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Topic of Research : Relationship between corporate social responsibility practices in India during COVID-19 pandemic, employee psychological capital, employee engagement, and employee performance: A study among Indian corporate employees

Findings

Recurring global pandemics, such as COVID-19, the Spanish flu, H1N1, and Ebola have repeatedly exposed vulnerabilities in public health systems, economies, and organizational structures. These crises underscore the critical need for businesses to adopt resilient and socially responsible practices. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), particularly during such disruptions, plays a pivotal role in protecting employee well-being through initiatives like healthcare support, financial aid, and flexible work arrangements. These measures not only safeguard employees but also strengthen organizational resilience and performance.

The study findings indicate that employees' perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) during the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant influence on their psychological and work-related outcomes. Employees who believed that their organizations demonstrated genuine concern for employee welfare and social responsibility exhibited higher levels of psychological capital, employee engagement, and job performance. The results suggest that organizational CSR initiatives strengthened employees' positive psychological resources, including hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy, enabling them to respond more effectively to workplace challenges during the crisis. Increased psychological capital further enhanced employees' engagement by improving their dedication, enthusiasm, and involvement in work, ultimately contributing to better performance. The mediating role of psychological capital confirms that CSR creates value not only through direct organizational support but also by developing employees' internal psychological strengths. The measurement model showed satisfactory reliability and construct validity, with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) providing empirical support for the proposed constructs. Additional diagnostic tests confirmed that the dataset was free from multicollinearity and non-response bias, strengthening the credibility of the results. Consistent with Social Identity Theory, the findings demonstrate that socially responsible

organizational practices foster stronger employee identification with the organization, leading to greater trust, commitment, and motivation. Overall, the study advances micro-level CSR research by establishing CSR as a strategic organizational capability that promotes employee well-being, improves engagement and performance, and enhances organizational resilience. These findings highlight the importance of embedding CSR within organizational and human resource practices to achieve sustainable employee and organizational outcomes during periods of uncertainty.

The study also emphasizes CSR's broader societal value, showing its alignment with Sustainable Development Goals—particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). By reinforcing inclusive, healthy, and resilient workplace cultures, CSR contributes simultaneously to employee welfare, organizational sustainability, and societal progress.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Employee Psychological Capital, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Crisis, COVID-19