

# Unveiling the nexus between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee satisfaction: a comprehensive bibliometric analysis

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – Researchers have tried analysing how the organizations' practices of doing good can help improve their employees' satisfaction over the past couple of decades. Employee satisfaction has a complicated relationship with a company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. Subsequently, the purpose of this paper is to conduct a bibliometric analysis and a literature review to trace the links between CSR and employee satisfaction, summarize and analyse the advances in this field, the knowledge gaps, publishing trends and further directions for future research.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The authors conducted a bibliometric analysis followed by a literature review of papers indexed in the Scopus database and published between 2000 and 2022. A total of 233 papers were identified, while 152 of them met the inclusion criteria for the analysis.

**Findings** – The subsequent analysis sheds light on the overlaps and connections between the two phenomena in human resource management (HRM). The authors outline potential avenues for future research and practical insight into how to leverage CSR activities for increasing work satisfaction.

**Originality/value** – By detailing the different ways CSR and employee satisfaction impact one another, analysing their relations and other supporting constructs, the authors contribute to the academic discourse by synthesizing prevailing literature and introducing practical guides for human resource (HR) professionals, managers and executives to manage turbulent surroundings more effectively, considering the major disruptions post-COVID-19 and the adoption of advanced technologies.

**Keywords** Corporate social responsibility, CSR, Employee satisfaction, Job satisfaction, Bibliometric analysis

**Paper type** Literature review

## 1. Introduction

In almost 15 years of researching the complex relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and employee satisfaction, there is still an ongoing debate about the extent of their mutual impact as well as their relationships with other related constructs and organizational phenomena.

Considering CSR has attracted researchers' interest since the 1950s (Bowen, 1953), a plethora of definitions and classifications have analysed it as an organization's strategic alignment. Jones (1996) describes it as the concept that companies should consider their obligations towards other societal groups besides their stakeholders that transcend the ones deemed mandatory by the regulations and contracts. In other words, companies voluntarily engage in CSR activities for the benefit of their suppliers, customers, employees and wider local communities. These activities are based on the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary



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aspects, which constitute the four CSR dimensions (Carroll, 1999) and can be a potent instrument in an organization's sustainability efforts (Kraus *et al.*, 2018).

Scientific research tends to view job satisfaction as a positive emotional state, which stems from one's judgement regarding their job or experiences related to their job or workplace (Locke, 1976). Undeniably, emotions play a vital role in making this judgement, which means that employees' satisfaction takes into account both the attitude and the emotions one has for their job (Saari and Judge, 2004). In this regard, a company's activities, including CSR ones, can affect the employees' satisfaction, invoking positive feelings in the workers so they can feel proud, enthusiastic, joyful and fulfilled or embarrassed, afraid and angry when the company's actions negatively affect the stakeholders (Onkila, 2015).

Illustratively, CSR can be a complete or partial mediator to the positive associations between the employees' job satisfaction and the companies' ethics programmes (Valentine and Fleischman, 2008). Besides mediating, CSR has been found to impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment directly, positively and significantly; the former is mediated by the employees' perception of the meaningfulness of their work (Glavas and Kelley, 2014). Besides CSR perceptions augmenting the quality of the working life one experiences and the attitudes and behaviours at work (Kim *et al.*, 2017), engaging in CSR activities at work has far-reaching influence even in the nonworking, private and family lives of the workforce, thus influencing the individual's satisfaction in life in general (Lee *et al.*, 2018).

For CSR activities to make an impact on employees' attitudes and behaviours, researchers claim that charismatic leadership plays a vital role. More precisely, managers through a charismatic leadership style can impact the way workers interpret the motives behind why companies adopt CSR initiatives, resulting in higher overall satisfaction (Vlachos *et al.*, 2013). Besides this, the successful implementation of CSR policies and activities as well as the increase in employee engagement in this regard, largely depends on active communication, top management's support, values and culture (Wang, 2018).

In a broader sense, a company's CSR-oriented activities enhance the organizational image, which then results in higher levels of employee satisfaction (Barakat *et al.*, 2016). We believe that a company's CSR-focused strategic direction indicates that the company may be considered a more desirable employer (Agnihotri and Bhattacharya, 2022). New job seekers, especially members of Generation Z, value an organization's environmental commitment, relations with the community and diversity, equity and inclusion policies when opting for a company they want to work at (Rzemieniak and Wawer, 2021). CSR's positive association with employee satisfaction can be attributed to the claim that companies that commit to implementing CSR are more inclined towards maintaining an excellent organizational climate, attracting and retaining high-performers and talent, lowering turnover rates and championing employee engagement and motivation (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009). In other words, we believe if companies focus on CSR, they will most likely elicit employees' positive judgement towards their jobs and vice versa.

On the other hand, Khaskheli *et al.* (2020) have found that workers' CSR perceptions negatively affect their extrinsic job satisfaction, while positively affecting intrinsic job satisfaction, which is probably the case as employees who find motivation in external aspects like monetary rewards may not be inclined to engage in extra-role or citizenship behaviour if no rewards are given to them. This is an example of why we believe their relationship to be compelling and still inspirational to research.

To the best of our knowledge, very few authors have tried synthesizing the interrelations between CSR and employee satisfaction, which represented an additional motivation to take on this research endeavour. With this research, our objective is to find the mutual links between CSR and employee satisfaction as well as their links with other relevant

organizational themes, present and analyse the primary advances in this field, identify the gaps in the literature and the next potential trends, which will preoccupy the research landscape in the future. As a result, we propose the following research questions, whose answers we believe will fulfil the research objective:

- RQ1.* What is the intellectual structure of the body of research concerning CSR and employee satisfaction?
  - RQ2.* What are the most impactful and popular concepts and hotspots in recent research?
  - RQ3.* Which paths for future research and potential new themes emerge concerning CSR and employee satisfaction?
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To achieve this, we used a bibliometric approach to analysing the current literature. The method has shown us that even though the relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction is a strong and complex one, it also touches upon a variety of other organizational aspects like organizational identification, employee well-being, retention, turnover, crisis management and similar. This relationship has significantly evolved, too. After the explanation of the methodology, the article then presents the results followed by a discussion of the findings, conclusions and practical implications.

## 2. Methodology

Although bibliometric analysis is not a new method, it has risen in popularity among scholars recently because of new and improved bibliometric software solutions and accessible databases, supporting the data structuring and analytical process ([Zupic and Čater, 2015](#)). In its essence, bibliometric analysis is an instrument for evaluating and investigating scientific literature as a technique akin to science mapping since it combines classification and visualization of data, which uncovers the inherent structure and dynamics of a certain topic ([Boyack and Klavans, 2010](#)). Stemming from this, bibliometric techniques aim to pinpoint the relations between publications, or in our case, the publications detailing the impact of CSR on employee satisfaction.

