



PRODUCTION ENGINEERING ARCHIVES

ISSN 2353-5156 (print)
ISSN 2353-7779 (online)

Exist since 4th quarter 2013
Available online at <https://pea-journal.eu>

Employee perception of CSR and its effects on the company's image

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Article history

Received 17.02.2022

Accepted 07.04.2022

Available online 16.08.2022

Keywords

CSR

awareness

responsibility

strategy

Abstract

Understanding and promoting the CSR is an important societal issue, and circumstances force modern-minded management to abandon the classical model of only the necessary fulfilment of legally set obligations. There has been a lot of study done on employee perceptions of CSR in the workplace, but very little has been done on how employees comprehend CSR and how they received it at their workplace in chosen countries. Research was carried out based on a questionnaire survey with data collection from September 2020 to March 2021, with a total of 1103 respondents. The aim of the article is to describe the CSR concept among employees meaning in selected countries: Zimbabwe, Czech Republic, Poland. The measuring instrument used in the study was the questionnaire method, in which the research tool is a questionnaire CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interview. It was shown that enterprises apply CSR activities, but they are not fully aware of the CSR benefits.

DOI: 10.30657/pea.2022.28.25

JEL: L23, M11

1. Introduction and literature review

Although the notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has received a lot of attention in the field of strategic management, most previous research has concentrated on analyzing CSR's impact on organizational performance (Yang et al., 2021b; Żywiołek et al., 2021). CSR refers to tactics that companies or enterprises use to conduct business in a way that is ethical, socially responsible, and developmentally useful to the community. CSR (also known as corporate citizenship, responsible business, and corporate social opportunity) is a concept in which businesses consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for their activities' impact on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities, and other stakeholders, as well as the environment (Hsieh and Chan, 2012; Rosak-Szyrocka et al., 2021a; Wong et al., 2021). This requirement demonstrates that businesses must follow the law and take voluntary steps to improve the well-being of their employees and their families, as well as the local community

and society at large (Bibi et al., 2022). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) issues have developed significantly over the last four decades as a result of increased demand for transparency and expectations that businesses manage and improve their social, environmental, and economic performance (Orbaningsih Dwi et al., 2021). Beyond making the company more profitable, corporate social responsibility focuses on distributing resources for the benefit of all stakeholders, including the community (Imran Ali et al., 2010; Boutmaghzoute and Moustaghfir, 2021). CSR encompasses a wide range of activities, ranging from the bare minimum of honoring workers' basic human rights to the implementation of policies and legislation that assist employees in achieving a work-life balance (Fuentes-García et al., 2008; Střihavková et al., 2021b). Employees desire a high quality of work life (QWL), therefore a CSR intervention could be a powerful instrument for improving business reputation and performance while also increasing employee happiness (Anderson, 1993; Hsieh and Chan, 2012; Barakat et al., 2016; Bilbao-Terol et al., 2019;

