

An Empirical Investigation of the Relationship Between SPR and Purchasing Performance in the Restaurant Industry of Thailand: Testing Mediation and Moderation Model

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The objective of the current study is understanding Social Purchasing Responsibility (SPR) performance according to the moderating effect of internal integration in the tourism industry in Thailand. For this purpose, data has been collected from 210 supply chain managers working in five star restaurants. The managers were selected by using the simple random sampling technique. To analyse the results, Smart PLS (3.2.8) software and structural equation modelling (SEM) has been used. The SEM findings have shown that SPR has a direct influence on purchasing performance. The association of SPR and purchasing performance have been partially mediated by organisational learning. Furthermore, internal integration did not have a moderating effect in the relationship of SPR and purchasing performance. Based on these findings, this study recommends that SPR adoption could affect operations for both buyers and suppliers within supply chain management organisations. These also further encouraged organisational learning and enhance the efficiency of purchasing. In addition, the findings show that organisations could realise the effect of SPR practices but may also be focused on other purchasing practices that could affect purchasing performance. The

current research also contributes to a body of knowledge in the way of empirical findings.

Key words: *SPR, internal integration, organisational learning, purchasing performance.*

Introduction

In the contemporary environment, supply chain management (SCM) has gained importance in the recent times and has a heightened dependence on suppliers (Maloni, Hiatt, & Astrachan, 2017; Chetthamrongchai & Jermstittiparsert, 2019; Jermstittiparsert, Joemsittiprasert, Wasino, Seftyono, Nugraha, 2019). Other effects are that currently, it is necessary for organisations to move away from for their own internal management of sustainable supply management (SSCM) (Ogunyemi, Ayios, & Spiegler, 2016). A purchasing function within an organisation should be developed that could be socially and environmentally responsible to save the organisation from risks. It could also save it from a ruined reputation through negative media attraction (Cambra-Fierro, Polo-Redondo, & Wilson, 2008; Seuring & Müller, 2008). In this regard, assistance is provided for organisations leading to competitive advantages in the global competitive environment (Gupta, 2012). The importance of this has increased for organisational sustainability in terms of the overall management of business activities (Tuttle & Heap, 2008).

Nevertheless, along with emerging issues, such as benefits for employees and concerns about security, it is necessary for firms to transform supply chain models within organisations. Firms should not only focus on the economic performance but should also be focused on building friendly environments. Supply chain models help reach harmony with the environment. Firms leading international markets have a greater level of supply chain management to enhance their sustainable advantage. For instance, Unilever is a multinational company that has adopted a project called the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan for 2020. It could make a big improvement in the health conditions of one billion people (Unilever, 2012). Moreover, it could also reduce the impact on the environment and achieve a 100 percent purchasing performance (Unilever, 2012). Moreover, Apple has also promoted a supervisory mechanism called “Apple Supplier Conducting Code and Supplier Responsibility Standard”. Research has found that sustainable supply (SS) firms could achieve a competitive advantage by cutting costs and increasing levels of risk management. They also explored new sources of incomes and increased their brand value (Hanifan, Sharma, & Mehta, 2012).

In the current study, SSCM is based on the findings of Carter and Jennings (2004), which include the purchasing function within “corporate social responsibility” (CSR). The previous literature indicates that there is little attention to the relationship of socially responsible supply chains (SRSC) and firm performance. Moreover, the SPR (SPR) could help to

improve supplier performance through the learning of organisations and therefore lead to reductions of costs (Carter & Mol, 2006) or internal integration in the organisations (Carter & Jennings, 2002). Nevertheless, the existing association between SPR and performance improvement is not still clear. The current study outlines the concept that SPR could act as a means for organisations to enhance their performance inside the restaurant industry of Thailand.

