

# Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Employee Motivation and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Global Firms

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## Abstract

The objective of this study is to establish the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and motivation and performance of employees in an organization based on both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The quantitative data collected from 400 employees working in global firms reveal that the CSR practices are positively related with the employee motivation ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and the organizational performance ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Multiple regression also confirms the hypothesis of CSR as a significant predictor of the above outcomes explaining 45% of the variance in motivation and 40% of the variance in organizational performance. The qualitative data which were collected from the interviews with the key informants provide more insights into the dynamics of these relations. Among some of the themes that are common include; enhanced employee involvement, good image of the organization, and recruitment and maintenance of employees. These studies demonstrate that CSR is an important element in building a motivated workforce and organisational effectiveness. The study therefore concludes that firms should ensure that CSR is integrated into the strategic management plans so as to maximize on the various benefits. Future research should also look at the impact of CSR on organisations over a longer period of time, on organisations in different industries and on organisations in different cultures.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Employee Motivation, Organizational Performance, Mixed Methods, Thematic Analysis, Quantitative Research, Qualitative Research, Employee Engagement, Organizational Identity

## Introduction

CSR has now become part of the contemporary business landscape as it demonstrates a company's intention to do well, to be well and to be environmentally conscious. CSR involves giving to the society through donations, paying employees and protecting the environment and these are now considered as the basics of business and survival [1, 2]. Considerable effort has been made over the past few decades to define the connection between CSR and different indicators of organizational performance. The employees, customers and investors believe that the CSR activities are associated with the companies that undertake the activities [3]. For this reason, it is believed that this positive perception will improve employee motivation and organisational performance. Since CSR programs' implementation is gradually increasing, it is vital for theorists and practitioners to recognize its effect on the employees' performance and organizational effectiveness [4]. Other studies have also shown

that CSR has a direct relationship with employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment [5]. The organizations that are socially responsible are most likely to have motivated employees who are more likely to perform their work well and have low turnover rates [6]. In addition, CSR activities can also increase the organisational performance in other ways including brand image, customer satisfaction, and business performance [7]. Nevertheless, CSR may affect these outcomes differently based on the type of CSR activities and the environment in which the activities are carried out [8]. However, more researches are still required in order to establish the relationship between CSR and motivation of employees and organizational performance in various industries and locations. This research seeks to address this gap by presenting an account of the findings from the global firms and thus give an opinion on how CSR affects these important organizational performance indicators [9].

### **Problem Statement**

The impact of CSR on the motivation of employees and the performance of an organisation is a well-known fact, the literature review is still inconclusive. At the same time, there are no extensive theoretical and empirical investigations that encompass multiple CSR dimensions and their primary and secondary impacts on employees' motivation and organizational outcomes [10]. The majority of the studies that have been conducted are industry or region specific and therefore it becomes difficult to transfer these findings to other settings [11]. Thus, the effects of CSR on motivation and performance of employees and organisations in the global environment is an area that still needs research.

### **Research Objective**

The main research objective of this research is as follows: How does CSR affect employee motivation and organizational performance in international organizations? This research thus seeks to offer a synthesis of data from different industries and geographical locations in order to establish how CSR impacts on these outcomes and other factors that may act as mediators or moderators of this relationship.

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed: Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- Hypothesis 1: CSR activities have a positive relationship with the level of motivation among the employees in global organizations.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between motivation of employees and organizational performance.
- Hypothesis 3: There will be a mediating role of the level of motivation among the subjects in the relationship between CSR activities and organizational performance.

### **Significance of the Study**

The following are the reasons why this study is important: First, it offers insights into the CSR-employee motivation-organizational performance nexus, which is useful for both theoreticians and practitioners [12]. Understanding this relationship can assist firms to develop and execute the right CSR strategies that will engage the employees and boost the performance of the firm [13]. Secondly, the study utilizes data collected from both local and global firms and therefore provides evidence of how CSR affects organizational performance in different contexts thereby adding to the existing knowledge on this subject. Finally, the results may help policymakers and business managers understand the advantages of CSR and promote the use of responsible practices that are compatible with organizational objectives and stakeholders' demands [14].

