



Managing CSR implementation in SMEs through differentiated networks

Loïc Sauvée, Mantiaba Coulibaly, Zam-Zam Abdirahman

► To cite this version:

Loïc Sauvée, Mantiaba Coulibaly, Zam-Zam Abdirahman. Managing CSR implementation in SMEs through differentiated networks. 29th IMP Conference, Georgia State University, Aug 2013, Atlanta, United States. hal-04363402

HAL Id: hal-04363402

<https://normandie-univ.hal.science/hal-04363402>

Submitted on 24 Dec 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Sauvée L., Coulibaly M., Abdirahman Z.-Z., 2013. CSR Implementation in SMEs through the management of differentiated networks. In : Proceedings of the 29th IMP conference, Track : managing Sustainability in Global Networks, pp 109-119. Atlanta, USA, 30 August - 2 September.

Managing CSR implementation in SMEs through differentiated networks

Loïc SAUVEE¹, loic.sauvee@lasalle-beauvais.fr (corresponding author)

Mantiaba COULIBALY², mantiaba.coulibaly@unice.fr

Zam-Zam ABDIRAHMAN³, zam-zam.abdirahman@lasalle-beauvais.fr

Abstract

Track: Managing sustainability through global networks

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, network, implementation, relationships

Purpose of the paper:

The objective of the communication is to propose an analytical framework for the management of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) implementation within SMEs. For SMEs, the CSR issue appears to be a key strategic challenge but due to resource and competence constraints and limitations, managers face a complex task of concrete implementation. In order to craft this framework, the research combines two relevant strands of research that have been devoted to the subject of CSR implementation. The first one is mainly represented by the work of Maon, Lindgreen and Swaen (2009) about the topic of innovation phases. Through the elaboration of an analytical framework, these authors identify qualitative steps which differentiate levels of interactions and network configurations, thus providing interesting insights on the subject in its dynamics aspects. The second one, in line with the work on innovation networks and innovation management (Conway and Steward, 2009; Håkansson et al., 2004) shows the importance of network configurations and multiplexity (i.e. intertwined networks of relationships that contribute to innovation adoption) for the understanding of innovation. Finally the research proposes a syncretic perspective on the topic of CSR implementation in SMEs grounded in the network and innovation management literature.

Research method:

The study has mobilized the systemic combining methodology (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). The research methodology is mainly qualitative and abductive (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In this approach, the research is centered on case studies seen as projects and as tools, with a cross fertilization between concepts and reality. It forms the basis for analytical generalization (Yin, 2003). We validate our approach by using concrete examples of CSR implementation in SMEs in France. Data collection on networks has been done through several channels: business sources such as market and sectoral studies, articles and archives

¹ Institut Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais, France

² IAE, université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis, France

³ Institut Polytechnique LaSalle Beauvais, France

as well as direct interviews with food managers and major stakeholders. Data analysis has mobilized software tools and techniques such as QSR NVivo 9 and Pajek.

Research findings

Two critical dimensions of the process of managing CSR implementation are mobilized in this analytical framework: firstly the consideration of the implementation phase, which will play a key role in the approach because it allows characterizing the nature of learning phenomena at work and their intensity; secondly the nature of network relationships and interactions between the partners involved in each phase, that they be organizations or individuals, and jointly the specific situation of a given company within its network. This analytical framework allows for a decryption of key resources and stages mobilized during the implementation process. Consequently we show that, when implementing CSR, SME managers will simultaneously mobilize different types of networks (of individuals and organizations) and will promote networking activity in the form of exchange of knowledge flows and resources that will support the innovation process. In linking network structure and networking activity to the contingent specificity of innovation phases, the study proposes an analytical framework of CSR implementation mainly centered on network structural and interactive aspects of learning phenomena.