Rosak-Szyrocka and Żywiołek, 2022). The most important role of human resources (HR) in CSR is to increase the importance of employees in CSR strategies and co-design processes, in which employees shape CSR practices. This is critical for the establishment of CSR policies that reflect and meet the requirements of employees, as well as preventing firms from taking a paternalistic approach to CSR that ignores the viewpoint of employees (Gond et al., 2011). Small and medium businesses (SMEs) have become increasingly crucial in Zimbabwe's economic development. This has been needed by the drop in formal sector employment levels since 2000 as a result of company closures and retrenchments due to low capacity utilization. As a result, the SMEs sector in Zimbabwe has grown in importance as a source of income a large number of families in both rural and urban places (Muruviwa et al., 2018; Mugova and Sachs, 2019). CSR is a way of managing consumer interactions, it tackles environmental and societal problems, it is a result of community pressure, it is a way of creating a positive business image, and it is a tool for making employees happy and pleased in Zimbabwe (Sibanda et al., 2021). Zimbabwe's economy does not support social solidarity across the country (Manuere; Kennedy Nyahunzvi, 2013; Makanyeza et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2021). Chinese investors have been accused of 'reaping without sowing' and committing 'wanton environmental harm' in their quest of 'primitive capital accumulation.' Companies in Zimbabwe treat corporate social responsibility and investment as a philanthropic endeavor. Poverty eradication in Africa would result in a healthier population, lowering government and donor spending for social welfare. This may compel governments to lower business taxes for multinational corporations operating in Africa (Vertigans and Idowu, 2021). However, there is no single legislative or policy framework that governs CSR; instead, it varies from one organization to the next. The Zimbabwean government has backed the Institute of Directors', SAZ's, and Zimbabwean Leadership Forum's 2009 plan to create a corporate governance code that focuses on the development and promotion of CSR as a guiding concept for business operations (Isheloke and Mugova, 2019; 2022). In Zimbabwe, foreign-owned mining companies are supposed to hand over 51 percent of their stock to locals, transfer 10% of their stock to the Community Ownership Trust, pay a 25% corporate income tax, and pay other taxes ranging from local to national levels in order to offset falling earnings (Chanakira, 2019; Dr Faitira Manuere et al., 2021). Despite the fact that the notion of corporate social responsibility originated in the United States, it is most often practiced in European Union countries. According to research, the following CSR promotion models are utilized in EU countries: observer (Hungary), patron (Spain, Italy), promoter (France, Germany, Sweden), and partner (France, Germany, and Sweden) (Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain). Denmark, Spain, and Sweden have the most CSR instruments, whereas the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom have the least (Lulewicz-Sas, 2014; Alam and Islam, 2021; Aldehayyat, 2021). CSR is connected with activities for the benefit of local communities and numerous social policy steps in Poland and the Czech Republic (Barauskaite and Streimikiene, 2021;

Duanmu et al., 2021; Sun and Ming, 2021; Zeng et al., 2021). Without a doubt, the common denominator of CSR in individual countries is that these countries' businesses recognize the critical need of continual employee investment. Businesses aim to help employees grow their knowledge and abilities, so they provide opportunities for them to participate in various sorts of training, workshops, and postgraduate courses. It is unquestionably a successful method of adapting to shifting stakeholder expectations (2018; Metzker and Streimikis, 2020). Companies have stressed employee happiness as a fundamental aspect of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies in order to achieve long-term success. However, how employees perceive organizational CSR efforts and whether such perceptions lead to employee satisfaction and loyalty are still unknown (Zhu et al., 2014; 2021). Stakeholder engagement is critical for companies to successfully implement CSR practices, and employees are one of the most important groups of stakeholders. As a result, improving employee satisfaction and engendering employee loyalty is a key goal for organizational CSR efforts. However, little is known about employee perceptions of CSR efforts and whether they admire them (Střihavková et al., 2021a). Employees who are satisfied are more loyal to their employers, therefore it is advantageous for businesses to discover strategies to boost employee well-being both at work and in general (Porter and Kramer, 2006; Zhang, 2010; Swider et al., 2011; Lu et al., 2021) There are many types of research about the employee perception of CSR in the companies' image but, but very little research looked at the how employee understand CSR and how they received this concept in their company (Barauskaite and Streimikiene, 2021; Streimikiene et al., 2021; Khamis and Wan Ismail, 2022).

2. Experimental part and its analysis

The article aims to find out the employee perception of CSR in different-sized enterprises that have implemented CSR in their public relation praxis in selected countries: Zimbabwe, the Czech Republic, and Poland. All areas of CSR were analyzed. Employees indicated those activities which, in their opinion, are visible as CSR initiatives. The paper is based on a questionnaire survey with data collection from September 2020 to March 2021, with a total of 1103 respondents. The research questionnaire contained 20 targeted questions, solving the research problem. The measuring instrument used in the study was the questionnaire method, in which the research tool is a questionnaire CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interview. The result of this research is to learn about the level of perception of company employees using CSR in public relation activities. This study concerned only the approach of employees in enterprises, as leaders and customers may perceive CSR differently (Metzker and Zvarikova, 2021; Stojanović et al., 2021; Bibi et al., 2022). Despite thinking about the sustainable development (Kokot-Stępień, 2021; Larina et al., 2021) of the planet, the proper use of resources, taking care of the environmental aspects and the company's image, the employee will put his own economic benefit first (Zhang, 2010;

