

Spirituality and Resilience Effects on Employee Awareness and Engagement in CSR: An Overview and Research Agenda

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ABSTRACT

As an individual, employee is the main organisation stakeholder who is also recognised as an asset, internal customer and the organisation representative. Their participation and proactive support is crucial to organisation's CSR practices. Their CSR awareness is a process of observation; retention and imitation of the organisational CSR practices into the motivation to demonstrate it as their personal engagement in CSR practices. However, a little is known about the linkage between employee CSR awareness and their engagement in CSR as earlier researches are more focus on organisation CSR awareness and its influence on employee engagement. This research hypothesizes the significant underlying influence of individual spirituality and resilience that interplays as mediator and moderator to the relationship between individual awareness and engagement in CSR.

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1. Introduction

In the last few decades, studies in corporate social responsibility (CSR) are more focused on the effects of CSR initiatives towards the organisation outcomes [1]. However, CSR studies in the millennia have emerged to emphasise on the individual outcomes including the effects of CSR initiatives towards individual employee especially their engagement in CSR initiatives [2]. Hence, this scenario extends the need to debate the CSR and employee engagement in the field of human resource management [3].

According to Aguinis and Glavas [1], employees played a significant role to link the business and society. Thus, they are perceived to be more engage in CSR when they work in the organisation with strong CSR strategies. In reality, organisations are actually engaging in the CSR initiatives via their employees [4]; the ones who play an important role as organisation's CSR ambassador [5-7] to accomplish the organisations' economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropy functions in the society [8].

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Employees are the organisation's asset [47]; they are also one of the internal stakeholders with specific interest in organisation internal CSR implementation [9-13]. Sometimes, they are standing as one of the organisation external stakeholders; each time the employees use their organisation's products or services they become the customers. They are also members of society who are affected by organisations' CSR policies, initiatives and activities too [12]. Instead of playing a key role in organisation CSR accomplishment, they are also a person or corporate citizen with various obligations towards the society at large.

Mirvis [33] claimed that employees' unconditional support and their engagement in organisation CSR activities act as the foundation for employees to inculcate their individual engagement in CSR. This cognitive process [50] will encourage individual employees to perform individual volunteering job without expecting anything in return [46]. Therefore, employees who attach themselves in their workplace CSR initiatives unconsciously develop their interest to willingly involve or engage in social activities after their working hours outside their workplace.

Thus, this research given the rationale to Bandura's social learning theory [15,50] to suggest that when employees involve in organisational CSR practices they tend to observe, memorise and replicate by modelling the CSR behaviour on behalf of the organisation. These processes inculcate their motivation to demonstrate the individual CSR behaviours through their individual CSR engagement in the society. The learning process forms individual CSR awareness to CSR behaviour that is influenced by their CSR environmental factors and psychological factors [16]. This research also articulates Kahn's employee engagement theory [45] to explain the situation of employees' psychological or emotional acceptance when they are physically present to perform and experience in the organisation CSR initiatives. Consequently, build up their focus, awareness and readiness to willingly engage in their own CSR initiatives i.e. individual CSR engagement in their society.

In the recent decade, researchers in the western countries shifted to study the individual CSR level outcomes [1] and have given more attention on CSR empirical findings [50]. In Malaysia, more empirical CSR studies focus on the study of organisational level outcomes especially CSR disclosure to fulfil the corporate governance requirements. However, less attention was given to study the employee outcomes including employee CSR awareness or perception [23,42,43] and almost none revealing the employee CSR engagement. Furthermore, mixed and inconclusive findings on the relationship between employee CSR awareness and their engagement in CSR [24,25,42,43] highlighted the need for more empirical studies of these constructs.

Additionally, the literature review on individual CSR studies in Malaysia reveals that earlier studies put a little attention on investigating the underlying effects of mediators and moderators in CSR studies. However, no research has been reported on the underlying effects of individual spiritual quotient as the mediator and individual resilience as the moderator in the relationship between employees' CSR awareness and their engagement in CSR. Hence, this study posit the link between individual CSR awareness [29,50] and the underlying mechanisms of whenever employees understanding and realising the reason of their existence i.e. the state of mind that nurtures their insight towards values, meaning and purpose of life [17]. Later this mental state inculcates employees' spirituality quotient [18,19] and resilience [20,21] to embrace and engage in CSR as part of their way of life [22].

