

‘Responsible drinkers create all the atmosphere of a mortuary’: Policy implementation of responsible drinking in Scotland

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Abstract

Purpose

Explores the reaction of customer facing staff and their attitude to the introduction of high profile CSR programmes; in particular their level of awareness and willingness to implement them.

Design/methodology/approach

Conducted using a series of site visits and interviews with managers working within the licensed trade, this was followed up with structured interviews of ‘front line’ staff.

Findings

Despite high levels of awareness of both the social problems relating to alcohol consumption and the legislative changes, engagement with operational CSR was limited and often disinterested. Legal and societal expectations regarding drunkenness are of little concern.

Research limitations/implications

Concerned with nascent legislation, the full impact and success of which has not yet emerged. Reviewing this study in five years would add to the strength of the results. Limited to Scotland due to its devolved licensing laws, however, it clearly highlights lack of employee engagement with CSR.

Practical implications

Despite placing CSR issues at the forefront of day to day operations within the licensed trade there is little empirical evidence around customer facing staff engagement. CSR is a dynamic process that relies on the involvement of employees for its successful implementation,

Social implications

The social and economic cost of excessive alcohol consumption is high on the political agenda in Scotland. The commercial hospitality industry could, through a proactive and comprehensive implementation of CSR policies, play a significant role in addressing societal concerns.

Originality/value

A new CSR implementation matrix is presented which allows hospitality businesses to be positioned according to levels of both management and employee engagement with CSR policies.

Key Words

CSR; Employee Attitudes; Alcoholic Drinks; Engagement

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Within the hospitality industry selling alcohol and creating an atmosphere for people to have a good time raises issues of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This paper explores the reaction of customer facing staff and their attitude to the introduction of high profile CSR programmes; in particular their level of awareness and willingness to implement policies and practices. The bill for the ‘Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005’ of the Scottish Parliament received Royal Assent in December 2005 and came into force in September 2009 (Scottish Government, 2007). This Act makes provision for regulating the sale of alcohol, and for regulating licensed premises and other premises on which alcohol is sold. It imposes stricter regulations on the sale of alcohol and training standards for all bar staff, requiring them to refuse to serve drunken customers and to only honour responsible drinks orders. This also gave rise to high profile, legally enforceable, CSR campaigns promoted by the National Health Service in Scotland including ‘Drinkaware’ and ‘Alcohol Focus Scotland.’

This paper divides into six sections. The literature on organizational applications of CSR, and in particular CSR in the hospitality and tourism industry, is reviewed in section one. We identify limitations in the existing literature, specifically the lack of investigation into the introduction and implementation of a high profile legally enforceable CSR campaign. The second section explores CSR, alcohol consumption and the introduction of the ‘Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005’. There follows a section on data collection methods and analysis. The next two sections are empirical. In the first we explore how customer facing restaurant and bar staff cope with the implementation of high profile CSR initiatives and whether it is perceived possible to implement them without adversely affecting the core aim of the business. In the next section our results highlight the void between the legislative intentions and business interests as perceived by staff and the significant problems this raises for both implementation and maturation of any CSR initiatives. In the final section of the paper, we draw together the threads of our argument, offer a new CSR implementation matrix, consider the limitations of our approach and point to avenues for future research.

Applications of CSR and the Commercial Hospitality Industry

CSR has its foundations in the tradition that businesses form part of society (Carroll, 1979), this imposes “economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary (philanthropic) expectations” on businesses. Jones et al. (2006, p. 330) observe that businesses “have the potential to make a positive contribution to social goals and aspirations”. However, some authors claim that CSR is a vague philosophical construct without clear boundaries (Lantos, 2005; Valor, 2005), indeed, within hospitality management CSR has many names: ‘social responsibility’, ‘corporate citizenship’, and ‘corporate sustainability’ (Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007, p. 462). However, for this study, the definition by Kang et al., (2010, p. 76) is adopted: “the activities making companies good citizens who contribute to society’s welfare beyond their own self-interests.”

Organizations use CSR in an attempt to gain corporate legitimacy and address the concerns of both society and the market in a variety of ways (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006),

including PR campaigns (Frankental, 2001), risk management (Husted, 2005), and social legitimacy (Werther, 2005). Corporate legitimacy is seen as the 'yardstick' for CSR effectiveness (Carroll, 1979; Maignan & Ferrell, 2000; Wartick & Cochran, 1985), where legitimacy is "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions" (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). If, as Drucker (1973, p. 368) suggests, the minimum criterion of CSR is "*primum non nocere*" there are certain companies and even industries that may not be able to comply and increase corporate legitimacy through CSR.