Gorgenyi-Hegyes et al., 2021; Lu et al., 2021). The examination of the above hypothesis-based research question is warranted in the light of the literature review and analysis. The conducted research shows the structure of the analyzed employees' attitudes, views, and behaviors is derived from their knowledge of CSR. The research specifies the minimum size of the sample and the method of communication with employees of companies in individual countries. The results in chosen countries were similar, and therefore, they were not hit on individual countries. Due to the timing of the pandemic and the size of the sample, the questionnaire was made available online. After the research, the results were analyzed and conclusions were formulated. The research questionnaire contained 25 targeted questions, solving the research problem. The aim of the work is to analyze the perceptions of company employees in the field of CSR. The following research questions were posed in the publication:

- How do employees perceive the CSR concept in the company?
- Do employees believe that enterprises understand the concept of CSR?

Respondents living in various countries (Fig. 1).

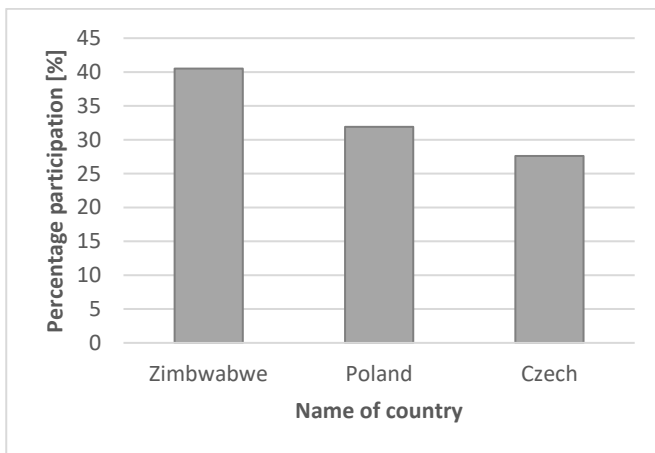


Fig. 1. Name of country taken part in the researchers

53.9% of women and 46.1% of men participated in the research. The research was dominated by respondents aged 26-35 and 36-45. Respondents there are predominantly employees of service companies (37.9), production-service companies (36.9%) and production companies (19.4%) (Fig. 2). The research participants are big-enterprise employees, small-enterprise employees, medium-sized enterprise employees and micro (Fig. 3). At the beginning of the research, the respondents were asked whether, in their opinion, enterprises were taking actions towards CSR. Data analysis showed that, in accordance with 62.1% of respondents, enterprises take actions towards CSR.

It indicates that firms are increasingly focusing on recognizing and addressing stakeholder requirements and expectations. As a result, organizations are becoming more attuned to stakeholder expectations, resulting in an increase in stakeholder involvement as part of their CSR operations.

