

Western Corporate Credibility: Is it applicable in Malaysia?

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Abstract

Credibility is an essential element for corporate to hold individual trust and confidence towards the corporate. Despite many elements that may influence the credibility of a corporate, less researches concentrate on factors that may affect corporate credibility as a whole in different dethronement particularly in Malaysian perspective. Thus, the study focuses on element derived from Western corporate credibility index and adding factors that may affect corporate credibility from Malaysian perspectives. The finding of the study indicates that factors that affect corporate credibility from Malaysian perspectives are Honesty, Customer Focus, Celebrity Engagement and Innovation. The results of the study can be an important inspiration to impement suitable strategies to enhance corporate credibility particularly in Malaysia

Introduction

Corporate credibility as well as business credibility is the measure of reliability or skill that an organization has according to its customers, clients, business partners and financial resources. Credibility is regularly a blend of the organization credit profile and notoriety. The organization might be considered poor credibility if either of one is deficient. Credit rating of a company have direct impact on credibility, its reputation is similarly essential in how potential clients, customers, business partners and financial resources view the corporate (Donovan, 2011).

Corporate credibility and corporate reputation are always a confusing matter when speaking of corporate brand and image. Some explorations agree and hold opposite opinion about whether reputation is part of corporate credibility. Reputation is firmly related yet different term to credibility, particularly regards with a firm. Herbig and Milewicz (1995) clarified notoriety as the estimation of the consistency extra minutes of a property and element. The author summarize the difference between reputation and credibility. They expressed that credibility is the trustworthiness of the present intensions, while reputation is an authentic thought in view of the total of the past practice. They placed that if a firm appreciates great notoriety and for its quality products and services, it can achieve high advertisement credibility.

The main issue regarding the organization credibility focused mainly on western countries. As previous reseaches were conducted within the context of western countries and ignoring the possibilities of other outcomes due to difference in context and region. The record of the corporate credibility has been generally utilized as part of western nation to assess the apparent believability of an organization. However, is Newell and Goldsmith (2001) measurement model fit to be applied on Asian particularly Malaysia as there are tremendous social contrasts between the nations?

Several factors can affect organization credibility due to different perspective and perception of individual such as culture difference and lifestyle. Culture different between countries cannot be neglected as it is a significant part in the attitude perceived by consumers which eventually leads to company credibility. Nevertheless, this research is conducted based on main races in Malaysia, which is Malay, Chinese and India. The various other ethnic in Malaysia form a multicultural society and that makes Asian, particularly Malaysia is unique in its nirma nd cultare because of diversity. According to Hofstede (1991), society is the total programming of the mind that perceives the people from one assemble or class of people from another. Moreover, Matsumoto (1996) said society is the arrangement of state of mind, qualities, convictions and conduct shared by a gathering of individuals, yet diverse for every person, conveyed starting with on era then onto the next. Thus, the factors that influences thinking can be obtained through this research.

Another vital problem of corporate credibility is regarding about the geographic location. Corporate credibility conducted in western countries and the application in Malaysia is questionable since the countries are different in culture. Culture is an accumulation of a guideline and directions which oversee life of individuals from a group. Its incorporate disposition, perspectives, models and morals which indicates it is extremely unique. There are two essential social examples over the world. They fuse 'Eastern and Western' societies. There is a huge contrast between culture, considerations, qualities and traditions which demonstrated that social limits are even intense than geographical confinements (Jin, 2016). Jin (2016) point out that eastern and western culture has significance difference in basic setup, motive, freedom, values, education system, employment and business. Thus this study gives a shot to understand the perceived thinking of credibility in the context of Malaysia culture. Furthermore, the enhancement of ethnic gathering in Malaysia makes this research more interesting as every ethnic group has diverse thinking. The point they view about corporate credibility will be distinctive even on similar ethnic group. Laroche, Kim and Hui (1997) mentioned that few researchers likewise concur that ethnic will have coordinate effect towards investigation of credibility. Thus, this study will concentrate on the view of Malaysian corporate credibility. Furthermore, it is important to discover the relationship of expertise towards corporate credibility in the context of Malaysia as well as trustworthiness and honesty.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1. Newell and Goldsmith Model

