

Anchoring Employees: Addressing Turnover Intention using Internal Corporate Social Responsibility

Akanksha Rawat¹ & Prof. H. C Purohit²

¹Research Scholar, Doon University, Dehradun

²Dean, School of Management, Doon University, Dehradun

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*Corresponding author: Akanksha Rawat

Abstract: Internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become important with changing employment and work arrangements while achieving desired corporate governance. However, it has not gained the deserved attention to date. Drawing from the Social Exchange Theory, this conceptual study connects Internal Corporate Social Responsibility practices to the turnover intention of employees and their organizational affective commitment. Based on the previous literature, the paper proposes a conceptual model outlining the role of five practices directed towards employees i.e., internal CSR and turnover intention. Analysis revealed that internal CSR practices positively influence organizational affective commitment; however, a negative influence was exerted on employees' turnover intention. The paper concludes by offering theoretical, practical, and social implications. Using this approach, the study aims to contribute to the psychological and physical well-being of employees, ensuring a long-term commitment and employment term with the organization.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; internal stakeholders; employees; employee commitment; employee turnover; social exchange theory.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has proved its strategic importance in the sustainable performance of business organizations in the past few years. CSR refers to the obligation of a business towards its stakeholders. These initiatives are a way to minimize or decrease the negative impact caused by the firm's operations on society and the environment (Newman et al., 2014). Firms in the manufacturing sector cause much more damage to the environment and society thus participating more in CSR activities to regularise their actions while the service industry pays for things they did not contribute to, thus undergoing less pressure to execute CSR (Thang & Fassin, 2017). However, a declaration by the Government of India to execute CSR as a mandatory practice has encouraged many businesses to participate in CSR, irrespective of the harm caused by them i.e. more harm is caused by the manufacturing sector than the service sector. The prevailing perception among the chief executives of businesses as found in a survey declared CSR as an instrument to attract and retain a qualified and responsible workforce (Thang & Fassin, 2017).

Besides society and customers, employers are recognizing and diverting their efforts towards catering to their internal stakeholders i.e. employees. This dimension of CSR is commonly known as Internal CSR or employee-focused CSR. Internal CSR could be defined as socially responsible behavior shown by companies towards their employees through employment stability, positive working environment, skill development, diversity, work-life balance, empowerment, and tangible employee involvement (Mory et al., 2016). Story & Castanheira,

(2019) define internal CSR as initiatives encouraging better working conditions for employees. Different authors have supported and measured various dimensions of internal CSR in their previous studies, particularly those concerned with employees. However, studies focusing on the internal aspect of CSR are limited. Similarly, the impact of these practices on employee outcomes such as commitment and performance is paid very little attention. A study by Brammer et al. (2007) suggests that there have been signs of payoff to Corporate social responsibility initiatives therefore, organizations must invest more in socially responsible practices to gain a larger pool of applicants while hiring as employees tend to be attracted by such initiatives. It would also result in a more committed workforce relying on social identity theory as employees proudly associate and identify as part of the organization. The attachment one feels towards an organization makes it hard for one to leave the organization intentionally is termed as employee organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Allen & Meyer (1996) categorized commitment into affective, normative, and continuance commitment where affective deals with the emotional attachment i.e., the desire to remain a part of an organization, and normative commitment refers to the obligation i.e., employees feel they ought to remain with a firm and continuance commitment resembles the need of an employee to stay. Among these, affective commitment has received the most attention as normative and continuance commitment has failed to establish a significant relationship between the variables (Al-bdour et al., 2010; Mory et al., 2016). Therefore, we have excluded these 2 dimensions from further study. Brammer, Millington & Rayton (2007) found a significant positive impact of CSR

practices on employee organizational commitment. This could be explained by social identity theory, where an individual feels pride and is motivated being identified, related or associated with an organization that is socially responsible and obliged. Furthermore, social exchange theory also supports the relationship between internal CSR and employee commitment as employees tend to show committed behaviour towards an organization committed to them not only through words but actions i.e., internal CSR practices. Therefore, we assume that internal CSR will create a committed and rewarding workforce.