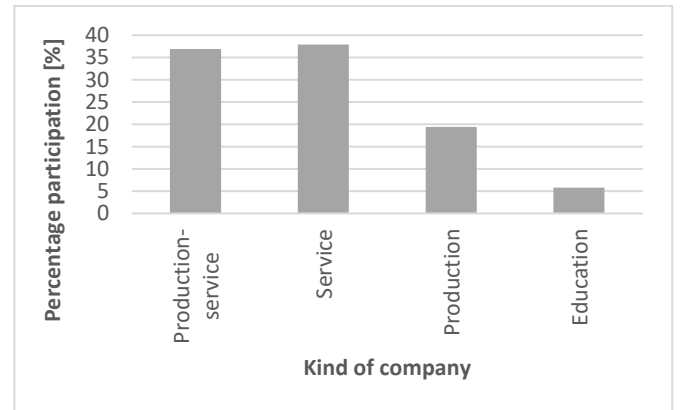


Fig. 2. Kind of the company in which respondents' work

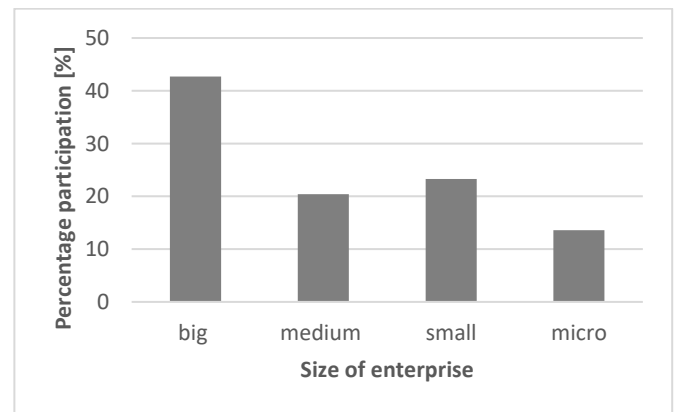


Fig. 3. Size of the company in which respondents' work

The survey also asked the respondents whether, in their opinion, enterprises have sufficient knowledge in the field of CSR. It turns out that as many as 52.4% of the respondents claim that enterprises do not have sufficient knowledge in the field of CSR. As many as 62.1% of respondents notice education and promotion in the area of CSR. Half of the respondents, as much as 55.3%, noticed the implementation of projects from European funds and 47.6% of respondents noticed that a team for CSR is being created (Fig. 4).

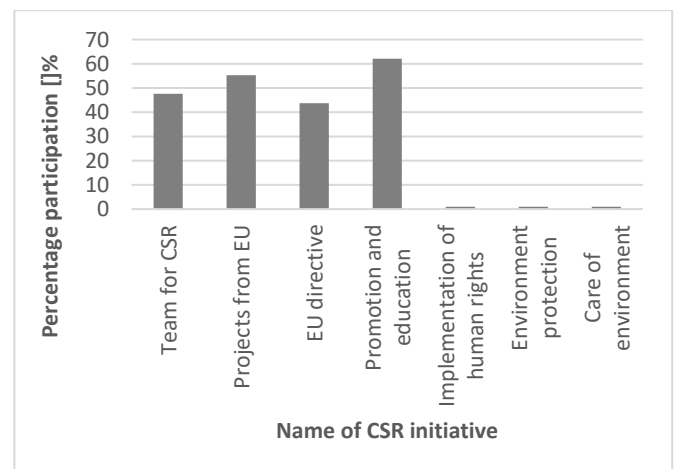


Fig. 4. What CSR development initiatives do you observe in your company?

The analysis of Figure 4 shows that the surveyed companies are guided by the principles of benchmarking, i.e., they undertake initiatives that are visible in the competition without focusing on what is important, e.g., for an internal client (employee), i.e., respecting their rights, environmental protection, or caring for the environment.

In the further part of the research, CSR practices were analyzed (Fig. 5). Respondents were asked what CSR practices are most often used in their workplace. The results of the research showed that according to 54.4% of the respondents it is an organizational order, according to 45.6% it is human rights. Slightly less, i.e. 42.7% of respondents, claim that work placements are used in the enterprise, and according to 41.7% it is social involvement and development of the local community and environment. The research also asked the respondents what, in their opinion, are the greatest barriers to CSR implementation (Fig. 6). The study showed that 49.53% of the surveyed business owners do not consider CSR as strategic approach to managing the organization. 45.63% respondents claim in the survey that the barrier is lack of understanding of CSR among business owners. 47.57% of the respondents claim that the barrier is overlooking the benefits of CSR implementation. The analysis of data about employee perception in selected countries: Zimbabwe, the Czech Republic, and Poland, allows for the conclusion that the selection of the sample for the study was correct. A research hypothesis was made to examine the social context. A hypothesis was also made to answer research questions after analyzing the literature and presenting data.

H1: Proper understanding CSR by companies and its engagement has a positive impact on employees’ satisfaction.