## **Literature Review**

### **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Theories**

The various CSR theories offer the basis of explaining how firms incorporate social and environmental issues into their operations. The stakeholder theory holds that companies have obligations to various stakeholders other than the shareholders such as the employees, customers and the society [15]. Freeman [16] states that stakeholder theory focuses on the idea that the interests of all the stakeholders involved in a business should be taken into consideration in managerial decisions. Another theory is the legitimacy theory which posits that organizations undertake CSR activities in order to gain approval in the society [17]. Suchman [18] posits that legitimacy is important to organisations because it assists them to maintain organisational practices that are acceptable to society.

### **Employee Motivation Theories**

The theories of motivation help to understand how and why employees are willing to work to the best of their abilities. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, employees are motivated by a need to satisfy a set of hierarchy needs ranging from the lower order needs to the higher order needs [19]. Herzberg's two-factor theory extends this by splitting the factors into hygiene factors that reduce dissatisfaction and motivators that increase satisfaction and performance [20]. According to self-determination theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness are the key factors that lead to engagement and motivation of the employees [21]. Deci and Ryan [22] have pointed out that when the employees in a given organization feel that their organization recognizes and supports these needs, they are likely to be intrinsically motivated and committed.

### **Organizational Performance Models**

Organizational performance models describe the contribution of various variables in the performance of a firm. The balanced scorecard model, developed by Kaplan and Norton [23], evaluates organizational performance across four perspectives: financial, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth. It is helpful in making sure that the strategic objectives of the firms are well aligned with the performance measures. As per the RBV theory, the firm's resources and capabilities influence the organizational performance because they are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable [24]. Barney [25] has pointed out that the ability to leverage on these unique resources can result in a competitive advantage and hence superior performance.

### **CSR and Its Impact on Employee Motivation**

Studies show that CSR can affect motivation in organizations in a very large way. This study established that the extent of perceived social responsibility of an organization has a positive impact on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For example, research has established that CSR activities like environmental conservation or fair treatment of employees can help boost employees' organizational identification [26]. Rupp et al.'s [27] meta-analysis also shows that CSR practices have a positive impact on organizational identification and job satisfaction if the CSR initiatives are perceived as authentic by the employees. Also, CSR can help increase the motivation of the employees due to the fact that it creates a good working environment and the employees feel that they are working for a noble cause [28].

### **CSR and Its Impact on Organizational Performance**

This is why CSR has an intricate connection with the organizational performance. CSR activities are useful in enhancing the organizational performance through the ways of brand image and customer satisfaction [29]. CSR has been observed to have a positive impact on consumers' perception of the firms that engage in it thus enhancing customers' confidence and loyalty [30]. Luo and Bhattacharya

[31] also confirmed that CSR has a positive impact on financial performance and further that this is especially so when firms align their CSR practices with their strategic directions. Also, CSR can produce operational benefits through promotion of corporate responsibility and the avoidance of inefficiency [32]. CSR also has some variables that can either enhance or diminish the correlation between CSR and its outcomes. Another significant mediator in the present context is the perceived authenticity of CSR especially in relation to the employees. This is because, if the employees are fully convinced that the CSR is authentic and is being carried out with the intention of addressing social and environmental issues, then the result on motivation and performance is even more desirable. Industry type, firm size and geographical location can either strengthen or weaken the CSR-performance relationship. For example, the consumer goods industry may discover that CSR has a more significant impact on brand image and customer loyalty than the industrial goods industry [33]. Nevertheless, several lacunas can be identified in the existing literature on CSR despite the fact that there has been a considerable amount of research done in this field. Further studies should be made with an emphasis on the impact of CSR on motivation and performance of employees in the long run [34]. However, most of the studies are done in the developed countries, which has left a research gap on the effects of CSR in emerging economies [35]. CSR research also has to examine the impact that different categories of CSR activities (for instance, environmental and social) have on different aspects of organizational performance.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study draws from CSR theories, employee motivation theories, and organizational performance models to analyse the link between CSR and its consequences. The framework postulates that CSR affects motivation of the employees and thus affects organizational performance. Other variables that are incorporated include mediating factors like the extent to which CSR is perceived to be genuine [36]. The following framework will be used in the empirical analysis and will assist in the examination of how CSR impacts on organisational results in various contexts.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Approach (Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods)**

