

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19285293

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EMPLOYEE LOYALTY

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Received: 11/08/2025

Accepted: 08/01/2026

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has garnered significant attention from scholars and has become a key factor influencing employee loyalty in recent years. However, the specific relationships between CSR and employee loyalty remain underexplored. This research aims to identify the main themes within studies related to CSR and employee loyalty, uncover research gaps, and propose future research directions. Data until 2025 was collected from the Web of Science (WoS) and Semantic scholar databases for English studies and Google Scholar for Vietnamese research. Studies were analyzed for general information. 21 studies showed that CSR positively impacts employee loyalty, especially when aligned with employee values and societal concerns. Through a synthesis of contemporary research, four primary thematic areas emerge. First, an "internal-first" hierarchy is established, where internal CSR serve as the necessary foundation for loyalty. Second, the relationship between CSR and employee loyalty is found to be indirect. Third, the effectiveness of these initiatives is amplified by cultural contexts, specifically within collectivist societies like Vietnam and minority-owned enterprises. Finally, CSR is a strategic human capital investment that enhances financial performance by increasing employee loyalty. These results suggest that for CSR to be a competitive advantage, it must be integrated into the core organizational strategy rather than treated as a peripheral expense. This study explores the CSR-employee loyalty relationship and advocates a multi-dimensional approach, emphasizing employee benefits and well-being to enhance loyalty.

KEYWORDS: CSR; employee outcomes; loyalty; review

JEL: O15, Q56, M14

1. INTRODUCTION

Heightened knowledge and attention to environmental and social issues have led society to demand pro-environmental management approaches (Guzzo et al., 2020). Consequently, scholars and stakeholders of various firms are raising awareness about environmental and social practices (González-Rodríguez et al., 2021). Additionally, researchers indicate that a firm's societal and ecological responsibilities increasingly contribute to employee loyalty (Choi et al., 2020).

Businesses and service providers are compelled to meet social and environmental performance expectations, prompting their involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices (Bolton et al., 2011). From the beginning, Carroll defined CSR as the responsibility of organizations to society, including economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities (Carroll, 2016). However, the concept of CSR varied throughout the development of business. CSR involves various prosocial activities undertaken by organizations to benefit society (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). In addition, includes many voluntary actions undertaken by firms to address the numerous social and environmental issues of its stakeholders (Pfajfar et al., 2022). Furthermore, CSR was seen as a philanthropic endeavor, it is now recognized as a crucial strategic tool for businesses and organizations (Ndzibah, 2009). In human resources management, fostering employee loyalty involves creating a work environment where employees feel valued, respected, and committed to the organization's success. In terms of loyalty, it shows the attachment to a particular object, which may be a person, a country, an ideal, a duty, or a cause. Thus, employee loyalty is characterized by a strong aspiration to join the organization, a commitment to attaining a high degree of skill, and a personal conviction in and acceptance of the organization's values and objectives (Chen et al., 2022). Employee loyalty is a crucial factor for the achievement of organizational success. It pertains to the level of commitment and dedication that employees have towards their firm.

CSR plays a vital role in improving employee attitudes (Vuong & Bui, 2023), employee loyalty (Jin et al., 2024), employee commitment (Loor-Zambrano et al., 2022), employee engagement and organizational identification (Ibrahim et al., 2023), workers' sense of belonging to an organization and their productivity (Alnehabi & Al-Mekhlafi, 2023), increase retention (Zainee & Puteh, 2020), reduce recruitment and training costs (Vitaliano, 2010), increase attractiveness to top candidates (Boehncke, 2023), encourage

employees to apply innovation and growth opportunities (Ejoh & Omoile, 2023), improve supplier-client relations (Hultman & Elg, 2018).