Turnover intention depicts the commitment one feels towards their workplace. Employees when not satisfied or happy with the work culture or work environment intend to leave the current organization and look after opportunities among the competitor firms. Organizations invest all kind of resources while hiring and onboarding new employees, they are trained for the upcoming roles and expected to remain a part of the business for long term. Therefore, when an employee leaves all such resources go in vain.

In present paper, we intend to investigate the influence of Internal CSR practices on the performance of employees in the Banking sector within a model, which draws on Social Exchange Theory. It provides employees an opportunity to administer and evaluate the initiatives directed toward them, an area where our literature lacks as more studies are based on ratings provided by the seniors of the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internal CSR

Internal CSR is also known as employee-focused CSR or employee-oriented CSR. This refers to those corporate social responsibility practices which are aimed towards the internal stakeholders of business i.e., employees. Internal CSR comprises the physical and psychological environment of work for employees (Turker, 2009). It is related to the well-being of employees consisting of their training & development, remuneration, health & safety, empowerment, human rights, work-life balance. To instigate positive attitude and behavior from employees, those ICSR practices must be encouraged which have direct influence on individual employees (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021). Few empirical researches show a positive impact of internal CSR on employee satisfaction, commitment and engagement (Low, 2014). A satisfied and committed workforce act as a strategic tool for the business to overcome competitors.

Compensation & Benefits: Compensation here refers to the monetary amount one receives against the services rendered by them while, benefits are the non-monetary gains offered by the provider. Remuneration is found to be the most powerful tool to generate positive behavior from employees (Albasu & Nyameh, 2017). From the perspective of banks, employers must satisfy and motivate its employees through compensation and offering benefits which will result in satisfied customers too.

Health & Safety: Here, health refers to the physical and

mental illness while safety means protection offered to the one performing tasks at ground level and reducing work-related accidents (Aarssen & Crimi, 2016). The present paper considers health and safety as a practice encouraging a safe and protected work environment to the human resource free from all physical and mental issues. Physical work environment consists of lightening, building, radiations, noise, material used, machines and equipment whereas psychological work environment refers to dignity & respect, communication, integrity, no molestation or harassment and good conduct. Any ignorance in health and safety practices of employees can be reflected in their absenteeism, turnover or poor performance (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021). In banking context, employers must pursue health and safety practices to reduce the mental stress and burden of its employees.

Training & Development: Training can be defined as a set of processes designed to facilitate learning among the trainees to enable them to satisfactorily meet their current skills, knowledge and ability requirements. It consists of development, education and vocational training (Anwar & Shukur, 2015). This identifies the existing skill gap among the human resource and address it through necessary remedial measures. Development is future oriented as it develops an individual for upcoming responsibilities. It focuses on developing the potential of employees for the positions they may hold in future. Development consists of job rotation, promotion, education, job enlargement & enrichment and experience. Training and development programs conducted by an organization aim towards improving employee's performance and satisfaction eventually rooting for organizational performance.

Work-life balance: 'Balance' in English literally means a scale to measure or a weighing apparatus. In this context we tend to put work and life on the either part to achieve stability between the two (Guest, 2002). It refers to dilemma one faces while managing job and family/personal responsibilities from employee's point of view whereas from employer's point of view it refers to creating a work culture where employees can focus on their jobs while getting enough support from the organization (Lockwood, 2003). Kalliath and Brough (2008) have defined work-life balance in six perspectives namely multiple roles, equity in multiple roles, satisfaction among multiple roles, role salience among multiple roles, conflict-facilitation relationship and perceived control between multiple roles. Work-life balance refers to the power an individual holds while choosing the role important to him/her. For example- one can compensate his work through work-from-home (WFH) in case of emergency/important work at home.

Employee Autonomy: Autonomy allows an individual to exercise control on the tasks assigned to a certain extent. It reduces stress and contribute to the well-being of employees. Employee autonomy refers to ableness of an employee to take decision about the place, time and the way one wants to compete their assignments. Past literature advocates to experience a positive influence of autonomy on the performance of employees (Lartey, 2021).

Significant positive impact of job autonomy and working conditions can be seen on the satisfaction level of employees (Rizwan et al., 2014). Despite these pro's, few cons have also been witnessed of providing excess control or autonomy (Wheatley, 2017).