Internal integration moderates the relationship of SPR practices and purchasing performance (PP) outcomes. In this regard, this paper could lead especially to one such practice: internal integration. It could work as a moderator that affects the relationship between SPR practices and PP. The existence and non-existence of internal integration could cause SPR to hinder or affect PP. Previous literature regarding the relationship between SPR and PP (in terms of a moderating effect) is not available as per the best knowledge of researchers. Hence, another objective of the current study is to analyse whether internal integration moderates the relationship of SPR practices and PP in the restaurant industry in Thailand. The moderating effect of internal integration is considered to be important especially in the literature about the management of purchases.

This paper has a special contribution to enhance the understanding of various associations of SPR practices and how they could affect performance outcomes within specific organisations in Thailand. It does so by extending a theory of a resource-based view (RBV), which explains how organisations could gain a competitive advantage from social and environmental initiatives. Moreover, the other aspect of this study is to examine the moderating effect of internal integration in the restaurant industry of Thailand. It shows that various performance level improvements are entirely dependent on internal integrations. Finally, the body of knowledge from these empirical findings would also be useful for researchers interested in similar areas of study.

The current study has been divided into the following sections, “introduction, literature review, methodology, data analysis and findings and conclusion, research limitations and future directions and recommendations”. They have been discussed clearly based on the literature stream.

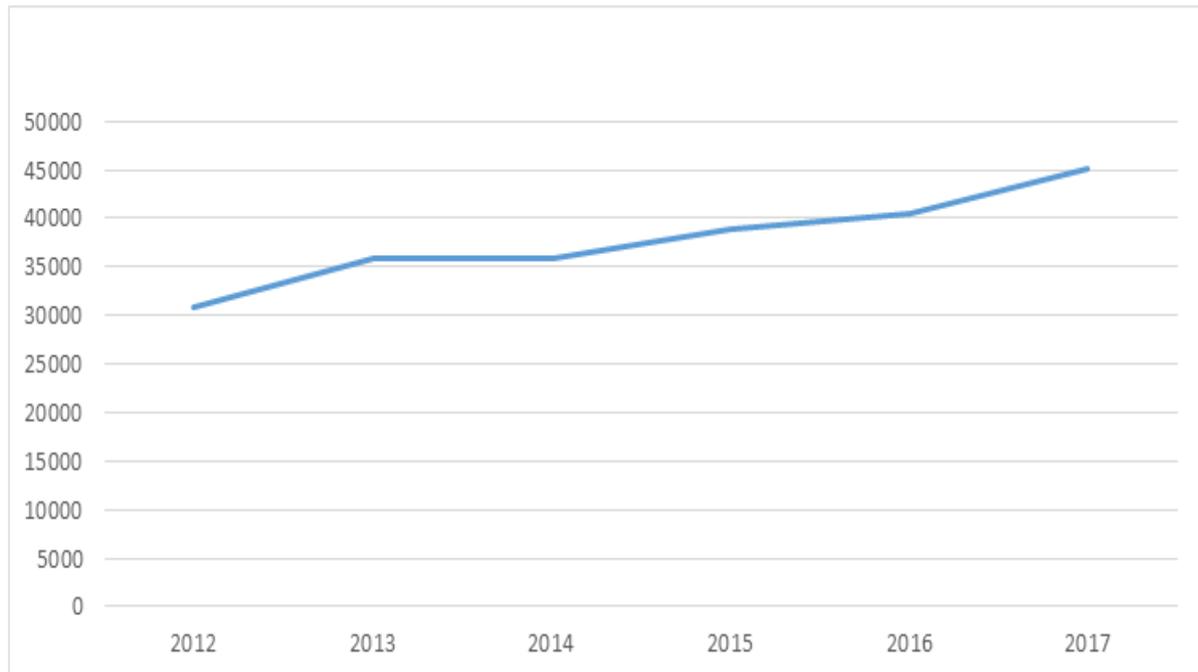
Overview of the Restaurant Industry in Thailand

Thailand’s highly competitive restaurant sector is comprised of approximately 150,000 outlets, 100,000 of which consist of restaurants and 50,000 of which include hotels (Sirikeratikul, 2018). The industry has been steadily growing along with the continuous growth of the tourism sector as well as improved modern prosperity. There are minimal barriers for newcomers entering the market. The per capita consumer expenditure in 2017 for

hotels and catering businesses was U.S. \$655 per person, an 11 percent increase from the previous year (Sirikeratikul, 2018).

