# Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Employees' Work Motivation: A Developing Country Perspective

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Original Research Received 18 February 2021 Revised 23 March 2021 Accepted 18 April 2021

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Abstract: This paper investigates the significance of the employee's perspective in the context of corporate social responsibility, concerning its implications on employees' motivation. We contend that our literature lacks an internal perspective beyond CSR's universally recognized implications on external factors. This study aimed to explore the phenomenon and its internal implications on employees to add new knowledge in this domain and explore a developing country perspective, i.e., Pakistan. Besides, we hope to find a link/association between CSR and human resource management by exploring. So, the research may help HR managers in strategic formulation relating to workforce management, specifically CSR as a tool for employees' motivation. Based on the McClelland's framework of motivation – the need for affiliation, achievement, and power as an initial framework – we recognized the influence of CSR within the perspective of achievement and affiliation with no insinuation of power, grounded in our context. Moreover, in our empirical examination based on indepth interviews from Interior Sindh, spiritual obligations and self-actualization as in the purpose of life were two of the most confounding results inferred from our study. Besides, several subthemes emerged in our analysis, highlighting the underpinning process behind our main themes, i.e., how the sense of achievement in our study triggers the sense of loyalty, pride, and happiness among employees. The findings confirm that the main driving force behind organizational CSR is usually based on external factors (e.g., PR effect, government regulation, brand image, tax benefits) with rare emphasis on internal factors (e.g., effect on employees).

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; spiritual obligations; employee motivations; affiliation; achievement

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya perspektif karyawan dalam konteks tanggung jawab sosial perusahaan, mengenai implikasinya terhadap motivasi karyawan. Kami berpendapat bahwa literatur sebelumnya tidak memiliki perspektif internal di luar implikasi CSR yang diakui secara universal pada faktor eksternal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi fenomena dan implikasi internalnya pada karyawan untuk menambah pengetahuan baru dalam domain tersebut dan mengeksplorasi perspektif negara berkembang seperti Pakistan. Selain itu, kami berharap dapat menemukan hubungan/keterkaitan antara CSR dan manajemen sumber daya manusia dengan mengeksplorasi. Sehingga, penelitian ini dapat membantu para manajer SDM dalam perumusan strategi vang berkaitan dengan pengelolaan tenaga kerja, khususnya CSR sebagai alat bantu motivasi karyawan. Berdasarkan kerangka motivasi McClelland - kebutuhan afiliasi, prestasi, dan kekuasaan sebagai kerangka awal, kami merasakan pengaruh CSR dalam perspektif pencapaian dan afiliasi tanpa implikasi kekuasaan, yang didasarkan pada konteks ini. Selain itu, dalam pemeriksaan empiris kami berdasarkan wawancara mendalam dari Interior Sindh, kewajiban spiritual dan aktualisasi diri seperti dalam tujuan hidup adalah dua hasil yang paling serius yang disimpulkan dari penelitian kami. Selain itu, beberapa subtema muncul dalam analisis kami, menyoroti proses yang mendasari di balik tema utama kami, yaitu, bagaimana rasa pencapaian dalam penelitian kami memicu rasa loyalitas, kebanggaan, dan kebahagiaan di antara karyawan. Temuan menegaskan bahwa pendorong utama di balik CSR organisasi biasanya didasarkan pada faktor eksternal (misalnya, efek hubungan masyarakat, peraturan pemerintah,

citra merek, manfaat pajak) dengan penekanan yang jarang pada faktor internal (misalnya, efek pada karyawan).

Kata Kunci: tanggung jawab sosial perusahaan; kewajiban spiritual; motivasi karyawan; afiliasi; pencapaian

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), in research, has started gaining scholarly attention especially in the perspective of public relations, marketing, and overall brand image of socially responsible organization (Kim & Park, 2011). Based on its origin and basic foundation, "Stakeholder Theory" (Freemen, 1984; Caroll, 1991), CSR has explored the perspective of numerous stakeholders, including investors, employees, and customers (Sillanpaa, 1997). However, to date, the focus of these studies is usually on external implications of CSR in terms of customer and investors (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2020; Liu & Lee, 2019; Sial et al., 2019; Järlström et al., 2016; Ehnert et al., 2015; Kramar, 2014; Kim & Park, 2011), very few studies have explored the implications of CSR in terms of employees and their motivation. This perspective is relatively unexplored, except in few management studies (e.g., Kunz, 2020; Hur et al., 2016; Mozes et al., 2011; Kim & Scullion, 2013; Rupp et al., 2018). Being the major stakeholder of an organization that has all the power to control and influence the direction of the organization, this unexplored phenomenon is quite problematic (Greenwood, 2007). Even empirical results from other studies provide supporting rationale to explore the employee perspective. Around 75% of their sampled participants considered CSR as a major influencing factor while evaluating the organization and they were prepared to consider a minimum paying job or reduction in pay to allow their organizations to be ethically responsible (Business In The Community Ireland, 2017).