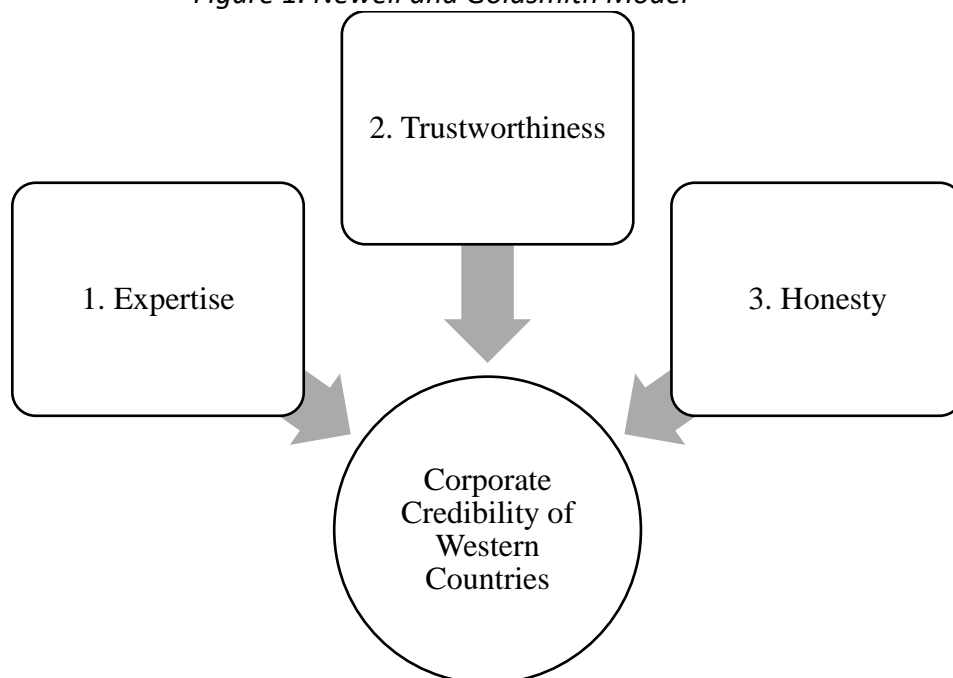
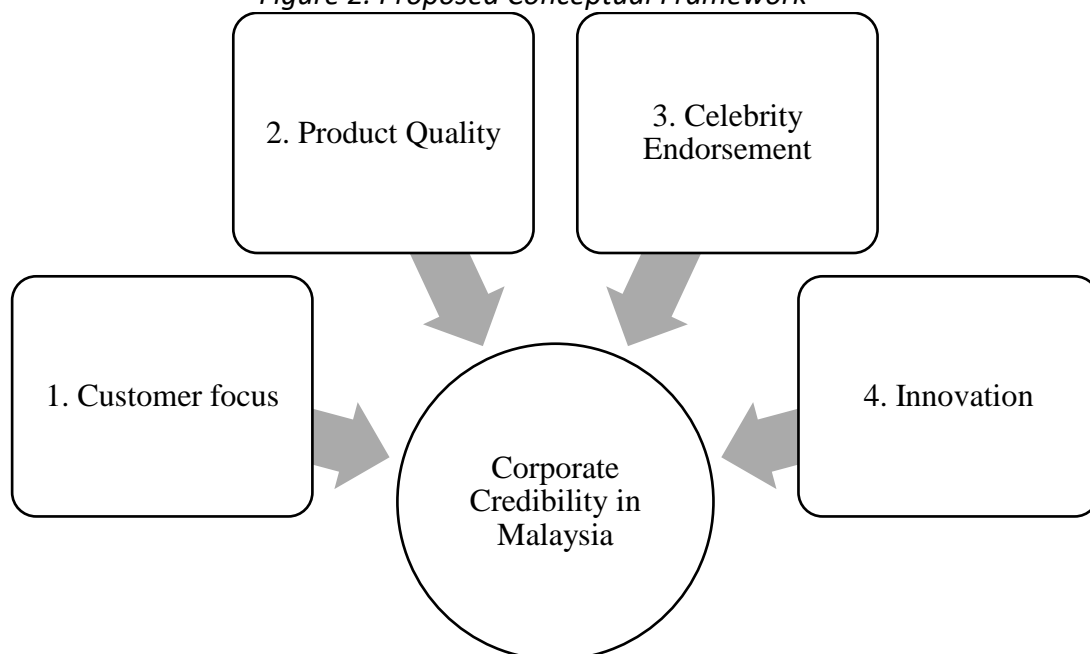


