

# Public Perceptions of Corporate Community Involvement: A Net-Cost approach among University Students in India and the Netherlands

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Many companies are currently exploring (or re-exploring) the concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate community involvement (CCI). Such projects encompass a variety of forms and points of focus, ranging from corporate support for training and educating adults or youth in local communities to nationwide programs helping welfare recipients find jobs to globally focused efforts providing aid to developing countries. These programs can include a variety of activities (e.g., donating money or organizing employee volunteering). For reasons that are yet unclear, individuals (or the public) can have differing reactions when presented with examples of the involvement of

corporations in local communities. People perceive CCI differently depending upon their own contexts and frames of reference. A better understanding of the definition and perception of CCI is needed, particularly from an international comparative perspective. This study draws upon data from a survey that addresses a wide array of concrete forms of CCI. Data were collected from business students in two different countries: the Netherlands and India. The objective of this study is to identify differences between these countries regarding public perceptions of CCI.

## Theoretical framework

Although the notion that

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corporations should have social responsibilities in addition to their wealth-generating function is still contested (Friedman, 1962; Henderson, 2001), many corporations are acting on such responsibilities, and business organizations are experiencing increasing internal and external pressure to fulfill broader social goals (Davies, 2003; Freeman et al., 2001; Logsdon and Wood, 2002). Carroll (1979) considers the corporate social responsibility of businesses to encompass "the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time" (p. 500). From a business perspective, the success and failure of companies (both national and international) is determined by their interaction with society. An increasing number of companies are focusing on their roles within society and how they can conduct business in a socially responsible manner.

Within the general topic of corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate philanthropy has evolved significantly in recent decades, and it is becoming more strategic (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Corporate philanthropy has traditionally been seen as an interaction between the commercial and nonprofit sectors, with companies simply donating money.

Current views are dominated by the broader concept of corporate community involvement (CCI), however, which includes corporate philanthropy (Seifert, et al, 2003), corporate social initiatives (Hess et al., 2002), and charitable giving (Brammer and Millington, 2004). The concept of CCI can be considered as a synonym for, an aspect of, and even a measure for CSR (Barnett, 2007; Carroll, 1999; Keim, 1978). Burke and colleagues (1986) define CCI as the provision of goods and services by companies to nonprofit and civil society organizations.

In other words, CCI is the concrete (in most cases, local) manifestation of socially responsible business. It involves collaborations between business and nonprofit organizations and investment on the part of a company in its immediate or broader surroundings; it is an active contribution to the resolution of social issues (Meijs, 2004). Meijs and Van der Voort (2003) distinguish several dimensions of CCI activities in terms of "Five M's": Money, Means, Manpower, Mass, and Media. These dimensions differ in terms of the amount of effort and hard cash that companies invest or spend. They may also differ in the benefits that they provide for companies.

The dimension of Money concerns donations or sponsorships. The sponsorship relationship between

McDonald's and FIFA or the Olympic Games is an example of CCI that is closely related to commercial sponsoring and that is based on money (see Tschirhart, 2005). The Manpower dimension involves contributions of employee time and expertise (also known as "corporate volunteering" or "employee volunteering"). Alternative teambuilding experiences and social responsibility outings are examples of ways in which businesses can stimulate volunteer work among their employees. The Means dimension refers to the provision of such tangible resources as computers, furniture, copying services, or accommodations. For example, a local bank may offer its facilities as a meeting space for a local nonprofit organization. The Media dimension refers to the possibility of "tagging along" with the communications of the for-profit or nonprofit partner to publicize their collaborative projects. One well-known example within the business literature involves cause-related marketing, as in the ninemillion.org campaign led by Nike and the UNHCR. The dimension of Mass refers to opportunities resulting from the co-operation of several local, regional, or national organizations to attract attention from national media, local governments, and large foundations. Although the Mass and Media dimensions remain under-

utilized in the Netherlands, their use is increasing relative to the other dimensions. The five dimensions of CCI are not independent. Most organizations combine several dimensions in their programs (e.g., when their employees volunteer as part of a fundraising campaign and the company matches the money that is raised). Van der Voort and colleagues (2009) observe that CCI activities are diverse, and that they differ in terms of motives for companies (benefits) and forms (costs). The motives that lead companies to engage in CCI have been the subject of broad discussion in the literature (see e.g., Ross, 1997; Tuffrey, 1997; Luijk, 2000; Ellen et al., 2000; Porter and Kramer, 2002; Peloza and Hassay, 2006).