Certain industries and traditional CSR are inherently contradictory, for example, Palazzo and Richter (2005, p. 398) observe that "as cigarettes kill active and passive users, all that a tobacco company can achieve is a reputation for transactional integrity". However, transactional integrity is only a small part of legitimizing a corporation's activities, as Weaver, Treviño, and Cochran (1999) note societal acceptance is the main driving force of CSR activities. Within corporations there are also internal and external challenges in implementing CSR. For example, Pomeroy and Dolnicar (2009) argue that CSR has not yet demonstrated to be effective in improving customer attitudes towards products and services. Whilst inside organisations Bondy (2008) discovered, when implementing CSR policies, individual employees' personal ethics can lead to conflict between personal power and CSR objectives, resulting in their almost complete inactivity on CSR. Finally, Rondinelli (2002) observes that even with well-formulated ethical rules, without independent moderation and control combined with genuine transparency, it is often business as usual that takes place.

At the macro-level the commercial hospitality industry appears to be proactive in encouraging and implementing CSR initiatives, for example, the *European Federation of Food and Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions and Hotels Restaurants and Cafes* has "drafted compliance parameters concerning equal opportunity, non-discrimination, working conditions, fair pay, vocational training and long-life learning, health and safety, and the relationship between employers and employees at all levels" (Holcomb, et al., 2007, p. 463). Lee and Park (2009) highlight some of the hotel companies' CSR programmes: Accor's "Earth Guest Program" to preserve and protect the environment whilst supporting local development; InterContinental Hotels' environmental protection efforts including energy efficiency, water conservation, climate change awareness campaigns, and procuring coffee; and finally, Marriott's community involvement projects. Whilst undoubtedly good programmes, what remains unclear is just how involved and engaged the employees are. In Scotland, another example is 'Alcohol Awareness Week' (2010) which is in its fourth consecutive year bringing together the Scottish Government, the alcohol industry, health professionals and the voluntary sector to promote a cohesive message about drinking alcohol responsibly.

Despite these grand efforts, CSR practices at the micro-level may not actually be taking place, for example, in a study of CSR practices in the UK's top ten public house operators, Jones et al (2006, p. 339) show "there is little evidence that pub operators are fully integrating CSR into their business or that they are seeking to use KPI's to measure, monitor, benchmark or compare their CSR performance over time or within their sector of the economy". This lack of engagement is confirmed by Dodds and Kuehnel, (2010) who note a

high level of awareness amongst Canadian tour operators, but little direct action, and Lee and Park (2009) found a significant difference between sectors in the industry when implementing CSR, with particular challenges for socially aware casinos, where they attempt to promote and train employees about responsible gaming and contribute to community development and enhancement whilst also supporting education and research programs for responsible gaming (Lee and Park, 2009).

Holcomb et al. (2007, p.472) propose for “most of the hotel and hospitality industry, the reality has not hit” compared to the CSR practices of other industries and call for a new approach within the industry. The commercial hospitality industry is encouraged to invest in the long term through more sustainable business practices and “live up to their reputation of being ‘hospitable’ not only to their guests but also to society”. One of the issues with existing CSR research in the hospitality industry is that few studies focus on the engagement with socially responsible principles of doing business. In many ways therefore, current research falls short of making a truly valuable contribution to the broader CSR literature as it lacks exploration of the attitudes that underpin engagement. The focus of the extant literature remains on the ‘what’ as opposed to the ‘why’ and opportunity to explore engagement with CSR rather than its simple presence is apparent.

CSR and Alcohol Consumption in Scotland

In Scotland, the social and economic cost of excessive alcohol consumption is high on the political agenda, not least because it costs the country £1.1bn per year. This is composed of £110million in health service costs; £96million in social work; £267million to the criminal justice system and emergency services; and, the remainder to various economic and social channels to compensate for the disruption (Alcohol Focus Scotland, 2007).

One of the aims of the ‘Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005’ is protecting and improving public health. Mandatory requirements contained within the Act require that alcohol can only be sold in accordance with an approved operating plan, licence fees are paid and that alcohol cannot be sold without a premises licence or personal licence holder present. Alcohol can only be sold by staff who have the mandated CSR training; proof of training must be kept on premises. Price changes and special offers can only be made 72 hours after the last change and promotions considered to be irresponsible, for example, ‘2 for 1’ or ‘Happy Hours’ are prohibited. All licenced premises are required to provide soft drinks at affordable prices and drinking water free of charge (Scottish Government, 2007). In order to enforce the Act, Licensing Standards Officers have been appointed who are responsible for maintaining licensing law throughout Scotland and are granted considerable power through their office.