Figure 1

Consumer Expenditure on Hotels and Catering 2012-17



Source: (Sirikeratikul, 2018).

Thailand has 100,000 restaurants across the country. As per the National Economic and Social Development Board, the expansion in restaurants was 12.8 in the first quarter of 2018, which was driven by increased expenses of Thais with higher income (Sirikeratikul, 2018). The long term outlook for the restaurant sector remains positive due to increased urbanisation and increases in disposable consumer income (Sirikeratikul, 2018). Thailand has a strong food culture that plays a great role in its identity and relationship with other industries. In addition, continuous expansion of retail mall operators and modern retail food establishments will provide and easy access to casual dining restaurants. To compete with all such kinds of consumers, restaurants should be establishing various strategies; introducing new, quality products; marketing online; and providing online sales and branding. The latter not only advertise products but also change lifestyles (Sirikeratikul, 2018).

The restaurant sector is considered to be highly competitive among international chains, which competes against well-established local restaurants (Sirikeratikul, 2018). Low barriers for the entry of businesses leads to regular newcomers entering the market. They bring new ideas and concepts with them. Food outlets are located everywhere in the Thailand, from small street carts to five-star hotels. Thus, restaurants compete in various ways, including

“price, food quality, service, trendiness, and food variety”. Japanese and Korean style foods include ramen, shabu, yakiniku, Korean barbeque, Bibimbap, and Korean style hotpot mixed with rice. “Chinese cuisine, American style burgers, Italian pizzas and pasta, and French cuisine” are most popular in Thailand, particularly among Thai teenagers (Sirikeratikul, 2018).

Table 1

Market Share of Restaurants in Thailand (2015-2017)

Revenue	2015		2016		2017	
	Revenue	(%)	Revenue	(%)	Revenue	(%)
Cafe	202	12%	236	14%	296	15%
Restaurants	647	40%	685	40%	744	38%
Fast Food	597	37%	645	37%	743	38%
Ice Cream	170	11%	161	9%	179	9%
Total	1615	100%	1726	100%	1962	100%

Source: (Sirikeratikul, 2018).

The contribution of the restaurant industry in Thailand, in a socio-economic sense, has shown that it plays a main role in the development of the Thai economy. With this significant contribution, the importance of this industry cannot not be ignored. Thus, the sustainability of this industry is very important, so that its contributions in the social and economic perspective will not be decreased. In this regard, the focus of the current study is to investigate purchasing performance with respect to SPR by analysing the moderating impact of internal integration within the restaurant industry of Thailand.

