

University social responsibility as a driver of organizational performance: An Innovative Approach in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance in a private university institution. A basic quantitative approach was adopted, with a non-experimental, transversal, descriptive and correlational methodological design. The study population was made up of 80 university employees, to whom two previously validated questionnaires with adequate levels of reliability were applied, obtained through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which reflected a value of 0.941 for the corporate social responsibility variable and 0.921 for organizational performance.

The findings of the study showed the existence of a significant, positive relationship of considerable magnitude between both variables, with a Spearman compensation coefficient of 0.660 and a significance level of less than 0.05. These results allowed us to corroborate the alternative hypothesis, indicating that the implementation of corporate social responsibility strategies in the university institution contributes favorably to strengthening organizational performance.

In conclusion, it is determined that greater adoption of corporate social responsibility practices is associated with an improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of institutional performance. These findings can serve as a reference for future research on the impact of sustainability and business ethics on university management, as well as for the formulation of strategies that optimize productivity and organizational commitment.

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained significant importance at global, national, and local levels, as it fosters employee commitment to their institutions. This is particularly relevant in private higher education institutions, where CSR initiatives influence organizational performance. Employee well-being is directly reflected in the experiences of students across various faculties.

At the international level, CSR plays a crucial role in institutional success, as evidenced by its impact on employee performance. Institutions continuously face global challenges; however, they remain committed to promoting education and improving the quality of life for underprivileged populations. As poverty rates continue to rise, governments must address

ethical dilemmas that authorities often mismanage. The lack of transparency among policymakers hinders economic growth in many countries (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2022).

In Latin America, universities are not adequately addressing environmental, social, and economic concerns. Their objectives fail to prioritize training professionals who are socially responsible and committed to knowledge transmission that fosters poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, and social equity, ultimately contributing to national development (Latin American Social Responsibility Union [URSULA], 2020)

Nationally, numerous universities are being established, yet not all maintain educational quality. The absence of CSR initiatives results in employee dissatisfaction, high turnover rates, and decreased job performance (Lara & Sánchez, 2021). According to the National Superintendence of Higher University Education (2022), universities exhibit deficiencies in professional training, innovation, and research, while also failing to invest in employee development. This ultimately impacts organizational performance and national progress.

Globally, educational institutions do not meet expected standards. They struggle to adapt to globalization, technological transformation, human resource development, and competency-building—key elements for optimal organizational performance (Goldsby et al., 2018).

In Latin America, improving organizational performance requires enhanced employee training. Many institutions lack empathy toward workers, failing to improve wages, implement incentive programs, or establish recognition systems that encourage productivity (Chong et al., 2020).

In private universities, CSR is poorly applied. Many employees lack formal contracts, social benefits, and fair wages while facing excessive working hours and limited professional development opportunities, leading to suboptimal organizational performance.

Given these challenges, this study aims to determine the relationship between CSR and organizational performance. The specific objectives include examining the correlation between CSR and performance outcomes, efficiency and effectiveness, sustainability, and resource management.

The study is supported by Pedrero et al. (2022), who explored the link between CSR and financial performance in 107 companies using a quantitative, correlational, and non-experimental approach. Their findings revealed a moderate level of CSR and an average financial performance, with a Spearman correlation coefficient of 0.890.

Similarly, Moposita et al. (2021) examined CSR's influence on organizational performance in rural Ecuador, employing a quantitative, causal-correlational, and explanatory methodology with 38 rural organizations. Their results indicated a moderate level of CSR and an average performance, with CSR accounting for 42% of performance variance.

Paredes et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between CSR and organizational climate in Ecuador using a quantitative, cross-sectional, and correlational approach with 391 participants. Their findings showed a moderate level of CSR and an average organizational climate, with a Spearman correlation of 0.598.

Likewise, Cruz (2024) analyzed the impact of CSR on organizational commitment using an explanatory, basic, correlational-causal, and non-experimental design with 92 participants. Results indicated a moderate level of CSR and an average level of organizational commitment, with a 51.4% influence based on Chi-square and Nagelkerke tests.

Additionally, Hernández (2023) studied transformational leadership and organizational performance in a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational, and applied research study with 113 employees. Findings showed that 77% of employees lacked charismatic leadership skills, and their performance was at an average level, with a correlation of 0.518.

Similarly, López (2021) investigated CSR and organizational commitment using a quantitative, correlational design with 186 employees. Results showed low levels of CSR and

organizational commitment, with no significant relationship between the variables (Spearman's $Rho = 0.182$).

