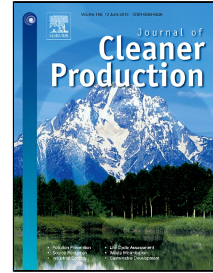


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A comparison of corporate social responsibility practices in the Singapore, Australia and New Zealand construction industries

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## **A comparison of corporate social responsibility practices in the Singapore, Australia and New Zealand construction industries**

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### **Abstract**

The construction industry has a major social, cultural, environmental and economic impact on the environment in which it operates. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) research in construction is growing, it is highly UK-centric and there has been no comparative research of construction industry CSR practices between different countries. Addressing the need for such research in an increasingly globalised construction industry, and adopting a cultural relativist perspective which recognises the contextuality of CSR practices, this paper presents a comparative study of CSR practices in the construction supply chains of the Singapore, Australia and New Zealand construction industries. Analysis of CSR data collected via an on-line survey of 137 firms in the construction supply chains of these countries using the Kruskal Wallis H-test and Relative Prevalence Indexing results indicate a compliance-based approach to CSR in all three countries and a common focus on environmental and safety issues. The social dimension of CSR is yet to mature, particularly in the areas of community interaction, disability, wellness, childcare and ageing. There is also significant reluctance to interfere with supply chains to achieve CSR objectives. Outside these similarities, numerous differences in CSR practices are found between these countries adding to our understanding of the influence of differing regulatory imperatives, institutional factors, workforce structures and demographics and cultural factors. The findings also add to our understanding of the interactions between formal and informal CSR policies and practices in different cultural contexts and the potential value of New Institutional Theory as a new conceptual lens to explore this issue further.

Keywords: Australia, corporate social responsibility, construction industry, cultural, practices, New Zealand, Singapore.

### **1. Introduction**

A positive corporate social responsibility (CSR) record is becoming an increasingly important asset in the construction industry, as governments, investors and communities recognise the impact of construction projects on the economic, social, cultural and ecological environment in which they are built (Watts et al 2015). Recognising that no consensual definition of CSR exists outside or within the field of construction (Watts et al 2015, Singh et al 2015), this paper adopts the ISO 26000:2010 definition of CSR which is the “responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that: contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of

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