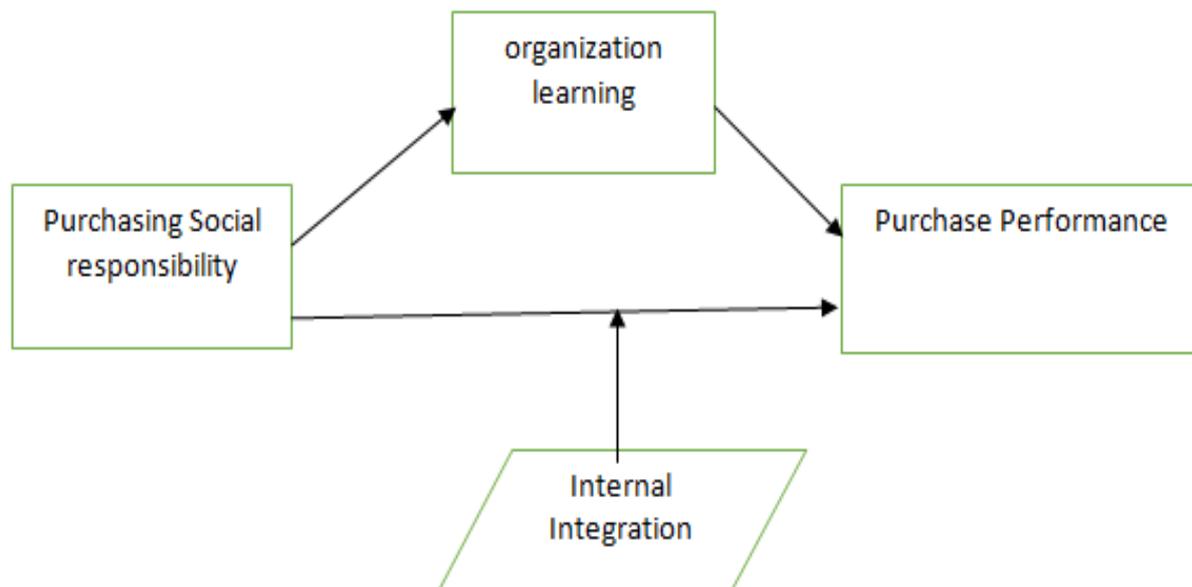
Conceptual Framework

Purchasing function and supply chain management (SCM) are being recognised as some key components in organisations for sustainability. These functions provide help to address the “environmental and social” aspects in the present stream of SCM. If structures include purchasing with CSR, then they exemplify SPR within an organisation (Carter & Jennings, 2004). The practices that are based on SPR have five elements: “environment, diversity, philanthropy and community, human rights, and safety”. In the current study, SSCM has been conceptualised by the study of Carter and Jennings (Carter & Jennings, 2004) to understand the effect of SPR on purchasing performance (PP), specifically in the Thai restaurant industry. Moreover, various other practices, which involve purchasing within the organisation, could affect the association of SPR implementation and PP. Internal integration is considered to be important in affecting their relationship. This has been used as a moderating variable in the current study. This variable has shown various other related purchasing functions involved with SPR. Internal integration could involve moderation in an

exogenous and endogenous sense. Within the current scope of research, a theoretical model has been developed to investigate the moderating effect of internal integration and organisational learning's mediating effect along with five hypothesis. Figure presents the relationship among SPR practices: internal integration, organisational learning and purchasing performance.

Figure 2

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Research Hypotheses

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is to connected with the globalisation process within organisations (Pedersen & Andersen, 2006). It provides assistance to enhance social and environmental responsibility (Closs, Speier, & Meacham, 2011; Porter & Kramer, 2006). Specifically, organisations that are service providers and are large should pay attention to CSR (Ağan, Kuzey, Acar, & Açıkgöz, 2016). Activities that are based on social responsibility are considered better in terms of brand image and reputation for organisations (Antonio & Lau, 2011), and could lead to competitive advantages (Ağan et al., 2016; Gupta, 2012). It is further suggested by Hojmoose, Roehrich, and Grosvold (2014) that a responsible supply chain helps employees feel they are satisfied as members of an organisation that is responsible in social and environmental sustainability. This ultimately could lead to improvements in the value of a corporation. Employees within an organisation are consequently encouraged and motivated to increase their skills, capabilities, knowledge and determination level to learn more. In the same vein, they can express their views, which may be congruent with other ideas in extant literature (Perin & Sampaio, 2003). These kinds of practices are very difficult to duplicate. Hence, they could involve proper awareness to attract

new potential employees (Hoejmosse & Adrien-Kirby, 2012). Thus, based on this it is hypothesised that:

H1: There is a significant association between SPR and organisational learning.

Organisational learning is an important resource for an organisation's capacity to be competitive in the market (Barney, 1991). It provides great assistance in making guidelines for workers becomes part of the improvement of the environment (Rothenberg, Pil, & Maxwell, 2001). This can provide aid for the overall sustainability of corporate development (Klassen & Vereecke, 2012). Further research has been explored by Cousins, Lamming, and Bowen (2004). It also supports the idea that organisations' purchasing is of great importance in sustaining close relationships to support their suppliers. This is considered to involve a greater tendency to include suppliers in environmental enterprises. Similarly, Carter (2005) further explains that SPR does not have a direct effect on company costs, but has a significant indirect effect by affecting organisational learning. This in turn, affects the efficiency of suppliers, and suppliers have the ability to improve the capabilities of a corporation in order to reduce costs. Therefore, the buyer plays an important role that is linked with suppliers. Based on this, it is hypothesised that

H2: There is a significant association between organisational learning and purchasing performance.

