corporate responsibility toward social and environmental aspect is derived from Social Identity Theory and Stakeholder Theory. These two complement theories attempt to provide conceptual reason as to why company should conducting CSR in the business policy and practice. Social identity theory tries to explain individual motivation to acts in accordance to social norms and values. According to this theory, personal identity and social identity are two concepts which underlying the self concept of individual (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Personal identity is determined by idiosyncratic characteristics like values and beliefs, traits, capability, appearance, and experience. Whereas social identity arrived from the knowledge that individual is part of social group or category (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). Social group is group of individuals who share common social identification or perceive themselves as part of certain social category.

In regard with the process of social identity construction, it cannot be separated with two important factors, both of social categorization and social comparison. In social categorization, someone tends to classify his self and the other into various social classes in order to determine its personal attribute and his identity when interact in certain social environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 20). Therefore, social identity will affect the way of the individual judging and perceiving himself as well as when him judging others (Hopkins, 1997).

According to Stryker & Stathan (1985), individual identity will be
organized in the hierarchy along the way of social structure with the emphasize on behavioral salience and commitment attributed to that structure. Identity in top of hierarchy apt to act based on the clarity of self-defining more than identity at the lower level. In connection with commitment, the stronger identity’s commitment, the stronger individual view when perceiving appropriate identity in line with his desire (Cassidy & Trew, 1998). At the same time, the high level of individual commitment tends to correlate positively with consistency between role expectations and role performance. In addition, to maintain the image that attached to the identity, individual would attempt to make any effort to the image (Franke, 2000).

Stakeholder theory explains corporate responsibility in situation that when companies doing their activities it should not just directed to fill the shareholders’ interest, but also better to consider other constituents such as government, supplier, customer and employee (Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995). Although this theory gained the popularity in recent decades, controversies still arise as the potential conflict of interest among stakeholder will potentially inevitable. Also, question still rise on which stakeholder that should obtain main priority, this is because company has limited ability to fulfill the interest of all involved parties (Donaldson, 2002; Freeman, 1994).

**Hypotheses Statement**

Corporate Social responsibility orientation has long been known as one of popular research topics in corporate social responsibility. This concept indicates stakeholder perception toward values that underlie the company’s decision making in relation with social and environmental issues (Aupperle, 1984, 1985). Initially, corporate social responsibility concept had been investigated empirically among group of manager and the concept continually also has been tested to other stakeholder (Smith, Harrington, & Dennis, 2001), such as student’s corporate social orientation (Burton & Hegarty, 1999; Kraft & Singhapakdi, 1991).

From standpoint of social identity theory, every individual tends to place their position as part of certain structured in the social community when categorizing their social cluster and stay exist when it compared with the contrast category (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). For instance, in Indonesian society characteristic which is based on collectivism value, gotongroyong is one of local wisdom that accentuated in everyday life. In this environment, a person tends to
place his/her self in the position where he should be useful for his community and therefore should have the concern to others. Even more, with the expectation to increase the social order in the higher level, it is possible for them to give more social concern and eventually it would strengthen the positive image. On the other hand, an individual normally would not be charged as asocial or do not care to other as a contrast social category. It could cause social cost for his self or people surrounding him.

In the corporate context, when companies carry out social responsibility actually they want to signal their image. Being in certain social class and signaling positive social identity are among action performed to increase corporate image.

The social role and responsibility of the firm would only be useful when it can provide benefit to the stakeholder. The higher the individual commitment when attached to certain social identity, the stronger would be the consistency between role expectations and role performance. Therefore, company’s social image will be enhanced through its role and identity when actively engage in CSR program that benefit to the stakeholders. This positive image will be persistent when social act is conducted consistently to fill what the society hope for.

Numerous studies have been trying to empirically tested the perceived corporate social performance from the various elements of stakeholders. The existing empirical research investigates the response of stakeholders to corporate social performance in their position as employee (Albinger& Freeman, 2000), as an investor (Sethi, 2005; Sparkes&Cowton, 2004) or even as a consumer (Maignan&Fenell, 2001). The understanding of the diverse attitude from stakeholder would depend on their interest toward the organization. For instance, the stressing on the economic performance tends to lead to the response from stakeholders that biased toward economic interest.

In the literature on individual and organizational behavioral, the personality aspect can play important role in shaping the individual behavior. Therefore, this study views the variety of individual orientation in perceiving a policy when looking at the richness of personality aspect. Consequently, individual orientation in viewing corporate social orientation will depend on the personal characteristics of the respective individual.