In this context, employees' work motivation is an emerging niche in literature where CSR and employee meet. More specifically, while evaluating the employees in terms of main motivating factors, a different notion is discussed here which specifies the non-financial elements as one of the main factors influencing the employee's motivation, and instead of confining all the factors as in monetary terms a different perspective (non-financial factors) needs to be explored (Frey, 1997). So, this study will try to fill the gap in the literature by exploring how CSR influences employee work motivation. As in the initial theoretical framework we have recognized the work of McClelland (1961) in the motivation domain, who specifies different needs of an individual that needs to be fulfilled for motivation – their 'need for affiliation, achievement, and power.' The need for achievement is a distinct human motive that emphasis an individual own tendency/effort towards his performance and can be defined as an individual's desire to be efficient and accurate in their work. The affiliation motive highlights human nature, focusing on one's desire to be a part of his group and people. This motive has its root in the social identity perspective and reflects individual desire to be part of a particular social group in terms of the sense of belonging, love, and conformity to social norms within the group. Whereas his last defined motive was the individual tendency/desire to have greater power and control in his loved ones and the lives of others. So, the basic framework for this research will be provided through McClelland's (1961) theory of motivation in which he explained the mentioned three basic motivators including the need for affiliation, achievement, and power. The behaviors of individuals are driven by these motivators and these motivators are being developed by the experiences that individuals face and by the societal culture.

Carroll (2003), while exploring the different perspective of CSR, specified 4 dimensions of it, (1) legal, (2) philanthropic, (3) economic, and (4) ethical CSR. For many years, Carroll's pyramid has remained an essential model in explaining the construct CSR. Although several theories emerged defining the motive of CSR. The currently, commonly accepted proposition regarding the main driving force behind the decision of an organization to engage in CSR is based on external factors, with rare emphasis on internal factors, i.e., its implications on sustainable human resource management (except in the studies of Järlström et al., 2016; Ehnert et al., 2015; Kramar, 2014). Now, in the South Asian context, what are those motives whether external factors (i.e., brand image, profitability) or internal factors (motivation) behind the organizational decision to engage in CSR, will be explored in this research.

Besides, this study will make significant contributions, the very first contribution from this study will be that the research will add new knowledge in the domain of corporate social responsibility and CSR influence on employees. Second, no research has been made in Pakistan earlier that has addressed the influence of CSR activities as an instrument to motivate employees. Third, this study will help to understand a firm's perspective/reasoning to engage in CSR. Most importantly, we firmly believe that by exploring CSR we can find the link/association between CSR and human resource management. So, this research will help the HR managers in strategic formulation relating to workforce management, specifically in terms of CSR as a tool for employees' motivation. As it pointed out by Malayke in his study about the changing paradigm for HR practitioners: "Demographic shifts in the labor market require scholars and practitioners to develop a more nuanced understanding of leading and motivating employees" (Klimchak et al., 2018). Most importantly, this linkage between HRM and CSR framework leads to valuable outcome for an organization in terms of higher employees' commitment, engagement, productivity, and overall better performance (see Xiao et al., 2020; Turner et al., 2019).

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **CSR: Employees' Perspective**

In comparison to other managerial literature, the phenomenon of CSR is quite new and relatively unexplored (Crane & Matten, 2007), and with the recent growing interest in qualitative research, CSR has started gaining scholarly interest and rapidly evolving especially in its managerial perspectives (Lockett et al., 2006). Due to the complex and ever-evolving nature of businesses, experts have placed high emphasis on the necessity of CSR's strategic integration in the business environment to generate a sustainable core competencies (e.g., Nehme, 2020; Ingham & Havard, 2017; Aguinis & Glavas, 2013; Lee et al., 2020; Chan et al., 2017; Ghaderi et al., 2019).