In addition, CSR represents a company's dedication to ethical and sustainable business practices that positively impact society. As firms grapple with customer and employee requirements, the connection between CSR and employee loyalty has become more critical. For example, comprehensive CSR activities were implemented to enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty, resulting in a more positive and healthier organizational culture (Shafique & Ahmad, 2020). Another perspective indicates a partly mediation effect of person-organization fit and employee trust on the connection between CSR and employee loyalty (Jin et al., 2024). In addition, another study indicates that CSR initiatives in economics, environment, and social impact significantly impact employee loyalty, partially or comprehensively (Lau, 2024). However, most of the limitations of this literature research focus only on one field or country, such as the banking sectors of Pakistan (Shafique & Ahmad, 2020) or China (Lau, 2024). Our research differs from others due to three legitimate sources: Semantic Scholar, Google Scholar, and WOS. Studies show a strong connection between a company's CSR efforts and employee loyalty. We gathered all research papers about CSR and employee loyalty, without any limitations on time or country, in order to investigate three main aspects: 1) the research characteristics of studies that have explored the connection between CSR and employee loyalty; 2) the various thematic areas that have been examined in previous literature; and 3) the existing gaps and potential avenues for future research on this topic.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between CSR and employee loyalty was mainly explained the following theories. Firstly, Social Identity Theory (SIT), pioneered by (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), provides a fundamental psychological framework for understanding intergroup behavior, prejudice, and discrimination. Rooted in Tajfel's personal experiences and early experiments, most notably the minimal group paradigm, SIT posits that even arbitrary group categorizations can trigger in-group favoritism and out-group bias. This perspective challenged previous theories which suggested that intergroup conflict stemmed solely from competition over tangible resources. In the context of the relationship between CSR and employee loyalty, SIT suggests that

employees construct their self-concept through organizational identification. CSR acts as a catalyst that strengthens this social identity; a positive corporate image fosters a sense of pride and belonging, thereby enhancing employee satisfaction and commitment. While SIT primarily focuses on identification, it also intersects with exchange dynamics: when an organization demonstrates social responsibility and builds trust, employees often reciprocate with increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Next, Social Exchange Theory (SET) has remained a cornerstone in explaining social interactions and structures since the foundational works of Homans (1961), Blau (1964), and Emerson (1964, 1972a, 1972b). As a pillar of workplace behavior and interpersonal relationship studies, SET is widely applied across social psychology, sociology, and anthropology. It explains how individuals engage in voluntary behaviors based on the expectation of reciprocal rewards from others. A core tenet of SET is that loyalty and trust are developed over time through a relational evolution. These relationships are governed by specific exchange rules, which establish behavioral norms between parties (Emerson, 1972a). Specifically, robust relationships between employees, supervisors, and the organization, cultivated through mutually beneficial actions, trust, and an ethical workplace culture, form the bedrock of loyalty (Arsawan et al., 2020). Under this paradigm, CSR serves as a high-value organizational contribution; when the firm exhibits social responsibility, employees feel an obligation to reciprocate with long-term commitment.

The concept of CSR has attracted the attention of scholars for the last century (Albdour & Ikhlas, 2012). This concept was first mentioned in the book of Bowen (2013), and is of interest to this day. McWilliams et al. (2006) refer to CSR as voluntary or non-profit activities aiming to achieve social benefit. CSR is a continuous dedication by firms to operate responsibly, promote economic growth, and elevate the quality of life for workers, their families, local communities, and society at large (Turcsanyi & Sisaye, 2013).

Organizations encounter several social, economic, legal, ethical, and environmental difficulties that affect their behavior, and focusing only on economic management to attain objectives is untenable (Rigoberto Parada Daza, 2009). Moreover, organizations face pressure from diverse stakeholders, including communities, regulators, NGOs, activists, and socially responsible investors, to enhance their societal responsibility and operate as accountable corporate citizens (Gross & Holland, 2011).

CSR activities can profoundly influence employees' perceptions of their organization, enhancing loyalty to the firm. Organizations bear a responsibility to society and their workforce, influencing sentiments toward the entity (Buchanan, 1974). It is a psychological condition in the relationship between an organization and its employees that reinforces the employee's commitment to remain with the organization (Allen & Grisaffe, 2001).

There are many definitions of employee loyalty. Employee loyalty includes "engagement with the organization and belief in the organization's values and goals." (Zanabazar et al., 2023). It encompasses a steadfast commitment to an individual, a collective, or a particular item, shown in a devoted workforce's attitudes and behaviors (Basit et al., 2018). Coughlan (2005) posits that due to this implicit commitment, personnel conform to universal ethical standards while pursuing personal and group objectives. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) argue that loyal employees accept without complaining because they believe things will improve. They are willing to make personal sacrifices to nurture a relationship (Mehta et al., 2010) and to support an organization while exhibiting citizenship behavior (Rusbult et al., 1988). These personnel never damage the company nor engage in opportunity-seeking (Robertson et al., 2015). Avoiding trivial conversation, engaging in overtime (Diem, 2016), mentoring junior staff (Hart & Thompson, 2007), and refraining from policy exploitation also determine employee loyalty (Stanley et al., 2023).