In parallel and in direct support of the Act, Alcohol Focus Scotland (2010) offer a series of CSR related training and education activities; these include ‘DrinkWise’, ‘Servewise’ and counselling skills. Servewise is designed, amongst industry workers, to standardise knowledge of irresponsible alcohol consumption in customers and a legal requirement in the sale of alcohol; whereas Drinkwise training educates those with concerns about the role of alcohol in their lives, increasing their knowledge of how to deal with alcoholism and aid in addressing anxieties. The counselling skills certificate is a series of modules to train

prospective alcohol counsellors. These activities are designed to encourage and stimulate societal responsibility in alcohol consumption by promoting awareness beyond the individual. This is further developed by the 'Drink Aware' (2010) campaign which promotes responsible alcohol consumption through education. It provides information to help people understand and manage their relationship with alcohol. Key areas of focus are impacts upon health, work and study, family, personal relationships and underage consumption.

CSR and Frontline Employees

It is the stakeholder, rather than the shareholder, view of CSR that is explored in this study (Bolton, Chung-hee, & O'Gorman, 2011; Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Ferrary, 2009); in particular issues of employee involvement and well-being (Vuontisjärvi, 2006) and their commitment and motivation (Farrelly & Greyser, 2007) to the business. Employer-employee relations are linked to business success (Karnes, 2009) and CSR has a strong influence on attitudes to work, these include: motivation and morale (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006), job satisfaction, organizational commitment and loyalty to the firm (Collier & Esteban, 2007; Tsai & Huang, 2008).

Frontline employees, both managers and staff, are central to any successful implementation of CSR as it is "a dynamic and developing process that relies on the involvement of the employee as a major stakeholder in its co-creation and implementation" (Bolton et al 2011). Villanova et al. (2009) propose that employee and organisational learning takes place "as CSR is embedded in business processes, and that once it has been integrated, in turn, it generates innovative practices, and finally, competitiveness".

Without employee engagement there is little chance of CSR being embedded in company practice and the resultant increased legitimacy being achieved. Furthermore, Bolton et al. (2011) highlight that companies depend on employees' engagement with CSR throughout the process of initiation → implementation → maturation, frontline involvement grows from a minor element in the CSR initiation stage to a vital factor of success in the later stages of the process.

Methodology

To examine the level of awareness and implementation of CSR policies and practices by front-line staff in the Scottish licensed trade sector a field study was conducted which adopted a two-stage process to gather the data from both managerial/supervisory personnel and other bar staff. The initial round of data collection consisted of semi-structured face to face interviews with supervisory level staff. After the initial period of data analysis a further round of structured email interviews were undertaken with front-line bar staff.

Data was collected in Glasgow as the Glasgow City licensing board area contains over 1750 outlets which hold a premises license. Initial emails and telephone calls were made to over

150 premises in the city centre area based on a purposive sampling exercise and from these a final sample of 29 face-to-face interviews with bar supervisors and managers were arranged. The sample was representative of both independent and chain affiliated establishments with managers interviewed from bars, hotels and nightclubs. All participants had at least 1 year experience in a management role.

The second round of data was conducted with undergraduate students studying hospitality and tourism management. A structured interview consisting of 12 open and closed questions was sent using the online survey tool Qualtrics to 416 students, after two reminder emails a total of 135 students responded. The first question was a filter to determine if respondents had prior experience in hospitality employment, the final sample of 64 represents 15% of the original sample. Of this sub-sample 37% had worked for more than 1 year and 18% had worked for between 3 and 5 years. Respondents had undertaken a range of roles from bar staff (34%), waiter (47%), events (8%) and nightclub staff (7%); 59% of the respondents were aware of Corporate Social Responsibility in the licensed trade. Only 49% of respondents reported receiving formal training and of this group only nine respondents had received training relating to the licensing act.

For the first round of data collection a schedule was created to ensure that interviews would be consistent (Yin, 2003). In order to stimulate discussion around CSR awareness, practices and implementation questions focused in on participant's attitudes towards binge drinking as this was seen as precipitating CSR elements of the act. Participants were then questioned on the extent to which problems can be controlled by front line staff and then on their responsibilities towards both customers and staff. Finally, participants were asked to suggest ways in which CSR practices might impact on day to day activity. All face-to-face interviews were recorded and lasted between 30 – 45 minutes in length. For the front-line staff questions were formulated which explored each Managers' level of training, their understanding of CSR and once again their experiences and attitudes towards perceived 'binge drinking' and possible solutions. All participants and premises were guaranteed anonymity within the study as it was recognized that certain issues surrounding licensing legislation may be contentious and affect their status as license holders.