Purchasing performance (PP) involves of the implementation of a supply chain. Purchase assessments include material quality, punctual delivery as well as the target and actual costs of materials (Chao, Scheuing, & Ruch, 1993). Consumers have played a vital role in association along with service provides (suppliers). In this regard, purchasing efficiency is a key factor. It involves having a good supplier who mutually improves assistance. It is further stated by Leire and Mont (2010) that being socially responsible in purchasing provides help in developing coordination with suppliers and reducing costs, which could improve social performance. Furthermore, this can help create a supplier relationship involving commitment and trust, which could further result in the improvement of the capabilities of suppliers (Worthington, Ram, Boyal, & Shah, 2008) and also the exploration of the purchasing performance of the organisation (Ağan et al., 2016). At the same time, Klassen and Vereecke (2012) further recommend that by using practical and policy standards in relation to social risks, innovations can enhance the performance of organisations. Based on this it is hypothesised that

H3: There is a significant association between the SPR and purchasing performance.

It was mentioned earlier that organisations focus on socially responsible purchasing, which increases the efficiency of organisations (Laulu, 2015; Thornton, Autry, Gligor, & Brik, 2013). Nevertheless, organisational learning could have an effect on the association of “SPR practices and purchasing performance” (Leire & Mont, 2010). There could theoretically be a mediating effect based on a resource based view (RBV) theory (Lavie, 2006). This argument is consistent with the study of Carter (2005), who adopted the RBV and identified a need within various studies to identify the specific character of organisational learning in the association of SPR and business performance. This involves using a mediating variable in organisational learning that is an important source for the capabilities of organisations (Perin & Sampaio, 2003). Thus, environmental and social responsibility for suppliers and buyers’ performance could lead to more change, which can further encourage buyers and suppliers to professionally work together. Based on this, it is hypothesised that

H4: Organisational learning significantly mediates the relationship of SPR and purchasing performance.

The Moderating Effect of Internal Integration

The specific objective of internal integration is to encourage the practices of purchasing along with the priorities of a business. Consequently, internal integration relates to purchasing practices achieving the objectives of an institution (Narasimhan & Das, 2001). In the extant literature, internal integrations are said to have a significant effect on the outcomes of performance (González-Benito, Lannelongue, Ferreira, & Gonzalez-Zapatero, 2016). Purchasing performance is still dependant on various strategies. These days, sustainability in organisations is recognised when there are strategic goals to enhance competitiveness (Stank, Daugherty, & Ellinger, 1999). CSR has become one of the more important concepts in business purchasing due to its significance from environmental and social perspectives. Internal integration is essential to increasing the acceptance of socially responsible buying and also adjusting to it along with other purchasing practices. This accomplishes supplier quality that conforms to the needs of a company. Due to all of these reasons, internal integration is anticipated to affect PSSR in the extent of purchasing performance. Based on this, it is hypothesised that

H5: Internal integration significantly moderates the relationship of SPR and purchasing performance.

Methodology

The current study is correlational and cross sectional in natural because one-time data has been collected. Moreover, for the current study, a quantitative approach by using a self-

administered questionnaire was used to investigate the relationship among independent, mediator, moderating and dependent variables of five-star hotels in Bangkok, Thailand. A questionnaire was considered an effective method for data collection from the respondents, especially when the researchers considered the variables and how to measure them. The primary data for the current study was collected by using a five-point Likert Scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). All the questionnaires have been adapted from the previous studies for all the variables. The items for SPR were adapted from the studies of Carter and Jennings (2004) and Thornton et al. (2013). In addition, internal integration items and the items for purchasing performance were adopted from the study of González-Benito et al. (2016). The items for organisational learning were adopted from the study of Carter (2005). For data collection, questionnaires were translated in both English and Thai.