The relationship between CSR and employee loyalty is multifaceted and rooted in several factors. Firstly, when companies engage in CSR activities that align with employees' values and beliefs, it fosters a sense of employee pride and commitment (Van Ngo et al., 2021). Moreover, CSR initiatives can promote Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). When workers willingly exceed their statutory job responsibilities to further the organization's goals (Dai et al., 2022). Additionally, employees perceive organizations engaging in CSR as socially responsible and caring, leading to increased trust and loyalty towards the company, a concept known as Perceived Organizational Support (POS) (Gao & Shu, 2014). Finally, CSR initiatives fulfill employees' expectations regarding fair treatment and concern for societal welfare, enhancing the psychological relationship between workers and the company (Dang & Do, 2024). Several research papers have explored the relationship between CSR and employee loyalty across different industries and countries. However, each study had its limitations. The research by Stojanović (2020) focused on several countries but

noted a limitation in the universality of its model. Similarly, Zhu et al. (2014) concentrated on Chinese enterprises, discovering that solely providing monetary benefits could harm employee loyalty, but they acknowledged a need for broader employee satisfaction measures. Rodríguez et al. (2022) examined sustainable HRM in Spanish universities, but their sample only included professors from public universities, potentially limiting generalizability. (Shafique & Ahmad, 2022) explored CSR in Pakistani banks but faced limitations due to the cross-sectional design and narrow geographic focus. Cachón-Rodríguez et al. (2021) investigated sustainability actions in Spanish universities, yet their focus on public universities might restrict generalization. Finally, Jílková (2021) discussed sustainable corporate strategy in the EU, but the study lacked international data and had a limited time horizon focused on the COVID-19 crisis, with respondents solely being employees. While these papers contribute valuable insights, their limitations highlight the need for future research to address broader contexts, diverse industries, and longitudinal perspectives to enhance the understanding of CSR's impact on employee loyalty and business performance. This study aims to provide the most current review of the topic, and identify critical emerging thematic research areas, gaps, and prospective research directions.

3. Method

1.1. Database

In this study, the Web of Science Core Collection (WoS), Semantic Scholar, and Google Scholar are used for data extraction. We could extract many papers with the

necessary information for thematic analysis, including authors' keywords, research areas, and abstracts.

1.2. Search terms and data extraction

The keywords "Corporate Social Responsibility" and "Employee Loyalty" were selected by specialists, and several scientific papers were reviewed. The search process was described as follows (Figure 1).

Initially, a comprehensive search was conducted using the primary terms "Corporate Social Responsibility," "CSR," and "employee loyalty." This process commenced in December 2025 and was conducted without temporal restrictions to ensure a broad capture of relevant literature.

All identified records were exported in .ris format and managed using EndNote for the initial screening phase. At this stage, a researcher evaluated the titles and abstracts against the following exclusion criteria: 1) duplicate studies, 2) not a research article (e.g., editorials, book reviews, or book chapter), 3) not in English or Vietnamese, and 4) not in CSR and Employee Loyalty. To ensure reliability, any discrepancies or borderline cases were resolved through consultation with a senior researcher.

Following the initial screening, the refined dataset was exported to Microsoft Excel 365 for systematic data extraction. One author performed a rigorous full-text review of the remaining articles to ensure they met the inclusion criteria and to extract key variables, such as theoretical frameworks, methodology, total citation, published year, theoretical background, industry, country where research was conducted, variables, results, and implications. Two authors independently read and extracted information to ensure consistency.