All the face to face interviews were transcribed and engaged with progressively before coding. Quotes from the structured data collection were extracted and presented alongside the interview question in table format. To ensure reliability the literature suggests using multiple coders (Isabella, 1990; Richter, 2011) and two members of the research team independently coded the data extracting relevant themes and categories. During the data analysis six themes relating to CSR emerged: problem recognition, blame culture, dealing with drunken customers, pretend CSR, atmosphere in the establishment and overall profitability. In the next chapter cognate themes are grouped together to form three categories: Responsibility, Practically and Value Proposition.

Frontline hospitality staff and Corporate Social Responsibility

Responsibility

Problem Recognition

Research participants in both data collection phases seemed well versed in the proposed legislation aimed at reducing the effects of binge drinking and phase 1 participants in particular conveyed a sense of victimisation in their attitudes towards the social problem and proposed solutions. Participants seemed to suggest that issues concerning alcohol in society are cultivated in contexts far removed from pubs and bars yet it is the licensed trade that must pay the price. The use of terminology such as “brought up”, “city street”, and “the home” indicate a need to locate the social problem specifically beyond their own context. In interpreting further, the licensees see the drinking problem to be instilled in individuals during their upbringing, perhaps in adolescence when they experiment with alcohol. Following that, issues concern people that either drink in their own home or outdoors, thus the interviewees indirectly attribute the issues to the sale of alcohol at off-licenses or supermarkets. Bar managers and supervisors were also happy to question government proposals such as those affecting minimum pricing and happy hours.

The majority of participants recognised the social problems relating to alcohol with a general attitude that social problems concerning alcohol and its negative effects were formed privately and were manifested outside licensed businesses. Responses from customer facing staff in phase 2 indicate broad agreement with those of phase 1 with the majority responding negatively to questions relating to proposed solutions to binge drinking. Respondents highlighted alcohol problems being “more of a social problem in Scotland” and despite some respondents recognising the potential for some positive outcomes, the imposition of a minimum unit price was described as “idealistic” by one respondent and would simply shift drinking habits elsewhere. The responses from both phases indicate a high level of understanding of the policies as proposed solutions but there was scepticism over the licensed trade's role as both a cause and control mechanism. The need to locate the problem elsewhere also manifests itself within a specific and targeted blame culture approach aimed at other stakeholders within the drink industry. At no point did any licensees consider themselves to have any responsibility.

Blame Culture

Several stakeholders associated with, or operating in, the alcohol industry were cited by licensees in phases 1 as being particularly guilty of perpetuating the negative effects of drinking. Interviewees listed: the government, police, supermarkets, manufacturers, and other owners/licensees. The attitude of ‘why us’ emerges once more, showing a sense of perceived victimisation illustrated by the blame attached to government who Manager P accused of “putting all the pressure on bar operators and bar managers”. The focus on business and profit dominates with licensees blaming supermarkets and the police. The issue with supermarkets is based on price and the realisation that bars compete with supermarkets as much as they do with other licensed businesses. There is reluctant compliance with the police enforcement of responsible drinking; this is particularly illuminating when it is considered that the police are obliged to shut down uncooperative licensed businesses. However, the issues are not ostensibly linked with CSR; rather the respondents posit the impact of the pressure felt from the government, police and supermarkets as being in profit rather than responsibility. The repetition of “[financial]

pressure” and mention of “give us a [financial] hand” underlined a feeling of victimisation amongst licensees.

Manufacturers of alcoholic beverages were also identified as perpetuating problems, Manager C suggests that with regard to certain gimmick and hyper cheap products, “I don’t think they should be on the market at all”. The sale of these products, according to Manager D demonstrated, “an absence of professional ethics”. The licensees shared a considerable knowledge of the ethical concerns relating to the production and sale of alcohol yet were rather more inclined to apportion blame on stakeholders other than themselves. Manager C was strong in their opinion that much harsher sanctions should be placed on alcohol manufacturers with regard to the production of particular products yet they displayed little acknowledgement of the contribution the licensed trade could make to the perpetuation of the problem.