With regard to costs, CCI programs differ according to the level of commitment the required, in terms of both the resources donated and resources needed to operate the program (Meijs et al, 2009). Although the literature addresses this level of commitment only with regard to corporate volunteering (i.e., the Manpower dimension) (Meijs and Kerkhof, 2001), it involves a variety of activities (i.e., recognition, support, organizing, and sponsoring), each of which can relate to multiple dimensions of CCI. First, *recognition* activities serve to demonstrate the organization's

appreciation for the voluntary efforts of their employees. In some cases, this can involve matching donations made by employees (Money). Second, programs may involve *support* activities, in which the organization allows employees to use organizational resources or have flexible working schedules. In some cases, organizations may offer the use of their networks (Mass) to forward appeals for funds or volunteers. A third category of activities involves the *organization* of voluntary activities or opportunities for employees. In this case, organizations are actively involved as they arrange volunteer opportunities for their employees. One example that relates to the Means dimension would involve organizing an event in which employees collect clothing for a nonprofit organization. Finally, *sponsoring* activities involve allowing employees to volunteer during working hours and supporting them with financial and other resources. Such activities illustrate how the various dimensions of CCI can be combined.

The level of commitment involved in CCI programs in relation to the Five M's can also be described in terms of Austin's (2000) three stages in the relationship between commercial and nonprofit organizations: philanthropic, transactional, and integrative. In the philanthropic stage, the nature of the

relationship is largely that of a charitable donor and a recipient. Although a large share of all commercial-nonprofit relations can be described in these terms, such collaborations are increasingly shifting towards higher levels of cooperation. Transactional relationships involve explicit resource exchanges focused on specific activities (e.g., cause-related marketing, event sponsorship, and contractual service arrangements). Yet other collaborations have evolved into the integrative stage, in which the missions, people, and activities of the partner organizations begin to merge into forms involving more collective action and organizational integration.

Pressure from stakeholders is another reason that companies may have for engaging in CCI. Hess and colleagues (2002) note that the market is changing under influence of the moral desires of stakeholders. For example, the purchasing behavior of consumers is influenced by the trade-off between their own moral desires and their desire to purchase goods at the lowest possible price. Perreira (2003) shows that more than 90% of the employees of one company (Timberland) have chosen to work at this organization because of its corporate community program. Governments are also pressuring companies to act responsibly by taking

such measures as integrating CSR guidelines into their purchasing policies. For their part, governments are also under pressure to focus on sustainable procurement and similar practices (Pianoo, 2011). As a consequence, these stakeholders are becoming increasingly relevant to the legitimacy of the company. In addition, service-delivery organizations are increasingly calling upon commercial companies to engage in actions to support their activities (e.g., sponsoring for local museums or corporate volunteering for the local Red Cross).

Many businesses and nonprofit organizations are struggling to arrive at real and sustainable designs for their CCI programs, in which philanthropy is replaced by transactions. Austin's (2000) third phase, integrative relations, is still uncommon in the Netherlands. Even globally, only a few initiatives ever approach the integrative stage. The partnerships between ING Chances for Children and UNICEF and between TNT and the United Nations World Food Program represent steps in this direction.

### **Cross-cultural comparison**

Because the concept of CCI is a social construct, interpretations are likely to differ by context, particularly with regard to concrete actions. In addition, because companies are embedded within the systems of the countries in which they

are located, they are subject to differing degrees of internal and external pressures to engage in CCI, and these differences lead to different initiatives (Logsdon and Wood, 2002). Conversely, as observed by Marquis and colleagues (2007), companies within a given community tend to have similar patterns of CCI, although these patterns differ from those of companies within other communities. The CCI behavior of companies is thus shaped by strong forces of "community isomorphism," which also creates differences in CCI between communities.