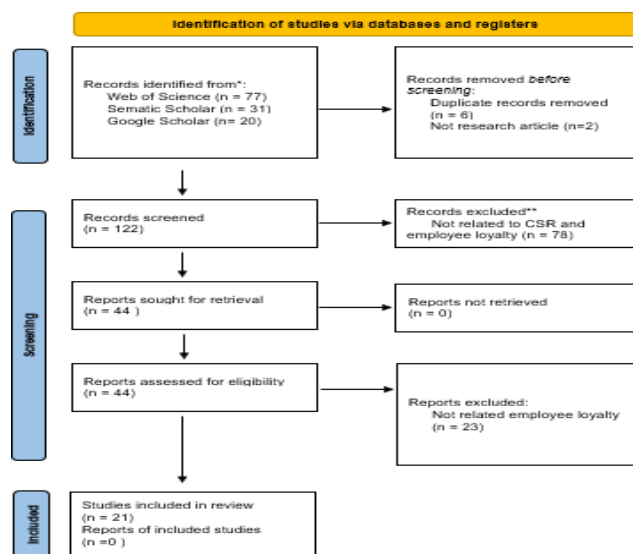


Figure 1: Searching step

3. RESULT

Table 1 shows the basic characteristics of the dataset. The dataset was mostly within the last five years, reflecting an accelerating academic interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and employee loyalty. While the chronological range extends from 2014 to 2025, a substantial 76% of the literature was published between 2021 and 2025. The inclusion of three "forthcoming" publications dated 2025 suggests that the data represents the current "cutting edge" of the field, particularly in journals focused on sustainability and environmental management (Aman-Ullah et al., 2025; L. Liu et al., 2025; R. Liu et al., 2025). Geographically, the research displays a distinct orientation toward Emerging Economies and the Global South, with a specific emphasis on the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam is the most frequently studied nation (5 entries), followed closely by China (4 studies), Pakistan (3 research). Other regions represented include Southeast Europe, Taiwan, Indonesia, Turkey, Egypt, and Iraq. This geographic distribution indicates a scholarly move away from Western-centric management models toward understanding how institutional and social frameworks operate in rapidly developing market contexts.

The industrial scope of the dataset is highly diverse, spanning primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. The construction and infrastructure sector emerges as a primary area of focus, particularly in China and Pakistan, where research examines international engineering contractors and power generation projects. This is followed by a strong presence in the financial services sector, notably banking in Pakistan and general public sector enterprises.

The Service and Hospitality industry is represented through studies on hotels in Indonesia and the Taiwanese tourism sector. Additionally, the data captures specialized industrial niches, such as the Maritime industry in Turkey, iron and steel production in Egypt, and the seafood export industry in Vietnam. The presence of research on "Minority-Owned Business Enterprises" and "State-Owned Companies" further suggests that researchers are categorizing industries not just by their output, but by their ownership structures and social roles. This evolution in the literature suggests that while the core tenets of CSR are globally recognized, their application and theoretical grounding are highly contingent upon the specific industrial and regional nuances of the organizations under study.

The existing body of literature demonstrates a diverse theoretical landscape and a wide geographical scope in the study of CSR. Scholars have employed a variety of foundational frameworks to examine CSR's impact across multiple industries, ranging from the Stakeholder Theory (Chang et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2021) and Social Identity Theory (Aman-Ullah et al., 2025; Jin et al., 2024; L. Liu et al., 2025) to more specialized lenses such as the Resource-Based View (Abd-El-Salam, 2023; Aman-Ullah et al., 2025) and Carroll's CSR Pyramid (Hasan et al., 2023; Ngoc Khuong et al., 2022), and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Framework (Zhu et al., 2014). These methodologies indicate a shift toward examining the "black box" of organizational behavior—moving beyond observing outcomes to understanding the psychological and structural pathways through which corporate initiatives produce specific results.

Table 1: Basic characteristics of the dataset.

Authors	Published year	Journal	Industry	Theory
A Chitra Devi (2024)	2024	Journal of Informatics Education Research	Multinational corporation	NA
Wiastruti (2016)	2016	Heritage, culture and society: research agenda and best practices in the hospitality and tourism industry	Hotel in Indonesia	NA
Stojanović et al. (2020)	2020	Journal of competitiveness	Universities From Southeast Europe	Stakeholder Capitalism
Aman-Ullah et al. (2025)	2025	Journal of global responsibility	Banking in Pakistan	Resource-Based View (RBV); Social Identity Theory.
Nguyen (2021)	2021	The Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business Government	Vietnamese Seafood Exporting Enterprises	Stakeholder Theory