Figure 1 shows the Western Corporate Credibility model which is based on Newell and Goldsmith 2001. As in Figure 2, it is seen that the different variables proposed as to fit the Asian environment of corporate credibility, particularly Malaysia as in the study.

Figure 2. Proposed Conceptual Framework



Literature Review

Corporate Credibility

Keller (1998) characterizes corporate credibility as the degree to which consumers believe a corporate can manufacture and convey products and services that meet customer expectation. Keller mentions that corporate reputation is part of corporate credibility and

emphasizes that the essential elements of corporate credibility is expertise and trustworthiness.

Tormala, Brinol and Petty (2006) point the significance of credibility in an organization can be demonstrated by the level of confident of consumers or public. Higher credibility will enhance the confident of individuals towards message contrast with lower credibility. Sternthal et al. (1978) additionally concur that high credible source will pull individual effectively and create more review. Investigation of Wakefield and Whitten (2008) has highlighted the significance of credibility in third party organization (TPO). The credibility will has coordinate impacts towards customers trust and attitude towards TPO.

Expertise

Concerning company or organization, expertise is the competency of the individual field or industry. There are past study that refers the significance of expertise in spokesperson. Expertise in endorser alludes to products endorser holds skills and abilities which induce buyer to make buying decision (Goldsmith, Lafferty and Newell, 2000; Ohanian, 1990).

Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) bring up that perceived expertise of source by the audience has an effect towards the adequacy of message or source. Amos, Holmes and Strutton (2008) also state that effect of commercial is determined by the expertise level of endorser. However, it does not generally make a difference whether an endorser is a specialist; the only thing that important is how the target audience (Hovland et al., 1953; Ohanian, 1991) views endorser. Expert sources give impact to the product's quality.

In general, expertise includes the degree to which the speaker is seen to be fit for making a right attestation. Consequently, expertise will be used to examine the relationship towards corporate capability.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is how the customers see the affirmations made by a communicator to be legitimate (Chebat, Filiatrault, Laroche and Watson, 1988). Trustworthiness is defined by the terms honest impartial and well intentioned. The measurement of trustworthiness is related to the ethical quality of source . Belch and Belch (2001) state the source of must be consist morals and believability to becoming reliable. Thus, corporate should be responsible, make legitimate move and do the right things to turn into trustworthy corporate.

Hovland (1953) analysed the expertness and trustworthiness are the way to perceived communicator credibility. Expertise and trustworthiness have been identified as vital variable to analyse corporate credibility.

Honesty

A few studies have included honesty as one of the vital elements in increasing corporate credibility. A set of components that determine perceptions of trust and credibility is proposed by Renn and Levine (1991). One of the research study state that the increase in the perception openness and honesty increase the perception of trust and credibility. Since honesty is the best policy, corporate nowadays need to be transparent in order to enhance credibility.