In this empirical study, employee awareness of CSR is the predictor that guides individual employee reactions, knowledge, observation, perception and practice towards the right CSR behaviour i.e. individual CSR engagement. Besides, this study interplays the mediating influence of individual spiritual quotient and moderating effects of individual resilience as to predict the strength of relationship between the predictor and outcome constructs i.e. employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a voluntarily action to contribute towards a better society and environment by the organisations' or individuals' contributors through investment of profit to people and planet which built on pyramid model of economic, legal, ethical and discretionary or corporate philanthropy or business giving responsibilities [8, 26-28]. Hence, the CSR initiatives consist of a set of policies and practices employed by the business entity. It is important to assure the stakeholders including owners, society and employees, are well protected by the organisation CSR strategies and operational activities [28]. Whereas, individual employee CSR is an individual determination to practise either a helping behaviour at his or her workplace or doing charity and humanity aids in the community.

2.2 Employee CSR Awareness

Employee CSR awareness can be shaped through human resource management (HRM) activities [49] that is understood as internal CSR [51] in the organisation. For instance, appropriate working hours, good compensation, better health care coverage, job satisfaction are amongst the HRM activities reported as CSR initiatives [48,49]. In addition, training programmes are including as the most popular HRM activities that help to develop employee awareness towards CSR culture that supports the employee engagement in CSR [29].

As the internal stakeholders, employees accumulate and establish their own perceptions and awareness in CSR over their exposure in the implementation of organisational internal and external CSR initiatives. The internal CSR are the HR initiatives [49] that hold employees interest and benefit themselves such as training and education, health and safety, work life balance, workplace diversity and human rights [30]. Whereas, external CSR by the organisation holds the employees' interest to recognise organisation involvement in community and regional development, philanthropy and sponsorship, cross-sector social collaborations and partnerships, or promotion and development of social and environmental practices in the society [31]. All of these exposures are employees CSR experience [3] which repeatedly become the reinforcement factors to bond between the employees and their organisation [31]; seem like significant to generate employee awareness towards CSR. Whenever employees' preference to accept, support and contribute in the organisation's CSR initiatives; indicates their acceptance to the internal CSR. In addition, their involvement in external CSR is more likely to raise their awareness of CSR. This is supported by the statement of Raub and Blunschi [32] who postulated that, employees' awareness of CSR activities is positively related to individual engagement in helping others i.e. individual CSR initiative at workplace; in which this study has classified as employee CSR engagement.

Therefore, employee awareness is the output of employee's active participation in organisational CSR that can stimulate individual involvement or engagement in CSR [32]. This kind of employee CSR awareness is a knowledge accumulation endeavour as a result of the individual learning process [15] to observe, imitate and nonstop practising the CSR initiatives within their occupation requirements. Thus, this research operationally defines employee CSR awareness as part of the individual learning process [15] each and every time employees develop their understanding i.e. knowledge, perception, mindfulness or reaction towards CSR [50] via the process of observation, imitation and direct experience in CSR initiatives which they perform on behalf of the organisation.

2.3 Employee CSR Engagement

Nowadays, Malaysian organisations [52] keep on organising numbers of initiative to engage the employees in CSR by encouraging them to involve in corporate volunteering, participate in disaster relief, school education programmes and go-green business initiatives. According to Mirvis [33], employee engagement in CSR is perceived to produce social and organisational values especially when they are willing to do volunteer services via their job functions, relationships with society, organisational products and services. The significant relationship between CSR and employee engagement, are including the CSR impact on employee’s motivation, identity, and individual sense of meaning and purpose [33] to engage in individual social responsibility [34]. Accordingly, the intention of this research is to extend Kahn’s [45] employee engagement theory; by defining employee engagement in CSR as the individual psychological condition that develops feeling of meaningfulness when they participate in organisational CSR initiatives, which generate individual perception/awareness of social support that bring them to fully present when they perform the organisation CSR. Therefore, when employees are physically and emotionally present in organisation CSR initiatives, as a result will shape individual focus, awareness and readiness to engage in organisation CSR initiatives and cognitively to prosper into individual social responsibility or volunteering.

