Promoting Sustainable Dietary Patterns Through Fast Food Restaurants' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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Abstract
Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of Carroll's CSR dimensions which are economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities undertaken by the fast-food restaurants towards promoting sustainable dietary patterns among the young generation.
Design/methodology/approach: 400 young generation aged between 18 and 30 years old answered the survey. The questionnaires comprised of six sections and the respondents were chosen by using stratified random sampling technique. All items were adopted and adapted from past studies. Reliability and validity analysis were performed, and the data were further analysed by using the Descriptive Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis to answer the research questions.
Findings: This study concludes that three CSR dimensions (economic, legal and ethical) embedded in the fast-food restaurants' CSR activities positively influence the sustainable dietary patterns of the young generation. The young generation are highly inclined to consider ethical dimension as the most important CSR dimension that influences sustainable dietary patterns.
Research limitations/implications: The study only carried out among the young generation that currently staying in Selangor.
Practical implications: The findings of this study assist the fast-food industries to establish a sound CSR strategy and provide supporting data to policy makers and relevant government agencies to promote healthy eating habits among the young generation.
Originality/value: Given the lack of focus on examining the influence of CSR activities performed by the fast-food restaurants, the study is justified in terms of its originality, as it examines a specific cohort by focusing on the correlation of economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic towards promoting sustainable dietary patterns among the young generation. These insights are invaluable, as past studies are not widely focused on this area.

Introduction

Overweight and obesity are elucidated as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may threaten health. Nowadays, the global obesity prevalence demonstrates an alarming increase, and this urges the World Health Organization (WHO) to introduce "globesity" term. Excessive intake of energy, salt, saturated and trans-fats, and free sugars increases the risk of getting noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes. This can also be referred to as malnutrition. Malnutrition is the state when the individual's intake of energy or nutrients is deficient, excess or imbalance. This is why addressing malnutrition in all its forms is vital to ensure the health and well-being of all and consequently, sustainable development. As stipulated in the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region, all Member States are required to take action to improve healthy diets and the European Food and Nutrition Action Plan emphasizes the importance of implementing effective national population-based approaches to promote healthy diets, which can support to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (World Health Organization, 2021).

Recently, many individuals do not have access to safe, affordable, and healthy diets to ensure health and wellbeing. Unhealthy diets remain one of the major contributors to the global burden of disease. A high prevalence of malnutrition is a serious public health problem. There is an urgent need to promote healthy diets and these diets also need to be socio-culturally acceptable. This is essential to achieve optimal growth and development of all individuals and prevent all forms of malnutrition, nutrient deficiency, overweight and obesity. According to the World Health Organization (2021), dietary patterns is referred to the "quantities, proportions, variety and combination of various foods, drinks and nutrients in diets as well as the frequency with which they are habitually consumed". Fast food consumption in daily diet of the individuals has become a global phenomenon. Nowadays, the fast-food industry in Malaysia is mushrooming due to the increasingly demand from the consumers. The trend of consuming fast food signifies a rapid rate especially among the young generation (Abdul Malek et al., 2022; Hossain & Islam, 2020; Mumena et al., 2022). The high demand of fast-food restaurants accompanied by such as it offers fast service, convenience, food safety, and affordable price (Mohd Hatta et al., 2022; Parikh, 2020). Moreover, the fast-food restaurant has fulfilled the need for young people who have busy and hectic working schedule.

Nevertheless, fast food restaurants have been criticized for causing the obesity epidemic and promoting malnutrition because the food contains high sodium, sugar, and fat. Consequently, fast food received massive criticism from various groups including health professionals, media, and legislators. In response, fast food industries have addressed these problems by implementing socially responsible initiatives which also known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Ali et al., 2021). Also, there is an increasing demand for the fast-food industries to protect the local communities (Yoon et al., 2020). Various health-related CSR activities performed by the fast-food industries to encourage the young generation practice a healthy diet such as modifying portion size, labelling nutritional information, providing nutrition education and offering healthier menu options (Folkvord et al., 2020; Ha et al., 2022; Kim & Ramos, 2018; Liew et al., 2021). Past studies do not widely examine the perceptions of the young generation towards the CSR activities performed by the fast-food industries to promote a sustainable diet. To address this gap, this study is conducted to understand the perception of the young generation towards the health-related CSR activities performed by the

fast-food industries to promote sustainable dietary patterns. This study explores the relationship between the four CSR dimensions of Carroll's CSR pyramid model towards promoting sustainable dietary patterns among the young generation.