At the time of study, there were almost 900 supply chain managers working in Thailand's five-star hotels. The samples size of 269 supply chain managers for the current study was selected by using a table and a random sampling technique (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Two sampling techniques were used in the methodology. One was probability and other was nonprobability. In probability sampling, each element had an equal chance of occurrence. In non-probability sampling, there was not an equal chance of occurrence of the elements. The generalisability of the probability sampling was greater when compared to non-probability sampling. Therefore, for the current study, a simple random technique was used so that the generalisability of the findings could be increased (Sekran & Bougie, 2013). In this regard, a total of 269 self-administered questionnaires were distributed among the supply managers of five-star hotels in Thailand. A total of 210 questionnaires were returned back from the hotels, which is a 78% response rate of the total. As a result, 210 responses were included in the analysis.

Data Analysis

Several prior studies adopted a partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) approach in testing the direct and indirect relationships of variables (Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2018; Lim & Loosemore, 2017; Singjai, Winata, & Kummer, 2018). Therefore, the research hypotheses of the present research were assessed through PLS-SEM. The measurements and structural model of the study were assessed by using Smartpls 3 software. The PLS-SEM approach is appropriate in the case of non-normal data or small sample sizes. (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

Construct Reliability and Validity

Before assessing the model, construct reliability and validity must be established (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). First the convergent validity and discriminant

validity of the measurement model were assessed. Table 1 presents the measurement model of the study. All the factor loadings that were less than 0.5 were deleted from the model in order to establish the indicators' reliability. All the constructs have a Cronbach's alpha > 0.70, average variance extracted (AVE) > 0.5 and composite reliability (CR) > 0.60. This established the convergent validity of the model (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). For discriminant validity, in the Fornell and Larcker criterion, the diagonal values represent the square of AVE that must be greater than the constructs' correlation with other variables. In the HTMT analysis, all the values should be less than 0.85 (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). Similarly, the results of the Fornell and Larcker criterion (in Table 2) and HTMT analysis (in table 3) have established the discriminant validity of the construct.

Table 1
Measurement Model of the Study

Measurement Scale	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
<i>First Order</i>					
Organisational Learning	OL1	0.877	0.81	0.66	0.854
	OL2	0.823			
	OL3	0.735			
Internal Integration	II1	0.629	0.80	0.54	0.851
	II2	0.611			
	II3	0.696			
	II4	0.656			
	II5	0.726			
	II6	0.725			
Purchasing Performance	PP1	0.764	0.77	0.50	0.833
	PP2	0.754			
	PP3	0.685			
	PP4	0.748			
	PP5	0.577			
Social Purchasing Responsibility – Environment	PER1	0.617	0.76	0.53	0.821
	PER2	0.784			
	PER3	0.757			
	PER4	0.758			
Social Purchasing Responsibility – Human Right	PHR1	0.820	0.79	0.60	0.820
	PHR2	0.721			
	PHR3	0.773			

Social Purchasing	SPR1	0.910	0.86	0.80	0.890
Responsibility – Safety	SPR2	0.880			
Social Purchasing	PDR1	0.750	0.70	0.59	0.820
Responsibility – Diversity	PDR2	0.780			
Second Order					
Social Purchasing	PER1	0.753	-	0.56	0.836
Responsibility	PHR2	0.729			
	SPR3	0.813			
	PDR4	0.701			

* Items II7 and II8 deleted due to low loadings.