The issues raised by participants specifically regarding the licensed trade related to staff turnover, the cost of running training programmes (over and above basic operational requirements), and also with a perceived lack of collective responsibility amongst license holders. Licensees firstly suggested that poor subscription to CSR legislation lay in the transient nature of employment in the licensed trade as opposed to individuals’ own propensity to engage:

“The problem with this trade is that every month I’m having to interview new students and casual-type staff that I know will be gone by the summer, how do I keep up with the training?” (Manager B)

The small percentage of customer facing staff in phase 2 who had received training relating to liquor licensing or legislation would appear to support this statement and might suggest therefore that front line perceptions may be influenced to a greater extent by those of their supervisors and managers.

It was also evident that interviewees considered problems relating to alcohol in a rather insular manner. Discussions were based on how the environment impacted their own particular business and whilst issues were related back to wider contextual factors, a broader consideration of the role of the licensed trade in the economic and political context seemed to be ignored. Thus a sense of the need for collective responsibility was not apparent. Implicitly, licensees referred to the nature of the industry yet in a resigned manner inferring, ‘that’s the way things are, they aren’t going to change’. The somewhat insular way in which the issues were considered is also evident in the varied approaches and management strategies offered by interviewees. The issues highlighted were potentially self-inflicted but still portrayed the licensees as victims of a flawed operational reality.

Practicalities

Dealing with Drunks

All participants recognised that dealing with the negative effects of drinking was an inevitable and inescapable part of the job, “these things just happen in bars sometimes” (Manager E). Licensees were keen to discuss anecdotes regarding the behaviour of customers who had overindulged. Manager C commented that “I’ve had a knife pulled on

me before. I've been threatened with violence. I've had people collapse from alcohol consumption". Once again, a victim's mentality is noted. However, with regard to the practical approaches to dealing with 'drunk' customers participants suggested that preventing them from consuming drink may not be the most appropriate approach: "Alcohol makes people think and behave irrationally, so the last thing you want to tell a drunk person is that they have had too much" (Manager A). Thus highlighting a central issue for CSR in the licensed trade; the product is a mind and behaviour altering drug, which can have serious negative effects on consumers and, as such, dealing with the effects of the drug can put staff at risk. This practical problem was something that respondents in phase 2 were keenly aware of. Around half of all respondents discussed issues relating to 'binge' drinking highlighting how this causes customers to become "rude", "aggressive" and at times "violent". It is perhaps not a great surprise therefore that many licensees appeared to turn a blind eye to drunken behaviour and attempt to control overindulgence through other practical approaches that were deemed by participants to be CSR related but, in reality, can be seen to have mainly business (as opposed to socially) related benefits.

CSR and day to day operations

Several Managers proffered practical approaches that could curb drunken behaviour which did not involve actually telling a customer that they should stop drinking whereas front-line bar staff displayed conflicting opinions about the implications of engaging with CSR at the operational level. One Manager, the manager of an 'up-market' cocktail bar proposed that: "The prices in here are quite high which can put people off. You have to spend quite a lot to binge-drink in here, maybe £50 or £60" (Manager G). This is a somewhat implausible statement which is more likely related to a market segmentation strategy than pricing 'drunk' customers out of the market, reinforced by one female bar tender who when commenting on alcohol pricing observed how she had drunk in "establishments with both very cheap and very expensive alcohol and consumed more than my recommended daily allowance of alcohol in both". Other licensees suggest alternative approaches whereby customers were offered food as an alternative to binge drinking. There is no empirical evidence that serving food in licensed premises curbs binge drinking and, once again, offering food as an adjunct to regular drinking would appear to be satisfying the particular needs of a bar's target customer than put in place as an informal CSR strategy.

The alternative to pricing customers out of binge drinking or serving food was to refuse to sell certain products or admit certain customers. Again, refusal to admit certain clients or sell drink in certain guises is not first and foremost a CSR practice; instead it might do more to illuminate the needs of a bar's client base. If regular customers don't like others engaging in drinking games, or hen nights they will stop coming which is, of course, bad for business. Having effective security on the door of a bar would certainly offer a practical solution to admitting drunken customers but there may be a business related rationale in that doormen are also responsible for filtering potential customers so that the right client mix is admitted. For bar managers these 'pretend CSR' decisions appear to help them rationalise their operational decisions as being socially responsible. For the staff serving the customers every day the situation was much more complex. Respondents in phase 2 of the data collection offered a range of responses to the issue of operationalising CSR. Some participants were "confident in doing so [refusing to serve a drunk customer] as it would prevent more problematic situations in the long run" others identified that it was "the right thing to do".

However, around half of the front line staff appeared to suffer from conflicting emotions when faced with the decision as to whether or not to serve a customer who appeared drunk.