The rationale that we propose for our research is that public perceptions of CCI are based on a net-cost approach, although they are influenced by specific aspects of the communities in which companies operate. The net-cost approach that we propose is the same as the approach applied in studies by Handy and colleagues (2000) and by Meijs and colleagues (2003) regarding public perceptions of volunteering. As with volunteering, the net-cost approach predicts that a given CCI activity is more likely to be perceived as CCI if the benefits of the activity for the company are lower than its costs to the company. In this way, we aim to define the extent to which consumers and employees perceive specific activities as CCI.

In this paper, we focus on perceptual

diversity based upon differences between the Netherlands and India. These perceptions can obviously be expected to differ considerably, given the incomparable states of the economy, government, and civil society in the two countries. From the civil society perspective, Salamon and Sokolowski (2003) attribute differences between the countries with regard to the context and level of volunteering to the social origins of their nonprofit sectors. The roles of governments within or towards the nonprofit sector based differ as well, as they are rooted in the histories of their respective societies. While the Netherlands is a clear example of the corporatist model, the situation in India is different. According to Kabalo (2009), the influence of the colonial era on relations between the state and the nonprofit sector can still be observed in the development of the nonprofit sector in India and other former colonies. In India, the nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations are widespread and predominantly rural based, with dominant activities in the sectors of education, human rights, and advocacy. Nearly 2% of the adult population is considered to be active in volunteering. The economic value of volunteering in India is approximately 2.8 billion dollars, or about 0.6% of the nation's gross domestic

product (GDP). In contrast, the share of the Dutch population that contributes time to nonprofit and voluntary sector organizations ranges between 30% and 50%. Volunteers are active in the areas of healthcare, education, social services, and sports and culture. The economic value of volunteering in the Netherlands is quite substantial, representing approximately 60 billion dollars, or 15% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). These key features of the nonprofit sectors in both India and the Netherlands are based on data from the Johns Hopkins Comparative Sector Project (Salamon et al., 1999; Salamon, Sokolowski, et al., 2004).

The two countries differ from a cultural perspective as well. According to Hofstede (1994), the differences between the national cultures of the Netherlands and India are most prominent in such areas as social inequality (i.e., power distance) and in the extent of masculinity. India's scores on these two dimensions are significantly higher than are those of the Netherlands, indicating that Indian society is more likely to accept and expect an unequal distribution of power. The degree of individualism in society is significantly higher in the Netherlands, where ties between individuals are loose and people are expected to look after themselves.

Socio-cultural differences between

countries have been associated with differences in public perceptions of volunteering (Meijs et al., 2003). Studies of these perceptions have revealed large differences between India and other regions – particularly the Netherlands. Table 1 presents a list of large rank-order differences between the Netherlands and India with regard to perceptions of volunteering. These rankings are derived from the study by Meijs and colleagues (2003), in which 50 items regarding volunteering were presented to convenience samples in the Netherlands and India. For more than half (27) of the items, had rank-order differences of 10 or higher (see Table 1). Respondents in India were more likely than those in the Netherlands were to perceive some of the items as examples of volunteering. For example, an office manager or an hourly wage employee who freely chooses to work overtime without pay is definitely

perceived as a volunteer in India, but not in the Netherlands. In contrast, respondents in the Netherlands were more likely than their counterparts in India were to perceive other items as examples of volunteering. For example, Dutch respondents were more likely to consider a parent who becomes a Scout leader because his child is a member of scouting, is more seen as a volunteer in the Netherlands than in India. The same result is seen for an executive who volunteers to serve meals for the homeless in order to impress his date. The findings from the public perception of volunteering in India suggest that the cultural context does appear to affect the ranking of a volunteer scenario. These differences between the Netherlands and India in attitudes towards volunteering might also be the case for the attitudes towards CCI in both countries.