Customer Focus

Customer focus should be characterized as the orientation towards the customer that a corporate serve. It could be in terms of reacting and responding to customers' needs and

wants. In addition, customer focus could likewise be executed in the part of convenience and available offered, with the goal that is much easier to reach organization. According to Clulow and Reimers (2009), when the obstruction of an activity is diminished and dispensed, convenience happened and facilitate the customers in satisfying their needs and wants with ease. In order to fortify the favourable perception towards corporate credibility, offering conveniences to customers should it would be done as would influence customer satisfaction level. While the satisfaction is low, perception towards corporate credibility would be unfavourable (Astono, 2014).

Product Quality

A corporate must have own product in order to run a business. According to Peters, Greer and Youngblood (1998), product quality alludes to the degree at which the customer perception towards the product performance whether it meets the expectation of customer or not.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1998), their examination is towards the service quality, the statement on service quality is the sign of contrast between the perceived performance and the expectation also could be connected into the subject of product quality as the legitimate method for measuring the quality is by differentiating the perceived performance with the expectation.

Celebrity Endorsements

Celebrity endorsements characterized as any person who appreciates open acknowledgement and who utilizes this on in the interest of a shopper decent by showing with it in an advertisement (McCracken, 1989). Young and Pinsky (2006) defined famous people as people who have come to a critical distinction that makes them well-known in the public eye.

There is an extraordinary value attached to the company by utilizing spokesperson endorsement as the corporate has more control of spokesperson image. Based on Tom et al. (1992), the corporate can construct identities that are consistent with their brands and focus people.

Innovation

Previous study claims that development is an essential corporate image affiliation that influences customer assessments (Keller, 2011). Studies mention that innovation are the only factor that affect consumer judgement of the fit and quality of brand extension among all corporate studied.

Gurban and Batra (2004) state that corporate image is partners with advancement and reliability affects products assessment when customer saw high risk in product. Thus, innovation affects corporate image and the credibility of a corporate.

Methodology

Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor analysis (CFA) are applied in the analysis as researcher as no prior predefined concept on the variables is known beforehand. On the other hand, CFA is used when thre researcher has all the variable dimension and knows the structure's predefined.

Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2009), reliability is the pointer on the consistency of results based on the techniques in data collection. Higher reliability indicates higher Cronbach Alpha of source of credibility and organization credibility. Normal relationship among the greater part of things is portrayed by the measurement which gives the qualities run from 0 to 1, and higher value indicates higher reliability, with 0.6 is the acceptable value.

Validity Test

Legitimacy is concern with the test being equipped for testing what it was planned for. The instruments that can be used to examine validity are face validity and content. The instrument that is used in this study is face validity. Face validity is checked as scale utilized by expert as a part of the field and check with other expert if available. In this examination, the questionnaire must be analysed and advised by the supervisor to lead the last survey.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficient is applied to examine the hypothesis in this study and check the strength of correlation between independent and dependent variables. Pearson correlation coefficient (r) can only take values from -1 to +1. A correlation of +1.00 means a perfect positive correlation between two variables meanwhile correlation of -1.00 indicated that there is no relationship between the variables.

Partial Least Square

Partial Least Square (PLS) is a modern statistic tools that function to understand and explain the connection between the variable and other explanatory variables in specific research. PLS is a useful software to explore and analyse the relationship between construct and predict the influence. PLS is implementing to discover the relationship between seven factors towards corporate credibility.

Findings and Discussions

Loading and Cross Loading

The table below shows the result of measurement model that include of factor loading. Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and validity of each construct. Most of the results shows that all the factor loading are higher than 0.5 and this portrayed that the factor loading is at a significant level. However, there are few construct is removed due to the low loading such as CC1 and 2, EXP 1 and 4, TW 2, 3 and 5, HON 1, 2, 3, PQ 1, CF 1 and 5, CE 1, 2, 5 and 6 and INN 2, 3, 5 and 6. This is to ensure the convergent validity are all under acceptable level.