Subsequently, to analyse the evolutionary progress of scientific literature over a period and shed light on the intellectual relations and diversity of the knowledge, a preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA)-compliant bibliometric review or a bibliometric analysis complementary with a review of the literature is used as a research method ([Boyack and Klavans, 2010](#)). The benefit of the method over traditional systematic literature reviews and meta-reviews is its increased objectivity and an aerial point of view on a certain topic ([Zupic and Čater, 2015](#)). Moreover, a descriptive aspect of the literature analysis is applied to gain fresh information about the most-cited authors and articles in the field. Then, the co-occurrence bibliometric technique is used to outline keyword relations and their occurrences, as well as country co-authorship ties.

Considering that the bibliometric techniques explore relationships outlined in publications as primary data sources, the data for the bibliometric analysis has been downloaded from the Scopus database, as one of the leading databases of global quality research. We searched for keywords in three waves or three pillars of keywords to widen the scope of the articles and to get a bigger picture of the research landscape:

- (1) *first pillar of keywords:* “Corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR” AND “Employee\* satisfaction”;

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- (2) *second pillar of keywords*: “Corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR” AND “Job satisfaction”; and
  - (3) *third pillar of keywords*: “Corporate social responsibility” OR “CSR” AND “Work\* satisfaction”.

The decision to use these keywords, which are separated in three waves, is in line with past experiences where it is recommended to choose a few representative keywords in cases when researchers want to uncover the details of the major research domain and their relationships at the micro level ([Chen and Xiao, 2016](#)).

We intended to analyse articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals between 2000 and 2022 and written in English to showcase the recent evolutionary development of the research area. Considering this, from the first pillar of keywords, 69 documents were identified, including reviews, book chapters, conference papers, reviews, data papers and short surveys besides articles in journals. To meet the previously mentioned criterion, we considered only 57 documents (articles in peer-reviewed academic journals). For the second pillar of keywords, out of the 210 identified documents, 175 documents (articles in peer-reviewed academic journals) were taken into consideration. Eventually, by searching the keywords from the third pillar, the database came up with two documents and one of them was included in the data set.

All data associated with each article, including authors, year, title, source title, number of citations, authors' affiliations, keywords and abstract were retrieved from the Scopus database on 24 April 2023, as a text file.

To clean the data and identify the articles for analysis, we used the PRISMA protocol ([Moher et al., 2016](#)), which resulted in a total of 152 articles ready for analysis. A breakdown of the completed steps of identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion per the PRISMA protocol is provided in [Figure 1](#).

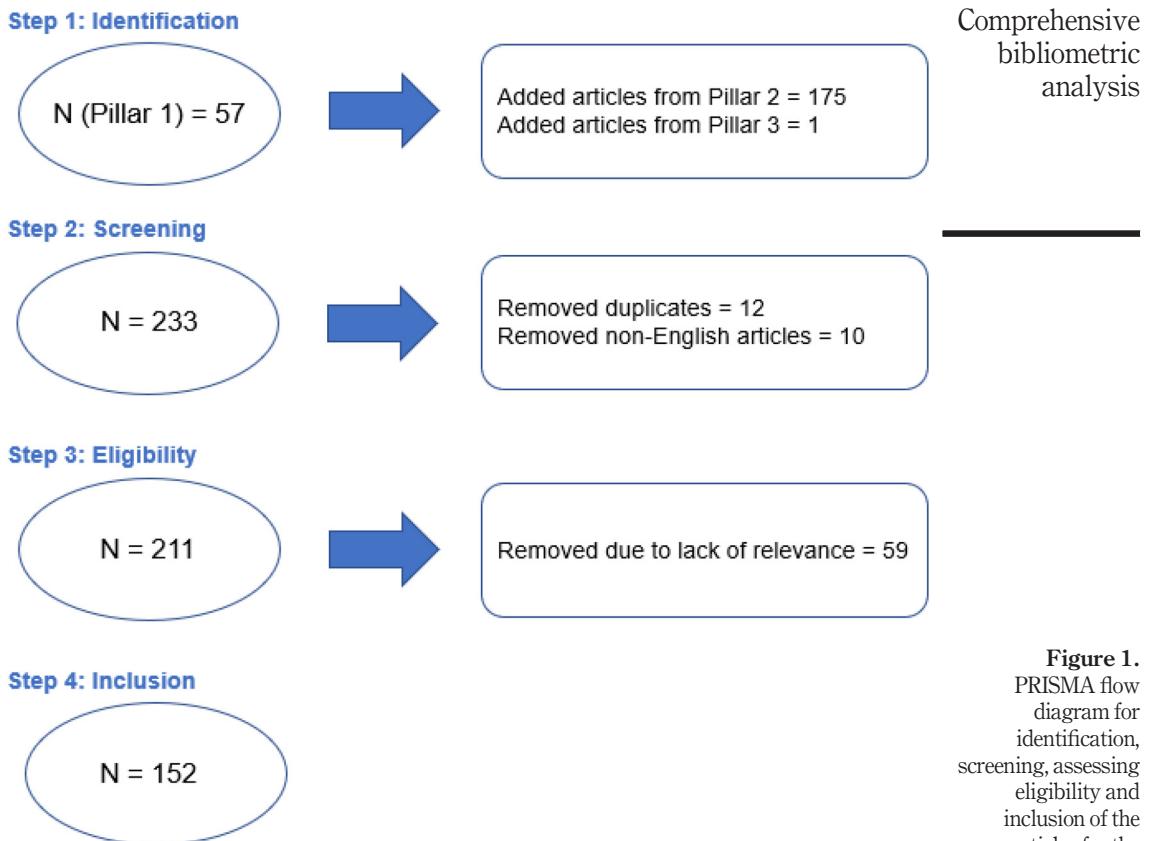
For the keyword co-occurrence and the country co-authorship analyses, the VOSviewer software (version 1.6.19) was used. [Van Eck and Waltman \(2014\)](#) have developed this software for creating and visualizing networks, based on bibliometric data. Its wide array of applications is evident in a variety of research fields, including ones related to organizational and managerial sciences like green entrepreneurship ([Wang et al., 2023](#)), multiple-criteria decision-making ([Yu et al., 2018](#)), management information systems ([Ozkose and Gencer, 2017](#)), smart factory ([Strozzi et al., 2017](#)), innovation management and corporate entrepreneurship ([Escobar-Sierra et al., 2017](#)) and more. The software enabled us to develop maps of network, overlay and density visualization, as well as visually present the keyword connections and clusters related to CSR and employee satisfaction.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 General descriptive analysis

This section consists of the bibliometric analysis results on articles outlining the relation between CSR and employee satisfaction in terms of yearly trends, top authors and academic journals and citations. Even though the criteria for selecting relevant articles were from 2000 to 2022, the first article researching CSR and job satisfaction appeared later, in 2008. A double-digit number of articles (13) were published in 2015, signalling the rising interest and popularity of the topic. Since then – except for 2017 – each year marks more than ten published articles. The annual trends are presented in [Figure 2](#).

The peak was reached in 2021 with 25 articles. Evidently, the interest in how CSR impacts job satisfaction does not wane as just in the first three months of 2023, there were ten articles published which equals the total number of articles on the topic in 2008, 2009,



**Figure 1.**  
PRISMA flow diagram for identification, screening, assessing eligibility and inclusion of the articles for the bibliometric analysis

**Source:** Authors' construction based on Moher *et al.* (2016)

2011 and 2012 combined. Figure 3 provides a closer look at the publishing trends in the last five years.