In 2012, Marvis [33] specified three different approaches to describe employee engagement in CSR as shown in Table 1. Firstly, the transactional approach of employee engagements in CSR built on whenever CSR initiatives implemented are meeting the desires of employees who are willing to play their role in the organizational CSR efforts. The employees’ motivation to engage in CSR is directed by the needs and wants of their responsibility in the organisation especially for self-satisfaction. Employees offer individual service to their job functions and serve the organization in due respect to various internal CSR (HRM practices); the main reason for their existence and choice to stay in the organization. Secondly, in the relational approach; employees are classified as the value driven persons. They are motivated to engage in CSR to create their own personal identity by becoming holistic persons by rendering collective service to others. Then, employees’ relational CSR engagement is established on a psychological contract between the employees and the organization; to emphasize the social responsibility contract between both parties. Finally, using a developmental approach; employees engage in CSR with the aims to activate their social responsibility to be a responsible corporate citizen. This approach fulfils their actual purpose of engagement that blends the individual service and self-learning process as a mutual opportunity to connect themselves with organization and society. Thus, this research will adopt the employee perspectives overview using these triplet approaches to determine the state of individual employee engagement, their motivational need and their purpose of engagement and involvement in CSR.

Table 1
 Three Models of Employee Engagement through CSR

Employee Perspectives	Engagement Model		
	Transactional	Relational	Developmental
• Personal Motivation to Engage	• Need-What I want from my job	• Identity-Who I am “Whole Person”	• Purpose-Who I wish to be
• Benefits of Engagement	• Self – Satisfaction	• + Self-Expression	• +Self-Development
• Personal Involvement	• Individual Service	• Collective Service	• Service + Learning

Source: Mirvis [49]

Moreover, empirical evidence of past research by Slack *et al.*, [6] has shown that employee engagement in CSR ranges from employees who exhibit disinterested and uninvolved in the organizational CSR activities; to those who were fully engaged with the CSR activities. However, there are some others who were contented with their own personal value; but do not have positive engagement with organisational CSR. These variations of employee engagement styles normally depend on the CSR initiatives embedded in employees' day-to-day working life in their organization. Among other, also include CSR communication, a visibility of CSR culture, and the strategic alignment of CSR to business and personal objectives [6].

In unfolding the styles of employee CSR engagement, this research combines positive and negative individual outcomes [50] i.e. the level of employee engagement presented by Slack [6] and the Gallup Employee CSR Engagement Hierarchy [35] as shown in Figure 1. This hierarchy illustrates the transformation process of uninvolved individual to an engaged individual in CSR initiatives. It also identifies what are the behaviours, value, sense of meaning and purpose [17] that really influences employee engagement in CSR.