**Table 1**

Items	Ranking	
	NL	India
A person who donates blood to a local hospital	15	1
A teacher who serves on the board of a local library	9	19
The home owner who helps create a crime watch group to safeguard his own neighbourhood	14	32
The person who is ill with Cystic Fibrosis, who participates in a pharmaceutical study, to determine the effectiveness of a new drug in treating the disease	28	14
An office manager who accompanies his wife to visit seniors in an nursing home	26	15

A parent who becomes a scout leader because of his-her child desires to be a scout. No one else will lead the troop so the parent agrees, but only as long as his-her child is involved	18	43
A teenager who offers to program the computer at a nonprofit agency, without pay, in order to establish "resume experience". After three months the teenager plans to quit and apply for a paying job	25	37
The hourly wage worker who, by his/her own choice, works overtime without pay	37	8
An office manager who, by his/her own choice works overtime without pay	45	11
A teenager who volunteers to serve a meal at the soup kitchen for the homeless in order to impress his date	21	41
The teenager who presents a program on youth leadership to an audience of peers at a religious youth conference with hope to find a suitable date	24	46
An IBM executive who volunteers to serve a meal at the soup kitchen for the homeless in order to impress his date	20	49
A teacher who volunteers to serve a meal at the soup kitchen for the homeless in order to impress his date	22	48
The medical doctor who volunteers to serve a meal at the soup kitchen for the homeless in order to impress his date	23	44
A lawyer who provides legal services to a non-profit organization at half his/her regular time	46	26
The trainer who does a free workshop for the Breast Cancer Foundation as a marketing device	42	25
A person who takes care of a spouse's children from a previous marriage (step-parenting)	40	22
The CEO of a local corporation who is volunteer chairperson of the United Way campaign ad who delegates all the work to the assistant	30	40
The paid staff person who serves on the board of United Way In a slot that is reserved for his/her agency	49	23
A teenager who agrees to offer his/her services as an usher at the symphony concert in exchange for a free ticket to the concert	33	45
The trainer who does a free workshop for an organization as a marketing device	43	29
An IBM executive who is granted a year of social service leave with pay, to become a temporary staff person with a non-profit organization	47	31



The medical doctor who agrees to offer his/her services in case of an emergency at the symphony concert in exchange for a free ticket to the concert	32	47
A teacher who agrees to offer his/her services to the symphony orchestra (for three hours) in exchange for a free ticket to the concert	31	50
The medical doctor who delivers a research paper at a conference held by the American Medical Association (AMA)	41	24
The paid staff person who serves on the board of a non-profit groups in a slot that is reserved for his/her agency	48	36
An accountant charged with embezzling, who accepts a sentence of 250 hours of community service in lieu of prosecution	50	38

Scores between 0 (not a volunteer) and 100 (definitely a volunteer) subtracted from Meijs et al., 2003

### Empirical framework

This study draws upon results of a survey involving a wide array of concrete examples of CCI that combine the net-cost approach with the five areas distinguished by Meijs and Van der Voort (2003): Money, Mass, Media, Manpower and Means. This combination resulted in the development of 37 items: nine related to Money, six related to Means, seven related to Media, seven related to Mass, and eight related to Manpower. The items were constructed on different levels of investment (i.e., high and low effort) and on different levels of explicit benefits for the company or CEO. One real-life example (most of which are derived from the Dutch context) is included within each dimension, in order to indicate whether the public actually perceives these CCI activities/efforts as CCI according to the

net-cost approach. Each of the 37 items is answered along a five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "absolutely not CCI" and 5 representing "absolutely CCI." One item was deleted from the sample due to lack of response in the Netherlands. Another item was deleted due to the lack of fit with the Five M's, which we use as a framework. In addition to the 35 items on CCI, four general items on the position of CSR and CCI were asked, yielding a total of 39 items.