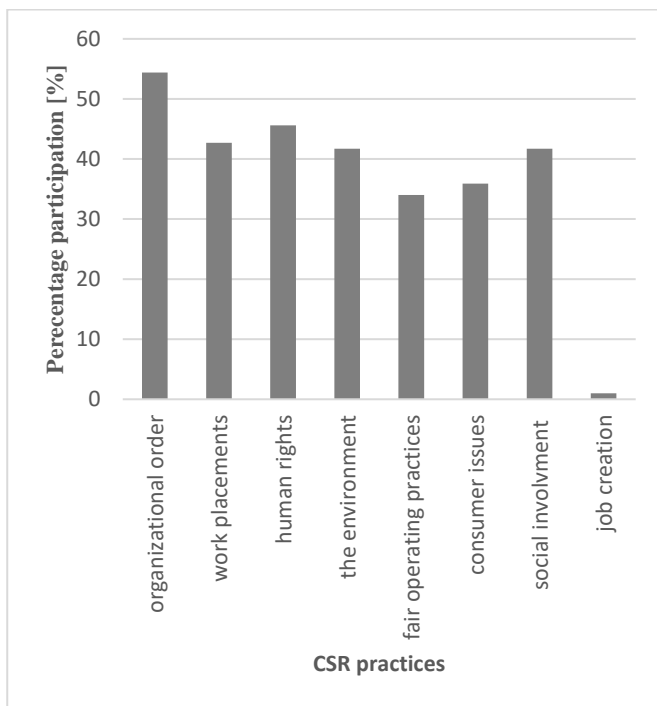
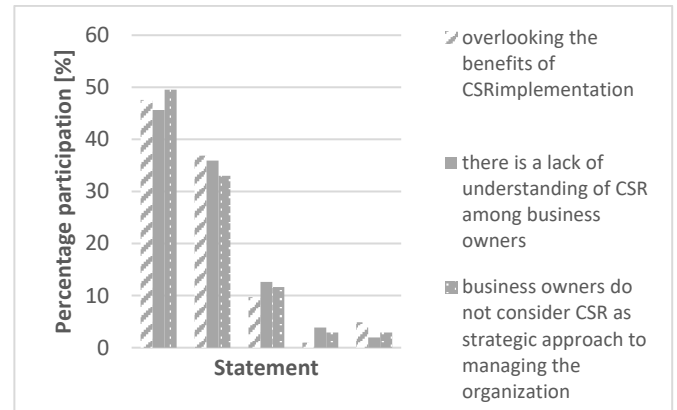


Fig. 5. What CSR practices the company you work in is undertaken the most often?



Where: 1- Definitely yes, 2- Rather yes, 3 -Hard to say, 4-Probably not 5- Definitely not.

Fig. 6. Based on your own experience, please indicate which statement about CSR barriers, you agree with the most

The next step of research is the calculation of the chi-square test, which allows the determination of Pearson's C coefficient (Deng et al., 2021). The Chi square value allows you to calculate the C-Pearson coefficient, which takes values from 0 to 1. The values mean:

- 0 - 0.2 - an extremely weak relationship
- 0.2 - 0.4 - weak relationship
- 0.4 - 0.6 - moderate relationship,
- 0.6 - 0.8 - a strong relationship
- 0.8 - 1.0 – a very strong relationship.

Table 1 presents the results of the C-Pearson coefficient at a significance level of 0.05.

Table 1. The results of the C-Pearson coefficient at a significance level of 0.05

Dependences	C-Pearson coefficient value
undertaking CSR activities/the importance of CSR in the company	0.67
importance of CSR for the company / lack of understanding of CSR by the owners	0.78
benefits of implementing CSR/activities for corporate social responsibility	0.93
CSR activities / benefits	0.71
actions for CSR / lack understanding of owners	0.53
company size / benefits	0.73
CSR knowledge / company image	0.65
socially responsible company / relations with stakeholders	0.41

The results presented in Table 1 show a strong relationship between benefits of implementing CSR and activities for corporate social responsibility, where the value of the C-Pearson coefficient is the highest and amounts to 0.93. The results also show a strong relationship between importance of CSR for the company / lack of understanding of CSR by the owners. The analysis of the results shows that concept of CSR and its

proper understanding are a big challenge for business owners, who should see it not only in terms of profit, but a number of other benefits that it gives the company in terms of public relations issue.