Given CSR literature in terms of dominant ideologies, there were two perspectives: one was focused on the stockholder concept (Friedman, 2007), and the other one was more emphasized towards the stakeholder ideology (Freeman, 1984; Caroll, 1979) According to Friedman (2007), CSR was a waste of resource, that otherwise could be utilized for the wellbeing of stockholders, and the main responsibility of the company is to maximize stockholders' profits. Whereas Freeman (1984), whose ideology was much focused on the wellbeing of overall stakeholders, instead of just stockholders, argues that to be considered as a responsible organization, firms have to fulfill the needs of all the stakeholders including society, government, and other stakeholders. His ideology was in alignment with Carroll's definition of CSR, which emphasizes that there must not be necessarily always a conflict between economic and social objectives of the organization. Firms can achieve their economic goals by work practices that come within the range of legal and social and ethical requirements means the tendency of an organization to peruse their economic goal within the limits of legal and social criteria (Carroll, 2003). Carroll's concept was more relevant and based on Bowen's idea of CSR that belief that CSR refers to "the idea and the responsibilities of organizations to achieve their objectives and to use and follow those practices and line of action that must not conflict with the wellbeing of society."

However, recent literature is more focused on its strategic importance for firms (Barnett, 2016; Rogers, 2013; Porter & Kramer, 2006; Iglesias et al., 2020; Connors et al., 2015). And with the growing trend among the customers in terms of social awareness, the role of CSR in the competitiveness of the organization has become enormous (Rogers, 2013; Peck, 2008; Porter & Kramer, 2006). And for decision-makers, it seems necessary to consider these CSR activities as a form of strategic investments (McWilliames, 2006).

While evaluating the different ideologies of CSR literature and recent developments, we can identify the gap in the literature which further signifies the need of our study that, throughout the evolution of CSR literature, the focus of these studies is usually on external implications of CSR in terms of customer and investors (e.g., Kim & Scullion, 2011; Browen & Dacin, 1997; Schmaltz, 2012). Very few studies have explored the implications of CSR in terms of employees, and this perspective is relatively unexplored (Dhanesh, 2014), except in few management studies (Hur et al., 2016; Mozes et al., 2011; Scullion & Kim, 2013; Rupp et al., 2018). So, based on the significance of employees as stakeholders, this study aims to fill the gap in the literature by incorporating the role and impact of employees in the CSR framework, especially the implications on employee motivation.

#### **CSR and Employee Motivation**

If we sort out the hierarchy of major stakeholders in terms of their importance to sustainable organizational growth, then the employees, in terms of their importance, are always considered the most significant stakeholder (Redington, 2005). However, in business literature or management discussions, not much focus has been placed on employees as main stakeholders despite their prominent role in business success (Pinnington et al., 2007). Now, this gap presents an opportunity, and to avail this opportunity and to fill the gap in the discussion of CSR/stakeholders, we have determined a niche in the literature where the ideology of CSR and perspective of employees overlap: "Employee work motivation." Based on the notion of different researchers, the consensus has been found regarding CSR as a major determinant of human resource management. (e.g., Lombardi et al., 2020; Herrera & de las Heras-Rosas, 2020). Specifically, CSR as a determinant of HR, in terms of a major source of inspiration for employees' work motivation, can be used as a tool to capitalize on several missed opportunities in the management of human resources (Santana et al., 2020; Xiao et al., 2020; Basil & Weber, 2006). If we further elaborate on the implication of employee motivation, Frey (1997) questioned the basic norm of evaluating the employee motivation based on financial perspective only. He discussed the implication of nonfinancial elements as the main source of inspiration for employee motivation, not just financial elements.

Due to the complex nature of human tendencies, it is hard to pinpoint the main source of inspiration for employee motivation, which is why several researchers had tried to elaborate the focal points of human motivation. On one perspective, we have Taylor's (1972) theory of motivation which was more focused on monetary implication as to the source of motivation, but it is hard to assume a single financial perspective as the sole guiding principle of such intricate human tendencies. Then, on the other hand, we have a much broader perspective of Maslow's (1954) hierarchy theory of motivation, which provides a more holistic picture of human motivation in terms of 4 major hierarchies: (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, (3) belonging/love, (4) self-esteem, and (5) self-actualization. Then, to question Maslow's hierarchy theory, Herzberg came with the concept of two-fold factors to specify the fundamentals of employees' motivation: "hygiene vs. motivators." He specifies motivation in terms of two major tendencies/factors. Factors that enhance employee motivation, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, he categorized as motivators. Whereas those factors that cause unhappiness and demotivation among the employees like working conditions, company policy, he categorized them as hygiene (Herzberg, 1987). Due to their sophisticated nature of employee motivation, it is necessary and important to thoroughly evaluate the in-depth tendencies and causes of motivation (Boxall & Purcel, 2003).