Literature Review

Promoting Sustainable Dietary Patterns

Nowadays, the consumers begin to realise the negative impacts of consuming too much fast food. The rising interest in health and well-being have encouraged the fast-food industries to engage in various heathy dietary initiatives. With these initiatives, it promotes a supportive eating environment that can influence the consumers' behaviours to choose a healthier and sustainable food. This is because the consumers prefer quality food intake, and they are more conscious on consuming nutritious, healthy, and safe food. Past scholars highlight that fast food industries play an essential role in influencing consumer diets through increasing the accessibility and availability of sustainable and healthy foods at the restaurants (Lim et al., 2013; Yoon et al., 2020). Therefore, the fast-food industries have the possibility to steer young generation toward choosing healthier food products. This study is guided by the Carroll's pyramid of CSR which postulates that business is socially responsible if the implementation of CSR activities embeds economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 1999, 2016; Tahir et al., 2022).

Economic Dimension

According to Carroll (2016), economic responsibility is considered as the basic responsibility that must be fulfilled by the organization. This refers to the business development, providing job opportunities, and producing and distributing products and services to society with the aim of making profit. Carroll (2016) suggests that the society perceives that business provide services and produce goods needed by the society. When the consumers looking for the products, they are looking for the products that come with value (Gopaul, 2015). Hence, if the business add value to their services and goods, they create more profit and at the same times benefit all the stakeholders. Yoon et al. (2020) further argued that the big portion size and low food nutrition are the potential key drivers of obesity epidemic. It is now the time for the fast-food restaurants to emphasize the food value because nowadays, most young generation are health conscious, and they are more interested to buy nutritious food. In order to attract them to buy the nutritious food, the fast-food restaurants should offer the food at a reasonable price. Furthermore, the fast-food restaurants can revise the current marketing technique such as offering healthy value-bundled meals, convey a better value-for-money message and focus on delivering their promise to the customers (Gopaul, 2015).

Legal Dimension

The business should operate legally according to law and regulations stipulated in the country (Aquino et al., 2021; Mahmood & Bashir, 2020; Rew & Cha, 2020). This includes complying with various federal, state, and local regulations and fulfilling all legal obligations to societal stakeholder. For example, the Ministry of Health Malaysia has enforced mandatory nutrition labelling in 2003 and majority fast food restaurants provide nutritional information of food that

they served to the customers (Vijayakumaran & Amalina, 2018). Providing nutritional information encourages the young generation to choose healthier food (Folkvord et al., 2020). Besides, the fast-food restaurants also have a standardised cooking process to ensure the food is clean, safe, and healthy. Therefore, it is also important for the fast-food restaurants to ensure the ingredients is fresh and the kitchen equipment is clean. Not only that, all staffs need to obtain certificates to indicate they are healthy.

Ethical Dimension

Ethical dimension encompasses the business goes beyond legal regulations or obligations. To illustrate this, business is expected to run their business ethically while embed activities norms, standard and practices that even though they are not codified into law (Carroll, 2016). Presently, there is an increasing demand for fast food restaurants to protect the local communities such as by responding to public health issues (Yoon et al., 2020). The alarming rate of obesity demands the fast-food restaurants to work together with the government to curb this problem. The fast-food restaurants may play the roles by establishing healthy eating environment such as by increasing the availability of healthy menu and reducing portion sizes. This is because fast food restaurants can influence the consumer to make a healthier food choice through food sourcing, marketing, and pricing.

