A Comprehensive Review: Corporate social responsibility, government and civil society

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A r t i c l e

To cite this article (APA Style):

Nazaruddin Ali Basyah. (2024). The article title is sentence case style. Jurnal Mimbar. 40(1), 37-43. doi.org/10.29313/mimbar.v40i1. 2621`

A b s t r a c t

This article explores the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the roles played by governments and civil society in shaping and encouraging CSR. The article begins by examining how CSR is related to specific patterns of business–government–civil society relations. Two basic models are explored: the dichotomous view that suggests CSR and government are mutually exclusive, and the view that CSR is the relationship between market actors and governments. The article also investigates recent changes in business–government–civil society relations, which have contributed to the growth and development of CSR. Finally, the article examines the ways in which governments have promoted CSR and how responsible public and private policies are interconnected. The article highlights the fact that the relationship between business, government, and civil society has a significant impact on the scope and nature of CSR.

Keywords: : Comprehensive; review; corporate social responsibility; government; civil society.

Introduction

The article also explores recent changes in business–government–civil society relations, which have contributed to the growth and development of CSR. One of the key changes is the increasing importance of civil society in shaping CSR. Civil society organizations, such as NGOs and community groups, have played a significant role in advocating for responsible business practices. For example, government policies that promote sustainable development can encourage businesses to adopt sustainable practices. In conclusion, the article highlights the importance of considering the relationship between business, government, and civil society in shaping and encouraging CSR. The article suggests that government policies can play a crucial role in encouraging responsible business practices and that responsible public policies are interconnected with responsible private policies.

Research Method

In order to accomplish the research goals, a pragmatic approach (Dewey, 1948) and an abductive approach were employed. The documentary analysis strategy was conducted using a Systematic Literature Review with methods recommended by the literature for the Administration field (Paul and Criado 2020). The study was conducted using scientific databases, Scopus and Web of Science (WoS), adhering to the Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRIS) for Systematic Reviews and Meta Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The exclusion criteria for case studies, qualitative research, and studies with ambiguous data—such as those lacking comparison groups—were underlined.

During the screening process, the preliminary analyses in the databases that had previously been offered were removed. The preceding criteria were adhered to in later analyses, along with the potential significance for psychiatrists. Subsequently, the studies' analysis was conducted after a qualitative evaluation about the degree to which the selected scales can be beneficial for the implementation of corporate social responsibility, government policy, and civil society initiatives. The idea of interdisciplinarity, or naturally related knowledge, is one way to view the data. The studies enable the sharing of a vast amount of knowledge and offer epistemic access to numerous topics. Potential biases in the study are highlighted by the dearth of precise quantitative data, which leaves qualitative data on the outcomes up for interpretation. A review of the literature's reporting bias indicates that the qualitative data offered is open to interpretation by researchers, casting doubt on the papers' claims to offer a solid, quantitative understanding of infantilization in government policy, civil society, and corporate social responsibility.

Results & Discussion
Corporate Social Responsibility
Definitions of Internal Corporate Social Responsibility

ICSR, or Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility, is a concept that refers to the integration of social responsibility practices into a company's business operations. These practices aim to enhance the well-being of employees, the environment, and society as a whole, while also improving the company's bottom line. (Hernández-Murillo & Martinek, 2009) The passage above highlights some of the policies and initiatives that can be implemented by companies to promote ICSR. One of the key elements of ICSR is creating a physical workplace environment that is safe and healthy for employees. This includes policies and guidelines that can prevent health and safety issues, such as providing adequate lighting, ventilation, and ergonomic workstations.

Another important aspect of ICSR is empowering employees by involving them in decision-making and evaluation processes. This can increase their sense of ownership and commitment to the company's goals. Additionally, providing flexible work arrangements, such as the option to work from home or adjust working hours, can help employees maintain a good work-life balance. The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of ICSR and has included it as part of their practices for employees. This includes focusing on workplace environment, employees, and governance. Finally, the passage emphasizes the need to focus on the benefits that employees are looking for, such as skills and professional development, workplace diversity, and a good working environment. By meeting these needs, companies can motivate employees to increase their engagement and commitment to the organization (Ranjan and Yadav 2018).