Table 2

Fornell and Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

	Organisation al Learning	Internal Integratio n	Purchasing performance	SPR
Organisational Learning	0.81			
Internal Integration	0.336	0.74		
Purchasing Performance	0.28	0.611	0.71	
SPR	0.405	0.579	0.445	0.75

Table 3

HTMT Analysis for Discriminant Validity

	Organisation al Learning	Internal Integration	Purchasing Performance	SPR
Organisational Learning				
Internal Integration	0.472			
Purchasing Performance	0.375	0.78		
SPR	0.577	0.76	0.608	

Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the hypotheses, PLS-SEM was applied using Smarts PLS 3.0. The model contains two endogenous variables: organisational learning (mediator) and purchasing performance (dependent variable) having an R^2 value of 0.44 and 0.60 and Q^2 of 0.25 and 0.21 respectively, which establish the substantiality of the Model. Table 4 presents the results of PLS bootstrap algorithms that confirm the significant direct relationship of SPR ($\beta = 0.66$,

t value = 15.86, p value = 0.00) and organisational learning. The findings also revealed the significant positive relationship of organisational learning ($\beta = 0.19$, t value = 3.138, p value = 0.002) and SPR ($\beta = 0.43$, t value = 6.83, p value = 0.000) with purchasing performance. Thus, considering the direct relationship, hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 are supported in this study. These results are consistent with other studies (Carter, Auskalnis, & Ketchum, 1999; Thornton et al., 2013).

Figure 1
Standardised Beta Coefficients of the Structural Model

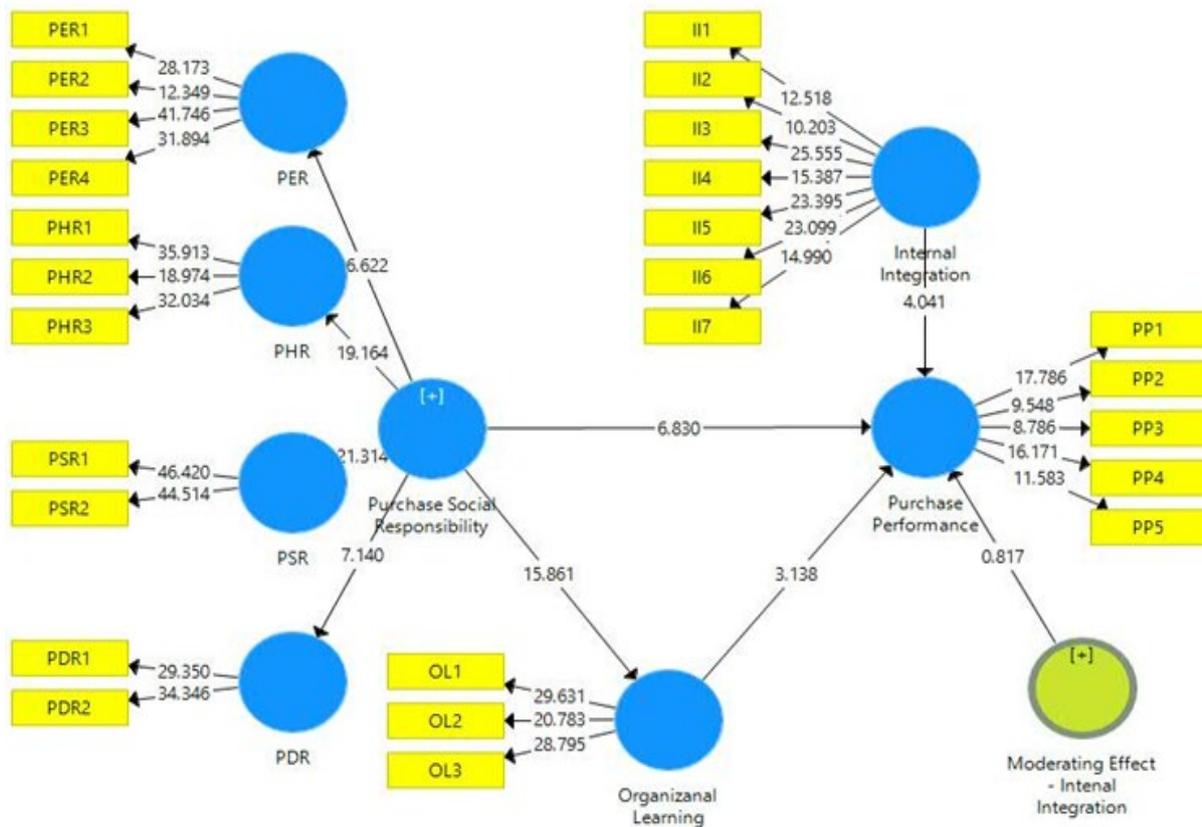


Table 4
Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Beta	S.E	T Value	P Value	CI ^{BCa} Low	CI ^{BCa} High	Decision
SPR -> OL	0.660	0.042	15.861	0.000	0.551	0.724	Supported
OL -> PP	0.188	0.06	3.138	0.002	0.078	0.301	Supported
SPR -> PP	0.434	0.064	6.83	0.000	0.303	0.552	Supported