The articles that explore the mutual impact of CSR and employee satisfaction have been published in a total of 90 journals. The identification of the top journals was based on the highest number of citations of the journal as a result of the published articles on the researched topic, the highest number of published articles in the journal on the researched topic, the highest SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) (2022 release) and the highest impact factor of the journal (2021 release). Regarding the first and second criteria, we used the data extracted from the Scopus database. Additionally, the data for the third and fourth criteria was used from the publicly accessible portal SCImago Journal and Country Rank ([SCImago, 2024](#)).

Following the analysis for every criterion, Table 1 presents the top ten journals where articles about CSR and employee satisfaction are published. The *Journal of Business Ethics* has the highest number of total citations, while the *Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* has the highest number of published articles. Subsequently, the highest SCImago Journal Rank (SJR) (2022 release) and the highest Impact Factor (2021 release) are associated with the *Journal of Management*.



**Figure 2.**  
Annual trends of  
articles exploring the  
relationship between  
CSR and employee  
satisfaction

**Source:** Authors' analysis



**Figure 3.**  
Latest trends of  
articles exploring the  
relationship between  
CSR and employee  
satisfaction

**Source:** Authors' analysis

Out of the 152 identified relevant articles, 129 articles are cited at least once, representing 84.87% of the total number. As a result, for the citation analysis, in [Table 2](#), we outline the ten most frequently cited articles that try to explain the relationship between the satisfaction of the employees and the CSR activities of the organization.

The top nine articles have all been published in the previously-analysed top journals. In this sense, the article titled: "Ethics programs, perceived CSR and job satisfaction" by [Valentine and Fleischman \(2008\)](#), published in the *Journal of Business Ethics* is one of the core articles on the subjects, being the most-cited

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Journal	Metric
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Number of citations: 1,118 Number of published articles: 9 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 2.59 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 6.331
<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Number of citations: 527 Number of published articles: 5 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 2.93 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 10.427
<i>Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management</i>	Number of citations: 429 Number of published articles: 10 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 2.13 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 8.464
<i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i>	Number of citations: 313 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 1.95 Impact factor of the journal (2020 release): 4.697
<i>Journal of Management</i>	Number of citations: 296 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 7.21 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 13.508
<i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	Number of citations: 203 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 1.57 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 6.026
<i>Sustainability (Switzerland)</i>	Number of citations: 183 Number of published articles: 9 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 0.66 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 3.889
<i>Tourism Management</i>	Number of citations: 173 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 3.56 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 12.879
<i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i>	Number of citations: 135 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 2.5 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 9.321
<i>Current Issues in Tourism</i>	Number of citations: 134 SCImago Journal Rank (SJR 2022): 2.06 Impact factor of the journal (2021 release): 7.578

**Source:** Authors' analysis

article with 391 total citations and the first identified article that considers CSR and job satisfaction.

In total, 382 different authors have researched and written about the mutual impact of CSR and employee satisfaction. To detect the top authors in this particular field, we focused on the most-cited authors, who published in the top journals for CSR and job satisfaction. As a result, the analysis came up with the ten most-cited authors presented in [Figure 4](#). Seven of them have published just one article, while Swaen and De Roeck – the two most-cited authors – are both co-authors of two papers ([El Akremi et al., 2018; de Roeck et al., 2014](#)).

Most of the articles (51; 33.55%) were written by two authors, while the average is 3.05 authors per article. The article “Linking Corporate Social Responsibility to Workplace Deviant Behaviors: Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction” by [Memon et al. \(2021\)](#) has eight co-authors, making it the article with the highest number of co-authors per article.

**Table 1.**

Top journals where CSR and employee satisfaction articles are published

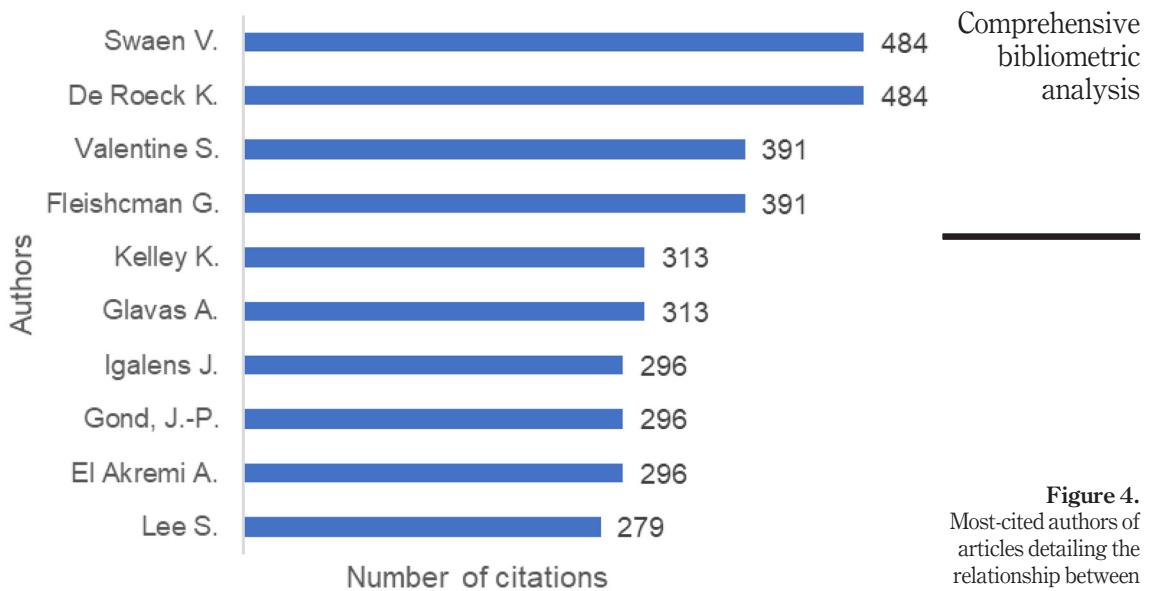
Title	Source title	Author(s)	Year	Total citations
Ethics programs, perceived corporate social responsibility and job satisfaction	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Valentine S., Fleischman G.	2008	391
The effects of perceived corporate social responsibility on employee attitudes	<i>Business Ethics Quarterly</i>	Glavas A., Kelley K.	2014	313
How do employees perceive corporate responsibility? Development and validation of a multidimensional corporate stakeholder responsibility scale	<i>Journal of Management</i>	El Akremi A., Gond J.-P., Swaen V., De Roeck K., Igalens J.	2018	296
Feeling good by doing good: employee CSR-induced attributions, job satisfaction, and the role of charismatic leadership	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Vlachos P.A., Panagopoulos N.G., Rapp A.A.	2013	209
The impact of CSR on relationship quality and relationship outcomes: a perspective of service employees	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Lee Y.-K., Kim Y.S., Lee K.H., Li D.-X.	2012	206
The impact of CSR on casino employees' organizational trust, job satisfaction, and customer orientation: an empirical examination of responsible gambling strategies	<i>International Journal of Hospitality Management</i>	Lee C.-K., Song H.-J., Lee H.-M., Lee S., Bernhard B.J.	2013	197
Understanding employees' responses to corporate social responsibility: mediating roles of overall justice and organisational identification	<i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	de Roeck K., Marique G., Stinglhamber F., Swaen V.	2014	188
Empowering employee sustainability: perceived organizational support toward the environment	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Lamm E., Tostit-Kharas J., King C.E.	2015	165
Effects of tourism CSR on employee psychological capital in the COVID-19 crisis: from the perspective of conservation of resources theory	<i>Current Issues in Tourism</i>	Mao Y., He J., Morrison A.M., Andres Coca-Stefaniak J.	2021	134
The effects of corporate social responsibility on employees' affective commitment: a cross-cultural investigation	<i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i>	Mueller K., Hattrup K., Spiess S.-O., Lin-Hi N.	2012	133
<b>Source:</b> Authors' analysis				