Chang et al. (2021)	2021	Sustainability	Taiwanese Companies That Received The Commonwealth Corporate Citizenship Award From Commonwealth Magazine From 2007 To 2018	Stakeholder Theory
Senbursa and Tehci (2023)	2023	Pomorstvo-scientific journal of maritime research	Turkish Maritime	NA
Abd-El-Salam (2023)	2023	Cogent business & management	The Iron And Steel Industry in Egypt	resource-based theory and social exchange theory
Zhu et al. (2014)	2014	Corporate social responsibility and environmental management	Retailer Company, Software Company, State-Owned Company in China	SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) Framework.
Jin et al. (2024)	2024	Plos one	Power Generation, Infrastructure, And Railway Projects in Pakistan	Social identity theory
(Shafique & Ahmad, 2022)	2022	Journal of public affairs	Banking in Pakistan	stakeholders theory, social contract theory, Friedman's theory, slack resources theory
Dang et al. (2024)	2024	KSCE Journal of Civil Engineering	International Engineering Contracting Enterprises in China	social exchange theory, signaling theory and institutional theory
R. Liu et al. (2025)	2025	Corporate social responsibility and environmental management	Minority- Owned Business Enterprises in China	NA
Thao (2023)	2023	International Journal of Professional Business Review	Enterprises in Dong Nai Vietnam	Classical Motivation Theories.
Hasan et al. (2023)	2023	International Journal of Professional Business Review	Telecom Market (adapted for Iraq).	Carroll's Pyramid
Bui et al. (2024)	2024	Sage Open	Public Sector in Vietnam	Social Identity Theory; Organizational Support Theory.
Kong et al. (2019)	2019	Sustainability	Hotel in China	Social Identity / Commitment Framework.
Jílková (2021)	2021	TEM Journal	Employees In Europe	Human Capital Development.
L. Liu et al. (2025)	2025	Engineering Construction and Architectural Management	Chinese International Engineering Contractors	Social Identity Theory.
Ho My Dung (2021)	2021	Tạp chí khoa học kinh tế [Journal of Economic Studies]	Yazaki Eds Vietnam (FDI, Tra Vinh Branch, Vietnam)	NA
Ngoc Khuong et al. (2022)	2022	Tạp chí Khoa học trường Đại học Cần Thơ [Can Tho University Journal of Science]	Seven Companies (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam)	Carroll's CSR Pyramid

Table 2 provides more information about aims, methodology and limitation of dataset. The primary research objectives across the analyzed literature can be categorized into three distinct levels of inquiry. First, there is a foundational focus on verification of the loyalty link, where studies aim to establish a direct empirical correlation between CSR initiatives and long-term employee retention (Stojanović et al., 2020; Wiastuti, 2016). Second, scholars have moved toward identifying the Mediation Mechanisms, the psychological "black box" that translates corporate actions into internal commitment. This involves

exploring critical bridges such as Organizational Trust, Person-Organization (P-O) Fit, and Job Satisfaction (Hasan et al., 2023; Jin et al., 2024). Finally, recent studies explore Strategic Performance, evaluating how CSR-driven loyalty ultimately serves as a driver for high-level organizational outcomes, including Financial Performance, Reduced Turnover, and Corporate Reputation (Dang et al., 2024; Shafique & Ahmad, 2022).

Regarding Methodology, the research in this topic is overwhelmingly grounded in the quantitative research paradigm, prioritizing empirical validation through

structured data. The most prevalent analytical tools are Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques, specifically Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS and Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) via AMOS, which allow researchers to test complex path models and multi-layered mediation effects. Data collection is predominantly conducted through cross-sectional surveys using Likert scales, with sample sizes

typically ranging from N=110 to N=1000. While quantitative methods dominate, specialized approaches have also emerged, such as the use of qualitative thematic analysis through semi-structured interviews (Abd-El-Salam, 2023) and mixed-methods designs for developing new scales, particularly in the context of minority-owned enterprises (R. Liu et al., 2025).