The database for this study was constructed by collecting data from convenience samples in two countries. In September 2010, data were collected from a group of undergraduate business administration students (488) in the Netherlands. In October and November 2010, data were collected from a comparable group of undergraduate

management students (95) in India. The total number of respondents was 583, with considerable oversampling in the Netherlands. In total, 35 items were taken into account. More than two thirds (67.6%) of all respondents, were male, and the average age of respondents was 20.35 years.

The sample was first subjected to an independent t-test using SPSS, in order to analyze differences between the Netherlands and India regarding the five dimensions (i.e., Money, Means, Manpower, Mass, and Media). Second, an item-level rank-order analysis was conducted in order to examine specific differences for each item. Following the rank-order analysis applied in the research on public perceptions of volunteering (Meijs et al., 2003), a rank difference of 10 out of 35 was applied in this analysis.

**Results for the general propositions**

The survey is divided into four general items and 35 specific items that reflect

the diversity in CCI. The overall results of the four general propositions regarding the extent to which CCI is related to business practices are shown in Table 2. The items measured here reflect the extent to which CCI supports the company’s core business, contributes to its HR goals and external profiling or exposure, and influences the choice of employer.

The cross-national results for these four general items suggest that respondents in India were more strongly convinced that CCI is and must be related to the business than did respondents in the Netherlands. The Indian respondents held a stronger attitude that CCI supports the core business, and they attached greater importance to this aspect when choosing an employer (Table 2). The latter result is in line with trends in the US, where high-potential graduates are expressing increasing interest in companies that are actively engaged in corporate citizenship/corporate social responsibility.

**Table 2**

Items	N		Mean		SD	
	NL	India	NL	India	NL	India
CCI supports core business**	488	95	3.40	3.91	0.91	0.94
CCI contributes to HR goals	488	95	3.65	3.83	0.93	0.93
CCI contributes to external profiling (exposure)	488	95	3.91	3.94	1.03	0.82
CCI activities influences my choice of employer**	488	95	3.01	3.83	0.97	1.02

\*\* Significant at 1%

Table 3 presents a general overview of the cross-national perception of CCI based on the five dimensions distinguished by Meijs and Van der Voort (2003). The overall scores for each dimension are calculated by dividing the sum of the scores for each item on the dimension by the number of items on the dimension (e.g., there are nine items for the Money dimension). In general, results for the separate dimensions and the underlying individual items (rated along a five-point Likert scale) do not contain any scores lower than 2 or higher than 4. This indicates that the respondents had no outspoken perceptions of specific activities as "absolutely not CCI" or "absolutely CCI." All five dimensions distinguished by Meijs and Van der Voort (2003), are perceived as CCI by the respondents.

The results reveal differences between the two countries. In general, respondents in India were less likely than those in the

Netherlands were to perceive items as examples of CCI. One exception involves the items in the Mass dimension. The Indian respondents were significantly more likely to perceive Mass as a form of CCI than were their counterparts in the Netherlands. Significant differences were also identified with regard to the perception of both Money and Means as forms of CCI, with respondents in India being less likely than those in the Netherlands were to perceive these items as CCI.

#### Results of the rank-order analysis

The overall scores on the five dimensions of CCI suggest a number of interesting implications. In order to explore these differences further, an item-level analysis was conducted, paying particular attention to efforts and benefits. This section presents the overall results from the rank-order analysis of the items. In the overview provided in Table 4, the figures appearing in the third column are

Table 3

Items	N		Mean		SD	
	NL	India	NL	India	NL	India
Money*	488	95	3.53	3.35	0.58	0.76
Means**	488	95	3.65	3.20	0.53	0.86
Mass*	488	95	3.23	3.40	0.55	0.73
Media	488	95	3.31	3.30	0.50	0.74
Manpower	488	95	3.23	3.20	0.50	0.78
Overall			3.42	3.29		

\*Significant at 5%, \*\* Significant at 1%

based on the Dutch results. The rank orders and means for India are presented in the fifth column. These results provide a clear indication of country-specific differences. The table also indicates

significant differences between country-specific outcomes for the items.