**Table 2.**  
Ten most-cited articles outlining the relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction

### 3.2 Co-authorship analysis based on countries

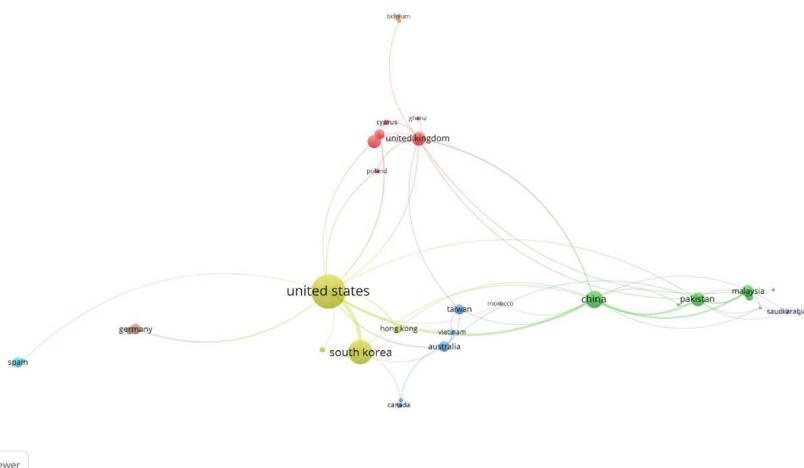
We developed a network visualization map for country co-authorship using the software VOSviewer, which is presented in [Figure 5](#). The unit for this type of analysis is countries, which in this case, we identified a total of 49 after excluding three units because they represented email addresses instead of actual names of countries.

The presented network visualization map comprises items, which are shown in the form of circles, labels and connecting lines; the larger labels and circles indicate a greater weight and a shorter distance between the items signifies a stronger co-authorship relationship ([Van Eck and Waltman, 2014](#)). Considering that, all labels and circles are divided into clusters by a specific colour – for our analysis, the countries were divided into nine clusters.



**Figure 4.**  
Most-cited authors of articles detailing the relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction

**Source:** Authors' analysis



**Source:** Authors' analysis

Most of the collaboration between the countries happens within the cluster, while there are frequent instances of cross-cluster collaboration like authors from the USA co-authoring with their Chinese counterparts or UK authors writing articles with authors from Taiwan and similar. Additionally, authors from the USA mostly

**Figure 5.**  
Co-authorship network map on employee satisfaction and CSR articles based on countries

collaborate with peers from South Korea, Hong Kong and Australia, while authors from South Korea mostly collaborate with peers from the USA, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia and Thailand. Rounding the top three countries with the most published articles is China, whose authors mostly collaborate with other authors from Morocco, Lithuania, Pakistan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong and more.

All clusters of countries have a mixed composition of countries from different regions and continents, highlighting the versatile cross-regional collaboration. The first cluster of countries is an example of that, encompassing Cyprus, Ghana, Greece, India, Poland and the UK. Moreover, authors from the countries of the second cluster come from Austria, China, Hungary, Lithuania, Malaysia and Pakistan. The countries where authors are leading the CSR and job satisfaction research are the USA and South Korea, both in the fourth cluster together with Hong Kong and Thailand.

The USA, followed by South Korea, can be considered as the most influential in this research field as authors originating from both countries have the highest number of published articles and, at the same time the highest number of citations. As can be seen in Tables 3 and 4, some countries lead in terms of the total number of published articles, whereas some in the sum of citations. France is not listed in the top ten countries in terms of the number of published articles as only two articles originate from the country, it is listed in the top five countries in terms of citations (484).

No.	Country	No. of articles	Total link strength
1	USA	36	30
2	South Korea	22	15
3	China	14	21
4	Pakistan	10	14
5	UK	10	13
6	India	9	3
7	Malaysia	8	11
8	Australia	7	8
9	Germany	7	3
10	Greece	6	6

**Source:** Authors' analysis

**Table 3.**

Top countries with published articles on CSR and job satisfaction (per the total number of articles) and their total link strengths

No.	Country	No. of citations	Total link strength
1	USA	2,640	30
2	South Korea	995	15
3	UK	653	13
4	China	551	21
5	France	484	2
6	Greece	276	6
7	Germany	252	3
8	Pakistan	249	14
9	Switzerland	217	1
10	Belgium	217	1

**Source:** Authors' analysis

**Table 4.**

Top countries with published articles on CSR and job satisfaction (per the total number of citations) and their total link strengths

### 3.3 Analysis of keywords

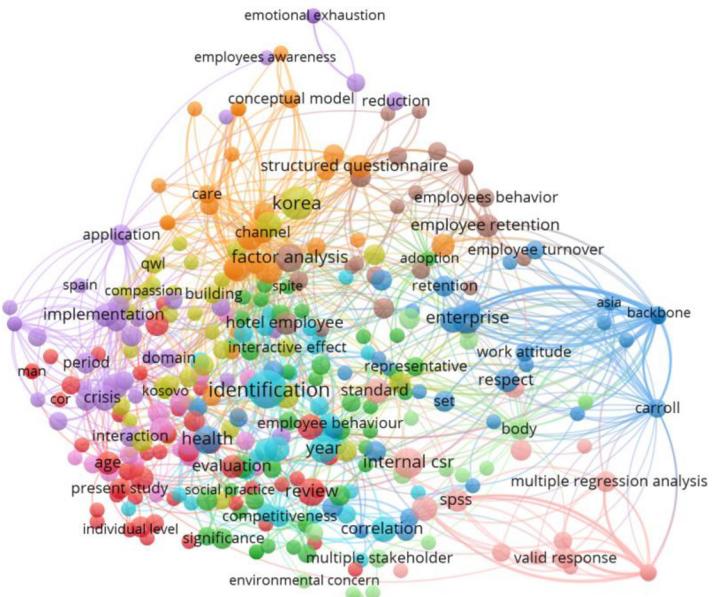
This section gives an overview of the keyword distribution per cluster and period based on the terms from the abstracts of the identified 152 articles from the Scopus database. We focused on the keywords or terms, which appear at least twice because we intended to get the bigger picture surrounding CSR and employee satisfaction and to touch upon as many relevant topics as possible, which rapidly change over time. By limiting the minimal occurrence of the terms to just two, we were able to identify the research hotspots in the entire analysed period 2000–2022. Additionally, in VOSviewer we created a network visualization map, as well as maps of overlay and density visualization. Based on the results, we demonstrated how the relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction has developed over time and suggest future trends and potential paths for further research.