CSR theories include the Stakeholder Theory, proposed by Edward Freeman in the 1980s, which posits that stakeholders drive institutions. Effective leadership is essential to align institutional strategies with stakeholder interests, ensuring economic sustainability while balancing ethical considerations (Arévalo & Escobar, 2018).

The Instrumental Theory, proposed by Milton Friedman, argues that responsible individual behaviors, rather than corporate initiatives, drive economic gains. Organizations must efficiently utilize resources and establish economic strategies to maximize profitability. Similarly, the Political Theory emphasizes institutional governance and economic expansion through a social contract between organizations and communities (Ayala, 2021).

CSR encompasses ethical, social, and environmental responsibilities in institutional decision-making (Bom, 2021). According to Vilca et al. (2022), CSR is essential for organizations of all sizes, aiming to mitigate societal crises in economic, social, and environmental spheres.

CSR originated in the 1950s, initially focusing on corporate values and public objectives. By the 1960s, scholars such as Frederick and Davis debated economic principles based on laissez-faire, prioritizing profit maximization. In the 1970s, Friedman emphasized the social dimension, analyzing internal structures. By the 1980s, CSR models integrated stakeholder engagement and ethical considerations. The 1990s marked the consolidation of CSR as a profitability-linked factor within social and economic negotiations (Cerón, 2019).

Regarding Organizational Performance, the Scientific Management Theory focuses on achieving efficiency through planning, training, monitoring, and task execution (Vega et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the Human Relations Theory highlights teamwork, employee attitudes, emotional intelligence, and internal communication as key performance drivers (Marín & Cuartas, 2019).

Organizational performance now considers workforce engagement, leadership effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and institutional reputation. It has evolved into a dynamic concept that prioritizes human capital, stakeholders, and institutional adaptability (Soto & Inga, 2019).

According to Morales et al. (2019), performance correlates with leadership, competitiveness, and market forces. Institutions must set clear goals, align vision and mission statements, and implement strategies that enhance user satisfaction and stakeholder engagement.

Pinedo and Delgado (2020) define organizational performance as a technical process linked to institutional management, measuring efficiency through procedural evaluations. Essential performance factors include infrastructure, financial resources, human capital, leadership, and institutional strategies.

2. Methodology

The research was conducted within the positivist paradigm, which aims to systematically observe and measure phenomena using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A quantitative approach was adopted, as numerical data were collected through questionnaires and later analyzed statistically (Hernández & Mendoza, 2018). Furthermore, the study was of a fundamental nature, as it did not seek immediate application but rather aimed to expand scientific knowledge. The research design was non-experimental, meaning that no manipulation of variables was carried out during the investigation (Carrasco, 2019). Regarding its scope, the study was correlational, as it examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance at a single point in time (Carrasco, 2019).

Corporate social responsibility refers to an organization's commitment to achieving its objectives while fostering a positive work environment, which in turn enhances employee efficiency (Mendoza, 2020). This variable was assessed using a 20-item questionnaire divided

into four dimensions: commitment to internal stakeholders, community engagement, environmental preservation, and institutional competitiveness. Meanwhile, organizational performance is defined as the extent to which administrative goals are met, considering the mission, vision, objectives, and tasks that influence the organization (Hernández, 2023). This variable was measured using a 24-item questionnaire covering four dimensions: performance outcomes, efficiency and effectiveness, continuity, and resource utilization, all assessed using a Likert scale.

The study population comprised 100 administrative employees from a private university in Lima, with inclusion and exclusion criteria applied. The sample, selected through simple random probability sampling, consisted of 80 participants who exhibited characteristics representative of the broader population (Tamayo, 2017). Data collection was carried out using surveys, with a structured questionnaire based on predefined dimensions and indicators. The validity of the instruments was ensured through expert review, while reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's Alpha, demonstrating high internal consistency.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software (version 26), beginning with a descriptive analysis of each variable and its respective dimensions, presented through tables and graphical representations. Inferential analysis was then conducted to test the hypotheses using Spearman's Rho correlation. Ethical considerations adhered to principles of non-maleficence, justice, autonomy, and respect, ensuring confidentiality and preventing data manipulation. The originality of the research was verified through Turnitin, and all references were cited following the seventh edition of the APA guidelines.

3. Results

General Objective

To determine the relationship between corporate social responsibility and job performance in a private university.

For statistical decision-making, Spearman's Rho test (Rho) was used as the statistical method, considering a two-tailed significance level (p-value) of less than 5.0% (0.05).

Table 1

Determination of the correlation coefficient between corporate social responsibility and organizational performance.

