

Abstract

Corporate Mismanagement and Food Woes – An Analysis of the Relationship between Corporate Social Irresponsibility and Food Insecurity

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Objective: Studies have found increasingly that corporate social irresponsibility has a role to play in the phenomenon of food security. The present study examines the relationship of corporate social irresponsibility to food inaccessibility through a sample of individuals employed within food based organizations in Trinidad and Tobago.

Method: As part of this survey of corporate social irresponsibility, 100 individuals from food production and distribution organizations within Trinidad and Tobago were asked about their observations and experiences of corporate social irresponsibility, within their specific industry. Individuals who reported socially irresponsible corporate practices were compared to those who did not encounter socially irresponsible corporate practices, as it related to high food prices and the food inaccessibility.

Methodology: For the purposes of this paper a quantitative methodological approach was adopted. The sampling frame for this study consisted of food manufacturers and distributors within Trinidad, whereby three persons per organization were sampled, each of whom was sourced from the upper, middle and lower levels of the organization. The total population for selection was 75 organizations while the sample population was 40. Systematic sampling was selected for this study. This study employed a questionnaire as the primary measurement instrument. Accordingly, the questionnaire investigated the main independent variable, corporate social irresponsibility, as well as other variables such as urbanization, rising energy prices, biofuel production and climate changes and their impacts on the dependent variable food inaccessibility. The data collected from this process were analyzed through the use of the following statistical tests: cross-tabulations, correlations, partial correlations, chi-square and regressions, in an effort to investigate significant associations and relationships.

Results: The findings suggested that corporate social irresponsibility had moderate effects on food inaccessibility, as was highlighted through the various tests. However, no significant relations were discovered through regression analyses which indicated that it cannot be used to predict this phenomenon. One possible explanation for this was that some individuals may not have been completely forthright with their responses for fear of exposure. On the contrary, biofuels emerged as the most significant variable in understanding the variance in food inaccessibility, as it pertained to high food prices. Nevertheless, corporate

social irresponsibility demonstrated strong relationships with all of the other independent variables inclusive of biofuel production, which attests to the fact that the actions/inactions of firms can have ripple effects on and multidimensional implications for the phenomenon, food inaccessibility.

Keywords: Leigh-Ann Waldropt-Bonair, corporate social irresponsibility, food security, food insecurity, food prices.