For the keyword co-occurrence map based on textual data, we originally identified 3,091 terms, which was narrowed down to 656 terms as only the keywords that occurred at least twice were considered. Afterward, 60% or 394 terms were selected based on the relevance score of VOSviewer. The presented keywords underwent a manual relevance check, which, eventually, resulted in 343 terms (items) being analysed, separated into 11 interconnecting clusters. A total of 51 keywords were excluded from the bibliometric analysis due to irrelevance to the analysis and a list containing these keywords (terms) can be found in the [Appendix](#). We decided to keep the keywords related to countries, geographical regions as well as research methodologies to get a clearer insight into the most-researched contexts and approaches in each cluster and theme connected to job satisfaction and organizational CSR efforts.

[Figure 6](#) presents a network visualization map for keyword co-occurrence in which the larger labels and circles indicate a greater weight ([Van Eck and Waltman, 2010](#)). Moreover, some labels may not be shown to prevent them from overlapping and making the map confusing and overly complex ([Van Eck and Waltman, 2010](#)). The lines between the items and circles represent links; a denser line between two items, as well as a shorter distance between them, signifies a stronger relationship ([Van Eck and Waltman, 2010](#)). Furthermore, all items are grouped into clusters based on their interrelatedness, and each cluster is shown in a separate colour ([Van Eck and Waltman, 2010](#)). In our case, the bibliometric analysis yielded 343 items, 11 clusters, 3,700 links and a total link strength of 3,973. A more in-depth content analysis of the themes of the clusters is provided in the next section dedicated to the review of the literature.

Out of all clusters, the keywords with the highest number of occurrences are *identification* (occurrences: 13, links: 67, total link strength: 74), *Korea* (occurrences: 10, links: 55, total link strength: 63), *enterprise* (occurrences: 8, links: 69, total link strength: 83), *internal CSR* (occurrences: 8, links: 43, total link strength: 50), *validity* (occurrences: 7, links: 60, total link strength: 72) and *health* (occurrences: 7, links: 48, total link strength: 57). Identification is closely related to the keywords “organizational identification” and “employee behaviour”, while “Korea” has the highest link strength with the keywords “hospitality industry”, “job performance” and “casino industry”. Furthermore, there is a strong link between the keywords “enterprise” and “retention” (44). The research on internal CSR is mostly connected with the terms “satisfaction” and “complementarity”, while “health” branches out to keywords such as “crisis”, “business organization” and “ability”.

The first cluster, coloured in dark red, has 46 distinct items. In the cluster, the highest occurrence can be observed in the keywords “review” (7), followed by “individual” and “age”, both occurring five times each. The highest link strength is attributed to “resource” (43), which, in turn, is related to keywords like “better performance”, “age”, “conservation”, “compassion”, “authority” and similar. The cluster presents India as the most common country for CSR and employee satisfaction research in this cluster. From the methodological aspect, the most used keywords include “cross sectional survey” and “individual level”.



**Figure 6.**

Network visualization map of keyword co-occurrence in articles about CSR and employee satisfaction

**Source:** Authors' analysis

Also, the cluster encompasses “review”, “theoretical model” and theories like self-efficacy and servant leadership.

The workplace is in the heart of the second cluster (green). The highest occurrences are noted in the keyword “workplace” (5), with “life satisfaction” and “loyalty” each appearing four times. The keyword “workplace” has the highest total link strength (47) in the cluster, too. Contextually and methodologically, the research endeavours in the cluster focus on “Vietnam” as well as “fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis”, “micro level”, “online survey” and “quantitative methodology”.

Further, the third cluster (dark blue) and its 40 items are led by the keywords “enterprise”, “health”, “solution” and “respect”, each appearing eight, seven, six and five times, respectively. Being one of the most frequently occurring keywords in general, the highest link strength is attributed to “enterprise” (83), which strongly connects with keywords like “retention”, “respect”, “authority” and “adoption”. Asia and Central European context are identified as the most common geographical areas for this cluster, while the applied methodology is versatile, including keywords that imply exploratory study, partial least squares structural equation modelling (SEM) and squares SEM.

Ochre is the colour of the fourth cluster, containing 37 items, out of which the most common ones are “Korea” (ten), followed by “employee outcome” and “hospitality industry” both appearing six times each. Connected to this, the highest link strength is attributed to “Korea” (63), which is closely linked to other keywords like “hospitality industry”, “job performance”, “casino industry”, “customer orientation”, “service employee”, “compassion” and similar. The cluster goes on to present Korea and Kosovo as common countries for this

cluster. Regarding the methodology, the keywords imply content analysis, the use of quantitative analysis as well as the need satisfaction theory as a theoretical backbone.

The fifth cluster mostly deals with themes and keywords related to the COVID-19 and post-COVID practices of CSR and employee satisfaction. As a result, the highest-occurring keywords include “crisis” (6), “wellbeing” (6) and “implementation” (5). Moreover, the highest link strength is noted with the keyword “crisis” (63), which closely connects to “wellbeing”, “job security”, “covid”, “health”, “best company”, “challenge” and “communication”. These themes were mostly researched in Spain and Germany as notable countries for this cluster.

Organizational identification has been found to positively relate to job satisfaction and CSR (Mozes *et al.*, 2011). The sixth cluster in turquoise, consisting of 34 items, analyses this relationship. “Identification” has the highest occurrence, appearing 13 times, while “organizational identification” (6) and “social exchange theory” (5) come next. Expectedly, the highest link strength is attributed to “identification” (74), as well, which further connects with keywords like “prestige”, “employee behaviour”, “organizational identification”, “antecedent” and so on. The cluster presents Bangladesh as a notable country for this cluster, while the applied theories and methodologies point to the social exchange theory and social identity, as well as empirical research and exploratory factor analysis.

The seventh cluster (29 items), coloured orange, considers the methodological aspect of published research. The keywords “validity” (7), “Amos” and “fit”, which both appear six times each, and “growth” (5) seem to have the highest occurrence. The research landscape notes the highest link strength with the keyword “validity” (72) that connects with keywords like “factor analysis”, “comparison”, “path analysis”, “primary data”, “statistical analysis”, “structured questionnaire” and other related keywords.

Further, the eighth brown cluster with 24 items focuses mostly on “factor analysis”, which occurs seven times, followed by “employee retention” and “hotel employee”, which both appear five times each. “Employee retention” also has the highest link strength (56), and its connections have greater weight with the keywords “growth”, “employee job”, “adoption” and “compliance”. Africa, Kenya and Seoul appear as common geographical regions for this cluster. In terms of the methodology, the keywords imply the use of factor analysis, a fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis method, multiple regression and a principal component analysis (PCA).