First of all, on the overall score of 35 items the (absolute) difference is only 0.13 indicating that CCI is an international

**Table 4**

Items	Variable	NL		India	
		RO	Mean	RO	Mean
Nike donates \$ 500,000 to various organizations to assist the victims of the tsunami and to help with reconstruction.	Money	1	3.97	1	3.84
A local restaurant donates left-over food to a meal program for homeless people.**	Means	2	3.96	14	3.34
A conglomerate launches a marketing campaign for a popular brand of diapers announcing that, for every package of diapers sold, it will make a donation to UNICEF to cover the cost of one vaccine in a developing country.**	Media	3	3.95	2	3.62
A well-known soccer team donates football kits to a nonprofit organization in Sierra Leone, so that the sports teams in that country can have the proper equipment.**	Means	4	3.87	18	3.29
A company donates all of the computers that are replaced every two years to a non-profit organization.**	Means	5	3.82	16	3.31
A company donates new furniture to a neighbourhood centre.**	Means	6	3.82	33	3.02
A company donates 2% of its total sales proceeds at the end of the year.*	Money	7	3.81	4	3.51
The corporate foundation of a major financial service provider organizes a network meeting for businesses and non-profit organizations in order to stimulate corporate community involvement.**	Mass	8	3.79	17	3.31
A company doubles the donations that its employees make to a variety of nonprofit organisations.**	Money	9	3.78	30	3.11
A company cooperates with nonprofit organisations to facilitate a volunteering programme in which employees may participate during working hours.**	Manpower	10	3.75	21	3.26
Employees of a telecommunications company cook meals for the residents of a disadvantaged neighbourhood as part of a corporate initiative promoting shared meals as a means of developing social cohesion in the community.**	Manpower	11	3.72	13	3.35
A company donates • 25,000 to a nonprofit organization.	Money	12	3.69	6	3.49
A company donates • 10,000 to a nonprofit organization	Money	13	3.68	7	3.47
A company donates • 5,000 to a nonprofit organization.*	Money	14	3.62	22	3.26
An oil company donates money to a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to animals that are victims of an oil spill.	Money	15	3.57	10	3.41
A financial service provider makes its meeting rooms available for the monthly meetings of a nonprofit organization in the neighbourhood.**	Means	16	3.56	28	3.19

In connection with the director's 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary, a company requests donations to a nonprofit organization instead of presents.	Media	17	3.54	20	3.27
A company organizes a network meeting with business relations in order to provide an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to develop new contacts, while also soliciting new projects for itself.	Mass	18	3.46	3	3.59
A company advertises internally for a nonprofit organization's fund-raising drive.	Media	19	3.43	11	3.40
A company allows an employee to leave work early on Wednesday afternoons (without making up the time) in order to volunteer.	Manpower	20	3.37	26	3.21
A company with a history of environmental pollution launches an employee-volunteering programme in which employees clean up a park in the neighbourhood.	Manpower	21	3.36	12	3.38
A company includes a free advertisement for a nonprofit organization in its personnel newsletter.	Media	22	3.36	15	3.31
An insurance company sponsors a cultural festival.	Money	23	3.31	23	3.22
A company cooperates with nonprofit organizations to facilitate a volunteering program in which employees may participate in their own time.	Manpower	24	3.26	9	3.41
A company posts volunteer job openings on its own intranet.	Media	25	3.23	31	3.08
A company facilitates a flexible work schedule so that its employees can volunteer. Employees are required to work the full number of hours in a regular work week	Manpower	26	3.22	19	3.27
A company announces volunteer job opportunities in certain nonprofit organizations in its monthly newsletter to business relations	Media	27	3.18	25	3.21
The director of a company forwards a sponsorship request from a nonprofit organization to his business network.	Mass	28	3.12	29	3.17
The director of an accountancy firm forwards a call for volunteers for the cancer foundation to all of its employees.**	Mass	29	3.02	5	3.51
The director of an accountancy firm forwards a call for volunteers for the cancer foundation to all of his employees, because he has been on the foundation's board for years**	Mass	30	3.01	8	3.41
A catering company provides free sandwiches for a nonprofit organization's event, to which the catering company receives 10 VIP tickets.	Means	31	2.90	32	3.04
A company allows an employee to leave work early on Wednesday afternoons (without making up the time) in order to volunteer. In return, the company receives advertising space on the nonprofit organisation's website.**	Manpower	32	2.73	24	3.22
A company includes a free advertisement for a nonprofit organization in its personnel newsletter, in exchange for a link on the nonprofit organization's website.**	Media	33	2.71	27	3.20
A company involves its employees as volunteers for Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), because the director's wife is a recovering alcoholic.	Manpower	34	2.52	35	2.47
An insurance company sponsors a cultural festival and receives 1000 free tickets for its customers. Total	Money	35	2.48	34	2.82
<b>Total</b>			<b>3.42</b>		<b>3.29</b>