Ethical consideration is one important aspect to influence the individual attitude and behavior when
confronted with the issue of corporate social responsibility. In this regard, the individual behavior is related with how the individual’s cognitive perspective will determine the ethical decision making (Brady, 1985). According to Brady (1985, 1990) there were two frameworks of individual ethical predisposition as part of cognitive moral development that reveal individual ethical personality, the utilitarianism and formalism ethical predispositions. The utilitarianism ethical predisposition tends to focus on the outcomes or consequences of the action. It proposes on the good result that can be benefited to the society at large. On the other hand, the formalisms ethical predisposition gives more emphasize on how to do something correctly than the end result.

In the context of corporate social responsibility, individual with utilitarianism ethical judgment has more concern toward high economics performance indicators such as high productivity and net income. Conversely, someone that highly influenced with the formalism ethical perspective tend to stresses on the process of doing something by adhering the rule, principles and certain behavioral standard in ethical way. Therefore, a formalist will strongly oriented to the legal and ethical aspects more than economical aspect in the corporate social responsibility orientation. Based on the argument, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Individual’s ethical preferences will influence the individual orientation toward corporate social responsibility.

H1a: The utilitarianism ethical attitude has positive relationship with individual economics orientation toward CSR

H1b: The utilitarianism ethical attitude has positive relationship with individual discretionary orientation toward CSR

H1c: The formalism ethical attitude has positive relationship with individual legal orientation toward CSR

H1d: The formalism ethical attitude has positive relationship with individual ethical orientation toward CSR

**RESEARCH METHOD**

**Sample**

Survey is conducted by targeting student in the Faculty of Economics and Business, Diponegoro University. Specifically, the target sample is the
accounting students who take the subject of behavioral accounting and accounting research seminar at undergraduate level as well as at the master program. Behavioral accounting subject was chosen because that subject has series of coverage on the topics of the basic concepts on the human behavior, ethical judgment and introduction of corporate social responsibility.

A number of 215 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents that comprise undergraduate student and master students who were taking the behavioral accounting class. Only 195 questionnaires that usable for the further analysis and the rest must be discharged because of data incompleteness.

**Operational Definition And Measurement Of Variables**

**Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in this research is the individual orientation toward corporate social responsibility. The instrument was adapted from Aupperle (1984) and Aupperle et.al (1985) as the popular instrument to measure individual orientation toward CSR. The instrument was developed based on the social responsibility framework by Carroll (1979) that includes the economics, ethics, legal, and discretionary aspects. The instrument is a forced score statements where respondent was forced to allocate total 10 point to 4 set of statements for every set of CSR aspect exposure. In total there 10 sets of CSR aspect exposure where respondent may have different preferences and emphasize for every aspect of CSR. The four set of statements represent each aspect of corporate social responsibility. After completing the scoring, the total score of four aspect of corporate social responsibility can be calculated to come up with CSR orientation of the respondent (Ibrahim & Angelidis, 1993). In this study, the classification of CSR aspect is simplified into three category, namely economic orientation, legal orientation, and ethical orientation. Preliminary observation found that discretionary orientation has similar content with ethical orientation. Therefore, it is converged into ethical orientation aspect to simplify the instrument design.

**Independent Variable**

Ethical predisposition is the main independent variable in this study. This variable refers to the cognitive frameworks preferred by individual state of mind when making the moral decision (Brady, 1985). There are two forms of ethical preference, utilitarianism and formalism. Utilitarianism is referring to
the consequences of a course of action when judging the moral issue. On the other hand, formalism give more emphasize on the compliance toward the rule, pattern, or other formal mechanisms to determine the moral attitude (Brady & Wheeler, 1996). Both of these traits were measured by the instrument adapted from Brady and Wheeler (1996). There are 13 characteristics of moral trait with the measurement of five-point likert scale ranging from very not important until very important. The utilitarianism personal attitude including innovative, resourceful, effective, influential, results oriented, productive, and winner. For the formalism personal trait, it includes the character of principled, dependable, honest, trustworthy, integrity, and law abiding.

Control Variables
Gender differences is becoming control variable in this study. Numerous literatures on the ethics have consider gender as one important factor in the behavioral aspect. Similarly, in the study on corporate social responsibility, it has been known that female has distinguished moral reasoning with male concerning with the ethical consideration (Gilligan, 1982 in Burton &Hegarty, 1999). Kraft &Singhapadik (1995) found that female view corporate social responsibility as one critical issue in determining organizational effectiveness. Therefore, this study will put gender as the control variable to control the differences in the CSR orientation between male and female students.