Convergent Validity

Convergent Validity can be verified through Average Variance Extracted (AVE), factor loadings, and Composite Reliability (CR). Table 2 shows the results of measurement model. The factor loading of all construct are range from 0.603 to 0.965. The outcomes of factor loading of all construct are exceeds the value of 0.708 as proposed by Hair et al. (2014). Hence, this means all the construct are highly and adequate convergence.

The Table 1 below shows the results of construct reliability that can be calculated through Composite Reliability (CR). The range of Composite Reliability could be from 0 to 1, depends on the sufficient response of the measurement elements. The value of higher CR proves that

the response of the measurement elements. The value of higher CR proves that the response towards the element are valid and reliable sufficiently and CR value should be above 0.80. In addition Hair et al. (2014) point that the measurement components are viewed as satisfied the convergent validity as the CR is higher than 0.60. The CR value in this study are all above 0.60 (range from 0.699 to 0.887). Thus, this reflected that the construct are reliable.

Besides that, the analysis from Qi, Shen and Dou (2013) point that the measurement of latent variance is turned out to be adequately for convergent validity when the AVE is equal or higher than 0.50. Hair et al. (2012) stated that value of AVE below 0.50, the outcomes is viewed as less adequately as the presence of more variance causing error variance. Based on the table below, all AVE are range from 0.519 to 0.724. The results shows that the entire construct has meet the criteria of convergent validity.

Table 1

Factor Loading

Construct	Item	Loading	CR	AVE	Validity
Corporate Credibility	CC 3	0.457	0.699	0.567	YES
	CC 4	0.962			
Expertise	EXP 2	0.603	0.736	0.592	YES
	EXP 4	0.965			
Trustworthiness	TW 1	0.630	0.075	0.592	YES
	TW 2	-0.887			
Honesty	HON 4	0.606	0.759	0.622	YES
	HON 5	0.936			
Customer Focus	CF 3	0.603	0.762	0.519	YES
	CF 4	0.781			
Product Quality	PQ 2	0.895	0.887	0.724	YES
	PQ 3	0.747			
	PQ 4	0.901			
Celebrity Endorsement	CE 3	0.839	0.801	0.668	YES
	CE 4	0.795			
Innovation	INN 1	0.759	0.845	0.646	YES
	INN 4	0.862			
	INN 7	0.786			

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant Validity (DV) is considered reliable as diagonal value (bold) must be higher than other correlations in its column and row. As shown in Table 2, all the Discriminant Validity (DV) of the constructs are higher than other correlations compared to row-by-row and column by column. Thus, it has showed that the validity of the construct.

Table 2

Discriminant Validity of Construct

	CC	CE	CF	EXP	HON	INN	PQ	TW
CC	0.753							
CE	0.279	0.817						
CF	0.348	0.115	0.720					
EXP	0.257	0.289	0.124	0.769				
HON	0.318	0.198	0.237	0.293	0.789			
INN	-0.231	-0.244	0.036	-0.393	-0.173	0.803		
PQ	-0.210	-0.308	0.094	-0.441	-0.238	0.404	0.851	
TW	-0.082	-0.301	-0.118	-0.209	-0.191	0.358	0.101	0.769

Note: CC = Corporate Credibility, EXP = Expertise, TW = Trustworthiness, HON = Honesty, PQ = Product Quality, CF = Customer Focus, CE = Celebrity Endorsement, INN = Innovation

Note: Diagonals (Bold) represented the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) while the other represent the correlations.

Collinearity Assessment

Tolerance should be figure with a specific end goal to assess the level of collinearity. The tolerance signifies the measure of variance of one formative indicator not justified by other indicators in the same block (Hair, etl, 2014). One of the solution that used to measure the collinearity is Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The value of tolerance 0.20 that below or equal and a VIF value of and higher correspondingly indicate a potential collinearity issue. Table 3 shows that all value of VIF are between range from 1.136 to 1.463. Thus, it portrayed that the results does not show any collinearity problem.