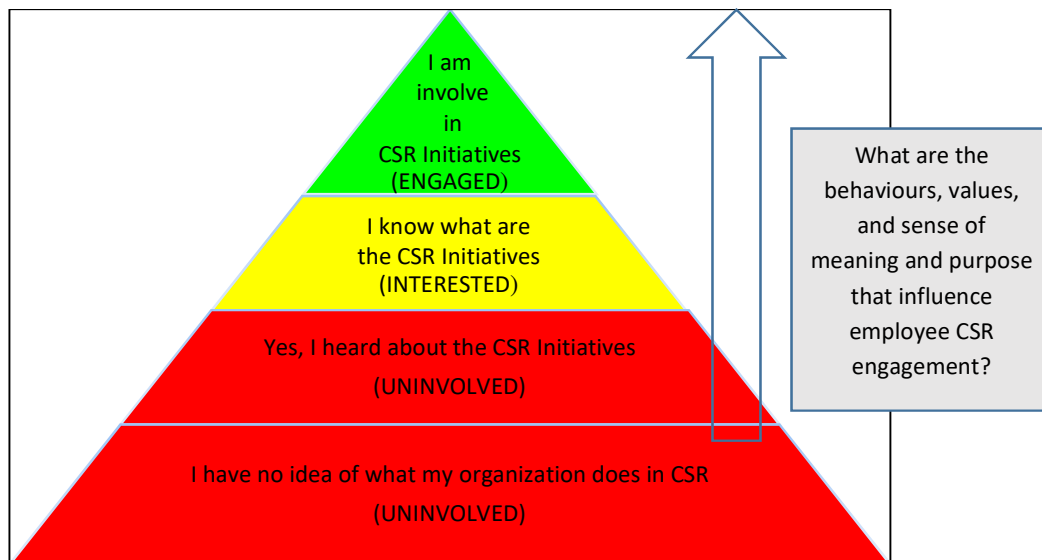


Fig. 1. The Employee CSR Engagement Hierarchy
Source: Adopted from Slack *et al.*, [6] & Gallup Inc. [35]

This research also adopts Kahn's [45] employee engagement theory to describe the psychological state of employees to physically attend and emotionally ready to engage in organisation CSR initiatives. This psychological condition is created through employee's central focus, awareness and readiness to engage in their personal CSR initiatives, i.e. their own choice to be responsible corporate citizens either for an external non-profit or charitable group or organisation in their own communal surrounding [36]. Thus, employee CSR engagement means employee readiness to accept and involve in CSR initiatives as an indicator of their tendency to be more in a give-and-take attitude with a normative reason; none at all for the worldly consideration [33]. That is also classified as individual personal value to do the right things in the society [1]. Therefore, this research operationally defines employee CSR engagement as the level of employees volunteering behaviour to give their hands in terms of time and effort for any CSR activities everywhere either at workplace or in their society without any financial expectation.

2.4 Spirituality, Resilience And CSR

Over the past few decades, the interest in spirituality studies related to religious, ethics and management has grown significantly but the field of CSR basically has hardly debated the relationship between CSR and workplace spirituality [19,50]. Contended by Rozuel [38], spirituality is not just restricted to religious beliefs and practices i.e. defined as a belief in a higher spirit or energy (God, gods, or undefined universal entities); but it also involves a greater consciousness of self and of the interconnectedness of human race with its economic, society and environmental system. Individual spiritual intelligence is coherent with the individual's internal strength of having a pure heart and ability to manage his or her emotional level that later influences one's intellect towards positive state of good affairs [39] in managing profit, people and planet [44]. The stronger the spiritual influence in individual person, the more the person exhibits their philanthropically behaviour and social responsibility [40] as their way of life [22]. Thus, the employee spiritual intelligence is one of the important inputs to shape individual CSR awareness to engage i.e. doing good behaviour and caring to their community and their environment through individual CSR practices. Consequently, this research recommends the individual CSR awareness at workplace with the intervention of individual spiritual quotient commencing on a religious belief which encourages individual employees to engage in CSR agenda.

It is also interesting to explore the influence of religion to shape individual CSR [50] through the spiritual window of Islamic ethical values as these two are well-matched concepts. In the study of Almunawar *et al.*, [37], they posited that both Islamic values and CSR provide a solid principal to the individual CSR agenda and its linkages to individual spiritual intelligence. In addition, Siwar and Hossain [22] stated that Islam as a religion encourages the Muslim to practise the responsible behaviour towards the society, environment and economy. They also mentioned about the importance of spiritual concepts in Islam following its correlation and contribution to current CSR policies and strategies. Hence, this study views that individual spiritual intelligence as the mediator [53] that explains the underlying mechanism of the relationship between individual awareness in CSR as well as becoming the foundation to blossom the individual employee CSR engagement.

Furthermore, the employees consciousness of the reason of their existence, nurture their values and the sense of meaning and purpose [17,40] of their lives. As a result, this inculcates employees' spirituality [18,19] and mental resilience [3,20,21] to embrace and engage in individual CSR [34] initiatives as a way of life [22].