Enacting CSR at an operational level is fraught with challenges for staff that fear both the reaction of the customer but also of their firm if they make a poor decision. Once again, the small number of respondents who had received formal training and the relative lack of engagement shown by some of the respondents in phase 1 suggest that front line staff can feel isolated when it comes to making challenging decisions. Furthermore, the vagaries of the licensed trade result in managers justifying their lack of adherence to advised CSR approaches through alternative strategies that exist largely to satisfy the particular business demands than address a CSR issue. The reason for these 'pretend' CSR approaches and the tentativeness shown by the front line staff can, perhaps, be explained by the final theme which relates to the core value proposition of a bar and the effect that responsible drinking may have therein.

Value Proposition *Atmosphere*

The first dimension of the value proposition theme relates to the atmosphere within a bar. Essentially, participants were honest enough to admit that customers who had consumed alcohol become steadily more uninhibited and, therefore, created a livelier atmosphere within a bar. This is highlighted by one bartender who observed that "the best nights are the ones when the customers are really up for it". There was also a sense that 'drunk' customers didn't necessarily have to be problematic for managers "I don't care how much people drink in my place as long as they don't cause any trouble" (Manager H). One licensee hypothesized that the likely effects of a zealously managed CSR policy would not, necessarily be positive as "responsible drinkers create all the atmosphere of a mortuary" (Manager, K).

For front line staff excessive consumption at certain times of the year like Christmas were seen as a bonus despite the risks, "You get sexually harassed and verbally abused but on the other hand it increases the amount of tips." This suggests a different style of conflict, less moral and more based on the underlying purpose of the bar and the atmosphere required to make it successful. If this atmosphere is reliant, to a certain degree, on the level of intoxication of its customers balancing social responsibility and profitability could be problematic, this is reinforced in the following section.

Profitability

The potential financial benefits associated with excess or binge drinking present a paradox and is one of the most pivotal issues relating to CSR and the drink industry. Bar managers, licensees and bar workers were all aware that the main aim of the business was to make money. By refusing customers drink, or preventing others consuming to excess, pubs and bars reduce opportunities to make a sale and, therefore, put future profitability at stake: "I feel a duty to the boss who is struggling with the bottom line. What can I do (or sell) for him that gives him a good (financial) outcome at the end of the night". The potential financial pitfalls of applying CSR approaches to licensed premises could be significant, as managing the paradoxical situation of selling intoxicating beverages in order to make a profit seemed to have two principal effects on licensees. None of the managers interviewed in the study was completely supportive of greater CSR related regulations within the workplace,

whereas, other employees were more openly cynical about the realities of CSR within the drinks industry:

“Publicans are really not remotely interested in drinking habits, public health, units consumed on premises, they are more interested in the amount of profit they can make off any given week” Manager H

Once again there was a clear conflict evident between the requirements of a CSR led policy to refuse to serve drunken customers and the need for licensed premises to be profitable. This conflict was not restricted to bar managers but felt just as keenly by front line staff.

Engagement with CSR

From the findings it is clear that, in general, there was high awareness and low engagement with CSR policies among the respondents. This confirms the indications of other studies within the hospitality sector (See Dodds & Kuehnel, 2010; Jones, et al., 2006). There was little evidence that the organisations studied were embracing socially responsible policies and any activity was superficial at best.

A veneer of subscription to CSR practices was evident amongst participants. This veiled what was, in reality, minimal engagement except in cases when the ‘lip service’ paid to CSR policies supported the development of avenues of revenue generation or product management. For example, serving “food until 9pm and on the busier nights...until 1am” (Manager J) was discussed in the context of acting in a socially responsible manner to allow food to inhibit the negative effects of consuming alcohol. However, this practice generates revenues from food sales later into the evening and ultimately could simply facilitate more prolonged drinking among customers. Similarly, another Manager spoke of having, “doormen on every night and we’re quite selective on who we let in” (Manager Q). This gives the impression of acting responsibly, but from an operations perspective, indicates that the establishment puts control measures in place to ensure the right clientele are welcomed in order to foster an atmosphere that is conducive to a profitable evening. The highlighted quotes also illustrate a more concerning issue that relates to Holcomb, et al.’s (2007, p. 472) proposition that, “the reality [of CSR] has not hit”. If the respondents truly consider the examples they offered to be worthy evidence of CSR engagement then the reality has indeed not hit.