Philanthropic Dimension

Philanthropic dimension refers to the company's activities to do charity to community. The contribution usually in various ways such as cash donations, scholarship provision or providing products and services free of charge (Chrisjatmiko & Margareth, 2018). When the business engages actively with charity activities, it leads to the settlement of social problems in local communities. For example, to promote sustainable dietary patterns among the young generation, the fast-food industries may actively involve by providing nutrition education on their websites. Arslan et al., (2022) agree that the dietary habits of the consumers can be modified with nutrition education because they will have knowledge on how to make healthier food choices especially those who have high health conscious.

Based on the literatures presented, the conceptual framework of this study is developed with four independent variables comprised of CSR dimensions and a dependent variable, sustainable dietary patterns.
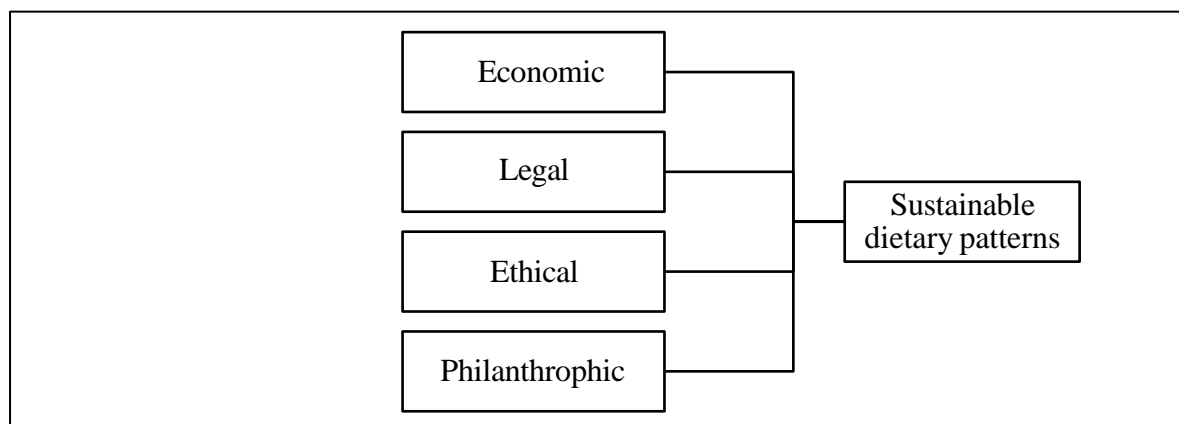
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Theory

This paper is anchored on the Stakeholder Theory as this theory posits that the responsibility of the business is not limited to financial parties only because every action and decision taken impact a wide range of stakeholders (Amanpreet & Lodhia, 2019). Freeman (1984) and Parmar et al. (2010) define stakeholder as any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the accomplishment of the organizational objectives. For example, customers, employees, suppliers, government, competitors, special interest groups and consumer advocates. Every business is obliged to be responsible for all stakeholders by fulfilling their interests and ethical demands. A study conducted by Kim and Ramos (2018) employed this theory to investigate the stakeholder responses toward health-related CSR activities performed by the fast food restaurants to address public health problems. When the fast-food restaurants undertaken this responsibility, it creates an excellent relationship with the stakeholders and gains public trust. This theory fits with this study because the four CSR dimensions performed by the fast-food restaurants reflected the responsibility of the fast food restaurants towards encouraging the young generation to choose healthy food.

Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach using an online survey with 400 respondents aged between 18 and 21 years old staying or working in Selangor. This study utilised both closed and open-ended questions which are adopted and adapted from past studies. This study employed stratified sampling technique to distribute the survey to the respondents through online and face to face. Data collected was analysed by using several statistical analyses such as Descriptive Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Cronbach's alpha, Normality Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis.