* SPR = Social Purchasing Responsibility, OL = Organisational Learning, PP = Purchasing Performance.

* Significance level = 0.05.

Similarly, the findings inferred that organisational learning partially mediates the relationship of SPR ($\beta = 0.124$, t value = 3.084, p value = 0.002) and purchasing performance. However, internal integration ($\beta = 0.024$, t value = 0.817, p value = 0.414) does not seem to have a moderating effect on the relationship of SPR and purchasing performance. These findings suggest that SPR and organisational learning have a substantive, direct impact on purchasing performance. In addition, organisational learning partially mediates the relationship between SPR and purchasing performance.

Table 5

Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Beta	S.E	T Values	P Values	CI ^{BCa} Low	CI ^{BCa} High	Decision
SPR -> OL -> PP	0.124	0.040	3.084	0.002	0.053	0.206	Supported
SPR * II -> PP	0.024	0.029	0.817	0.414	-0.038	0.066	Not Supported

* SPR = Social Purchasing Responsibility, OL = Organisational Learning, PP = Purchasing Performance, II = Internal Integration.

* Significance level = 0.05.

Discussion and Conclusion

In light of recent literature, this study assesses five hypotheses. Out of these, three represent direct effects among the variables, whereas two of them propose the indirect effects of variables among the predictors and the outcome constructs. In general, this study provides an in-depth understanding of corporate social responsibility adopted for purchasing in organisation by assessing the moderation of internal integration in Thailand. The findings of the study support H1 to H4, providing empirical support for direct and indirect relationships among the studied variables. These findings are consistent with previous studies (Thornton et al., 2013; Yawar & Seuring, 2017). However, internal integration found no empirical support for moderating effects in the relationship between SPR and purchasing performance. One potential reason for the insignificant moderating effect of internal integration is the lack of adequate systems due to time and financial constraints. These results support the findings of Carter and Jennings (2002), which also found no direct and indirect relationships between SPR and purchasing performance. However, these results are in contrast with González-Benito et al. (2016) and Narasimhan & Das (2001), who found a moderating effect of internal integration in their studies. These inconsistent results call for more research in this regard.

By summarising the findings, it can be concluded that the purchasing performance of an organisation can be enhanced by incorporating corporate social responsibility in planning and



decision-making regarding purchases. Furthermore, experiences through organisational learning also play a vital role in enhancing purchasing performance by purchasing CSR. Finally, internal integration does not moderate the relationship between SPR and performance. It implies that managers in Thailand don't need to focus on internal integration while making decisions regarding purchases in their organisations. However, their understanding of corporate social responsibility is necessary in this regard.

Limitations and Future Research

This research has some limitations, since it has a cross-sectional design and the data obtained has implications regarding the responses at one time only. However, a longitudinal study is preferred to assess changes in responses at different points in time and to establish the causal relationships among variables. The data was collected from 210 Thai restaurant supply chain managers. Thus, future research should enlarge the sample and balance the number of purchasing and other managers to conduct a comparative analysis between two groups of managers. Moreover, this study found no moderation in the relationship between SPR and purchasing performance. This calls for future researchers to investigate the inconsistent moderation results. Finally, it would be interesting to carry out in-depth research by incorporating ethical and cultural variables in the current research model to have insight into organisational and cultural factors in proven relationships. Another limitation is that the current study focuses only on the restaurant industry. Therefore, the results of this study are limited. A future comparative study could be established to generalise the findings in a proper way.

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