Table 3

Results of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	Credibility
Credibility	1.187
Expertise	1.444
Trustworthiness	1.204
Honesty	1.203
Customer Focus	1.136
Product Quality	1.463
Celebrity Endorsement	1.187
Innovation	1.459

Hypothesis Testing

PLS calculation and bootstrapping were utilized to examine the path coefficient significant and validity of the proposed hypothesis. Throughout this research, it will investigate 7 hypothesis which is EXP, TW, HON, CF, PQ, CE and INN and corporate credibility.

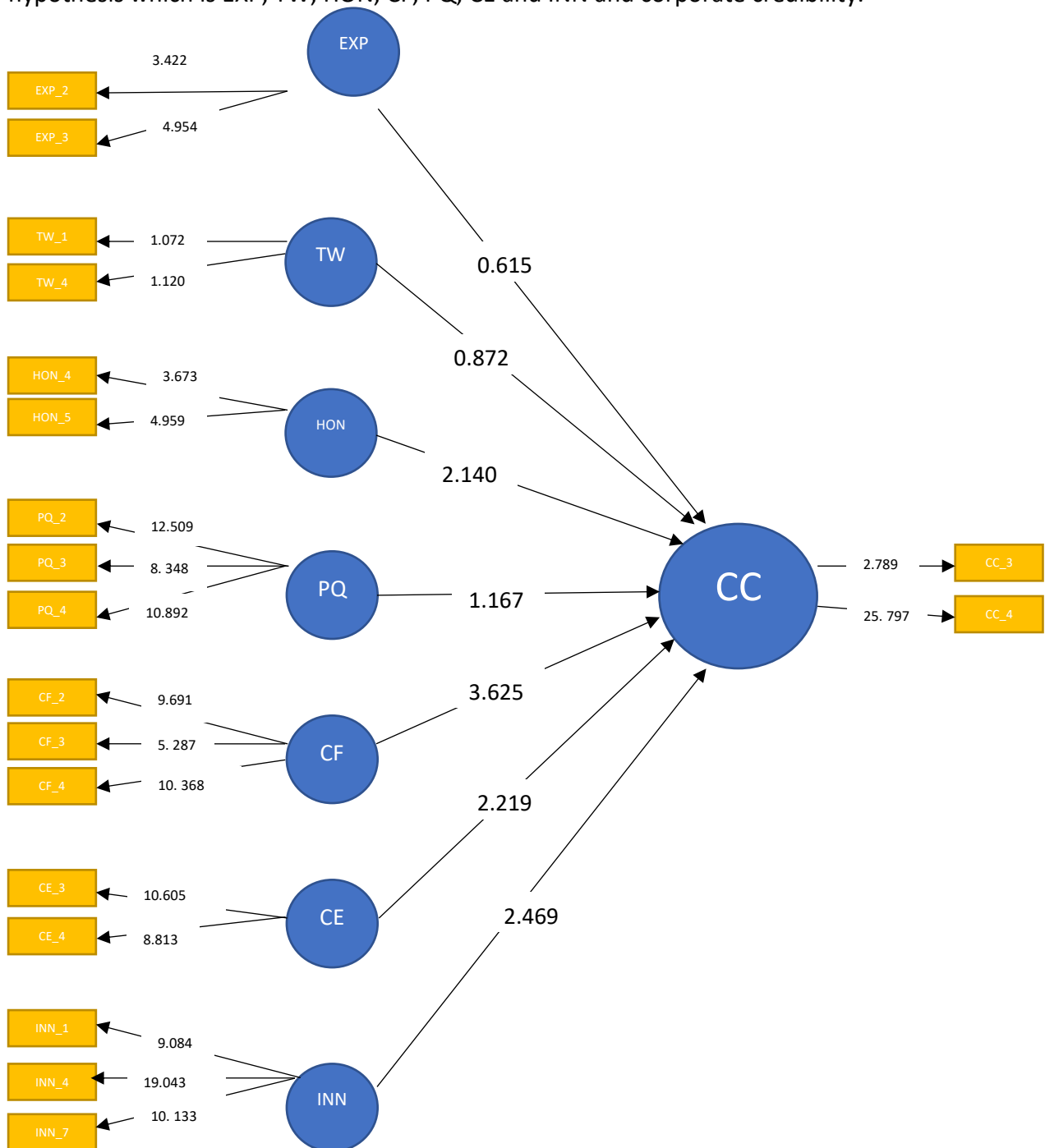


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Model

Note: CC = Corporate Credibility, EXP = Expertise, TW = Trustworthiness, HON = Honesty, PQ = Product Quality, CF = Customer Focus, CE = Celebrity Endorsement, INN = Innovation

Expertise

Hypothesis H1 is to examine the relationship between expertise and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the results of expertise does not have significant relationship towards

corporate credibility ($\beta = 0.615$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the expertise does not influence corporate credibility.

Trustworthiness

Hypothesis H2 is to examine the relationship between trustworthiness and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of trustworthiness does not has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 0.872$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the trustworthiness does not influence corporate credibility.

Honesty

Hypothesis H3 is to examine the relationship between honesty and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of honesty has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 2.140$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the honesty has significant impact on corporate credibility.

Customer Focus

Hypothesis H4 is to examine the relationship between customer focus and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of honesty has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 3.625$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the customer focus has significant impact on corporate credibility.

Product Quality

Hypothesis H5 is to examine the relationship between product quality and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of product quality does not has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 1.167$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the product quality does not significant impact on corporate credibility.

Celebrity Endorsements

Hypothesis H6 is to examine the relationship between celebrity endorsements and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of celebrity endorsements has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 2.219$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the celebrity endorsements have significant impact on corporate credibility.

Innovation

Hypothesis H7 is to examine the relationship between innovation and corporate credibility. Table 6 shows the result of innovation has significant relationship towards corporate credibility ($\beta = 2.469$; $p > 0.05$). This result disclosed that the innovation have significant impact on corporate credibility.