As of literature, it appears that the basic underpinning behind the main forces of motivation is derived from two contrasting perspectives, extrinsic and inherent/intrinsic motivations (e.g., Hur et al., 2016; Balakrishnan et al., 2011; Kim & Scullion, 2013; Aguinis & Glavas, 2013) in their study explored motivation in terms of its internal intricacies and to understand the sense making process of CSR perception on individual level. Their underpinning revolves around the individual's internal dispositions/personalities and their influence on one's motivation and behavior tendencies. On the other hand, contrary to its internal implication, researchers tried to explore the motivation in terms of external factors. A more controversial approach merely focused on external situational circumstances and their implication on an individual's behavior, attitude, and motivation. This sort of ideology was more focused on contextual factors and their interaction with the individual (e.g., Weibel et al., 2010; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Frey & Jegen, 2001). Besides, scholarly studies focusing on extrinsic motivating factors has reached its limit. As the scholars consider 'top-down incentive' approach (or extrinsic factors) as the outdated one, that have no/little room in modern work environment, with a renewed focus on intrinsic aspect of employees' motivations (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

Despite the underpinning contrasting philosophies, however owing to the ever-evolving nature of literature and inherent complexities of human behavioral tendencies, recently the growing focus is more inclined towards the amalgamation of these two ideologies to understand human motivation. Where we incorporate influences of internal factors like personality and external environmental factors (Mitchell & James, 1989). Pioneer of such approach where we combine several causes to understand the human motivation was proposed by McClelland (1961). This combined approach works as the founding pillar for our research where we believe that the notion of employee motivation through the perspective of CSR needs to be evolved from merely focusing on a single factor like money or personality differences,

to the more robust approach of combined causes of human motivation. Since the evolution of information technology, it has caused a higher sense of awareness among the public, including employees. Hence, the ideology of McClelland (1961) as the focal point of this study. McClellands (1961), contrary to popular belief of that time, came up with the idea that the intricate nature of human motivation cannot be summarized into monetary factors instead several combining factors. It took him around 20 years along with his Harvard colleagues to define the main forces behind individual motivation. McClelland (1961) specified three main motives: the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. The need for achievement is a distinct human motive that emphasis on an individual own tendency/effort towards his performance and can be defined as an individual's desire to be efficient and accurate in their work. The affiliation motive highlights human nature, focusing on one's desire to be a part of his group and people. This motive has its root in the social identity perspective and reflects individual desire to be part of a particular social group in terms of the sense of belonging, love, and conformity to social norms within the group. Whereas his last defined motive was the individual tendency/desire to have greater power and control in his loves and the lives of others."

To restate again, the purpose of this study is not to explore the implications and main defining factors of individual motivations, instead, by drawing the McClelland's (1961) ideology as the basic guiding principle for our theoretical and methodological layout we will try to seek the explanation regarding effects of CSR on employees' motivations, in terms of what factors motivate the individuals based on their company's CSR perception.

# **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Data Collection**

In terms of sampling approach, we have used a non-probability approach, specifically a convenience and judgment based. The reason for using this approach is, there are very few organizations that engage in CSR activities specifically in Interior Sindh, which is our scope of this study. So, this is why we have to pinpoint those organizations that fulfill the criteria.

In terms of data collection technique, as the core purpose is to explore the underlying impact of CSR on employees' motivation, we have used in-depth interviews of employees in those selected organizations. In total, we have 10 interviewees during the period from August 2020 to December 2020, belonging to different organizations. Specifically, those employees that have firsthand experience in CSR activities. Most importantly, to minimize any sort of bias, we have conducted those interviews in informal settings i.e., outside of the organization, as organizational environment might influence/hinder the level of honesty in their answers.

#### **Data Analysis**

In qualitative data analysis, while collecting the data through a semi-structured interview, the researchers are allowed to use predetermined interview guidelines containing the list of topics that need to be explored instead of specific questions. Basically, this research framework involves two main themes: (1) How participant defines CSR – meaning, purpose, driving forces, motives, and (2) CSR and employees' motivation – factors influencing worker's motivation, employee's role in CSR, advantages/ disadvantages, if any. It is firmly believed that by exploring CSR through this framework, we can find the link/association between CSR and human resource management.