The article highlights the high ranking of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on research agendas and in theoretical and managerial discussions. Many argue that doing good is not only the right thing to do but also leads to doing better. This has led to an increasing emphasis on CSR as a necessary component of organizational roles in society and the application of social and ethical standards to businesses. While many organizations have demonstrated their commitment to CSR, some struggle in their efforts (McWilliams et al. 2006). The article suggests that the importance of CSR has moved from ideology to reality, and organizations are expected to define their roles in society and apply social and ethical standards to their businesses. However, the article also acknowledges that implementing CSR can be challenging for organizations. This may be due to a lack of resources, knowledge, or support from stakeholders (Kotler and Lee 2005). Overall, the article emphasizes the importance of CSR and its increasing relevance to organizations. It highlights the challenges that organizations face in implementing CSR and suggests that more research is needed to understand the factors that facilitate or hinder the adoption of CSR practices (Lindgreen et al. 2009).

The passage highlights the complex nature of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and how it has evolved over time, influenced by various theories such as agency theory, institutional theory, resource-based view of the firm, stakeholder theory, stewardship theory, and the theory of the firm.

However, despite the many conceptualizations of CSR, the best ones are still in their early stages, and it is difficult for practitioners to apply them in practice. This lack of clarity can hinder managers' understanding of CSR and impede further theoretical development in the field (Windsor 2006). In summary, the passage suggests that the development of CSR has been influenced by multiple theories, resulting in various conceptualizations of the concept. However, these conceptualizations are still in their early stages, and it is challenging for practitioners to apply them in practice. This lack of clarity could hinder managers' understanding of CSR and impede further theoretical development (Snider et al. 2003).

The passage suggests that there are various reasons why companies choose to behave more responsibly, even in the absence of legal requirements. These reasons can be strategic, defensive, or altruistic. Corporate interest in CSR is driven by the belief that it can be good for business. This is based on the idea that integrating non-economic factors into the business creates a competitive advantage, differentiates the organization from competitors, builds a better image and reputation, and creates consumer goodwill and positive employee attitudes and behavior. Companies realize that implementing CSR programs can create a "win-win" scenario for both the organization and its community (Kotler and Lee, 2005). In summary, the passage highlights the business benefits of CSR, including creating a competitive advantage, building a better image and reputation, and fostering positive employee attitudes and behavior. Companies recognize that implementing CSR programs can be a "win-win" for both the organization and its community, and this belief drives corporate interest in CSR (Brammer et al. 2007).

Relationship Between CSR, Government and Civil Society

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) suggests that private companies can play an important role in promoting development, particularly through partnerships with government and civil society groups. However, a critical view of CSR highlights the need to consider the underlying motivations of businesses that embrace the concept. Accommodation and legitimisation are two such motivations. Accommodation refers to implementing cosmetic changes to business practices to avoid more substantial changes, while legitimisation involves businesses using their influence to shape discourse and limit the scope of questions that can be asked.

Despite these concerns, the article argues that CSR can provide significant benefits for civil society groups. These benefits include increased power and rights, leading to better negotiating positions. However, achieving these benefits requires active engagement from non-governmental organisations and others to shape the CSR debates and insist on corporate accountability. Finally, the article suggests that partnerships between businesses and civil society groups can be beneficial, but they require a critical approach. This critical cooperation involves using power, rights, and interest-based negotiation strategically to achieve desired outcomes. Overall, the article highlights the potential benefits of CSR but emphasises the importance of maintaining a critical perspective and promoting corporate accountability.

Based on the studies mentioned, it appears that job satisfaction can play a crucial role in connecting ICSR practices and employee engagement. Hansen, Dunford, Boss, and Angermeier (2011) suggested that trust is a partial mediator between ICSR and engagement in terms of employee turnover. This study predicts that job satisfaction, as another potential variable, can also affect the relationship between ICSR practices and employee engagement, and therefore includes it as a mediating variable. Additionally, previous studies have shown a positive relationship between ICSR practices and job satisfaction (Chan & Mohd Hasan, 2019, Hendar, 2023) as well as between job satisfaction and employee engagement (Tepayakul & Rinthaisong, 2018). Based on these findings, this study suggests that positive organizational activities related to ICSR practices can increase job satisfaction among employees, which in turn can have a positive impact on employee engagement.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept that reflects the idea that businesses have a responsibility to act ethically and contribute to the well-being of society beyond their economic interests. The expectations of corporate behavior from society and stakeholders are critical factors in defining and implementing CSR initiatives (Whetten et al. 2002). Stakeholder theory suggests that businesses operate within networks of stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, governments, and communities, among others. These stakeholders have different expectations and demands that can conflict with each other and with the organization's interests. CSR involves understanding and responding to these expectations and demands, as well as engaging in a dialogue with stakeholders to identify and address their concerns.