Findings

Profile of Respondents

This study gathered 400 respondents to participate in this survey. More than half of respondents were female (72.5%), while the remaining were male (27.5%). Other than that, young adults between the ages of 22 and 24 exhibited a high interest in participating in this survey (60.5%), compared to other age groups. In term of ethnicity of respondents, Malay respondents participated in the survey at the maximum rate (57.0%), while the other Indians and Chinese respondent accounted for (17.5%) and (25.5%) respectively. The findings discovered that majority of the respondents received tertiary education (94.6%), while the rest (1.0%) have secondary school certificate. In addition, majority of the respondents are unemployed (92.0%) because they are currently pursuing their degrees. This parallel with the largest age group participated in this survey. Due to these circumstances, the highest rank of respondents' income was less than RM2,500 (56.0%). In addition, majority respondents eat fast food once a week (64.3%) and they mostly visit the fast-food restaurants with their friends (60.5%). This is perhaps due to the reason that they are still studying, and they spend most of their time at with their friends.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents (N = 400)

Characteristics	Total	Percentage
Gender		
Male	290	72.5
Female	110	27.5
Age		
18-21 years old	122	30.5

22-24 years old	242	60.5
25-27 years old	25	6.25
28-30 years old	11	2.75
Ethic		
Malays	228	57.0
Indians	70	17.5
Chinese	102	25.5
Marital Status		
Married	390	97.5
Single	10	2.50
Educational Level		
PT3/PMR/SPM/SPMV/SMA	4	1.00
Matriculation/Foundation/STPM/STAM	18	4.50
Diploma/Bachelor Degree	355	88.8
Master/PhD	23	5.75
Type of Occupation		
Private Sector	18	4.50
Public Sector	6	1.50
Self-employed	8	2.00
Unemployed	368	92.0
Reasons of unemployed		
Student	362	90.5
Housewife	2	0.50
Currently seeking for job	33	8.25
Others	3	0.75
Monthly income		
Less than RM2,500.00	224	56.0
RM 2,501.00 – RM4,849.00	68	17.0
RM4,850.00 – RM 10,959.00	69	17.3
More than RM 10,959.00	39	9.75
With whom the respondents eat fast food		
Alone	54	13.5
Colleagues	4	1.00
Family	100	25.0
Friends	242	60.5
Frequency of eating fast food (weekly)		
0 time	60	15.0
1-2 times	257	64.3
3-4 times	63	15.8
5-6 times	10	2.50
More than 6 times	10	2.50

Validation and Reliability Test

Although the research instruments were adopted and adapted by the past literatures, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Reliability Analysis were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) once the data was collected to ensure all items are valid and have internal consistency. By conducting this analysis, the factors underlying the numerous sets of dimensions employed in this study can be identified. Notably, EFA results involving 400 respondents in this study posit a remarkable pattern of correlation between the

variables. Furthermore, the analysis also confirm that each question/item utilised for this study was highly correlated. The KMO value of 0.918 postulate that the sample size of 400 respondents were sufficient to measure all five variables in this study. By referring to Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, a test statistic of x^2 (df = 903) = 10187.021, p <0.001 indicating that the correlation matrix was significantly distinct from an identity matrix. Hence, it can be concluded that the question/item used for this study is valid.

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Question/Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Variable: Sustainable dietary patterns					
I am sure the healthy eating initiatives performed by the fast food restaurants are helpful for my diet				0.701	
I am sure the healthy eating initiatives introduced by the fast food restaurants encourage me to choose a healthier option				0.773	
I am interested to buy healthier food choices at fast food restaurants				0.791	
I am interested to know healthier food offered by the fast food restaurants				0.685	
I am sure that the fast food restaurants have the possibility to steer the young generation towards the direction of healthier food				0.698	
I know the healthy food choices offered by the fast food restaurants prevent me from being obese				0.717	
Variable: Economic					
I believe that the healthier food choices should be better value for money	0.558				
believe that the price of healthier food choices at fast food restaurants is reasonable	0.664				
I believe that the fast food restaurant should continuously create economic value	0.705				
I believe that the CSR activities done by fast food restaurants boost up its sales	0.880				
I know the fast food restaurant offers good value for money meals to the customers	0.885				
I believe the fast food restaurants consider changing their current marketing strategies to focus on quality or healthy food	0.786				
Variable: Legal					
I am sure the fast food restaurants prepare the food by following the food regulations standard		.707			

