

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been known since the twentieth century. In 1940 professor Theodor Kreps of Stanford Business School mentioned a report named “Social Adult” about the action of an organization that was responsible for community. Then, in 1953, Howard Bowen published a book named “Social Responsibilities of the Businessman” and he was praised as the father of Corporate Social Responsibility. However, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility did not become popular until 1960. Later it became more prevalent. (<http://www.edfthai.org/csr/content.asp?cid=1>).

The concept of CSR is used from interior to exterior of organizations. At the beginning, only owners and executives were recognized as an important part of organizations. Later, employees were more recognized by the organizations and finally the organizations became more concerned with environment and communities around them.

It can be stated that Corporate Social Responsibility is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders, as well as the environment (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility).

According to the above concept, private universities are a kind of business organizations that should be responsible for their communities because in the age of global capitalism shareholders and profits are not the only concerns of private universities.

In addition, private universities provide study services for improving students’ potential before letting them go to the labor markets. Students are considered as a product for which the university must be directly responsible (หนังสือพิมพ์ประชาชาติธุรกิจ, 2551). Therefore the universities are considered as an important social institution that should implant the sense of social responsibility in its

students' minds in order to help them to be the ones who have both knowledge and ethics. That is why some private universities are becoming more concerned with using the concept of CSR in their university in order to coexist with their communities peacefully.

Rangsit University is one of those that put the CSR concept in its activities which correspond to one of the objectives of the university that is to support activities that contribute fully to the benefits of the society with the aspiration that “we will work towards forging the youth and the new generation into becoming graduates or scholars fully equipped with knowledge and ethics” (<http://www.rsu.ac.th/>)

Moreover, Rangsit University has encouraged students' participation in activities for example, music, sport, recreation, and community service as well as participation in the administration of students' projects. This is done on the basis of a belief that a perfect university must be responsible and concerned with enhancing student's personality in all aspects including academics, ethics, personality, health and culture.

According to Rangsit University motto that is “Creating Knowledgeable Graduates, Creating Society Consciousness”, it can be stated that only the quality of education is not enough, but having moral and social responsibility are something that is expected by communities as well. Therefore, the corporate social responsibility concept is put into activities of Rangsit University which can be grouped into four kinds of CSR activities as follows:

1. social contribution;
2. environmental conservation;
3. Thai art and cultural promotion; and
4. donation activity

(<http://www.boybdream.com/manager-news-content.php?newid=50969>)

Like other activities, CSR activities need participation from students to be successful. Therefore, it is interesting to survey on awareness and participation in CSR activities of students at Rangsit University in order to know whether awareness of CSR activities relates to the participation level in CSR activities or not and to know what Rangsit University should do to increase the participation level of their

students in CSR activities in order to make it become sustainable and implant the sense of participation in social responsibility in students' minds.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Main research question

- Is there a relationship between awareness and participation in CSR activities of students at Rangsit University?

Sub-questions

- What is an important factor that influences Rangsit University students' interest in CSR activities?
- What are Rangsit University students' attitudes toward CSR activities?
- What are Rangsit University students' suggestions for further improvement of CSR activities?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Main objective

- To find the relationship between awareness and participation in CSR activities of students at Rangsit University.

Sub-objectives

- To investigate an important factor that influences students' interest in CSR activities.
- To explore students' attitudes toward CSR activities.
- To find the students' suggestions on how to improve CSR activities.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

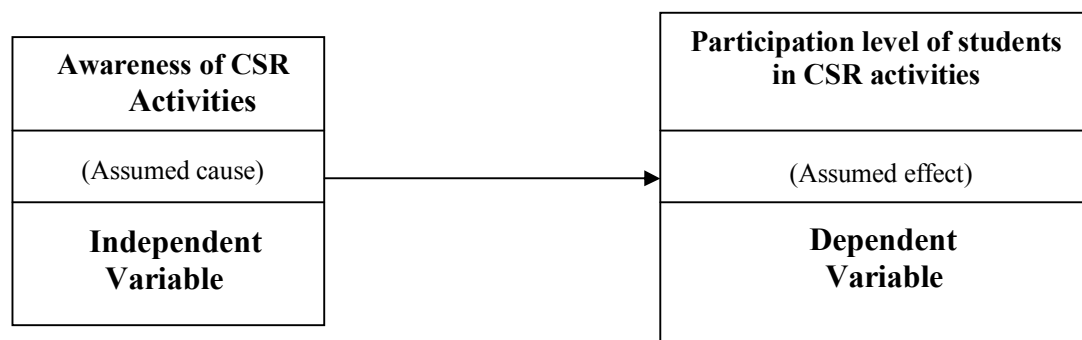
1.4.1 This study will focus only on four kinds of CSR activities established by Rangsit University that are about environmental conservation, social contribution, Thai art and cultural promotion, and a donation activity in which students can participate.

1.4.2 This study does not focus on the donation activities that are about scholarship provided by executives of Rangsit University and only undergraduate students were asked to respond to questionnaires.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of the study let executives of Rangsit University know what they should do to improve CSR activities and how they will use the Corporate Social Responsibility concept in stimulating students' awareness and participation in CSR activities so that students can adopt CSR permanently because it originated from their consciousness not because it was a fashion.

1.6 FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY



1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Awareness is defined as knowing or noticing that something exists. It comprises a human's perception and cognitive reaction to a condition or event and does not necessarily imply understanding, just an ability to be conscious of, feel or perceive.

Awareness of CSR activities is defined as knowing or noticing that CSR activities exist in Rangsit University. It may be known through students' experience of facts or information they receive from communication channels and public relations.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined as an activity performance both inside and outside Rangsit University which is responsible for impacts of its doing business on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders, as well as the environment.

CSR activities is defined as Rangsit University's activities relating to environmental conservation, social contribution, art and cultural promotion, and donation activities in which Rangsit University students can participate, no matter if it is performed necessarily or voluntarily.

Participation is defined as the act of taking part in an activity or event.

Participation in CSR activities is defined as an involvement of Rangsit University students in CSR activities which relates to environmental conservation, social contribution, Thai art and cultural promotion, and donation activities in forms of giving knowledge, manpower, stuff, or money.

Students at Rangsit University is defined as undergraduate students who are studying in any faculty and any year of study of Rangsit University.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study of the relationship between awareness and participation in CSR activities of students at Rangsit University in this paper is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one presents the introduction which is the background of the problems, research questions, objectives, scope of the study, significance, framework of the study, operational definitions, and organization of the study.

Chapter two is the review of literature related to the study.

Chapter three conveys the methodology used in the study, including data collection and data analysis.

Chapter four reviews the findings of the study.

Chapter five contains the conclusion, discussion and recommendations of the study.