Employee Organizational Commitment

Previous studies reviewed in this paper, provides evidence of the relationship between CSR and internal CSR on employee organizational commitment. The majority of the studies have considered the well-known scale of Organizational commitment by Allen and Meyer (1996), considering three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance. Affective Commitment is a consequence of internal CSR, where affective commitment refers to binding an individual's identification and association with an organization (Story & Castanheira, 2019).

Turnover Intention

The turnover of employees refers to employees' voluntary leaving of an organization or a profession. Employees leaving their workplace is detrimental for both the organization and the employees. It also has a negative influence on the recruitment, induction, and training costs incurred on an individual while joining the organization, especially the loss of knowledge. Researchers like Parsuraman(1989); Weisman et al. (1980) advocate the involvement of various attitudinal, decisional, and behavioural components in the turnover behaviour of employees. "The perceived desirability of termination of employer-employee relation is known as turnover intention" (Jha, 2009). A few factors outlined by Mobley et al. (1979) are possibly responsible for turnover intention among employees are organizational factors, employee characteristics, job and market-related expectations.

2.4 Internal Corporate Social Responsibility & Employee Commitment

The present paper proposes that internal CSR or employee-focused CSR stimulates affective commitment among employees. There are a few papers confirming the significant relationship between the two variables. Internal CSR practices refer to the activities promoting the psychological and physical work environment of the employees (Turker 2009a, 2009b). It includes health & safety, compensation & benefits, training & development, work-life balance, and employee autonomy/empowerment. Internal CSR leads to employee commitment and organizational identification while sprouting positive attitudes, pride, and satisfaction among them (Desilva & Desilva, 2019). Internal CSR increases Affective Commitment among employees; however, no such significant impact was seen on Normative commitment (Mory et al., 2015). Ali et al. (2010) studied five dimensions of internal CSR: health & safety, training & education, human rights, work-life balance, and workplace diversity in relation to organizational commitment. Findings revealed that all five dimensions positively influence affective and normative commitment of employees; however, no such effect was identified in continuance commitment. Thang and Fassin (2017)

explored five dimensions of internal CSR, among which labour relations, health & safety, and training & education significantly affect organizational commitment whereas work-life balance and social dialogue doesn't. A positive correlation among internal CSR and organizational commitment was witnessed (Ekawati and Prasetyo, 2016). Faliza et al., 2023 empirically examined work environment, skill development and empowerment as dimensions of internal CSR whereby, it was found to be an important antecedent for achieving or strengthening organizational commitment. Kharisma, 2013 evidently concluded that internal CSR leads to high organizational commitment than external CSR.

Based on the above literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between internal CSR and employee commitment.

2.5 Employee Commitment & Turnover Intention

The present paper proposes a significant association between employee commitment and turnover intention. Organizations imbibe Resource based view theory which support capitalizing on resource that are unique, rare, valuable and inimitable. Human resource is one such resource which is hard to imitate and unique in every firm. Thus, organizations can gain competitive advantage managing this resource effectively making it important for the employer to attract and retain qualified and talented workforce. Ashar et al. (2013) found a negative correlation between affective commitment and employee turnover intention. Turnover intention of employees tends to appear as a major problem for all employers in this era of cut-throat competition. Here, studies by Mosadeghrad et al. (2011); Ekhsan, (2019) and Tnay et al., (2013) concluded that committed and satisfied employees have negative turnover intention. Values, beliefs and practices shared within an organization constitutes the culture of an organization which directly or indirectly shapes the attitude of employees towards their job and the employer. Henceforth, a strong positive culture shapes the commitment of employees to a firm which resultingly increases their intention to stay with it (Pathan, 2022). Guzeller and Celiker, 2020 conducted a meta-analysis of the relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention and revealed a moderate negative correlation between the two variables. Stanley et al., 2013 explored the three dimensions of organizational commitment and their influence on the commitment profiles of employees and reached to a conclusion that employees with dominant affective and normative commitment profiles experience lower intention and ease of movement.

Based on the above findings, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a negative relationship between employee commitment and turnover intention.