The main idea to use the semi-structured method was to get responses from participants in their own terms without any influence from the researcher. That is why we do not ask directly about the implications of CSR on employee motivation. Instead through this framework, we tried to evaluate the natural emergence of themes and constructs linking CSR with employee motivation. After the interviews, we engaged in the code development process to get the holistic picture and condense the data. Then, based on manually developed codes we tried to determine the emerging themes connecting CSR and employee motivation. For the robustness of our findings, we also have used Nvivo software for technical support in our data analysis.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, we explore the implications of CSR on employees' motivation by underlining the key factors and themes that emerged from our comparative data analysis. Specifically, our findings confirm the commonly accepted proposition that the main driving force behind the decision of an organization to engage in CSR is usually based on external factors (e.g., PR effect, government regulation, brand image, tax benefits), with rare emphasis on internal factors (e.g., the effect on employees). However, contrary to popular beliefs, our findings suggest huge implications of CSR on employee motivation.

# Motive of CSR

Concerning motivation of CSR from an organizational point of view, several themes emerge from our data mainly focused on external factors. Most occurring factors relevant to the motive of CSR were based on its influence on organizational brand image, PR effect, and competitive pressure that force organizations to engage in such activities.

"In such a competitive environment, it is a proven fact that organizations need to evolve. They just cannot rely on traditional strategies to enhance their profitability. For a positive brand image and other ethical considerations, we have to engage in activities aiming at the well-being of society. Moreover, we have the pressure from other competitors to fulfill our civic duties." (Senior Manager, MCB)

Moreover, tax benefits, rebates, and Government regulations were another frequently occurring phenomenon in our analysis. As it is allowed by government to deduct CSR amount from taxable income in Pakistan which leads to lower tax. Specifically, in tax structure (Finance Act 2014), companies were allowed to deduct the amount from income that they have paid in PM relief funds.

"In 2017, our organization (PTCL) introduced the 'Way of Life' program in Pakistan specifically focused on the wellbeing of interior areas. Through this program, our employees were asked to engage in different CSR activities aiming at the wellbeing of society, like plantation and visitation at the orphanage. In 2014, we were awarded as 'Best HR Practices' in the Telecom sector."

When we asked about the benefits of these activities, he replied,

"As a leading organization in the telecom sector, we are expected to behave ethically. Moreover, since the inception of this new government (PTI), there are some external pressure/regulations in the corporate sector from the government like the Prime Minister Relief fund introduced by PM (frequent reminder to donate) and scrutiny of taxes. Besides, rebates and tax benefits are also by default factors." (HR Manager, PTCL)

# CSR's Effect on Motivation:

What motivates employees and how CSR influences work motivation? In theoretical development, we discussed the evolving trend of employees' motivation, from monetary focus to more hybrid causes of motivation, and how the evolution of information technology leads to a higher sense of awareness among the general public including employees.

"Due to the dynamic nature of the business environment and overall information technology evolution, all the stakeholders, including customers and employees, have become more socially aware. Earlier theories and myopic factors that used to define human tendencies, including employee motivation, now become obsolete and irrelevant in today's setting. So, it is definitely a need of time to analyze the work motivation in more robust manners including the implication of CSR and how an ethically responsible environment in organization motivates employees." (Mr. Ahmed, Operational in charge, LU)

For the in-depth understanding of CSR, now we are going to state the emerging themes confining the influence of CSR on motivation.

#### **Spiritual Beliefs**

One of the confounding factors we found in our data analysis is related to religious obligations, here CSR act as a way to fulfill an Individual's religious duties and values which ultimately leads to a higher level of satisfaction/motivation among the employees. As in South Asian countries, there is a higher inclination towards spirituality, and individuals tend to follow those norms and values rigorously in their daily lives. So, the occurrence of this tendency is quite plausible, especially in Interior Sindh.

"Spirituality/ Religious norms are the fundamental pillars in our society that guides and direct every aspect of one's life. So, it is quite understandable for an individual to be affected by these CSR activities because in a way these activities are concentrated on fulfilling their spiritual needs and morally desired actions" (Assistant Marketing, Coca-Cola)

From a spiritual perspective, several other themes emerged from this phenomenon that describes the varying intensity of spirituality on employees: employee's background, peer/family pressure, employee personal belief system. All these factors work in an interconnected way to influence the intensity to which an individual employee is motivated by the spiritual fulfillments.