Table 2. Research Methodology and Results Summary

Authors	Aims	Method	Result	Limitation
A Chitra Devi (2024)	Impact of CSR on commitment, loyalty, and retention in MNCs.	Descriptive research technique, statistical analysis is hypothesis testing analytical tools such as One Way ANOVA, Correlation Test, Multiple Regression Test and Chi Square Test, n=300, survey, SPSS	CSR has a stronger positive effect in collectivist cultures. Lower turnover in collectivist settings compared to individualistic ones.	Not mentioned
Wiastuti (2016)	Determine influence of CSR on employee loyalty in the hotel industry.	Quantitative: Survey (N=110), Likert scale, Multiple Regression (SPSS).	Significant positive impact. CSR Economic has the most influence; CSR Social has the least.	Specific to one hotel (Harris Hotel Tebet).
Stojanović et al. (2020)	Investigate recognition of CSR efforts and their impact on identification/loyalty.	Quantitative: Questionnaire, SEM methodology.	CSR activities significantly influence loyalty. Higher loyalty leads to better company performance/competitiveness.	Needs cross-cultural dimension; only focused on employees (not other stakeholders).
(2025)	Impact of CSR on organizational performance in the banking sector.	Quantitative: Survey (N=384), Smart-PLS v.4.	CSR has a significant positive relationship with performance, fully/partially mediated by motivation and loyalty.	Specific to banking industry in Pakistan (AJK).
Nguyen (2021)	Evaluate CSR impact on performance of seafood exporters in Vietnam.	Quantitative: Survey (N=315), SPSS.	CSR has both direct and indirect positive impacts on performance through business values/loyalty.	industry-specific to engineering and a country focus
Chang et al. (2021)	Explore how employee turnover mediates CSR performance and financial outcome.	Quantitative: Data analysis of Taiwanese firms (OEM focus), Mediation/Proxy analysis.	CSR reduces turnover. Turnover negatively impacts finances. CSR has an indirect benefit on finances via employees.	Sample mostly Taiwanese OEMs (intermediate goods).
Senbursa and Tehci (2023)	Reveal relationship between CSR and image, satisfaction, loyalty, and WOM in maritime.	Quantitative: Survey (N=284), SPSS/AMOS, Structural Equation Model (SEM).	Positive relationship among all variables. CSR has a very high effect on Corporate Image and Satisfaction.	Specific to office workers in one Turkish ship-owner company.
Abd-El-Salam (2023)	Discover factors affecting loyalty via service quality and management commitment.	Qualitative: Semi-structured interviews (N=15), Thematic Analysis.	Identified 5 main themes; CSR includes environmental impact, energy reduction, and govt. projects.	Single company study (EZDK Steel, Egypt).
Zhu et al. (2014)	Test framework modeling satisfaction as both mediator and moderator for CSR & Loyalty.	Quantitative: Survey (N=438).	Purely money/env efforts can be detrimental to loyalty without satisfaction of "personal treatment."	Exploratory analysis; specific to four Chinese companies.
Jin et al. (2024)	Impact of CSR on loyalty via P-O fit and employee trust.	Quantitative: Survey (N=338), SmartPLS-3.	CSR significantly influences loyalty. P-O Fit and Trust partially mediate this relationship.	Cross-sectional data; focused on Pakistan CPEC projects.
Shafique and Ahmad (2022)	Influence of CSR on bank financial performance through serial mediation.	Quantitative: Cluster Sampling, SEM (SPSS AMOS).	CSR → Satisfaction → Loyalty → Financial Performance. Established a clear serial mediation chain.	Cross-sectional; focused on banking in Punjab, Pakistan.
Dang et al. (2024)	Examine CSR impact on financial performance in engineering contracting (IECEs).	Quantitative: Survey (N=355), PLS-SEM.	CSR positively affects finances. Loyalty and Reputation are partial mediators. Customer satisfaction was NOT a significant mediator.	industry-specific to engineering and a country focus
R. Liu et al. (2025)	Examine how CSR in Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (MBEs) affects employees.	Mixed Methods: Scale development (Study 1) & Serial Mediation (Study 2).	Minority-specific CSR has a stronger influence on loyalty than general CSR due to cultural resonance.	Not mentioned