3. Summary and conclusion

CSR has been shown to improve employee loyalty and happiness in organizations (Bibi et al., 2022; LeBaron et al., 2022) although it is seldom acknowledged by the industry. The energy crisis, expensive raw materials, a lack of investment, high tariffs, difficult bank loans, and tough international competition may all be important factors in the crisis, but a disregard for universally accepted CSR principles, particularly its internal dimension involving employees, could also be a significant factor (Střihavková et al., 2021b). True CSR can inspire workers to work with enthusiasm and strengthen their feeling of belonging, resulting in increased productivity and organizational credibility. As a result, it is critical to examine the condition of CSR in various firms in order to learn how employees feel about the company's CSR philosophy. The paper concerns an important and current issue that is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Authors verified how workers assess the involvement of enterprises in undertaking socially responsible activities as well as what barriers to implementing CSR do companies face. The research allowed to identify those socially responsible activities that are considered the most important. The research has confirmed that undertaking social activities generally contributes to improving the image of enterprises. However, in some cases it is possible to identify barriers to introduce CSR activities. The research results and their analysis allowed us to answer the following questions:

- **How do employees perceive the CSR concept in the company?**

Based on the results of the study and respondents opinion, we stated that enterprises are not fully aware the benefits of CSR as evidenced by the fact that CSR is not included in the strategy of research facilities by business owners. CSR activities by firms need to be favourably seen by employees and further satisfy employees, which is particularly true for enterprises in developing nations attempting to incorporate CSR practices at the starting stage. According to a CSR literature review, a company's performance and competitive advantage can be improved by implementing CSR efforts (Barauskaite and Streimikiene, 2021; Marakova et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2021a).

- **Do employees believe that enterprises understand the concept of CSR?**

The analysis of the research allows to conclude that enterprises primarily use promotion in terms of CSR, while employees claim that business owners do not fully understand the CSR concept. It was stated that if companies see CSR only as a kind of charity or promotion activities and nothing more, then they do not yet clearly understand what CSR is.

Authors stated that companies in order to be successful, must consider the social and environmental impact of their technological, operational processes, stimulate the creativity of their workforce, as well as cooperate with their suppliers,

customers, and other business partners in designing and developing new products and services. The benefits of CSR communication include serving as a conduit between a company and its stakeholders, as well as maintaining company openness and responsibility. Excellent CSR communication must be trustworthy, informative, and instructional while avoiding overemotional content. Companies that consistently implement CSR programs will generate consumer happiness, gain favorable feedback, and be able to improve relationships with stakeholders. Companies' considerable participation in CSR programs will improve their reputation among consumers and society. The authors plan to investigate not only employee perception but also client perception from the CSR perspective in the future in the aspect of sustainability as well as industry 4.0 technologies and society 5.0 requirements (Rosak-Szyrocka et al., 2021b).

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员工对企业社会责任的认知及其对公司形象的影响

關鍵詞

企业社会责任
意识
责任
战略

摘要

理解和促进企业社会责任是一个重要的社会问题，环境迫使具有现代意识的管理放弃只有必要履行法定义务的经典模式。关于员工在工作场所对企业社会的看法已经进行了大量研究，但关于员工如何理解企业社会责任以及他们如何在所选国家的工作场所接受企业社会责任的研究却很少。研究是在问卷调查的基础上进行的，收集了 2020 年 9 月至 2021 年 3 月的数据，共有 1103 名受访者。本文的目的是描述选定国家/地区员工的企业社会责任概念：津巴布韦、捷克共和国、波兰。研究中使用的测量工具是问卷法，其中研究工具是问卷 CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interview。研究表明，企业实施企业社会责任活动，但并未充分意识到企业社会责任的好处。