"As an HR manager, I have an experience of around 5 years, dealt with many employees with contrasting personality traits. Based on experience, I can say that with some level of surety that you cannot motivate those employees through pressure or other means to engage in such activities or to be motivated by them until and unless they have their reasoning and motivating factors based on their beliefs system/ background." (HR Manager)

#### Achievement

In the theoretical framework of McClelland, achievement is described as a basic motivational need. In this aspect, several themes emerge describing the underpinning behind the role of CSR on achievement. Some of the most reoccurring themes were a Sense of Pride and loyalty and degree of happiness.

"Being a part of this society, it is our obligation to give back and work for the wellbeing of the general public. We want our employees to be proud of the company they work for and have a higher sense of achievement based on the association they have with the organization's name." (Employee, Sapphire)

Loyalty and a sense of pride are closely related to the implication of CSR on employees' sense of achievement. Several types of research and surveys have found a close link-up between employees' sense of pride and the ethically responsible image of an organization (e.g., Heater, 1990). The same themes also emerged in our data, where employees consider a better role of his/her organization in society as a sense of pride. Also, this relationship is also enhanced by their loyalty.

"When you have worked for an organization for more than a decade, it's common to consider this entity as part of your family. So, when PTCL started their 'Kamyab Nojawan Program' aiming at the betterment of interior Sindh (my home residence), the bond, sense of pride, happiness, and loyalty I've felt for my organization, has never been this much stronger." (Senior Employee)

#### Affiliation

McClelland (1961) describes affiliation as a social need of an individual to be part of a group and to have a sense of belonging/ involvement within the group. As humans are considered social animals, they cannot live in isolation. This tendency results in their need of being loved by all, and the constant struggle to avoid rejection. Based on these inferences, we tried to examine the implications of CSR as

a tool for a higher level of affiliation towards the organization. Several themes emerged from our data that were consistent with this hypothesis.

"As employees spent 2/3rd of their daytime in office surroundings, this results in a greater sense of bonding with the organization leading to the overall highest level of affiliation. That sense of identity forced them to evaluate each step of the organization thoroughly and critically. As by societal norms considered CSR as the obligation of an organization, and such activities result in a higher level of motivation among employees." (Assistant Manager, FFC)

Fear of rejection and individualism vs. collectivism are two of the most recurring themes related to the affiliation. As the fear of rejection or fear of being considered as an outlier forced the individual to act in a way that is acceptable by social groups. Whereas the intensity of this affiliation is highly dependent on individual priorities in terms of 'self-centered person' or 'proud in nature' individuals are not much influenced by this need.

"I've spent enough time in the market to know that, to achieve the goals you have to be fully focused. Definitely, I'd love to engage in such CSR activities until and unless they do not hinder my personal objective." (Anonymous (as per request)

#### Self-Actualization

Maslow's (1954) theory of Hierarchy of Needs described self-actualization as the final/highest level of need to achieve overall satisfaction. This need fulfills the basic desire of an individual to understand the purpose/motive of his life and helps to achieve the best version of himself. Especially in our region, where piousness is considered as the highest form of a trait that is needed to achieve, the best version of himself, and being ethically responsible towards society is the most logical way to achieve this level. So, it's quite under stable to find one of the implications of CSR as an approach to achieve self-actualization among employees. This theme emerged in our data, where employees indirectly describe CSR and the wellbeing of society as a purpose of life and the best way possible to devote one's life.

"Being a Muslim (devoted individual), it is our obligation to serve our lives according to the commandments of our faith and strive for the persona/character that fulfills all the necessary obligations. CSR acts as a channel to reach our desired optimum level." (Agricultural financial officer, HBL)

#### Power

Surprisingly, despite having a prominent role in human psychology in terms of the human desire to have power and control, in our analysis, there is a very insignificant discussion of power as an implication of CSR on employees. Instead, there was more influence of altruism and humility. Interestingly, it has been observed in different studies that, people, while in limelight, tend to convey their altruistic side while completely hiding egotistic desires (Wood & de Simons, 1998). Hence, this can be the reason behind the lack of discussion related to power in our analysis. This perspective was beyond the scope of our discussion therefore it represents a gap for future studies that need to be explored. So, based on this it is apparent that employees do not consider CSR as a means to fulfill their own desire for power and to have control over the needs of others.