Authors	Aims	Method	Result	Limitation
Thao (2023)	Assess factors affecting motivation and loyalty in Dong Nai province, Vietnam.	Quantitative: Interviews (N=1000), SPSS 20, AMOS (EFA/CFA/SEM).	CSR and Corp Culture are key drivers of long-term loyalty and motivation in the Dong Nai region.	Data collected June-Dec 2022; specific to one Vietnamese province.
Hasan et al. (2023)	Investigate the role of trust in the CSR-Employee outcome relationship in Iraq.	Quantitative: Survey (N=359), PLS-SEM (Bootstrapping).	CSR has a "subtle yet noteworthy" effect on loyalty. Trust is a robust mediator.	Context-specific (Iraq telecom); cross-sectional.
Bui et al. (2024)	Develop a framework for employee loyalty in the Vietnamese Public Sector.	Quantitative: Framework development.	CSR and POS positively impact identification and well-being. Both mediate loyalty. POS did not directly impact loyalty.	Context is limited to the public sector in Vietnam.
Kong et al. (2019)	Explore CSR's influence on identification and commitment for highly educated staff.	Quantitative: Survey (N=836), AMOS 21.0 (SEM).	All 5 CSR dimensions (Environment, Charity, etc.) impact identity. Identity mediates the CSR-Loyalty link.	Convenience sampling; did not test all three dimensions of Org Commitment separately.
Jilková (2021)	Examine the role of human capital/education in supporting CSR and sustainable strategy.	Quantitative: Online survey (pre and during COVID-19).	Perceptions of benefits shifted; flexible work is now essential. Education investment is largely neglected.	Not industry-specific; specific to the crisis period.
L. Liu et al. (2025)	Explore motivations for employees to engage in CSR endeavors.	Quantitative: Survey (N=328), Multiple Regression.	Reputation influences participation via loyalty. Rights and CSR strategies have a direct effect.	Not international; limited time horizon (cross-sectional); only surveyed managers/employees.
Ho My Dung (2021)	An investigation into the relationship between CSR initiatives, employee satisfaction, and employee loyalty at Yazaki Eds Vietnam.	Quantitative: EFA/CFA/SEM (N=310)	CSR initiatives oriented toward customers, employees, and the environment exert a positive influence on both satisfaction and loyalty.	Not mentioned
Ngoc Khuong et al. (2022)	The impact of CSR on employee satisfaction and loyalty in Ho Chi Minh City enterprises	Quantitative: PLS-SEM (N=350)	CSR Environmental, economic, and philanthropic dimensions are identified as the strongest predictors of employee loyalty.	Not mentioned

4. TOPIC ANALYSIS

The synthesized findings from current research reveal a multi-dimensional relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and employee loyalty, characterized by four primary thematic areas.

First, a foundational "Internal-First" hierarchy emerges as a critical prerequisite for employee loyalty. While environmental CSR is highly regarded within the Vietnamese context (Ho My Dung, 2021; Ngoc Khuong et al., 2022), economic CSR, specifically fair compensation and financial stability, functions as a fundamental factor. Research by (Zhu et al., 2014) underscores that external philanthropic efforts are insufficient to compensate for poor "personal treatment" or substandard internal labor conditions, suggesting that loyalty is built from the inside out.

Second, the study found the primary mediation mechanism between corporate action and employee behavior. Loyalty is rarely a direct response to CSR initiatives; rather, it is mediated by psychological

states grounded in Social Identity Theory and Social Exchange Theory. In the former, employees choose to remain with a firm because its ethical reputation allows them to define their own identities through the organization's prestige. In the latter, CSR initiatives trigger a sense of reciprocity, where employees feel a social obligation to return the firm's ethical behavior with increased loyalty and dedication (Jin et al., 2024; Hasan et al., 2023).

Third, the efficacy of these initiatives is heavily dictated by "Cultural and Contextual Sensitivity." A Chitra Devi (2024) demonstrate that CSR exerts a significantly more profound impact in collectivist cultures, such as Vietnam and China, where social harmony, group belonging, and organizational "face" are central to the employee experience. This cultural resonance is further refined in minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), where minority-specific CSR creates a unique connection with employees that generic global strategies cannot achieve (R. Liu et al., 2025).

Finally, these dynamics culminate in a strategic "Profit-Loyalty Chain." Recent empirical evidence from the 2021–2025 period confirms a serial mediation effect: CSR activities lead to increased job satisfaction, which fosters enhanced loyalty, subsequently reducing turnover costs and driving overall financial performance (Dang et al., 2024; Shafique & Ahmad, 2022). This evidence reframes CSR not as an elective or charitable expense, but as a strategic investment in human capital that produces measurable competitive advantages.