Table 6

Path coefficient and hypothesis testing

H	Relationship	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	T-statistics	p-value	Result
H1	Expertise → Corporate Credibility	0.612	0.08	0.62	0.541	Not supported
H2	Trustworthiness → Corporate Credibility	0.879	0.07	0.87	0.380	Not supported
H3	Honesty → Corporate Credibility	2.156	0.08	2.14	0.032	Supported
H4	Customer Focus → Corporate Credibility	3.606	0.08	3.62	0.000	Supported
H5	Products Quality → Corporate Credibility	1.193	0.07	1.17	0.233	Not Supported
H6	Celebrity Endorsements → Corporate Credibility	2.143	0.06	2.22	0.033	Supported
H7	Innovation → Corporate Credibility	2.601	0.06	2.47	0.010	Supported

Results of Hypothesis Testing**H1: Expertise have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility**

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H1 is discovered to be not supported, as expertise do not have significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Hence, the proposed H1: Expertise have significant influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is rejected.

H2: Trustworthiness have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the hypothesis results, it is found that H2 is not supported as trustworthiness do not imply a significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Thus, the proposed H2: Trustworthiness have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is rejected.

H3: Honesty have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H3 is discovered to be supported, as honesty have significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Hence, the proposed H3: Honesty have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is accepted.

H4: Customer focus have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H4 is discovered to be supported, as customer focus have significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Hence, the proposed H4: Customer focus have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is accepted.

H5: Product quality have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H5 is discovered to be not supported, as product quality does not imply significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Hence, the proposed H5: Product quality have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is rejected.

H6: Celebrity endorsements have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H6 is discovered to be supported, as celebrity endorsement have significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Hence, the proposed H6: Celebrity endorsement have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is accepted.

H7: Innovation have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.

Based on the tabulated hypothesis results, H7 is discovered to be supported, as innovation have significant effect on the perception towards corporate credibility. Hence, the proposed H7: Innovation have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility is accepted.