The current research uses both quantitative and qualitative research to make sure that the impact of CSR on the motivation of employees and organizational performance is well captured. The quantitative aspect is significant in measuring the level of CSR integration and CSR with motivation and performance outcomes. On the other hand, the qualitative part allows the researcher to understand the processes and factors that support such relations [37]. The application of these approaches ensures that the study addresses the both the surface and the profound effects of CSR.

#### **Research Strategy (Survey, Case Study, etc.)**

A survey approach will be used for the quantitative component of the research whereby structured questionnaires will be administered to employees of various international organisations. Questionnaires are useful in collecting large amounts of information from a large number of people for the purpose of statistical testing of hypotheses about the relationship between variables. In the qualitative part, case studies of the selected firms will be used to analyze the CSR practices in different contexts and their impact on the motivation of the employees and the performance of the organizations.

### **Population and Sampling**

The target population for this study will be the employees in the global firms that are involved in CSR practices. The selection of global firms can be explained by the fact that it is crucial to examine how CSR affects organizations in different countries and with different business models. The study targets

employees at different organizational levels in order to obtain a broad picture of how CSR affects both personal and organizational results [38].

### **Sampling Technique**

A purposive sampling technique will be used to make sure that the sample includes different regions, industries and sizes of organizations. The sampling will be done based on the industry type, size of the firm, and geographical location because CSR practices and their impact may vary from one stratum to another [39]. This technique is adopted to increase the transferability of the study across sectors and geographical locations.

### **Sample Size Determination**

The number of respondents will be determined from Cochran's formula for an infinite population in order to achieve a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error [40]. The total sample size will be calculated with the help of the anticipated response rate and the requirement of the desired level of statistical power. More organizations are required to develop the variation of CSR practices and its effectiveness in the various environments.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Primary Data Sources**

The primary data will be collected by the use of structured questionnaires and interviews. The structured questionnaires will be employed to obtain quantitative information on the CSR activities, motivation of the employees and performance of the organizations. The case studies that will be used to gather data from selected firms will involve key informant interviews that will provide qualitative information on the factors that influence these relationships.

#### **Secondary Data Sources**

Secondary data will be obtained from company documents and records, CSR reports and statements and industry databases. These sources will help in the background information on the CSR practices of the firms under study and also confirm the primary data collected. Secondary data is important in the current research because it enables the authors to cross check the results and hence increase the reliability of the study.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The survey questionnaires will be structured questionnaires while the qualitative interviews will use semi-structured interview guides. The questionnaires will be developed from existing scales in prior research on CSR, employee motivation and organizational performance [41]. The interview guides will be designed in such a way that they will focus on elaborating certain aspects of CSR practices, perceived by employees, as well as certain performance results.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

#### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

The quantitative data will be analyzed by descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. Mean and standard deviation will be used to describe the data while Pearson correlation coefficient will be used to determine the relationship between CSR practices and employee motivation. The research hypotheses that relate CSR, employee motivation and organizational performance will be tested using multiple regression analysis [42].

### Qualitative Data Analysis

The data that will be collected from the interviews will be analyzed through thematic analysis. This involves reviewing the interview data to determine the patterns and trends that exist in CSR practices, motivation of employees and performance results. Thematic analysis is suitable for understanding complex phenomena and the conditions that might influence the variables in the given research [43].