2.6 Internal Corporate Social Responsibility & Turnover Intention

Internal CSR decreases turnover intention among employees while improving employee engagement (Chang et al., 2021). There is an inverse relationship between internal CSR and employees' intention to leave an organization therefore, organizations must operationalize internal CSR to retain its qualified and competent employees (Low, 2015). Rashid et al., 2018 attempted to measure the influence of internal CSR on employee's intention to quit mediated by organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) on the banking sector of Pakistan and found a negative relation however, OCB significantly mediated the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Another study on the higher education institutions of Pakistan considered internal CSR as a legitimate strategy and tool to mitigate employee retention and employer branding (Ikram et al., 2021). Ouakouak et al., 2020 conducted a study drawing on the Social Exchange Theory, revealed that both external and internal CSR has a negative association with employee's intention to quit. Low et al., 2017 capitalized a study drawing on Social Exchange Theory and Stakeholder theory, found internal CSR to be a responsible initiative towards enhancing commitment and satisfaction of employees thus decreasing the turnover intention among them. Internal CSR practice employee well-being, justice, fairness, work-life balance and career development. Kim et al., 2023 stated in their study conducted in the U.S hospitality industry that internal CSR is found to have significant sequential effects on employee attitude such as identification, justice, commitment and turnover intention. The findings were based on Social Exchange theory and Social Identity theory. Ranjan and Yadav, 2018 capitalized Signaling theory conducted a literature review stated organizations that position themselves as operationalizing internal CSR do witness less willingness to quit among employees. Sanusi and Johl, 2020 proposed a conceptual framework relating ICSR belief and employee's intention to job continuity to solve the issue of employee turnover.

Based on the above literature, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship between internal CSR and turnover intention.

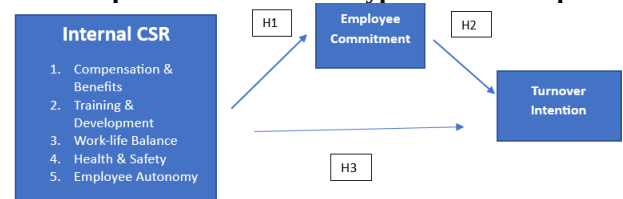
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK & HYPOTHESES

3.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET) by Blau, 1964 is based on the ideology of 'reciprocity' that when an organization behaves in a fair, just, caring manner towards its employees, then employees also reciprocate their efforts through same gestures such as loyalty, commitment and performance CSR practices focused on employees are a kind of investment made by the organization which reaps constructive behaviour such as trust and engagement (Memon et al., 2020). Internal CSR practices encourage positive outcomes from employees such as performance (Albasu & Nyameh, 2017). Employees are constantly involved in exchange relationships within an organization which creates obligations and liberty among the employer and employees. Researchers assume that people only

participate in such exchange relationships till the costs incurred don't outweigh the benefits reaped. Cooperation and reciprocity facilitate this relationship, as one party provides the benefits, another party is obliged to repay it in future at some point. SET explains the relationship between employees' perception of the organization and their resulting behaviour (Gaudêncio et al., 2019). Thus, SET analyse the cost-benefit ratio and can be applied to both theory and practice in context of organizations. It can be used as a tool to nurture the work culture and working environment of a business promoting camaraderie and teamwork among the fellow employees. When employees feel valued and cared for by the organization, they tend to feel satisfied and committed which eventually motivates them to stay with the organization (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2021).

3.2 Conceptual Framework & Hypotheses Development



On the basis of the above model, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between internal CSR and employee commitment.
- H2: There is a negative relationship between employee commitment and turnover intention.
- H3: There is a negative relationship between internal CSR and turnover intention.