However, sometimes organizations may try to change stakeholders' expectations by providing them with information, education, or incentives. For instance, a company may attempt to educate its

customers about the benefits of using eco-friendly products, leading to a change in their expectations of the company's environmental practices. Similarly, a company may provide training to its suppliers to improve their working conditions and ethical standards, leading to a change in the expectations of these stakeholders. In conclusion, CSR is about meeting the societal expectations of corporate behavior while operating within networks of stakeholders with potentially conflicting demands. However, organizations may also attempt to change stakeholders' expectations by engaging them in a dialogue, providing information and education, or offering incentives. Ultimately, the success of CSR initiatives depends on the ability of organizations to navigate these stakeholder networks and to balance their interests and demands.

The successful implementation of CSR requires building strong relationships with stakeholders through formal and informal dialogues and engagement practices. Business leaders must address the moral complexities that arise from the competing demands of various stakeholders and build enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with them. Stakeholder engagement is an essential aspect of CSR, as it involves actively involving stakeholders in decision-making processes and seeking their input and feedback. However, the way in which organizations choose to manage their stakeholder relationships can vary widely, and there can be inconsistencies, equivocalness, and practical implications related to the role of stakeholder engagement in CSR that still require synthesis and resolution.

Effective stakeholder engagement can take various forms and be based on different theoretical perspectives. For example, some organizations may adopt a transactional approach, focusing on identifying and addressing specific stakeholder needs or concerns to enhance their reputation and legitimacy (Andriof and Waddock 2002). Others may adopt a relational approach, emphasizing the importance of building long-term, trust-based relationships with stakeholders that can lead to collaborative problem-solving and mutual value creation. In conclusion, to achieve the successful implementation of CSR, organizations must actively engage with their stakeholders, build strong relationships with them, and address the moral complexities that arise from competing stakeholder demands. The way in which organizations choose to manage their stakeholder relationships can vary widely, and there is a need for synthesis and resolution to address any inconsistencies or equivocalness related to the role of stakeholder engagement in CSR.

This includes examining the benefits and challenges of implementing CSR initiatives, how CSR can affect a company's reputation and brand image, and how CSR can impact a company's financial performance and competitive advantage. Overall, understanding the strategic implications of CSR is critical for firms as they seek to balance their social and environmental responsibilities with their financial goals and objectives. There is a growing interest among managers in understanding the antecedents and consequences of CSR, particularly for executives at multi-national, multi-divisional companies. These corporate leaders recognize that norms and standards of CSR, as well as stakeholder demands and regulatory frameworks, can vary significantly across different nations, regions, and lines of business.

Moreover, divisional managers face constant pressure from various stakeholders, including employees, suppliers, community groups, NGOs, and government, to increase their involvement in CSR. This pressure can stem from a desire to enhance the company's reputation, attract and retain employees, increase customer loyalty, and comply with regulatory requirements. To address these challenges, companies must develop effective CSR strategies that align with their core values and business objectives, while also taking into account the diverse needs and expectations of stakeholders across different contexts. This involves engaging in stakeholder dialogue, implementing CSR initiatives that are relevant and meaningful to stakeholders, and measuring and reporting on the impact of these initiatives. Ultimately, understanding the antecedents and consequences of CSR is crucial for companies seeking to build sustainable businesses that balance social, environmental, and financial considerations.

Implications for civil society and government

The statement suggests that although Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an important aspect of contemporary business, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical support for its implementation and success criteria (Lindgreen et al. 2009). Existing literature on CSR orientation within organizations has only recently started to focus on the practical aspects of its development. Furthermore, the statement suggests that the available models and guidelines for managers to implement CSR lack clarity, and there is a need for a dynamic perspective to understand the complex nature of CSR implementation and its outcomes. Overall, the statement highlights the need for more

research and practical guidance for organizations to effectively implement CSR and measure its success.