The ninth cluster in pink (20 items) documents the highest occurrences in the keywords “consequence” and “direction”, which both appear five times, respectively. The highest link strength is attributed to “hotel industry” (37), which further links to “competitiveness”, “age” and “business operation”. The keywords “empirical finding”, “hierarchical linear modelling” and “moderation analysis” represent the versatile quantitative research methods in this cluster.

The penultimate cluster (19 items) is coloured in light red and is marked by the keywords “internal CSR” and “staff”, occurring eight and six times, respectively. Subsequently, the keyword “multiple regression analysis”, which links with other keywords such as “SPSS”, “staff”, “valid response”, “human right” and “backbone”, has the highest link strength of 59.

Finally, the 11th cluster coloured in olive visualizes 18 items. The dominating keywords in the cluster are “body” and “region” (both appearing four times each), followed by “law”, “multiple stakeholder”, “organizational pride”, “service quality” and “tourism” all with three occurrences each. Additionally, the highest link strength is attributed to “body” (46). Methodology-wise, the keywords imply the use of mediation analysis.

### *3.4 Content analysis: a literature review of corporate social responsibility and employee satisfaction*

Our state-of-the-art analysis and review have demonstrated a complex and interactive relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction based on prior research, identifying a

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considerable number of articles detailing their mutual impact and connections with other constructs, which are of interest to the scientific community of organizational sciences and human resource management (HRM). Moreover, the published literature has shown how multiple factors can aid or negatively influence these relationships.

One of the first associations of the word satisfaction in an organizational context is the fulfilment of employees' needs. Understood as such, early research focused on investigating that CSR activities are more likely to satisfy the needs for safety and security, individuality, belongingness and meaningfulness (Onkila and Sarna, 2022). When employees feel their needs are met, they tend to exhibit loyalty towards the organization, ultimately resulting in lower turnover rates (Shafique and Ahmad, 2022). Moreover, employee-centred, internal CSR through competitive salaries, health benefits, development programmes and similar can affect the notion of safety or security (Onkila and Sarna, 2022). Additionally, while visible, external CSR like community engagement, philanthropy and customer focus can help employees feel they are a part of a distinctive and singular organization, this has benefits for establishing the organization as an employer brand with a strong reputation and image, making it attractive for both customers and potential future employees (Vuong and Bui, 2023). Additionally, these types of CSR activities can foster emotions of meaningfulness in employees (Bauman and Skitka, 2012). Through a showcase of values and mission statements rooted in CSR, employees' satisfaction is affected by an enhanced feeling of firm identity, psychological ownership and a positive perception of similarity and fit (Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2019).

The research has demonstrated a clear link between CSR activities and employee outcomes besides just an impact on satisfaction. In this sense, a positive link is achievable in cases of well-established CSR policies, resulting in better financial outcomes and employee performance on an individual level (Chang *et al.*, 2021). Besides satisfaction, CSR has been found to increase creativity and engagement levels (Chaudhary and Akhouri, 2019). As a result, this impact spills over into an increased customer orientation and motivation for competitiveness on an organizational level (McDonald and Rundle-Thiele, 2008).

More contemporary scientific discourses have focused on ways to retain employees, especially in industries like technology, which have recently been marked with frequent jobholder changes. It was found that CSR activities can improve the workforce's satisfaction and, eventually, retention by fulfilling their needs for relatedness, existence and development (Lee and Chen, 2018). This is specifically accented in times of crises, such as the labour crises induced by the pandemic, where internalized CSR, which is integrated into the corporate strategy played a crucial effect in mitigating low motivation and satisfaction, as well as shifts in values (Miethlich *et al.*, 2023). Because of this, many employees tend to support high-CSR organizations in crises and post-crisis periods (McCartney *et al.*, 2022).

As employee engagement and the quiet quitting phenomenon entered the mainstream, ways to stimulate organizational citizenship behaviour became a priority for a plethora of managers. In that sense, CSR with the mediation of employee satisfaction is found to positively impact the employees' voluntary commitment to contribute more to the organization than what is essentially contracted (Khaskheli *et al.*, 2020). This contributes to an increased sense of identification with the organization, its values, actions and what it stands for.

Finally, the review presents some of the key theoretical and methodological foundations of the research field. Considering this, from a theoretical point of view, a wide breadth of theories was used and explained with no single dominant one standing out. These theories include the self-efficacy theory, servant leadership theory, need satisfaction theory, social exchange theory and social identity theory. We claim that this demonstrates the diverse role of the workforce when it comes to accepting, shaping and implementing CSR activities.

When it comes to the methodology, we noticed more rigour as both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were implemented. Yet, the quantitative ones were more dominant and diverse, including SEM, multiple regression analysis, PCA, hierarchical linear modelling, moderation analysis and such. From the set of qualitative ones, the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis appeared to be the most pronounced, and notably, the data set included the use of exploratory studies, too. We believe that a bigger focus on quantitative research can result in higher repetition and comparativeness of the findings, while the inclusion of more qualitative and experiment research approaches at this point may provide the scientific community with new in-depth approaches and outlying topics.

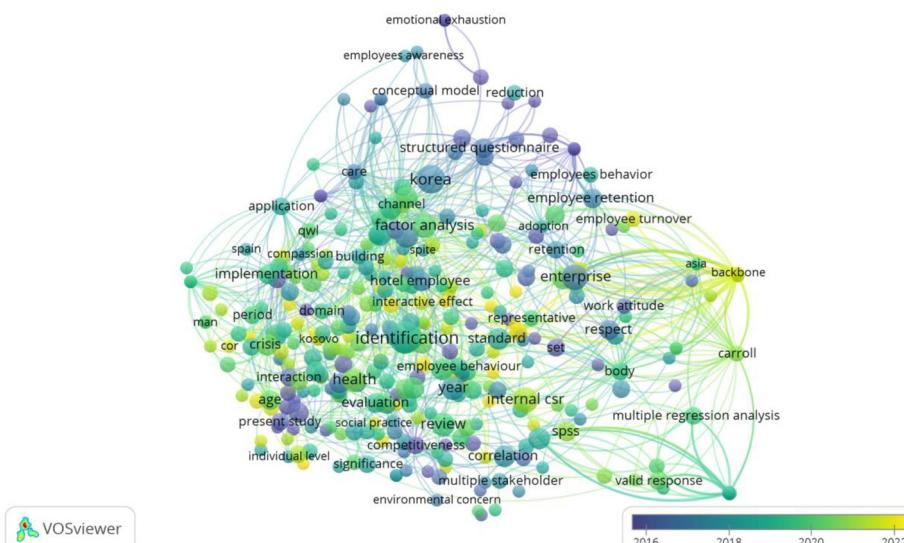
### 3.5 Future trends for corporate social responsibility and employee satisfaction

The overlay visualization map presented in [Figure 7](#) outlines the time-related dynamics of the most popular keywords in the research landscape. The darker colours signify earlier publications, whereas as the circles turn to yellow, they mean they appear in more recent articles.