Contribution

The main outcomes of the research can be sketched at two levels. Firstly, it adds new knowledge on CSR innovation management, where complex learning processes are to be considered. The main theoretical contribution is to show that, in the management of CSR implementation, a complete and simultaneous understanding of learning processes in differentiated networks of organizations and individuals at micro and meso levels is necessary. The network theory allows for this perspective on network forms, seen as formal structure well as support for networking interactive activity. The network as a structure constitutes the formal architecture which gives possibilities of real channels of knowledge creation and sharing (related to CSR), while the network as a support channel provides opportunities for interactive and networking activity. More especially this networking activity (mainly interpersonal contacts) is necessary to enrich the exchanges for learning. Secondly the research, in its operational aspects, constitutes the basis for the proposal of an analytical framework and tools useful for managers in their will to set up CSR principles.

Relevant literature

Argyris C., Schön D. A. (1996) *Organizational Learning II. Theory, Method, and Practice*. Addison-Wesley: Reading, MA.

Berthon B., Charreire Petit S., Huault I. (2007) "Réseaux sociaux et processus d'apprentissage, une relation complexe et ambivalente" Communication à la XVIème Conférence Internationale de Management Stratégique (AIMS), Montréal, 6 et 7 juin, 30 p.

Borgatti S. P., X. Li, (2009). On social network analysis in a supply chain context. *Journal of Supply Chain Management*, vol. 45, n°2, pp 5-22.

Borgatti S. P., Mehra D., Brass G., Labianca G., (2009). Network analysis in the social sciences. *Science*, February, vol. 323, pp 892-895.

Brodhag C., (2011). La double dimension procédurale et substantive de l'ISO 26000. in *ISO 26000 : une Norme «hors norme» ?*, Capron M., Quairel-Lanoizelée F., Turcotte M.-F. (dir.), *Economica*, pp 131-143.

Cramer J. (2005) "Company learning about corporate social responsibility" *Business Strategy & the Environment*, vol. 14, n° 4, pp 255-266.

Conway S., Steward F., (2009). *Managing and Shaping Innovation*, Oxford University Press, 478 p.

Crossan M. M., Lane H. W., White R. E. (1999) "An organizational learning framework: from intuition to institution" *Academy of Management Review*, 24, (3), 522-537.

Dubois A., Gadde L. E., (2002). Systematic combining: an abductive approach to case research. *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 55, pp. 553-560.

Dubois A. and Araujo L. (2004) "Research methods in industrial marketing studies" In Håkansson H. Harrison D. and Waluszewski A. (Eds). *Rethinking Marketing. Developing a New Understanding of Markets*. Chichester: Wiley, pp 207-227.

Eisenhardt K., Graebner M. E. (2007) "Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges" *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 30, 25-32.

Fenwick T. (2011) "Learning to practice social responsibility in small business: conflicts and challenges" *Journal of Global Responsibility*, vol. 1, n° 1, pp. 149-169.

Håkansson H., Harrison D. and Waluszewski A. (Eds) (2004) *Rethinking Marketing. Developing a New Understanding of Markets*. Chichester: Wiley.

Jamali D., Zanhour M., Keshishian T., (2009). Peculiar Strengths and Relational Attributes of SMEs in context of CSR. *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 87, pp 355-377.

Jenkins H., (2009). A 'business opportunity' model of corporate social responsibility for small- and medium-sized enterprises. *Business Ethics: A European Review*. Vol. 18, n° 1, January, pp 21-36.

Jonker J., De Witte M. (Eds), (2006). *The Challenge of Organizing and Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. 304 p.

Kleysen R., Dyck B. (2001) "Cumulating knowledge: an elaboration and extension of Crossan, Lane & White's framework for organizational learning" In M. Crossan and F. Olivera (Eds). *Organizational learning and knowledge management: new directions*, pp 383-394. Richard Ivey School of Business, London, June 1-4.

Maon F., Lindgreen A., Swaen V., (2009). Designing and Implementing Corporate Social Responsibility: An Integrative Framework Grounded in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 87, pp. 71-89.

Perera O., (2008). How material is ISO 26000 Social Responsibility to SMEs? *International Institute for Sustainable Development*.

Yin R. K., (2003). *Case Study Research. Design and methods*. 3rd edition, Sage Publications, 181p.