The statement suggests that the existing models and suggestions for managers to implement CSR are unclear, and the research on developing and implementing a CSR orientation is limited in scope. Some studies have focused on specific aspects and dimensions of CSR, such as Maignan et al. (2006) and Matten et al. (2003), Rosdiana, and Mulyani, (2023).. Furthermore, there is a lack of consensus on the approach to CSR implementation. While some authors argue that incremental or transformational organizational change processes can lead to CSR implementation, others suggest that radical and transformational approaches are necessary. According to (Hart and Milstein, 1999), such approaches require managers to fundamentally rethink their views about strategy, technology, and markets. Overall, the statement highlights the need for further research and clarity on the best approach for managers to implement CSR effectively and the factors that contribute to its success.

The statement suggests that there is a lack of resolution on how to integrate and develop CSR within an organization's culture and strategy, often referred to as "corporate DNA." This lack of clarity underscores the need for a systematic and interdisciplinary literature review that can shed light on the best models for CSR implementation and change. A literature review can help synthesize existing research and provide insights into the most effective approaches for implementing CSR within an organization. By examining the literature from multiple disciplines, such as management, organizational behavior, and sustainability, a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of CSR implementation and change can be developed. Overall, the statement emphasizes the need for a comprehensive literature review that can help clarify the best models and approaches for integrating CSR into an organization's culture and strategy. This will help organizations better understand the challenges and opportunities associated with CSR implementation and ultimately enhance their ability to achieve sustainable business practices.

There are several strategies that companies can use to ensure that their CSR efforts go beyond glossy reports and public relations and truly contribute to social and environmental performance. One key approach is to focus on measurement and evaluation of CSR initiatives. Companies should establish tangible standards and targets for their CSR efforts and regularly track progress towards these goals. This can help to ensure that CSR initiatives are focused on achieving measurable outcomes rather than just generating positive PR. It is also important to ensure that these standards and targets are meaningful and relevant to the specific social and environmental issues that the company is addressing.

In addition to setting clear standards and targets, companies should engage in joint monitoring arrangements with industry peers, civil society organizations, and government agencies. This can help to ensure that CSR efforts are held accountable and are contributing to meaningful social and environmental outcomes. By working together with external stakeholders, companies can also benefit from diverse perspectives and expertise, which can help to improve the effectiveness and impact of their CSR initiatives. Finally, companies should be transparent about their CSR efforts and report on their progress towards achieving their goals. This can include regular reporting on key performance indicators and metrics, as well as sharing lessons learned and best practices with other companies and stakeholders. By doing so, companies can build trust and credibility with their stakeholders and demonstrate their commitment to making a positive impact on society and the environment.

It is true that the CSR agenda is increasingly being driven by the business sector, and there is a risk that CSR initiatives may become too closely aligned with business interests such as decreased regulation. This underscores the importance of NGOs and labor organizations taking an active role in shaping the CSR agenda and pushing their own priorities and perspectives. To effectively seize the initiative, NGOs and labor organizations should focus on developing their own agenda for CSR that reflects their specific priorities and interests. This may include advocating for stronger regulations and standards to promote social and environmental responsibility, as well as ensuring that the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities are represented in CSR initiatives.

To build support for their agenda, NGOs and labor organizations should engage in strategic partnerships and coalitions with other stakeholders, including businesses, government agencies, and civil society organizations. By working collaboratively, NGOs and labor organizations can amplify their voice and leverage their collective expertise and resources to influence the CSR agenda. It is also important for NGOs and labor organizations to promote greater transparency and accountability in CSR initiatives. This can involve advocating for stronger reporting and monitoring requirements, as well as ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to hold businesses accountable for their CSR commitments. Overall, by taking an active role in shaping the CSR agenda and pushing their own interests and perspectives, NGOs and labor organizations can help to ensure that CSR initiatives are

truly aligned with the principles of sustainable development and are serving the needs and interests of all stakeholders, including marginalized communities and the environment.

