

Corporate Social Disclosure: Critical Perspectives in China and Japan (The Palgrave Macmillan Asian Business Series)



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Corporate social disclosure (CSD), as an important branch in social accounting, has been widely examined since the 1970s. During that time, managers were under pressure to disclose the wider consequences that corporate activities may have on the environment, human resources and consumer policies. Rapid globalization in the 1980s and 1990s has forced corporations to realize that their operations and activities are not in a vacuum but have immense consequences both locally and globally. Consumers started to have an increasing awareness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and expected far more transparency in corporate affairs. The disclosure of this kind of information is demanded by various stakeholder groups, including governments and pressure groups. Nowadays, CSD is still voluntary in most countries although some European countries including France and Germany have mandatory requirements in environmental disclosure. Even so, given the fierce competition among global business players and the increased knowledge and demand of various stakeholders, companies, in order to continue to obtain their legitimate license to operate in society, cannot avoid CSD.

Corporate Social Disclosure focuses on China and Japan as two countries for critical observations of the latest CSD issues. The first reason is because Japan has a more mature approach to CSD as its development started quite early together with its Western counterparts. The second reason is inspired by prior literature on the cultural influence on corporate financial disclosure. A number of studies have employed Hofstede's four cultural dimensions to explain different countries' levels of disclosure of accounting information. The third reason is despite Japan's maturity in CSR and CSD and China's inexperience, both countries in recent years have shocked the world with serious business scandals.

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