Considering this, most recently, in the period from 2020 to 2022, the published articles have mostly focused on the keywords “backbone”, “employee turnover”, “authority”, “micro level”, “social exchange”, “external CSR activity”, “work-life balance”, “crisis”, “covid” and similar. As a result, we propose seven avenues for future research.

*Resilience in a crisis.* In crisis times like the global COVID-19 pandemic, employee satisfaction is once again put at the forefront of HRM activities. As remote and hybrid work became “the new normal”, blurring the lines between professional and personal life, the work–life balance of employees has been imperative to enhancing employees’ performances ([Ortiz-Bonnin et al., 2023](#)).

*CSR and employee satisfaction’s impact on turnover.* Moreover, the pandemic-induced crisis led to high turnover rates, which are still felt today, especially in the hospitality, information



**Figure 7.**  
Overlay visualization  
map of keyword co-  
occurrence in articles  
about CSR and  
employee satisfaction

**Source:** Authors’ analysis

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and communications technology (ICT) and retail sectors. As a reaction, managers started coming up with ways to mitigate that. [McCartney et al. \(2022\)](#) have found that job satisfaction significantly and negatively impacts employees' turnover intentions. Additionally, organizations engaging in high levels of CSR activities tend to have an advantage when retaining employees in the view of crises as these activities contribute to the feeling of prosocial impact in the workers, thus reducing turnover rates ([Carnahan et al., 2017](#)).

*The influence of flexible working arrangements.* Connected to the twofold impact of the pandemic and organizational digitalization trends, flexible working arrangements have become ubiquitous for many job positions. As a result, it would be beneficial for research to further analyse how to engage and satisfy employees when they are not often seeing each other in person and how to boost the engagement and the sense of belonging and connection to the organization in this context ([Kakkar et al., 2023](#)).

*CSR and employee satisfaction's impact on the quality of life.* In contemporary HRM, employees are seen as whole individuals with their personal and professional lives and characteristics flowing in and out of the workplace. As a result, studies can highlight the role CSR plays in enhancing their satisfaction not just by doing good for the community but for increasing the level of their quality of life ([Gonzalez-De-la-Rosa et al., 2023](#)).

*Employer branding.* Relationships and the impact of CSR and job satisfaction will likely continue to be explored in relation to other constructs and organizational phenomena like employer branding ([Bharadwaj et al., 2022](#)), green human resource management ([Sabokro et al., 2021; Mishra, 2017](#)) and others. Workforce satisfaction and the responsibility towards the environment can play a crucial role in building the employer brand and how the organization is perceived by the customers but also by the future employees and the candidates who would want to become members of the team ([Carlini and Grace, 2021](#)).

*New research contexts.* Based on the already-published literature, the way CSR activities impact employee satisfaction in a variety of different contexts like Latin America, Balkan and Scandinavian countries, and similar, which have been less represented, as well as with different mixed research approaches can be explored. Also, while these two aspects have been heavily researched in certain industries like hospitality ([Kim et al., 2018](#)) and gambling ([Lee et al., 2013](#)), future trends will more likely focus on other sectors.

*The micro level of CSR and employee satisfaction.* Exploring the micro level of CSR and employee satisfaction activities has gained ground, too. Proper communication of micro-level CSR activities fosters employee engagement, improved productivity and higher job satisfaction rates ([Low and Spong, 2022](#)), while at the same encouraging and empowering workers to practice positive work behaviours, protect the environment and be aware of their vital contribution in environmental management ([Afshar Jahanshahi et al., 2021](#)). The focus on micro-level and individual CSR will likely continue in the future as organizations tend to custom tailor the employee experience as much as possible for their workforce, while we suggest that macro-level effects would also have profound implications.

#### 4. Discussion

CSR and employee satisfaction have gained considerable interest from scholars but also from managers, employers and individuals from the broader organizational environment. This is evident in the publication trends which see the beginning of the decade as a tipping point with the highest number of publications on the topic to date. Moreover, this article positions CSR and employee satisfaction as separate fields whose mutual relationships bring them together in the HRM discipline.

This brings us to an additional finding of our research that saw a diverse plethora of journals that publish articles related to the topic of interest. These journals include ones

dedicated to sustainability, environmental management, management and others, signifying the position where these two organizational phenomena evolve and develop within the research landscape.

Furthermore, the diversity in the publication sources is also reflected in the (co) authorship of the articles. Even though USA and South Korean authors lead the scientific discussion in the field, there is a growing body of authors from different parts of the world collaborating. While most of the collaboration between the authors occurs within a cluster of countries like Malaysia, Pakistan, China and others, there is frequent cross-cluster mutual work between different Chinese authors and UK and USA authors and similar.

The use of the keyword co-occurrence bibliometric technique has shown that most research endeavours focused on identifying and measuring these two concepts in an organizational context and putting them in correlation with different ones. As such, it was found that CSR and employee satisfaction are closely related to the feelings of organizational identification, citizenship behaviour and affective commitment. Perceived CSR influences the workforce's attitudes as CSR initiatives educate workers on the character of the organization, its fairness, equity and community care, thus improving the sense of organizational identification (De Roeck *et al.*, 2014). We believe this strengthens the bond between the organization itself, and every individual who is a part of it. Besides identification, the other most frequently occurring keyword was internal CSR, pointing to the importance of including this aspect in the organizational strategy as it carries widespread effects on the workforce and the surrounding communities (Miethlich *et al.*, 2023).

In recent years, the keywords and themes connected to health, employee turnover, work-life balance, crisis, covid and more dominated research. Considering that in crises as the one induced by the global pandemic, the levels of satisfaction and psychological capital, which includes self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and hope, are increasingly low, it was found that CSR supported and impacted psychological capital through employee satisfaction during the pandemic (Mao *et al.*, 2021). These effects are found to be amplified in cultures, which are characterized by high ingroup and institutional collectivism, orientation towards the future and humane orientation, as well as low indices of power distance (Mueller *et al.*, 2012). Connected to crises, when human resource (HR) managers communicate the internal and external CSR activities well to the workers, cohesion can be more easily maintained, especially during major changes such as acquisitions and mergers (De Roeck *et al.*, 2014).

Researchers have tended to explain and measure these organizational concepts with the help of established theoretical frameworks like self-efficacy theory, servant leadership theory, social identity theory, social exchange theory and need satisfaction theory (Kim *et al.*, 2020). This is in line with other studies related to the exploration of theories for describing CSR (Mehedi and Jalaludin, 2020). When it comes to the methodology, rigorous quantitative and qualitative research approaches were implemented, while mostly relying on the former. This also supports related findings in the literature that outline the complementary puzzle pieces of versatile methodologies and assessment approaches of employee satisfaction and CSR (Barauskaite and Streimikiene, 2021).