"In such a materialistic time period, where each decision is judged based on the profit/loss criteria, it is quite refreshing when a company engages in such activities that are purely focused on the humanitarian aspect." (Manager, Jazz Telecom)

### CONCLUSION

This paper aims to investigate the gap in the literature related to the role of employees in CSR implications. To explore the phenomenon, we identified employees in different managerial levels as an

informant as they are the one who has firsthand experience with CSR and its implication on their overall surroundings.

Figure 1 summarizes all the findings specified in the objective of this research. Mainly in the domain of (1) Motive of CSR and (2) Implications of CSR on employees' motivations. Our findings confirm the commonly accepted proposition that the main driving force behind the decision of an organization to engage in CSR is usually based on external factors (e.g., PR effect, government regulation, brand image, tax benefits), with rare emphasis on internal factors like its effect on employees. This is actually consistent with the findings from past studies (e.g., Rahman et al., 2016) who found CSR as a response to the negative image of the Bangladeshi labor market, where firms engaged in CSR to build their brand image and mitigate the negative publicity of child labor issues. Along with the research of McWilliams et al. (2006) who defines external factors like cost reduction, the overall efficiency of the organization, and strict government regulations as the main motives behind a firm's decision to engage in CSR. However, our main focus of the study was to understand the role of CSR in employees' motivation means how it influences the employees as in this era of socially aware stakeholders. We cannot just assume a single factor like monetary benefits as the sole process behind the employees' motivation. So, in this regard, the main themes that emerge from our analysis are,

Spiritual obligations influence the intensity to which employees are swayed by CSR activities, here different subthemes like employees' family background, peer/family pressure, and personal belief system govern individual's philosophy towards spiritual obligations. Abu Bakar and Yusof (2015) found similar findings in the Malaysian market, in which he argues that the responsibility of the organization is not just to fulfill the material requirements but also the spiritual-moral needs of stakeholders. Whereas in the Lebanese context, Jamali and Sdiani (2013) in 'Does Religiosity Determine Affinities to CSR?' argues that individual religiosity influences their perspective of CSR, which is consistent with our finding of individual personal belief and its influence on CSR perception. Surprisingly enough, this perspective of CSR tends to be found in religious countries, mainly Islamic, i.e., Malaysian, Lebanese, and Pakistan (see Abu Bakar and Yusof, 2015, in Malaysia; Hunjra et al., 2020, in Pakistan; Jamali and Sdiani, 2013, in Lebanon). So, these findings can be the result of hypersensitivity towards religious values. Therefore, this theme needs to be explored from a non-religious perspective (i.e., in Western countries) to get a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Achievement, another theme pointed out by respondent while exploring the implication of CSR on employee's motivation. Achievement in a sense that employees feel a sense of pride, loyalty, and happiness towards their ethically responsible organizations. This theme is actually consistent with the findings of other researchers in the context of Chilean firms. Rodrigo and Arenas (2008), who found a similar perspective in their study 'Do Employees Care about CSR Program,' concluded sense of achievement in employees as one of the determinants behind the perception of CSR means whether they care about such activities or not. Whereas the study 'The Impact of CSR on Casino Employees' Orgnizational Trust, Job Satisfaction, and Customer Orientation: An Empirical Examination of Responsible Gambling Strategies' concluded that CSR results in a higher level of loyalty and customer orientation in employees (Lee et al., 2013).

Affiliation, in the sense that employees spent an enormous amount of time within the proximity of the organization, often results in blurred boundaries of their personal and professional lives. This causes a higher sense of bonding with the organization. A similar theme emerged in our research where employees either because of the fear of being left out/rejected or based on their own personality (collectivist approach/individualism) tend to form an affiliation with the organization and this affiliation results in the higher implication of each firm's step including their propensity towards the well-being of society, i.e., CSR. This theme is actually consistent with the theory of social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which believes that people create a bond with the organization/ group of people they belong to, and favorably perceive group characteristics. This sense of identity tends to force them to assess the actions of their organization, which results in a perception of positive actions (CSR) as higher motivation and satisfaction towards the organization.