I am aware about the ingredients content in each fast food meal	.581				
I perceive that the fast food restaurants should display the nutritional information	.724				
I believe that reading nutritional information influences me to consume healthy food offered by fast food restaurants	.761				
I prefer buying products from fast food restaurant that comply with legal obligations for products safety	.707				
I prefer buying products from fast food restaurant that gives true product labelling information	.581				
Variable: Ethical					
I am confident that the fast food restaurant is considering the customer's health		.849			
I am confident that fast food restaurant has a sense of responsibility to customer's health		.819			
I believe that fast food restaurant acts responsibly to solve obesity epidemic		.796			
I believe the fast food restaurants should increase the availability of healthier food choices		.574			
believe the fast food restaurants should begin to sell low calorie food		.567			
I am sure the fast food restaurants implement ethical business conduct		.441			
Variable: Philanthropic					
I believe the fast food restaurants should actively engage in nutrition education through their websites					.564
I often see the fast food restaurant is actively involved with the local community					.656
I know that the fast food restaurant plays positive role in the society					.679
I know that the fast food restaurant makes impactful contributions to the society					.775
I believe that the fast food restaurant involves with volunteerism activities within the society					.820
I am sure that the fast food restaurant engages actively in charitable activities					.704
Eigenvalue	13.377	3.741	3.205	1.946	1.705
Percentage of Variance	31.109	8.699	7.453	4.526	3.965
Total Variance Explained	31.109	39.808	47.261	51.787	55.752

Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.918
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Approx. Chi-Square)	10193.810
Sig.	0.000

Using the reliability analysis, the results of Cronbach's alpha demonstrated that each variable or construct employed in this study contribute positively towards measuring the same construct or variable. According to Nunnally (1978), the value of 0.70 and above is considered acceptable to measure reliability, specifically internal consistency or item interrelatedness of items in the questionnaires. By referring to the Cronbach's alpha value as presented in Table 3, the value of all constructs was greater than 0.700 whereby; (i) Sustainable dietary pattern (0.879), (ii) Economic (0.859), (iii) Legal (0.767), (iv) Ethical (0.800) and (v) Philanthropic (0.855). These results conclude there is a high level of internal consistency among all items.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's alpha)

Variable/Construct	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha	Reliability assumed
Sustainable dietary patterns	6	0.879	Yes
Economic	6	0.859	Yes
Legal	6	0.767	Yes
Ethical	6	0.800	Yes
Philanthropic	6	0.855	Yes

Testing Parametric Assumptions
Normality testing is conducted to determine whether a dataset has a normal distribution or not. Hence, this analysis was carried out to validate the normality assumption which is required before performing the multiple regression analysis. In order to determine the normality of the dataset, the skewness and kurtosis value should be within +/-2. However Kline (2005) proposes other alternative statistical perspective in terms of normality assumption, whereby the skewness value can goes as far +/-3 and +/-10 for kurtosis value.

Table 4: Normality Analysis (skewness and kurtosis)

Variable/Construct	Skewness	Kurtosis	Normality assumed
Sustainable dietary patterns	-0.339	0.25	Yes
Economic	-0.717	3.024	Yes
Legal	-0.836	2.835	Yes
Ethical	-0.156	1.179	Yes
Philanthropic	-0.221	0.746	Yes

The linearity analysis was performed whether all independent variables employed in this study (economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic) have a linear relationship with the dependent variable (sustainable dietary patterns). By referring to the ANOVA results, it can be perceived that al independent variables have a linear relationship with the dependent variable, with a significance value of 0.001.