#### *4.1 Practical and research implications*

This research has a plethora of managerial implications as it sheds light on crucial aspects of enhancing employee engagement and satisfaction, offering valuable insights for organizations facing challenges related to high turnover rates and low levels of organizational identification. By outlining effective strategies for designing and custom-tailoring CSR activities, managers and HR professionals can foster a positive work environment that nurtures employee pride and bolsters ethical and legal CSR practices.

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The significance of these findings extends beyond a single industry or sector, as they hold relevance for a variety of organizational contexts. Recognizing that high job satisfaction and the implementation of CSR initiatives can greatly impact employer branding, this research emphasizes the importance of aligning business objectives with employees' well-being and ethical values. Such alignment not only contributes to an organization's reputation but also fosters a sense of pride and commitment among employees.

Moreover, this article makes a noteworthy contribution to the ongoing discussion surrounding employee well-being and work-life balance. Demonstrating how CSR activities can positively influence these factors, it highlights the potential for organizations to create environments that support the holistic needs of their workforce and points to a direction for CSR and job satisfaction in the post-COVID world.

The relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction has implications for policymakers, too. All organizations are part of a complex economic and political system, so it is beneficial for decision makers to regulate ethical and legal compliance and follow environmentally friendly initiatives of organizations to ensure the progress of local communities.

Besides these, the article has potential research implications. These implications are twofold, as recognized in the proposed research questions for fulfilling the research objective. On one hand, a more objective, aerial perspective of the topic of interest is presented, thus synthesizing the existing literature and the main findings that connect these organizational phenomena. On the other hand, the article outlines opportunities for future research that can enrich the scientific landscape and further help maximize the impact of CSR activities and the effect on employee satisfaction.

Since the two constructs are well-established in organizational analysis literature, some statistical methods are more appropriate for research than others. Prior research identifies quantitative statistical methods, such as hierarchical linear modelling, SEM and regression analyses as prevalent (Rahman *et al.*, 2016). This implies that scholars tend to favour these methods, yet there is space for further exploration of mixed methods.

Besides their mutual relationship, CSR and employee satisfaction have recently been intensively analysed with other phenomena and constructs. This includes the impact of different levels of CSR and employee satisfaction on turnover intention, organizational commitment, trust, employee alienation and interactional justice (Chen *et al.*, 2023; Silva *et al.*, 2023; Kakkar *et al.*, 2023; Murshed *et al.*, 2023). This reaffirms the multidisciplinary implications as these constructs are historically typically associated with various organizational disciplines like human resource management, organizational behaviour, workplace ethics and similar. Notably, researchers have mainly used various models for measuring the impacts of CSR and employee satisfaction, which are grounded in theoretical frameworks often in combination with other pre-determined constructs in the absence of uniform measurement scales. Stemming from that, the study can raise additional interest in exploring several hypotheses such as: CSR positively affects job satisfaction and organizational belonging in digital workers and/or digital nomads; CSR activities impact job meaningfulness through the mediation of employee satisfaction; CSR activities impact the likelihood of survival of small- and medium-sized enterprises through employee satisfaction; transformational leadership increases workforce satisfaction through internal CSR activities, and similar.

#### 4.2 Limitations

The study does not come free of some constraints. A limitation and an aspect, which other researchers can further focus on regarding this topic, is to widen the breadth of the analysed articles and search the Web of Science database, too. Also, they may analyse year-by-year

changes in the research landscape and include similar bibliometric outputs. Additionally, we considered only articles written in English for the bibliometric techniques as a type of global language, yet other studies that were not in this language were discarded.

There are some constraints related to the chosen method. Bibliometric analyses do not provide a comprehensive contextual understanding of citations or used keywords. In this sense, a lot of factors may influence an author to cite or not to cite a specific work, which is sometimes more subjective than not. Researchers also note possible distortions in bibliometric analysis results if frequent self-citation is done by the authors as this increases the citation count (Zupic and Čater, 2015). The interdisciplinary research impact related to CSR and employee satisfaction cannot be entirely shown through this method. Eventually, bibliometric analysis may not give a complete picture of the quality or importance of an article as citations are not the most comprehensive and direct measures for these characteristics. In many cases, when an article is cited repeatedly, it may more likely mean that the publication has high international visibility and may not be *de facto* of excellent quality (Wallin, 2005). Reaching higher citations is harder for newer publications, too, which results in mainly older articles having higher citations.

## 5. Conclusion

With this research, our objective was to determine the relationships between CSR and job satisfaction, using bibliometric data and a literature review, summarizing and analysing recent developments in the area, knowledge gaps, publication patterns and future research prospects. We employed descriptive and co-occurrence bibliometric analysis techniques, followed by a more in-depth content analysis and literature review. This served as a foundation for identifying future research areas as one of the purposes of the bibliometric analysis.

We strongly believe that this research fulfils this objective while presenting in-depth insights to unveil the nexus between CSR and employee satisfaction, which are embodied in some of the key findings: there is a rising interest in exploring the relationship between CSR and employee satisfaction, which is demonstrated by the peak in the number of published articles so far in 2021, and an annual double-digit number of articles since 2015 (except for 2017); the journal with the highest number of total citations is the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the journal with the highest number of articles published on the topic is *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, while the *Journal of Management* is identified as the journal with the highest impact factor and SCImago journal ranking from the data set; the article “Ethics programs, perceived corporate social responsibility and job satisfaction” by Valentine and Fleischman, published in 2008 is the most-cited article and is the first identified article exploring the relations between the two researched constructs; Swaen and De Roeck are identified as the two most-cited authors on the topic out of the 382 authors and they are part of a co-authorship team of two papers; the country co-authorship analysis found that the collaboration between the 49 countries mostly happens within each cluster, marked by increasingly common of cross-cluster collaborations; the USA and South Korea are two countries leading the academic discourse both in terms of the highest number of total citations and published articles; the keywords with the highest number of occurrences are identification, Korea, enterprise, internal CSR, validity and health; from 2020 to 2022, the scientific discussion on the topic primarily focused on the keywords backbone, employee turnover, authority, micro level, social exchange, external CSR activity, work-life balance, crisis, covid and other related keywords; the seven identified areas for further research in the future include building resilience in a crisis, CSR and employee satisfaction’s impact on turnover and quality of life, the influence of flexible working arrangements,

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employer branding, introducing new research contexts and analysis of the micro level of CSR and employee satisfaction.

Considering this, the article presents potential implications for managers/business leaders and HR professionals in the micro-organizational context, as well as policymakers who are tasked with regulating corporate compliance and following corporate activity and its effect on the environment and society.

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### Appendix

List of excluded keywords from the bibliometric analysis comprehensive understanding, contrast, direct benefit, direct effect, direct relationship, end, example, extant literature, extension, fact, future study, higher level, highlight, iii, important aspect, indirect effect, item, lack, main effect, majority, meaning, moderated mediation effect, negative impact, negative relationship, new insight, partial, positive association, positive influence, potential impact, prerequisite, previous literature, previous research, prior research, recent year, recommendation, regard, relate, room, scholarly literature, scientific evidence, section, significant association, significant impact, significant implication, significant influence, significant positive impact, study finding, suggestion, theoretical implication, theoretical, type.

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