Evidence from the past research by Leal *et al.*, [41] found that employees' resilience increases after an organisation implements internal social responsibility activities to promote employees psychological and physical health through work-life balance practices, wellness programmes, employee assistance programmes, etc. Thus, this research postulates the moderating effect [53] of employee resilience alters the strength of the causal relationship between individual awareness and engagement in CSR as an indicator of improvement of knowledge in CSR practices.

3. Research Framework

Mirvis [33] revealed that several studies aimed directly on the linkage between CSR and employee engagement. Those studies found a strong correlation between employee's commitment and engagement to their organisation when organisations engage the employees directly in voluntary and on-the-job CSR-related activities. But, very few studies have been conducted to understand the link between employee CSR awareness (ECSRA) and employee CSR engagement (ECSRE) [32,42,43]. The studies of CSR and employee engagement in HRM revolve around complexity and ambiguity,

with a few consensuses on the impact of employees' CSR awareness towards their individual CSR engagement. An earlier research by Raub and Blunschi [32] found a positive relationship between employee CSR awareness (ECSRA) and employee CSR engagement (ECSRE). However, there is almost no empirical evidence from previous studies in Malaysia had shown the relationship between these two constructs [42]. Therefore, the inconclusive findings of the earlier researches on these constructs [24,25] urge the need for more empirical studies to define the linkage between employee CSR awareness and their engagement in CSR.

Hence, the call for this research is to answer the research question (1) What is the relationship between employees CSR awareness (ESRA) and employee CSR engagement (ECSRE)? Also, this research is to focus on the effects of single mediator i.e. individual spiritual quotient (ISQ) and single moderator i.e. individual resilience (IR) to answer the second and third research questions (2) What are the constructs of individual resilience (IR) that moderate the relationship between employee CSR awareness (ECSRA) and employee CSR engagement (ECSRE)? (3) What are the constructs of individual spiritual quotient (ISQ) that mediate the relationship between employee CSR awareness (ECSRA) and employee CSR engagement (ECSRE).

To understand further the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement, the assumption of this research proposes the following alternative hypothesis;

H1: There is a positive relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement.

The inconsistent findings of the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement in the earlier research, thus, call for the introduction of a mediator and moderator in this study. In the past, only a few studies have examined the underlying impact of spiritual intelligence [37] and resilience [41]; in the relationship between CSR and employee. As a consequence, this research recognizes the underlying effect of individual spiritual quotient (ISQ) as mediator and individual resilience (IR) as moderator in the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement; posit the following alternative hypotheses;

H2: Employee CSR awareness develops individual spiritual quotient.

H3: Individual spiritual quotient increases individual CSR engagement.

H4: Individual spiritual quotient mediates the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement

H5: Individual resilience moderates the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement.

This research proposes a model that integrates individual spiritual quotient as a mediator and individual resilience as a moderator into the relationship between employee CSR awareness and employee CSR engagement. Therefore, the suggested framework of this research is illustrated in Figure 2.

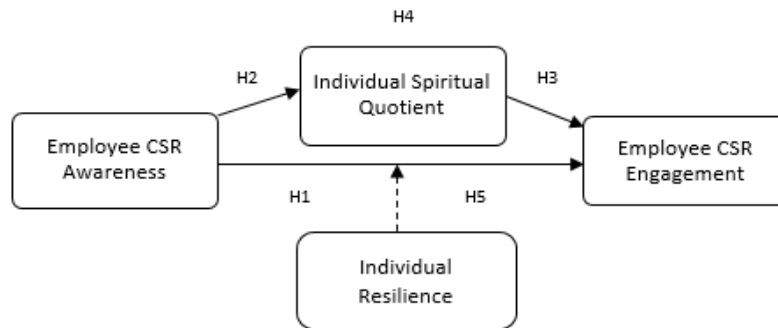


Fig. 2. The Research Framework

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, this study is to underpin individual employee behaviour as the internal stakeholder that associates between their awareness and engagement to the CSR activities by the organisation. At the same time, to provide empirical evidence on the individual experience in organisational CSR including to develop their interest to do voluntarily action beyond good and practice ethical behaviour towards the society. Moreover, this research also underpins the consequences of individual resilience and spiritual intelligence on individual CSR awareness and engagement.

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