Respondents considered customers to show symptoms of a social alcohol problem that was cultivated beyond drinking in licensed establishments. Weaver, et al. (1999) and Jones, et al. (2006) discuss societal acceptance of CSR policies and its importance in the engagement of firms. In this case, license holders found the “binge drinking” society (Manager T) to be relatively unsubscribed to CSR policies and therefore the propensity to enforce them was extremely low. The sense of the licensed trade being a victim of a problem created, in the respondents’ opinions, elsewhere was tangible as well as a reluctance to engage with an issue that neither they were responsible for nor their customers were interested in addressing. The clear difficulty here was that the consequences of not engaging with CSR policies did not pose a direct threat to the success of the business.

Bondy (2008) suggests that the implementation of CSR can be a source of conflict between the objectives of the CSR policy and the personal power of an individual. This conflict can result in inactivity by the employee towards CSR. Our findings provide some confirmation of Bondy's assertion with employees highlighting a sense of divided loyalty between the requirements of the CSR policy and their commitment towards what they perceived as their primary role in the business, to sell drinks. A sense of duty to their manager "who is struggling with the bottom line, what can I do (or sell) for him that gives him a good (financial) outcome at the end of the night". Clearly some employees feel a duty towards selling as many drinks as possible for the financial benefit of the business. Anxiety was also evident in the front line employees concern over the potential abusive or violent implications that might result from refusing to serve a customer. Showing loyalty to the organisation by spurning CSR or being concerned over personal safety is indicative of the tension between engagement with CSR and operational realities (Collier & Esteban, 2007; Tsai & Huang, 2008).

Overall, employee engagement was mixed. Some employees seemed to support legislation but lacked support in carrying it out, others seemed disinterested. A reason for this was alluded to by many participants who highlighted the characteristic of the licensed trade as having high staff turnover which hindered its ability to stimulate and monitor engagement with CSR. The perpetual need to source new staff and train them acted as an obstacle to investing in further educating them on CSR policy. Bolton, et al.'s (2011) discussion on CSR becoming embedded in an organisation through a process of initiation → implementation → maturation shows the difficulty faced by the licensed trade as organisations could perpetually flounder around fundamental problems with initiation. As high rates of staff turnover preclude cohesive implementation of CSR policies, the hope of successful implementation or even eventual maturation is a distant one.

The idea of CSR being a complex and vague philosophical construct without clear boundaries (Lantos, 2005; Valor, 2005) further inhibits employee engagement in the licensed trade due to the majority of employees not being suitably invested in the industry to care about their conduct. Rondinelli's (2002) observation that more often than not it is simply business as usual is particularly resonant. In particular Glasgow, one city, has over 1750 licenced establishments with only four enforcement officers; with most interviewees never having seen one. Vuontisjärvi (2006) questions employees' potential commitment and motivation toward CSR. Given the findings above, the complexity of CSR as a construct, typical occupational motivation and the turnover of frontline hospitality workers make employee engagement challenging to progress the embeddedness of CSR beyond the implementation stage.

CSR Implementation Matrix

Research participants were aware of the issues surrounding alcohol problems but were quick to lay the blame at the door of other institutions and adopted a 'victim' stance with regard to the social problems. However, the recognition of a social problem concerning alcohol by the government and the potential for the licensed trade to be a vehicle for encouraging responsible drinking exists. Uncertain or weak employee engagement is central to the difficulties identified and the industry is essentially floundering in a liminal position of

veneered engagement which lies between low engagement and true potential for socially responsible achievement.

By comparison, the tobacco industry is different to the drinks industry in that, by the nature of the product, employee engagement with CSR could be highly integrated into the corporate culture yet legitimacy would never be achieved beyond transactional integrity. Thus as an industry tobacco is 'stuck', achievement of socially responsible business practices and values are negated outright by the consequences of consuming its products. If the fundamental concept of *primum non nocere* is accepted the drinks industry is in a stronger position, as it is possible to drink responsibly. As such the tobacco and drinks industry should not be considered to occupy the same CSR/ethical territory. Enforcing CSR at an operational level is problematic within the licensed trade, managers have been shown to adopt strategies in the spirit of CSR but in the main satisfy the business needs of a bar and not destroy its fundamental value proposition.

The paradox of having to sell intoxicating beverages to survive means that employees constantly walk a fine line between running a lively, atmospheric and profitable business and an edgy, violent and unethical one. The drinks industry could promote responsible drinking if employee engagement was to be progressed beyond successful initiation to implementation and maturation. The CSR engagement matrix (Figure 1) illustrates these considerations.