5. DISCUSSION

This research aims to explore the content of research mentioning CSR and employee loyalty. By analyzing the research papers from Semantic Scholar and Web of Science for English studies and Google Scholar for Vietnamese studies. This study reveals that CSR initiatives positively influence employee loyalty within organizations. The synthesized findings reveal a multi-dimensional relationship characterized by four primary thematic areas, including 1) Employee loyalty begins with an "internal-first" hierarchy, 2) CSR initiatives do not drive loyalty directly but rather through psychological mechanisms, 3) The effectiveness of CSR is significantly amplified in collectivist cultures like Vietnam and within minority-owned enterprises, and 4) CSR as a strategic human capital investment that drives financial performance by increasing employee loyalty

The findings confirm that loyalty is rarely a direct response to corporate action; rather, it is mediated by states grounded in Social Identity Theory, where employees define their identity through the firm's prestige, and Social Exchange Theory, where CSR triggers a sense of reciprocity and social obligation (Hasan et al., 2023; Jin et al., 2024). When employees perceive a commitment to sustainability, it fosters pride and purpose, strengthening their emotional connection (Malik, 2024). Additionally, participation in CSR programs develops soft skills such as leadership and empathy (Dempsey-Brench & Shantz, 2022), while an ethical corporate culture encourages loyalty toward firms demonstrating integrity (Pasricha et al., 2018).

These dynamics culminate in a strategic "Profit-Loyalty Chain." Empirical evidence from 2021–2025 confirms a serial mediation effect: CSR activities lead to increased satisfaction, which fosters loyalty, subsequently reducing turnover costs and driving overall financial performance (Shafique & Ahmad, 2022; Dang et al., 2024). This reframes CSR as a strategic investment in human capital. Importantly, the positive

impact of CSR on employee loyalty also translates into tangible benefits for the organization. A more engaged and loyal workforce leads to higher productivity, lower turnover rates, and improved overall performance. Additionally, employees who feel valued and fulfilled in their roles are more likely to become brand ambassadors, positively influencing the organization's external reputation and attracting top talent.

Moreover, the study underscores the importance of building organizational identity and commitment through CSR initiatives. By shaping employees' perceptions, values, and alignment with organizational goals and missions, managers can foster a sense of belonging and loyalty among employees. Recognizing the broader societal and organizational implications of CSR initiatives, including their impact on social responsibility and legitimacy, allows managers to design and implement initiatives that resonate with internal and external stakeholders, ultimately enhancing employee loyalty and organizational success.

This study prioritized empirical validation using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), specifically PLS-SEM (SmartPLS) and CB-SEM (AMOS). Consequently, future research should adopt qualitative methodologies to explore emerging dimensions of the relationship between CSR and employee loyalty that quantitative data may not fully capture.

From a managerial perspective, the study offers practical insights into leveraging CSR initiatives to enhance employee loyalty and satisfaction. Firstly, before launching high-profile environmental or philanthropic campaigns, ensure that internal CSR—such as fair compensation, health support (especially post-COVID-19), and workplace safety—is robust. Loyalty cannot be "bought" with external charity if internal conditions are substandard. Secondly, designing CSR programs that allow employees to participate actively. This transforms CSR from a corporate announcement into a personal experience, allowing employees to derive a sense of prestige and "face" from their association with the firm. Finally, utilizing the "Profit-Loyalty Chain" logic to justify CSR budgets. By tracking metrics like employee satisfaction and turnover rates alongside CSR spending, managers can demonstrate the tangible ROI of ethical practices.

This study has some limitations. First, the search strategy was limited to English and Vietnamese, potentially omitting research in other languages. Second, while the use of Scopus, WOS, Semantic Scholar, and Google Scholar reflects the field's development, it may not be exhaustive. Finally, future research should continue to delve into the

"black box" of psychological mechanisms to further refine these findings.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study underscores the multifaceted nature of CSR's influence on

employee outcomes, highlighting the need for researchers and managers to adopt a multi-dimensional theoretical approach. By doing so, organizations can effectively leverage CSR initiatives to enhance employee loyalty and drive long-term organizational success.

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