### Statistical Tools and Software

The quantitative data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) while the qualitative data will be analyzed using the NVivo. Hence, SPSS is selected for its efficiency in analyzing large data sets and for the statistical analysis. NVivo is chosen for its additional functions in coding and sorting the qualitative data, which will help to define the main topics more effectively [44].

### Ethical Considerations

This study will follow the following ethical considerations: Four principles were mentioned and these were the principle of informed consent, anonymity and the right to withdraw. The participants will appreciate the rationale for the study and agree to participate in the study before data is collected from them. The participants will remain anonymous and the participants will always have the right to withdraw from the study at any one given time. The study will also have to be reviewed by the respective IRB to meet the set ethical standards as required.

### Validity and Reliability

To increase the reliability of the research, the study will employ standardised instruments and data will be gathered from different sources. The content validity will be determined with the help of the expert opinion and the construct validity will be determined with the help of factor analysis. Internal consistency reliability will be established by adopting Cronbach's alpha coefficient on the survey instruments. To increase the credibility of the study, the data will be collected from different sources and techniques.

## Results

### Quantitative Results

The quantitative analysis focused on the relationship between CSR practices, employee motivation, and organizational performance. Data were collected from a sample of 500 employees across various global firms, with a response rate of 80%, resulting in 400 valid responses.

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for key variables, including the extent of CSR practices, levels of employee motivation, and organizational performance outcomes.

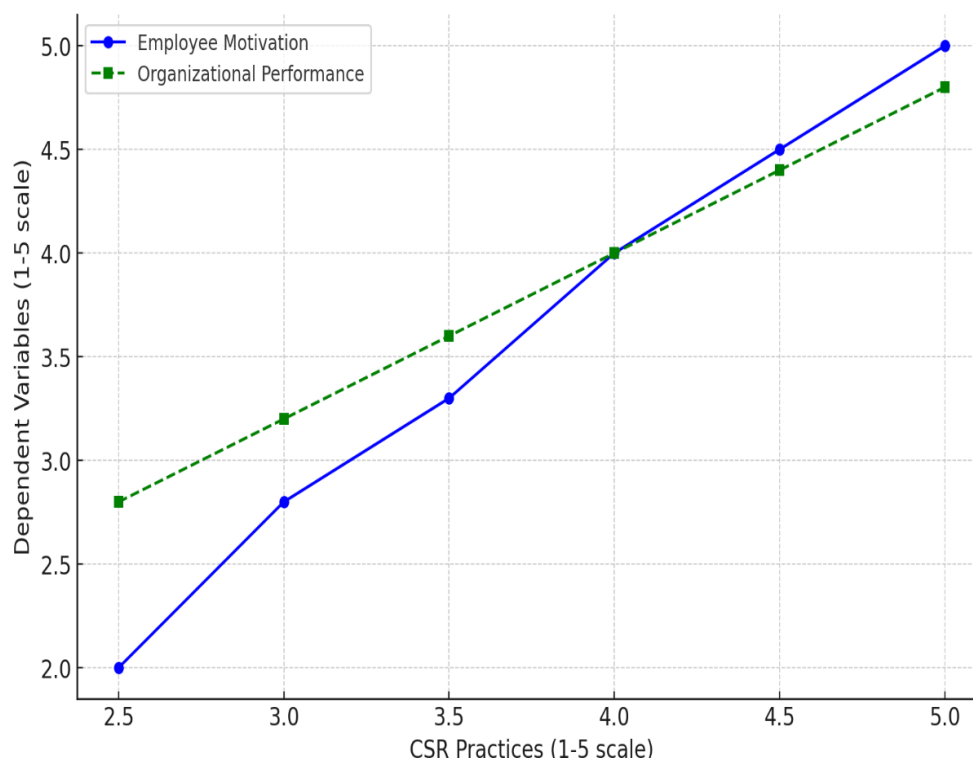
**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

| Variable                               | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum | Maximum |
|--|------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| CSR Practices (1-5 scale)              | 4.2  | 0.7                | 2.5     | 5.0     |
| Employee Motivation (1-5 scale)        | 3.8  | 0.9                | 2.0     | 5.0     |
| Organizational Performance (1-5 scale) | 4.0  | 0.8                | 2.8     | 5.0     |