Table 5: Linearity Analysis

Variable/Construct	df	F	Sig.	Linearity assumed
Economic and sustainable dietary patterns	1	92.943	<0.001	Yes
Legal and sustainable dietary patterns	1	129.641	<0.001	Yes
Ethical and sustainable dietary patterns	1	172.578	<0.001	Yes
Philanthropic and sustainable dietary patterns	1	69.010	<0.001	Yes

As presented in the earlier part of this paper, this study aims to investigate the association between a dependent variable (sustainable dietary patterns) and multiple independent variables (economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic). In order to fulfil this research objective, multiple regression analysis was conducted to explain how the independent variables employed in this study predict or explain variation in the dependent variable. Based on the Model summary results, the R^2 value was 0.350 and the adjusted R^2 was 0.343, indicating that the model used in this study fits 35% of the data. The Durbin-Watson value of 2.959 indicates there was no significant autocorrelation issue.

Table 6: Linear Multiple Regression (Model Summary[b])

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.591[a]	.350	.343	4.07710	2.959

a. Predictors: (Constant), Philanthropic, Economic, Ethical, Legal
b. Dependent Variable: Sustainable dietary patterns

The ANOVA results discovered that the entire model utilised in this study was significant (p<0.000), indicating that there was a significant relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables employed in this study.

Table 7: Linear Multiple Regression (ANOVA[a])

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3466.240	4	866.560	52.131	.000[b]
	Residual	6449.612	388	16.623		
	Total	9915.852	392			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainable dietary patterns
b. Predictors: (Constant), Philanthropic, Economic, Ethical, Legal

By referring to the Multiple Regression results, the Collinearity statistics demonstrated that the value for each construct was greater than 0.30 and the VIF value was less than 0.4, indicating that there was no multi-collinearity issue in this study. Furthermore, the results posit that three independent variables (economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic) (p<0.050) employed in this study have a statistically significant relationship with the dependant variable (sustainable dietary patterns), except philanthropic as the significant value is 0.985 (p>0.050). The most influential factor in promoting the sustainable dietary patterns is through the ethical CSR

practices performed by the fast food restaurants as the Beta value is the highest among other independent variables with value of 0.370.

Table 8: Multiple Regression (Coefficient[a])

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.882	1.667		.529	.597		
	Economic	.226	.085	.140	2.653	.008	.598	1.671
	Legal	.245	.080	.178	3.082	.002	.501	1.997
	Ethical	.451	.067	.370	6.762	.000	.559	1.790
	Philanthropic	-.001	.066	-.001	-.019	.985	.598	1.672

a.   Dependent Variable: Sustainable dietary patterns

Discussion and Conclusion
There are various CSR activities performed by the fast food restaurants in order to promote healthy eating among the young generation. The findings of this study conclude that ethical dimension was found to be the most important CSR activities that should be fulfilled by the fast food restaurants. Nevertheless, only one CSR dimensions, philanthropic was found to have no significant effect on promoting sustainable dietary patterns among the young generation. Three CSR dimensions (economic, legal and ethical) were found to have significant association in promoting sustainable dietary patterns whereby this findings parallel by study conducted by (Kent et al., 2020; Tahir et al., 2022). The health related CSR activities performed by the fast food restaurants are helpful in promoting the sustainable dietary patterns. These includes by offering healthier food with reasonable price, adhering to food regulations, providing nutritional information, ensuring the ingredients used is fresh and safe and acts responsibly with public health problem.

This study concludes that the fast food restaurants shall play their ethical role to promote the sustainable dietary patterns among young generation. Nowadays, the young generation are more concern on the number of calories, fat, and sodium they consumed. The findings propound that this is the future trend for fast food restaurants to offer healthier food options to young generation who are aware of the benefits of a balanced diet. Some fast food restaurants started to offer menu that consist of lower-fat and lower-calorie salads, sandwiches and desserts that are tasty and nutritious. This signifies that many fast food restaurants have transformed the image from an unhealthy food to healthy fast food. When the young generation begin to eat healthier food, they improve their health and well-being. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to the whole population as it only covers Selangor area. Future studies may look into conducting this study on other state or carry out a qualitative study to explore the perception of young generation in depth.

Acknowledgement

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