Management Engagement	High	Trapped	Achievers
	Low	Flounders	Isolated
		Low	High
Employee Engagement			

Figure 1 CSR Engagement Matrix

Due to the high turnover of staff in the hospitality industry it is possible for businesses who are keen to develop CSR to become 'trapped' no matter how much is invested at the management level due to low engagement from front line staff. Clearly, elements within the industry remain as 'flounders' as employee engagement is poor but the potential alluded to earlier indicates that with increased employee and management engagement, corporate legitimacy would increase and lift the drinks industry to be a CSR 'achiever'. Finally, the data

points to the bottom right quadrant being 'isolated' relating to circumstances where staff want to adhere to CSR policies but are hamstrung by reluctant or unsupportive employers.

Our theoretical observations focus on the relationship between liability and engagement. CSR policy takes an industry perspective, which is natural and understandable. However, at the most cynical level it is easy to project from our findings that many licensed establishment owners are not interested in enforcing socially responsible operating policies in the interest of sustaining profit levels. Conversely, socially responsible licensed establishment owners may still suffer from the high turnover of frontline staff who are characterised by lower commitment and engagement with any seemingly 'peripheral' policy or interests. Thus it emerges that CSR in the licensed trade is marred by a dissonance between the interest in engagement of the actual alcohol vendors and the liability associated with the owners. The endemic issue is that the frontline vendors neither have incentive to engage nor liability for failure to engage. CSR within the licensed trade therefore has to be exercised at the coal face, where vending and consumption are occurring.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Industry

The first step in the implementation of CSR is to understand the views of managers and employees who are responsible for that implementation. One of the issues we have identified is that owners/managers are not necessarily confronted directly with the issues related to irresponsible drinking and those frontline staff that are confronted with them are not empowered to care. This study is concerned with nascent legislation. The full impact and success of these policies will not have emerged as yet and thus judging current levels of engagement is only indicative.

Our recommendations for legislation relating to responsible drinking are threefold: appreciate the structure of the industry in terms of management and frontline vendors; incentivise training; and incentivise enforcement. This research suggests dissonance between the legislation that is passed to owners and the extent to which that information is then honoured and disseminated. The nature of the industry involves fast turnover of generally casual staff thus legislation has to be perpetually disseminated by management to new staff that fundamentally have utter allegiance to those whom are paying them. Legislation must focus on those who dispense the alcohol on the front line and it must be presented in a way that makes them care. Our recommendation is that front line staff must be targeted directly and incentivised to engage. Paying individuals to attend training courses and thereafter incentivising the enforcement of legislation will encourage the engagement of potentially transient and disinterested frontline staff. The practicalities of this will involve further deep consideration beyond this study but material benefits for enforcement through commercial sponsorship of the process could involve frontline staff receiving discounts or special offers from businesses that pertain broadly to their demographic

Attempts to implement CSR in the licensed trade in only one country limits the scope of this study. Scotland is renowned for social issues relating to health and lifestyle thus the extremes of the problem that legislation is attempting to counter in Scotland may not be as pertinent to issues in other countries although anecdotal evidence suggests problems of

binge drinking in many global contexts. The employment environment alluded to in this study may be peculiar to Scotland and the UK more generally. Lower rates of pay and varying organisational structures mean that the hospitality and tourism industry tends to encourage a more transient frontline workforce. In other countries levels of perceived professional integrity and employment structures make working in the hospitality and tourism industry a more credible and career-orientated endeavour and thus engagement with CSR may vary.

Reviewing this study in five years would add to the strength of the results. This would develop further insight into the impact of the legislation and the way in which engagement has evolved over time. Given the nature of employment discussed, research involving leaders in the drinks industry could help to further our understanding of the status quo of the licensed trade in Scotland. Perhaps developing recommendations for improving the status quo could stimulate a more supportive and positive employment environment for industry workers. Further, this study focuses on licensees and front line employees in the drinks industry and using a student sample for the front line employees. Other stakeholders and a broader sample of employees will have valuable perspectives that could be explored to add depth and texture to the results presented here. The relationship between the personal drinking habits of managers and employees may also have some bearing on attitudes and this would be a fascinating area for future research. The projected potential for the drinks industry to become an 'achiever' remains untested as does the application of the matrix to other industries.

Ultimately, engagement with CSR in the drinks industry is bad for business. The nature of alcohol means that stamping down on its consumption in pubs will only cause the problem to resurface elsewhere. In the tobacco industry, smoking can be controlled through sales since the actual consumption of cigarettes is relatively innocuous, whereas it is the consumption of alcohol that is the problem. Fundamentally the challenge is to navigate the ethics of vending alcohol and the subsequent consequences of its consumption.

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