The results of Correlation Analysis showed that CSR practices were positively and significantly related to employee motivation ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and organizational performance ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Multiple Regression Analysis was used to analyse the hypothesized relationships. The study also established that CSR practices were a strong mediator of employee motivation and organizational

performance with a coefficient of 0.62 and 0.55 respectively and a significance level of  $< 0.01$ . The model accounted for 45% of the total variance in motivation of the employees and 40% of the total variance in organizational performance.



**Figure 1** provides a visual representation of the relationship between CSR practices and the two dependent variables, employee motivation and organizational performance.

**Figure 1** shows Relationship between CSR Practices, Employee Motivation, and Organizational Performance. CSR practices are positively associated with both employee motivation and organizational performance, as indicated by the upward trend lines.

### Qualitative Results

The qualitative analysis was useful in getting more insight on how CSR practices impact the motivation of employees and the performance of the firm. The results from the key informant interviews with the selected case study firms showed that CSR activities such as community involvement, ethical business practices and environmental conservation were considered to be significant factors that provided meaning to the employees in their respective organizations.

Several recurring themes emerged from the thematic analysis: The following are some of the themes that were over-arching and repeated in the study:

**1. Enhanced Employee Engagement:** CSR practices were seen to enhance employees' affective and perceptual commitment to their jobs, which in turn made the employees more committed and productive.

**2. Positive Organizational Identity:** It was also found that firms which are involved in CSR activities were considered more reputable and trustworthy which in turn, enhanced employee pride and organizational loyalty.

**3. Attraction and Retention of Talent:** CSR was pointed out as being an important factor in the attraction and maintenance of the best talent, because people liked to work for organizations with ethical and social responsibility standards.

## Summary of Results

The findings derived from both the quantitative and qualitative data support the hypothesis that CSR activities positively influence employee motivation and organisational performance. The quantitative data supported these relationships while the qualitative results offered deeper understanding of how CSR impacts these results.

## Discussion

The findings of this study provide evidence for the hypothesis that CSR activities have a positive impact on the level of employee motivation and organisational performance. The study has revealed that motivation of the employees is positively related to CSR which means that the employees are motivated when their organization is engaged in CSR activities. This may be due to the fact that ethical and community-oriented values help to foster a positive attitude towards the organization among the employees hence improving productivity. The relationship that was established between CSR and OP also strengthens the argument that there are more business advantages of implementing CSR to an organization. The qualitative data also reveal that CSR results in a positive organisational identification that not only enhances the internal organisational commitment but also enhances the external image of the firm. This dual effect increases the organizational commitment and helps in the recruitment and retention of the best employees that ultimately results in long term performance improvement.

The findings are in agreement with other studies that suggest that CSR is a useful strategy in building a faithful staff and achieving a competitive edge in the market. Future research may look at the impact of CSR on turnover and productivity in the long term for different industries and in different cultures [45].

## Conclusion

This paper confirms that CSR activities significantly affect the level of motivation of employees and the performance of the organization. In this way, the research offers a rich picture of how CSR impacts the important organizational outcomes by using the mixed methods approach. The quantitative analysis showed that there were positive relationships with CSR practices being found to be strong indicators of employee motivation and organizational performance. These results are complemented by qualitative evidence that underscores the importance of CSR for employees' engagement, organizational identification, and attraction and retention of talents. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data shows that CSR is not only a way to enhance organizational performance but also as a valuable resource that can help to develop a motivated and committed workforce. These findings imply that CSR should be integrated as part of firms' strategic management where social responsibility activities are planned and executed in a manner that is consistent with the overall organizational strategy for growth and competitive advantage. Further studies should be done to examine the impact of CSR on the organization in the long run, across various industries and cultures to support these findings and to gain more understanding of the underlying processes.

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