\*Significant at 5%, \*\* Significant at 1%

concept. Nevertheless, an item-level comparison of the results from the Netherlands and India reveals diversity in perceptions. Compared to India, Dutch respondents had higher mean scores on 23 of the 35 items. With regard to rank-order differences, 11 of the 35 items revealed differences of ten places or more. A somehow developing distinction between perceptions can be seen with regard to the level of benefits a company (or CEO) receives for the efforts made. Results from the Dutch sample clearly indicate that obvious benefits for a company (e.g., advertisements or free tickets) lead to a lower perceptions of CCI. In contrast, the Dutch results reveal higher scores for the items that do not state benefits for the company or CEO. For the Indian sample, this is less the case, thus suggesting that benefitting from efforts is more accepted in India. For example, receiving advertising space on the nonprofit's website for allowing employees to volunteer is more CCI in India (24), while it is ranked in the one of the last positions (32) in the Netherlands. In addition, organizing a network event for nonprofit organizations while soliciting business for themselves is ranked high (3) in India and relatively low (18) in the Netherlands.

At the aggregate level, the Indian sample has a significantly higher score

on the Mass dimension. This is reflected at the item level, with the exception of one item: the involvement of a corporate foundation that organizes a network meeting. There are large discrepancies between India and the Netherlands with regard to perceptions of using the network of the company or the CEO network as a dimension of CCI. For example, respondents in India considered a CEO who forwards an appeal for volunteers to his employees as a strong example of CCI (5), while the Dutch respondents did not interpret this as a clear form of CCI (29). For a similar item with a slight change in context (i.e., the CEO forwards an appeal for donations to his business network), however, the perception of CCI decreases dramatically in India (30), while remaining essentially the same in the Netherlands (28).

Although it is not clearly reflected in the general means of the five dimensions, the Media dimension received lower scores than did the other four dimensions for both the Indian and the Dutch respondents. In both countries, five of the six items for this dimension appear in the lower half of the rank order. The only "outlier" in this regard is the real-life example of cause-related marketing, which could have been interpreted as either donating money or donating media. Moreover, this example is strongly

embedded in management practices and probably in the minds of consumers as well. Taken together, these two arguments could explain the relatively high scores for this item.

The outcomes for the Manpower dimension also reveal interesting variations, with country-specific differences on three items. For the respondents in India, it apparently does not matter whether corporate volunteering takes place within or outside office hours or whether it is facilitated by the employer or initiated by the employee. In essence, the costs incurred by the company do not factor into the equation. In contrast, respondents in the Netherlands indicate that employer involvement is indeed an important element in the perception of Manpower-related activities as CCI. Without investment from the company, such activities are less likely to be interpreted as CCI. For example, the Indian respondents were less likely to perceive corporate volunteering during working hours as CCI than were the Dutch respondents (NL=8; IN=18). In contrast, Indian respondents indicated a higher comparative perception of CCI for corporate volunteering activities that take place in the employee's own time (NL=24; IN=10).