Organizational Performance		
Corporate Social Responsibility	Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's Rho) **	,660**
	Significance (Bilateral) (P-value) **	,000
	N	80

The data presented in Table 1, indicate a strong and statistically significant direct association ($\rho = 0.660$, $p = 0.000$), supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis. Consequently, corporate social responsibility is probabilistically associated with organizational performance.

Table 2

Combination of results for specific

Dimension	Organizational Performance		
	Spearman's Rho	Significance (Bilateral)	Sample Size (N)
Performance Outcome	0.635	0.0	80
Efficiency and Effectiveness	0.617	0.0	80
Continuity	0.679	0.0	80

Dimension	Organizational Performance		
	Spearman's Rho	Significance (Bilateral)	Sample Size (N)
Resource Utilization	0.592	0.0	80

The specific objectives of this research focused on examining the relationship between corporate social responsibility and various dimensions of organizational performance in a private university. First, the study analyzed the association between corporate social responsibility and performance outcomes, revealing a strong and statistically significant correlation ($\rho = 0.635$, $p = 0.000$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Second, the relationship between corporate social responsibility and efficiency and effectiveness was assessed, showing a direct and strong correlation ($\rho = 0.617$, $p = 0.000$), confirming the positive link between these variables.

Additionally, the study explored the connection between corporate social responsibility and organizational continuity, finding a strong and significant correlation ($\rho = 0.679$, $p = 0.000$), further reinforcing the positive association between these aspects. Lastly, the research examined the relationship between corporate social responsibility and resource utilization, reporting a strong and significant correlation ($\rho = 0.592$, $p = 0.000$), which also supported the direct link between these variables.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that corporate social responsibility is significantly and positively related to organizational performance across different dimensions. This highlights its critical role in the effective management of the private university analyzed in the study.

4. Discussion

The correlation analysis for the general objective revealed a Spearman's Rho value of 0.660, indicating a moderate to strong positive relationship. This result suggests that as CSR initiatives increase, organizational performance also improves, benefiting aspects such as productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Institutions that actively engage in responsible practices tend to experience higher operational efficiency and institutional success.

Comparative studies show varying results. Cruz (2024) found a 51.4% influence of CSR on organizational commitment using Nagelkerke, while this study focuses on correlational analysis, emphasizing CSR's role in fostering employee dedication. Valverde et al. (2022) found a 0.523 correlation between CSR and competitive success, indicating a moderate relationship. Similarly, López (2021) identified a weak link between CSR and organizational commitment (0.182), whereas Mendoza (2020) reported a strong correlation (0.809) between CSR and institutional image, reinforcing the importance of CSR in enhancing reputation.

Other research aligns with these findings. Hernández (2023) found a moderate correlation (0.518) between transformational leadership and organizational performance, indicating that strong leadership positively impacts performance. Márquez et al. (2023) found a 0.555 Pearson correlation between CSR and organizational culture, highlighting the role of a cohesive corporate culture in supporting CSR initiatives. Ugando et al. (2022) reported a strong correlation (0.945) between CSR and strategic variables, suggesting that organizations prioritizing CSR achieve better strategic goals. Pedrero et al. (2022) found a high correlation (0.890) between CSR and financial performance, showing that ethical business practices provide a competitive advantage. Paredes et al. (2021) linked CSR to organizational climate with a moderate correlation (0.598), reinforcing the idea that CSR fosters a positive work environment.

5. Conclusions

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational performance, as perceived by the administrative staff of a private university. A well-implemented CSR strategy strengthens operational efficiency, institutional reputation, and overall sustainability, leading to a more competitive and socially responsible organization.

Performance Outcomes: CSR positively influences student and employee satisfaction, operational efficiency, and institutional reputation. Universities with strong CSR initiatives attract better funding opportunities and top talent, fostering a productive and engaged academic environment.

Efficiency and Effectiveness: CSR contributes to strategic decision-making and goal achievement by optimizing resources and ensuring responsible business practices. Institutions that integrate CSR effectively can improve internal processes, reduce waste, and enhance overall effectiveness.

Organizational Continuity: A strong CSR commitment enhances an institution's ability to adapt to external challenges, ensuring long-term sustainability and resilience. CSR-driven institutions build trust and credibility, strengthening their capacity to navigate market fluctuations and industry changes.

Resource Management: CSR is closely tied to effective resource utilization, ensuring that financial, human, and material resources are managed efficiently. Universities that prioritize CSR tend to adopt sustainable resource allocation strategies, leading to cost-effective operations and long-term institutional stability.

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