While companies may garner great public relations value from "best practice" examples of CSR, it is important for civil society and government to assess the bigger picture of how industry is contributing to sustainable development. This includes placing individual cases into a broader framework that considers the overall impact of corporate activities on social, environmental, and economic sustainability. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was a prominent showcase opportunity for CSR initiatives, but it is important to go beyond individual examples and assess the overall contribution of the private sector to sustainable development. This can involve evaluating the extent to which CSR initiatives are aligned with the broader goals of sustainable development, such as reducing poverty and inequality, protecting the environment, and promoting economic growth.

In addition to assessing the impact of South African companies on sustainable development, it is also important to consider their impact in other parts of Africa. This can involve evaluating the extent to which companies are respecting human rights, contributing to local development, and minimizing negative environmental impacts in other African countries where they operate. To assess the bigger picture of how industry is contributing to sustainable development, civil society and government can use a range of tools and approaches, such as sustainability reporting, social impact assessments, and stakeholder engagement processes. By taking a comprehensive and critical approach to evaluating the impact of corporate activities on sustainable development, civil society and government can ensure that the private sector is held accountable for its social and environmental responsibilities and that CSR initiatives are contributing to meaningful and lasting change.

One of the main lessons regarding the CSR agenda is that civil society and government need to engage directly with businesses to ensure that CSR initiatives are effective and complementary to regulations, without compromising the right to disagree, campaign, or litigate. This means engaging with businesses in a collaborative and constructive manner, rather than resorting to opposition or confrontational politics. To effectively engage with businesses on the CSR agenda, civil society and government should focus on building relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and shared values. This can involve engaging with businesses through dialogue, consultation, and partnership building, and seeking to understand their perspectives and priorities. By working collaboratively with businesses, civil society and government can help to ensure that CSR initiatives complement regulations and do not diminish civil society rights.

At the same time, civil society and government should maintain their independence and continue to advocate for stronger regulations and standards to promote social and environmental responsibility. They should also ensure that there are mechanisms in place to hold businesses accountable for their CSR commitments and to protect the rights of civil society. Overall, engaging with businesses on the CSR agenda in a collaborative and constructive manner can help to promote meaningful and lasting change. By working together, civil society, government, and businesses can help to ensure that CSR initiatives are effective, complementary to regulations, and contribute to sustainable development while protecting the rights of civil society.

Conclusions

In recent years, there has been increased attention to the strategic implications of corporate social responsibility (CSR) by scholars and managers. CSR refers to situations where a firm goes beyond legal compliance and engages in actions that promote social good, beyond the interests of the firm. However, there are multiple interpretations of CSR, and it can be challenging to develop a clear definition and measure its impact. CSR activities can include incorporating social characteristics into products, adopting progressive human resource management practices, achieving higher levels of environmental performance, and advancing community goals. In addition, researchers are now examining the strategic role of CSR in organizations, moving beyond just defining and identifying CSR activities. Indeed, this article has provided a critical view of the evolving CSR agenda, highlighting some of the possible implicit motivations from a business perspective, such as accommodation and legitimization. These motivations suggest that CSR initiatives may be driven more by business interests than by genuine concern for social and environmental responsibility. To counterbalance these potential biases, civil society groups need to maintain a critical and vigilant approach to the CSR agenda. This means not just monitoring corporate behavior and holding businesses accountable for their actions, but also actively engaging in the shaping of the CSR discourse itself. Civil society groups can play a key role in shaping the CSR agenda by advocating for more robust standards, reporting requirements, and regulatory frameworks. They can also help to ensure that CSR initiatives

are aligned with broader social and environmental goals, and that they do not undermine civil society rights or serve as a substitute for stronger regulation. In addition to these more critical roles, civil society groups can also play a more constructive role in supporting businesses that are genuinely committed to social and environmental responsibility. They can do this by providing guidance, expertise, and feedback on CSR initiatives, and by recognizing and promoting best practices. Overall, the critical view presented in this article underscores the importance of maintaining a healthy skepticism of the CSR agenda and of the motivations behind corporate social responsibility. At the same time, it highlights the critical role that civil society groups can play in shaping the CSR discourse and promoting more responsible business practices.

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