Implications of the Study

4.1. Theoretical Implications

The connection between internal corporate social responsibility and employees' commitment and turnover intentions has remained challenging for researchers. This paper attempts to employ social exchange theory (SET) to analyse the effects of such practices on internal stakeholders' behavior and attitudes, thereby influencing their turnover intention and commitment towards the organization. The ICSR dimensions used in this study connect to the physical and psychological well-being of employees. The analysis of the previous studies conducted on the internal CSR showed that all five dimensions of the constructs have a significant impact on employee commitment and turnover intention. This connotes that SET, which involves reciprocity of actions, is the foremost reasonable way to clarify the reciprocal effect of ICSR activities on turnover intention through positive employee-focused initiatives. Findings are aligned with the previous studies, conforming to the positive outcomes of implementing internal CSR practices. It contributes to the literature on CSR by examining employee-oriented CSR practices on employee outcomes, especially in banking institutions. Further, it provides conceptual evidence confirming the relationship between internal CSR practices and turnover intention in the banking industry.

4.2. Managerial Implications

The CSR department must focus on equal involvement of internal and external stakeholders while designing practices and initiatives. Dimensions employed in the study of internal CSR must be reviewed by the human resource department to improve training and development, establish work-life balance, design an appropriate compensation structure, and ensure a healthy and safe work environment and adequate autonomy to make employees feel heard, valued, and respected. The conceptual study revealed that internal CSR has a significant effect on the commitment and turnover intention of employees. Therefore, practitioners must identify and implement practices that employees most value. In addition, management must offer better career management opportunities, succession planning strategies, performance appraisal methods, supportive resources, and benefits. Employees reciprocate and reward organizations with commitment, loyalty, and performance that practice reliable, ethical, and value-based behaviour.

4.3. Social Implications

Thoughtfully designed compensation and benefit structure will increase the purchasing power of the working class while enabling them to balance their personal and professional lives, resulting in satisfied citizens. The banking sector has a spillover effect on the other sectors of society, gaining the attention of the government, regulatory bodies, policymakers, and investors. Sustainable business practices adopted by banks will be aligned with stakeholder expectations and interests, resulting in a significant contribution towards the environment and economy.

Limitations & Suggestions for future research

The study employs only five dimensions of internal CSR that are examined concerning employee commitment and turnover intention among banking institutions in India. Dimensions included compensation and benefits, training and development, health and safety, work-life balance, and employee autonomy. However, internal CSR is not just limited to these five dimensions. Future researchers can consider other factors that were used in earlier studies to measure their influence on commitment and turnover intention. Secondly, this study is conceptual in nature thus, it lacks any empirical evidence. Therefore, future researchers are expected to gather empirical data to improve the generalization of the results. Furthermore, only a limited number of studies have been included in the study; therefore, analysing more articles would improve the present picture of the relationship shared among the variables. Lastly, researchers must consider the effect of demographic factors such as age, gender, etc., on the dependent and mediating variables.

CONCLUSION

CSR is the obligation an organization has towards its stakeholders, as it exists directly or indirectly. CSR practices adopted by an organization are a mirror image of which stakeholders it considers important. Financial performance may seem glorious at first, but it is only for the short term. To survive in the long run, one must acknowledge and admire the contribution of each

stakeholder, including employees. An employee needs to feel satisfied, happy, and respected to be an asset to the place it is employed. CSR is believed to build a positive corporate perception and image among other stakeholders, rewarding it with national and international visibility and government support, eventually resulting in profit and sales. Hence, we need to practice CSR not only externally but internally too.

The present paper attempted to conceptually examine the influence of internal corporate social responsibility on the turnover intention of employees with a mediating role of employee affective commitment in the Indian banking sector. The Companies Act, 2013 has made it mandatory for all businesses specified under an umbrella to mandatorily practice CSR and the banking industry is no different.

The past studies analysed in this study revealed that internal CSR has a significant and positive impact on affective commitment in the Indian banking sector. Internal CSR practices inspired by the five underlying dimensions namely compensation and benefits, training and development, health and safety, work-life balance and employee autonomy, improve commitment levels among employees as they feel heard, valued, and respected. It also supports Social Exchange Theory, which posits commitment as a reward one gives to the employer in exchange of the above-mentioned facilities. Further, it was found that commitment inspires employees to stay with the organization for the long term thus negatively influencing their turnover intention. Previously, researchers have studied the possible relationship between the three variables considered in our study individually, however, the author has not come across any similar study where all three variables and dimensions have been studied.

This paper offers a new approach to the relationship of variables considered while highlighting the mediation effect of AC on turnover intention of employees, which is one of the major concerns of the banking industry.

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