Although scores for the items within the Means dimension were relatively high in the Netherlands, the Indian sample apparently did not consider donation of goods and services by companies to be similarly characteristic of CCI. For example, while donating food appears second in the rank order of the Netherlands, it is ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in India. A similar pattern emerged for the donation of sports equipment (NL=4; IN=19), computers (NL=5; IN=17), and furniture (NL=6; IN=34).

Respondents in both countries apparently concur that monetary donations constitute CCI. In India, however, there is a clear distinction with regard to whether money is donated solely by the company or jointly by the employees and the company. Joint donations by employees and the employer were clearly less likely to be interpreted as CCI by the Indian sample as they were by the Dutch sample (NL=9; IN=31).

As stated above, one real-life example drawn from the Dutch context was included for each dimension of CCI. In almost every case, these examples ranked higher among the Dutch respondents than they did among the Indian respondents. Recognition of these initiatives offers a logical explanation for this outcome.

## Conclusions and discussion

This paper is intended to show and analyze differences in perceptions of corporate community involvement in two culturally and economically different countries. This research clearly indicates that, in both countries, CCI is perceived as more than corporate volunteering or simply donating money. In general, each of the five M dimensions (i.e., money, means, manpower, mass, and media) score in the middle of the five-point scale. In India, the overall scores for the perception of activities related to the Means and Money dimensions as CCI were lower, and scores for the Mass dimension were higher. One explanation for these outcomes could be that the overwhelming magnitude of social issues (e.g., poverty and homelessness) in India leads to a general acceptance of a higher need for collaboration between companies and between companies and civil society than is common in the Netherlands. It is interesting to note that, in the Dutch context, practitioners often define CCI largely in terms of corporate volunteering or employee volunteering. Our findings indicate that they would do well to consider the other four instruments as well.

This research reveals a number of other interesting differences between the two countries with regard to perceptions

at the level of concrete propositions. First of all, on the overall score of 35 items the (absolute) difference is only 0.13 indicating that CCI is a general international concept. Nevertheless, compared to respondents in the Netherlands, respondents in India are more convinced that CCI may, can, or even should support the company. Significant differences emerge regarding the use of CCI to support the core business. Moreover, the business students in India had significantly stronger perceptions regarding the influence of CCI on the choice of employer than did their counterparts in the Netherlands. Explanations for these outcomes can be found in cultural aspects or in the way the economies work (e.g., the role of businesses or governments).

The most interesting results of the cross-national analysis emerge at the level of propositions within the five dimensions. In contrast to the Dutch respondents, the Indian respondents seem to appreciate the benefits that CCI offers to the company. While Dutch respondents apparently perceived a clear relationship between effort and benefit and had an appreciation for net costs, the Indian respondents did less automatically acknowledge this relationship or its direction. The Indian respondents appeared less concerned about whether



the company (and, more specifically, the CEO) profits from CCI activities. But, the Indian sample is too small to make definite conclusions.

Overall, this exploratory study has revealed interesting results that call for additional research. Although conclusions and implications based on this sample should be approached with caution, the results suggest that there is an interesting international discussion regarding about the "fine lines" of appropriateness in the context of CCI activities. Based on the results of this research, we suggest that CCI activities are not generally perceived in the same way in different contexts; these perceptions are influenced by country-specific characteristics (e.g., culture and economy). Such "community isomorphism" shapes the CCI behavior of companies, thereby causing companies to act according to the particular needs

existing within their societies (Marquis et al, 2007).

Further research is needed in this area. The narrow distribution of the survey results raise the question of whether the outcomes should be attributed to the failure of the net-cost approach or to a lack of sufficient discrimination among the examples used in the survey. Further insight could be gained by discussing the examples in focus groups and asking participants to explain why they think that particular examples might lose or gain points. These results could be used to develop a new survey. Whether in its present or in a revised form, the survey should obviously be administered in many more countries, cultures, and contexts, thereby generating a broad database with which to test the net-cost approach and identify intercultural differences.

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