Managerial Perspectives on the Role of Corporate Social Responsibility within the Oil and Gas Industry in South East Asia

Henry Groen
Dip. Bus, Admin, (Mount Royal College); CMA, (Alberta);
MBA (Athabasca University)

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Faculty of Business and Law
The University of Newcastle, New South Wales

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Declaration

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my dissertation, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Henry Groen

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Abstract

Set within the context of the oil and gas industry in South East Asia, this dissertation explores the question of what managers, from different cultural backgrounds, perceive to be the role that corporate social responsibility (CSR) plays in their companies and their perception of the level of success their companies achieve in carrying out their CSR programs. A total of 30 semi-structured in-depth individual interviews were held with expatriate and national managers from three different multinational oil and gas companies operating in the three different countries as well as two domestic oil and gas companies in each of those countries.

In order to answer the broad question, the study:

- Investigated how Western and South East Asian business philosophies compare with respect to the role that CSR plays in their companies;
- Identified the stakeholder groups that CSR programs commonly target and ascertained why; and
- Identified the extent to which CSR practice is aligned with CSR theory and whether or not there is a model of CSR that best portrays the day to day practices.

The findings of this study are generally consistent with literature on the subject and, amongst other things, suggest that oil and gas managers in South East Asia believe that the main role of CSR is to show care and concern for the communities and their employees in the places where these companies operate. The primary objective is to give back and share as a form of compensation for the impact that the oil and gas operations have on peoples’ lives. The findings also suggest that: the most relevant stakeholders include the government and the community; the industry wants to be seen as giving back for purposes of reputation, image and maintaining peaceful operations; there is varied success in CSR execution; and there is room for improvement in CSR performance.

The findings further suggest that there is a common understanding across cultures as to why and for whom CSR is done and that certain personal, cultural and corporate influences may impact how managers view CSR.