Model Specification
In order to test hypotheses, multiple regression analysis is performed that examine the relationship of ethical preference and CSR orientation. In total, there are three respective regression models derived from three consecutive dependent variables namely economics orientation, legal orientation, and ethical or discretionary orientation. The model specification is illustrated as follows:

\[ \text{CSRO} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{UTIL} + \beta_2 \text{FORMAL} + \beta_3 \text{GENDER} + \beta_4 \text{EDUC} + \epsilon \ldots \ldots \ldots (1) \]

Where:
- \text{CSRO} : CSR Orientation (economic, legal, and ethical)
- \text{UTIL} : Utilitarianism ethical attitude
- \text{FORMAL} : Formalism ethical attitude
- \text{GENDER} : category of 0 if male and female otherwise
- \text{EDUC} : education level; 0 if master, undergraduate otherwise
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The statistical analysis will be started with the descriptive statistics. The demographic profile of respondent is demonstrated in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Master Class</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 provides the profile of the respondent. From the table it demonstrates that the female student was the dominant respondent that account 62% from total sample. It can be understood because the majority of students that take the behavioral accounting subject were dominated by female. In addition, the undergraduate student number is higher than master student to participate as respondent in this study. Undergraduate student has the percentage of 66% from total sample.

Next, table 4.2 exhibits the descriptive statistics of the variables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Orientation</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Orientation</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethic Orientation</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalism</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 exhibits the descriptive properties of the respective variables. Looking at the mean score of CSR orientation, legal orientation aspect has the highest score followed by the economics orientation and ethical
orientation respectively. It means the students view that legal aspect was placed as the most important element that back-up the company operation. The lowest score achieved by ethical orientation indicates that students perceived voluntary aspect like ethical and discretionary orientations were less important compared to economics and legal aspects.

Regarding the ethical predisposition characteristics, the formalism attitude has higher mean score than utilitarianism attitude. It indicates that student still perceives the importance of the adherence toward rule and regulation in the operation of the company.

Table 4.3
Summary of the hypothesis result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Economics Orientation</th>
<th>Legal Orientation</th>
<th>Ethical Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.29)**</td>
<td>(2.59)**</td>
<td>(7.81)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilitarianism</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.64)</td>
<td>(-1.86)*</td>
<td>(-0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalism</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-2.96)**</td>
<td>(4.31)**</td>
<td>(-0.55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.26)</td>
<td>(-3.46)**</td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.10)</td>
<td>(-0.89)</td>
<td>(-2.77)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$-value</td>
<td>9.035***</td>
<td>9.376***</td>
<td>2.244*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$Adj-R^2$</td>
<td>0.142</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

***: significance level at 0.01; **: significance level at 0.05; *: significance level at 0.1

Table 4.3 demonstrates the result negatively related with ethical of hypothesis testing. The utilitarianism ethical predisposition only reveals negative relationship weakly with the legal orientation at 10 percent. Its
In regard with formalism ethical predisposition, it strongly provides significant result negatively toward economics orientation and positively toward legal orientation. This result is consistent with the prediction where formalism ethical attitude of an individual would make legal aspect as the main consideration in his orientation toward behavior. Also, the negative relationship of formalism and economic orientation confirm the notion that these two aspect of ethical preferences were rather not suitable each other. When economic orientation emphasize more on the aspect of end result in terms of profit, formalism would stress more the adherence of process and activities toward rules and regulations rather than the end result.

In comparing utilitarianism and formalism ethical preference, the pattern of both attitudes was quite in opposite especially when looking at the coefficient direction. Except for ethical orientation, these two ethical preferences have opposite direction. While formalism gives the emphasize to legal orientation, it lends negative favor toward economic orientation. Conversely, utilitarianism gives its opposition toward legal orientation and has positive direction toward economic orientation.

The gender differences as control variable has resulted in significant relationship to legal orientation. The negative relationship between gender and legal orientation means that female has superior legal orientation than male. This finding indicates that female students have precautionary mental preparation in having orientation toward the legal aspek of CSR.

The education level as another control variable reveals negative relationship toward ethical orientation. This finding means that there is differences in the level of ethical orientation of CSR between master student and undergraduate level student. Moreover, the negative coefficient shows that master student have higher level in their ethical orientation than undergraduate students.

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has the objective to test the relationship of ethical predispositions with student corporate social orientation. The sample of the study is 195 respondents from undergraduate class and master program student who took the behavioral
accounting subject. There are four hypotheses that expose the detail relationship concerning the two ethical predispositions and three aspects of corporate social orientations. Overall, hypotheses testing showed the significant relationship between formalism ethical predisposition and legal orientation. In addition, gender differences also take into account when there were differences of legal orientation between male and female students. Educational level also posits the difference of master student and undergraduate student in their ethical orientation.

This research has some limitations. The respondent of this study only restricted for accounting student in the Faculty of Economics and Business, Diponegoro University. Therefore, the generalization of the results from this study was also limited. Another limitation is concerning with the limited support of hypothesis acceptance. For the avenue of future research, some improvements can be made. Firstly, future research should try to reach the sufficient number of sample by extending the coverage of the respondent in order to lead to the acceptance of the research hypothesis. It is promising to apply the research topics to the other type of sample, like manager, employee, consumer or investor. Secondly, future research can develop the ethical judgment characteristics with the connection to the organizational behavioral aspects.

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