Table 7

Summary of hypothesis testing results

H	Relationship	Result
H1	Expertise have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Rejected
H2	Trustworthiness have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Rejected
H3	Honesty have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Accepted
H4	Customer focus have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Accepted
H5	Product quality have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Rejected
H6	Celebrity endorsement have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Accepted
H7	Innovation have positive influence on the perception towards corporate credibility.	Accepted

Conclusion

Expertise and Corporate Credibility

The results indicates that H1 does not shows positive influence towards corporate credibility. It illustrates that perceived expertise does not have positive impact on corporate credibility in Malaysians. Expertise and attractiveness as a part of the credibility components might expect a tradeoff to exist resulting in increase in one characteristics and decreasing in the other characteristics due to similarity components. Although prior research Newell and Goldsmith (2001) shows that expertise is essential when measuring credibility, however, the outcomes are proved to be different. The dimension of expertise are more appropriate for western countries as compared to Malaysia.

Trustworthiness and Corporate Credibility

The results of statistical analysis shows that hypothesis (H2) does not have a constructive relationship with corporate credibility. This explains that perceived trustworthiness does not have much significant effect towards corporate credibility. The possible explanation for the failure is that trustworthiness effect was the overwhelming effect of source expertise. The effects of trustworthiness variable showed signs of being mitigated in the high expertise cases.

Honesty and Corporate Credibility

Based on the results of statistical analysis, honesty have positive influence towards corporate credibility. This explained that perceived honesty would influence people perception to have positive impact on corporate credibility. In this study, the results proved that honesty of an organization could be one of the factor that affect corporate credibility as it reviewed as foundation of a leadership.

Customer Focus and Corporate Credibility

Based on the results of this research, the finding are consistent with the prior researches. Customer focus can be concluded as vital factor that will affect corporate credibility based on the research findings. In short, corporate in Malaysia that emphasis on customer focus will tend to understand the needs and wants of customers and forging a long-term relationship with each other.

Product Quality and Corporate Credibility

Based on the results of statistical analysis, it shows that product quality has no positive relationship towards corporate credibility. Many researchers conclude that the product quality is viewed as one of the main priority that shapes the impression of the customers towards a corporation. The results might be differ with the previous findings due to the cultural differences between western and Asian countries. However, both western and Asian countries value product quality as their dimension of credibility. Indeed, western country are more focusing on this variable than Asian country.

Celebrity Endorsement and Corporate Credibility

Based on the results of this research, the findings of celebrity endorsement and corporate credibility are constant with the prior research. Credibility has been demonstrated to have huge and coordinate impacts on states of mind and behavioural expectations (Erdogan, 1999). From the results of this research, celebrity endorsement have been proven as a vital role in influencing credibility. Malaysian are tend to believe more on the corporation that collaborate with celebrity endorsement.

Innovation and Corporate Credibility

The study also proved that perceived innovation would affect people to induce corporate credibility. Gurban and Batra (2004) state that corporate image is partnered with advancement and reliability affects product assessment when customer saw high risk in product. Corporate that create and innovate products regularly will increase people reliability and trustworthy on it. Malaysian are tend to believe more on the corporate that often manufacture new product.

From the theoretical viewpoint, the study aim to propose a theoretical framework of factors that affect corporate credibility in Malaysia. Ohanian (1990) creates the framework credibility model. This theory is applied to determine the factor of corporate credibility in Malaysian perspective. Beside the three factor in the credibility model which includes expertise, trustworthiness and honesty, another four variables has been added in the proposed framework which is customer focus, product quality, celebrity endorsement and innovation in affecting the corporate credibility in Malaysia. Indeed, it shows that the credibility model by Ohanian (1990) does not fit Malaysia context other than honesty. Thus it is important to realize that assessing corporate credibility index with the present western credibility index may not reflect the true value of an organization in Asia, particularly in Malaysia.

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