McClelland defines power as one of the motives and needs of an individual, and in several types of research related to human psychology emphasis on power as one of the main driving forces behind human motivation. But in our research, we have found no desire for power among employees while evaluating or engaging in any CSR activity instead their motives are found to be more based on humanitarian perspective and altruism. And their philosophy towards the role of the organization is

based on the theory of obligation, which works as a guiding principle to remind organizations about their obligation towards societal benefits. Numerous researchers have explored this humanitarian perspective and the role of CSR. In his research, 'Employee Engagement and CSR,' Mirvis (2012) concluded a similar finding that employee engagement in CSR activities tends to be high in cases when they are certain about intentions of these activities means they are purely humanitarian based on some short-term PR gigs. Interestingly several researchers while power is the determinant of human psychology observed that People while in limelight tend to convey their altruistic side while completely hiding egotistic desires (Wood & de Simons, 1998). Hence, this can be the reason behind the lack of discussion related to power in our analysis. This perspective was beyond the scope of our discussion therefore it represents a gap for future studies that need to be explored.



**Figure 1. Research Findings** 

Self-actualization, in a sense that this need fulfills the basic desire of an individual to understand the purpose/motive of his life and helps to achieve the best version of himself by fulfilling his/her

potential. Especially in our region, where piousness is considered as the highest form of a trait that is needed to achieve the best version of himself and being ethically responsible towards society is the most logical way to achieve this level. So, it is quite under stable to find one of the implications of CSR as an approach to achieve self-actualization among employees. In other words, when an employee perceived CSR as a tool to fulfill his potential that can be based on either spiritual needs or some other personal objective, then it automatically influences their desire to engage in such activities and their overall perception towards organization based on such criteria. While evaluating the same perspective, Singhapakdi et al. (2015) argued the similar viewpoint that orientation of employer towards CSR influences the overall quality of work-life of an employee, and the quality of work-life reflects in the dimensions of, self-esteem, self-actualization, and knowledge.

This study has made some significant contributions in the literature of CSR. The very first contribution from this study is that the research adds new knowledge in the domain of corporate social responsibility and CSR influence on employees. Moreover, this research has explored a developing country's perspective, i.e., Pakistan, to analyze the influence of CSR activities as an instrument to motivate employees. Third, this study helps to understand a firm's perspective/reasoning to engage in CSR. Most importantly, we firmly believe that by exploring CSR we can find the link/association between CSR and human resource management. So, this research may help the HR managers in strategic formulation relating to workforce management, specifically in terms of CSR as a tool for employees' motivation.

This study has certain limitations; the very first limitation is related to the time constraint. As the researchers are provided with deadlines so time is the major constraint here. Secondly, as the study is being conducted during pandemic times so traveling to far areas for conducting interviews is the major concern. Besides, virtual platforms are used to conduct interviews and as we know in developing countries like Pakistan, there are infrastructural, connectivity issues and overall lack of trust towards online source might have hindered/bias our research flow. In conclusion, contrary to popular belief our findings suggest huge implications of CSR on employee motivation and through this research, we tried to fill the gap in the literature by exploring this stance in our context.

#### **Empirical Implications**

In terms of the empirical implication of this research, it contributes to the organizational process of strategic development specifically relevant to human resource management. These findings will help the HR managers to navigate and manage the talent resources in terms of how to enhance their motivation and the role of CSR in the whole process. Especially in the South Asian region where emotions and divine values tend to be more strictly followed, these findings have major real-life implications in such context. Essentially these findings suggest that employees can fulfill their own sense of obligations and find a match with corporation values through these CSR activities (Bankwala, 2011).

#### **Theoretical Implications**

Apart from the empirical contributions of our findings, we firmly believe that our outcomes contribute to some aspects of theories and enhance overall knowledge relevant to CSR literature. First of all, this research adds new knowledge in the domain of corporate social responsibility and CSR influence on employees. In terms of how CSR has a positive influence on employees' motivation and CSR is the link between employee's values and corporate values. These findings prolong the limited literature relevant to CSR and its internal implications. We acknowledge the growing interest in CSR and internal mechanisms, and we hope to contribute to this debate through this research and paved a way for future studies.

Secondly, our findings contribute to CSR literature by conveying a context-specific factor-like spirituality that may be relevant for hyper-religious countries as this factor Spirituality and implication of CSR tends to be found in Muslim countries, i.e., Pakistan, Indonesia, and Lebanon. Therefore, this theme needs to be explored from a non-religious perspective (i.e., in Western countries) to get a better understanding of this phenomenon.

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#### **Recommended Citation:**

Abdullah, U., Ali, U., & Channa, K. A. (2021). Influence of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Employees' Work Motivation: A Developing Country Perspective. Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship, 9(1), 63-77.

#### This article is available online at:

http://ojs.sampoernauniversity.ac.id (ISSN: 2302-4119 Print, 2685-6255 Online)